

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013



A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

By donation

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Edition No. 32

Caltrans building up 101 at base of Oil Well Hill

Zack Cinek
Reporter
zack@willitsweekly.com

Caltrans maintenance crews have been dumping dirt from dump trucks and shaping it with a bulldozer at the base of Oil Well Hill north of town.

The site of the dirt work is just opposite the Reynolds Highway intersection on the west side of Highway 101, where the north-bound lane opens to two lanes.

"What they are doing is they have stored the material temporarily at

Read the rest of **Caltrans**
Over on Page 9

Romero seeks 3rd District seat

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

Clay Romero, 53, has announced his candidacy for Third District supervisor.

Romero has been a resident of the Willits area for 39 years and was a graduate of Laytonville High School. He has been married to his wife, Melanie, for 19 years and has one son. He is a self-employed machinist who works in Willits.

Although he has never been elected to public office, Romero ran twice for public office in the past. In 1995 he ran unsuccessfully for the Brooktrails board of directors and in 2002 he ran for California State Assembly. He was defeated by Tim Stoen in the Republican primary election of that year by a margin of

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



Frrrosty!

Willits will have cold weather all week, with a 60 percent chance of snow(!!) Thursday night. Make sure outside pets have warm places to sleep, or bring furry friends indoors during these very cold nights. Make sure water is accessible, by breaking ice layers on outside troughs and buckets, and give out extra feed to keep critters warm through the cold spell.

Photo by Maureen Moore



Above: left: Curtis "Twinkles" Collicott plugs in the decoration, illuminating the 30-plus bulbs as Logan Gamble (center) supervises the activities from the sidewalk. Right: Collicott poses with the finished decoration. Below: Collicott shows off his festive antler helmet.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Twinkling up the TOWN

On the Monday after Thanksgiving, the boys of the Public Works Department of the City of Willits get the green light to hang the annual holiday decorations down Main Street.

Stretching from the intersection of Commercial Street south to the intersection of Highway 20, trees, wrapped presents, wreaths and bells now decorate the lampposts down both sides of the road.

Curtis Collicott was the "man in the bucket" for the post out side of J.D. Redhouse, which received its 25-pound, 7-foot-tall decoration: two presents and cascade of lights.

Collicott made the antler helmet he wore on Monday, keeping the festivities bright, even during the gray, early morning task.

Decorations will remain up until the day after New Year's, when they will be removed and stored for next year.

- Maureen Moore

Willits trolley service on railroad tracks?

Zack Cinek
Reporter
zack@willitsweekly.com

Imagine a trolley to take passengers around town on the railroad tracks.

An idea for such a trolley is brewing, and is one way Willits residents can reclaim their railroading past while parking their cars.

"Willits has a rich history in railroad. We were originally built as crossroads for three different railroads," Willits resident Richard Jergenson said. Jergenson is president of the Mendocino County

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

Gassen seeks 3rd District seat

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

Arno Gassen, who has worked as a janitor for the County of Mendocino for the past 17 years, has declared his candidacy for the office of Third District supervisor.

Gassen, 62, was born in Germany and grew up in Southern California. He describes himself as "the son of hard-working immigrant parents who came to the U.S. for a better life."

As a young man, Gassen served in Vietnam and is now deemed a disabled veteran.

Gassen has long been involved in SEIU Local 1021, the labor union for the majority of county government employees.

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

Willits Community Christmas Program Tags & trees are out now!



Above left: Kati and Harry Muhlhauser pose with volunteer Laura Deffendall, the daughter of Willits Community Christmas Program coordinator, Sandy Turner. Center: Santa and Mrs. Claus lead the pack of bikers from last weekend's Toy Run down Main Street. Toys collected at the event help to fill tags on trees, like this one at Willits Power (right).



Photos by Maureen Moore

It's time again for the annual Willits Community Christmas Program. Trees like the one pictured above are already all over town, for shoppers to select a child in need of help this holiday season. Eleven locations have already received their trees, including Buttercups Children's Boutique, Willits

Power Carhartt, J.D. Redhouse, Mazahar, Coast Hardware, Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, Main Street Music, Healing Central, Willits Pet Care Center and the Unique Boutique - and the list is growing. Event coordinator Sandy Turner said 155 families are included in the program this year, and

Read the rest of **Xmas Trees**

Over on Page 9



What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from readers

'Transportation funding crisis' Neighbor bashing

To the Editor:

I'm confused.

According to Sunday's Sacramento Bee, the fee to register a vehicle in California would more than double under a proposed November 2014 ballot measure designed to raise an estimated \$3 billion a year for the state's ailing road system.

The paper goes on to say that Will Kempton, who was Caltrans director from 2004 to 2009 and is currently executive director of Transportation California, along with Jim Earp, of California Alliance for Jobs, have filed documents with the California Attorney General's office. These documents say, among other things, that "California is facing a transportation funding crisis." So they want to put the fee increase measure on next November's ballot.

But what's really confusing me is: If there is a "transportation funding crisis," why is Caltrans wanting to spend half a billion dollars (assuming modest cost overruns) on an unneeded, elevated, freeway-style bypass around the little Northern California town of Willits, when a 2-lane, ground-level road would easily do the trick for a quarter of the cost?

Not to mention that a more reasonable bypass would reduce what is turning out to be the largest destruction of California wetlands in the past 50 years. And not to mention that we wouldn't have to lie awake at night listening to highway noise from the elevated freeway echoing off the hills.

Just asking.

Tom Frisroe, Willits

A common-sense solution

To the Editor:

While the contractors have, for the most part, done an impressive job of building the Willits bypass, my objection has always been to Caltrans' over-built design. Caltrans insisted on a 4-lane footprint even though only two lanes will be completed for the foreseeable future. This design, particularly at the 40 acre northern interchange, causes unnecessary damage, unknown risks, and wastes taxpayers' funds.

To get an idea of the magnitude of the northern interchange, imagine the area of Willits from the Highway 20 intersection to the high school and from Main Street to the railroad tracks filled up to 30 feet in depth – about three stories high. Only about one-10th of the fill dirt has yet been placed.

The roundabout already included in the Caltrans design is a feasible alternative to this gigantic interchange. It can safely accommodate large trucks, and it involves no "head-on" traffic in different directions. Down-sizing the interchange would save time, money and impacts by reducing trucking, compacting and paving, eliminating four bridges, and avoiding further wetland fill and destruction of Pomo cultural sites.

Caltrans is facing budget and schedule challenges of its own making on this project. Recently bids on the required wetlands mitigation plan (already a year-and-a-half behind schedule) came in at three times the engineer's estimate.

I would, at this point, dearly love to see the bypass completed, on schedule, and without further cost to the taxpayers or unnecessary damage to our valley. There is a common sense solution, if there is the political will to do it.

Madge Strong, Willits

'Twas the Friday before Christmas ...

*'Twas the Friday before Christmas, at the Center for the Arts
An event was just starting, to warm the community's hearts.
The walls were hung with festivity and flair,
In hopes the whole community soon would be there.*

*The tables were set, the cookies were spread,
The plans of a wonderful party dancing in our heads.
Jennifer in her scarf, and Maureen in her sweater,
Couldn't think of a way for the party to be better.*

*When out on Commercial Street, there arose such a clatter,
We sprang from the stairs to see what was the matter.
Away to the entrance we flew like a flash,
And gasped as we saw the huge crowd gathering for the bash.*

*The streetlights shined on the plates, trays and tins
Of many cookies and sweets, baked with hope to take the win.
Honor and bragging rights would soon be bestowed,
For goodies that made everyone cry their best "Ho! Ho! Ho!"*

*Lynn from the Chamber, HMM, Willits Power, Les Schwab,
Ardella's, SugarKat and Emandal
Set up tables displaying their goodies for the tasting of all.
More rapid than eagles, the tasters they came,
And they sampled, and shouted, calling out their favorites
by name!*

*"It's delicious, this fudge!" "Those cookies, oh my!"
"The candy, divine! And the caramels, you must try!"
To the WCA building the people they ran,
"We must taste and cast our votes while yet we still can!"*

*Tallies were made, and the judges would name
The best treats made by those who competed and came.
Their photos in the paper the winners would see,
With copies, we hope, of the winning recipes.*

*After the judging, the party will still go on,
With cookie swaps (bring your own) until they're gone,
Christmas carols sung by the sweet Devon Jones,
And holiday spirit until everyone goes home.*

*The party will pay thanks to all who have shown such support,
For this crazy and amazing endeavor, WW, for short.
Join Willits Weekly to toast to next year's editions
Filled with news and community, innovation and tradition.*

*From 4 to 7 pm on Friday, December 20 we will be,
At the Center for the Arts with T-shirts and back issues to see.
We encourage all to come with this cordial invite,
As we say Happy Holidays to all, and to all a great night!*

Celebrate with WW!

December 20 at Willits Center for the Arts

The community is invited to attend Willits Weekly's first annual holiday party held on December 20 from 4 to 7 pm at the Willits Center for the Arts. A night of fun is planned, with Christmas music and merriment as well as the main event: a cookie contest.

We have invited a number of "celebrity" bakers to make treats for the contest including: Tam Adams of Emandal, Kathryn Sterngold of SugarKat Kitchen, Lori Dorholt and Kathy Albright of Ardella's, Lynn Kennelly of the Willits Chamber of Commerce, a team from Howard Memorial Hospital, and the ladies of Les Schwab Tire Center. (And the list is growing!)

Contestants will bake off dozens of cookies and holiday sweets which will be on display at decorated tables for the tasting. Attendees will be encouraged to sample and vote for their favorites. Judges will also cast their vote, and a "People's Choice" and "Judges' Favorite" award will be given. As well as bragging rights and a surprise prize, winners will have their photos in the paper, along with cookie and treat recipes.

There will also be a cookie swap table, so those who want to bring cookies and treats to exchange with other eventgoers can do so, and take home a bag of cookies at the end of the night.

A soundtrack of holiday music will keep the spirit of the evening festive, and the community is welcome to come and mingle and enjoy the evening at the Great Room upstairs at the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street.

Willits Weekly will also have back issues available, and T-shirts and gift subscriptions packaged for holiday gifts. Can't wait to see you all there!

The Rules: LETTERS

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

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

Where are the WW boxes?

1. Old Mission Pizza	5. Ardella's Downtown Diner
2. Brewed Awakening	6. Scoops
3. Ace Copy and Shipping	7. J.D. Redhouse
4. Willits Post Office	8. The Country Skillet

Willits Weekly

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Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

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Funds for 4-H

Santa Photos and Bake Sale earn \$370 for Willits Club

On December 1, "elves" from the Willits 4-H Club came to ER Energy to hold a bake sale and assist with "photographed" photos with Santa.

The photos raised \$95, and the bake sale, an additional \$275.

Funds raised will go to help fund field trips and more for the group. Interested in joining 4-H? Contact 354-1224 for info.

Photos by Maureen Moore



Furry Friends

Hoping for a home?

Meet the very beautiful Toots! She spent her whole life as a beloved family pet, and it shows – she is very well-adjusted, socialized, smart and friendly. She is attentive, eager to please and seems to learn rules quickly. Unfortunately her family did not have fencing around their home, and this girl took herself on one too many field trips! While they had nothing but wonderful things to say about Toots, they felt that she needed a more active family or companion and a home with fencing and boundaries to ensure her safety. Because she has been a pet, she should be an easy addition to her new home. We believe that she is housebroken, and all she needs is lots of love and adventure!

The Ukiah Animal Shelter, 298 Plant Road, is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4:30 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6:30 pm. More info: www.pawstoadopt.com or call Adoption Coordinator Katherine Houghtby at (707) 467-6453.



Willits Power Equipment

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A community Thanksgiving

500 diners enjoy a traditional Turkey Day feast






Top row: Diners and servers enjoy participating in this year's festivities including John and Luke (left) and Bob and Diana (right).

Middle left: Server Diana carries out two plates of the turkey, stuffing, potatoes, gravy and rolls to hungry diners.

Middle right: The crew of Chamberlain Creek inmates who served and helped cook the meal.

Bottom row: left: Diners pose with volunteer Diana Pearl. Right: Ty Sumvan-Bickford poses with volunteers Bob and Harry.

Photos by Maureen Moore

The 24th annual Willits Community Thanksgiving Dinner, thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, was a great success again this year: feeding about 500 people at the Harrah Senior Center.

Members of the Willits Community Services board of directors helped usher guests to their seats, as – often – a short line of diners waited briefly for a place.

Volunteers, including 4-Hers and high school students, cordially waited on table, bringing salads first, then serving plates of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, yams and green beans. Other volunteers circled tables with serving carts covered with desserts or drinks.

Many of those eating were older people, but there were families with young children, too.

Some put money in the tip box even though the dinner was free to all. "We always come and donate money," one woman who came to eat with her husband said.

The food – including 45 turkeys – is cooked at the Chamberlain Creek Conservation Camp off Highway 20, by three shifts of inmate crews. "We warm things up at the Senior

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
jennifer@willitsweekly.com

Funds for the food, apart from the turkeys which were provided by WCS, were donated by Thy – "call me 'T' like the first letter of my name" – Sumvan-Bickford, owner of 101 Burgers and 101 Donuts. "I usually donate about half the food," Sumvan-Bickford told Willits Weekly, but this year, she said, she was happy to donate it all and hoped to be blessed enough to do the same next year. Her daughter Dhavi was one of the young volunteers at the dinner.

Morgan and Emma, both 4-Hers, said they'd been coming to the Community Dinner to volunteer for four years, and always enjoyed helping to serve the food. They also can put the community service in their 4-H record books, Morgan said.

Royce Peart, a Willits High School student who waited on tables at the dinner, said he wasn't there officially representing any groups or clubs at the high

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

208 E. San Francisco Ave. Willits 459-6791

Classifieds

The rest of Caltrans | From Page 1

Algebra, Geometry
College Preparatory Mathematics, Individual Instruction. Mac Smith 459-MATH

Body Life Studio
"Wonder and Awe Within" Workshop Dec. 15 from 1-5 Explore inspirational movement in the natural forces of breath, gravity, imagination. For adults. Questions, registration - bodylifestudio@gmail.com

Computer Help
Need help with your computer? I will come to your home or business. PC and Macintosh. Repairs and configuration \$35/hr. Tutoring \$15/hr. Call Liam 459-2470 or email macamerlin@yahoo.com.

Consignments Accepted
Gavel Down Sales, located at 1611 South Main Street, is open Tues through Sat, 10 am to 5 pm, and is accepting quality home furnishings for consignment. Contact Kapila at 707.459.1300.

Help Wanted
Managing Director: WCT seeks permanent P/T administrator: publicity & marketing, computer graphics, finance, personnel, record keeping and community liaison. Salary negotiable. See willitsweekly.com for full job description. Submit resume to WCT, P.O. Box 80, Willits, or wct@willitsonline.com.

Help Wanted
Ardella's Downtown Diner now hiring all positions. Apply within. No phone calls please.

Help Wanted
Housekeeper wanted for Baechtel Creek Inn. Must be able to go up and down stairs, lift up to 30 pounds, and be reliable and willing to work. Apply in person.

Help Wanted
Maintenance person wanted for Baechtel Creek Inn. Must be available on weekends, and weekdays. Apply in person.

Culinary Arts Instructor/Cook
Willits Charter School is seeking a Culinary Arts Instructor / Cook. 30 hours/week. Contact Willits Charter School @ 707-459-5506 for further information.

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Christian lady has bedroom w/full bath to rent, with TV hookup. Golden Rule Mobile Village. \$400/month, includes TV. 1 small pet negotiable. No smoking, no drugs. Avail immediately. 459-9195.

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Pinball Machines
PINBALL MACHINES for sale. 459-6372.

Racing Truck
Traxxas Radio-Controlled Model Truck for sale. Includes recharging equipment. Used twice – never raced. Looks like new. Asking \$250 firm. Call evenings: 707-456-0381.

For Rent
Quiet, clean studio, close to downtown Willits, Westside, garbage and water paid, NS/JP. \$525/month. Armo: 459-9601.

For Rent
Office/massage studio for rent. Centrally located. 143 square feet, with separate waiting room. Off-street parking. Utilities included. \$175/month. Available now. 354-2473.

Rummage Sale
Every Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm at 1st Baptist Church, 145 Wood Street. Rain or shine. We accept rummage donations, and have an ever-changing selection of goods!

Swim Coaches Wanted
Swim Coaches for Willits Otters swim team, Feb. through Aug. Coaching experience desired. Monday through Thursday, 5:30 to 7 pm. Some weekends required for swim meets. Call 391-2154.

Found Cat
Young grey and white male 3/4-tail cat found on Locust Street on December 1. Sweet, vocal, wants forever home, or to go back to his actual home. Is he yours? Call 459-3141.

Volunteers Needed
Come meet wonderful people and make a difference in your community. Pick up an application at the Harrah Senior Center on Baechtel Road. Hope to see you soon.



Above: On the southwest slope of Oil Well Hill, a state bulldozer is parked at the site where fill dirt is being packed in and shaped at the base of a steep slope.

Below: Highway 101 is above the dirt and the tree trunks, where Caltrans relocated excess dirt to fill in alongside the road.



Photos by Zack Cinek

The rest of Xmas Trees | From Page 1

the sooner helpful community members can select, buy and return the items on the tags (currently being refilled on the trees daily!); the easier the second half of the process – wrapping and distribution – will be.

Turner also stressed that even \$5 and \$10 monetary donations add up and are equally as appreciated as fulfilling full tags.

Drop off boxes for completed tags are located at J.D. Redhouse and Main Street Music.

"We really would like to stress for people to bring back fulfilled tags as soon as possible," explained Turner. "There is no 'too soon' to get them back to us."


Gifts from the Toy Run and other fundraisers will help fulfil tag requests as well.

Deliveries will take place Christmas Eve.

Anyone wishing to help with wrapping the gifts or for more information on the program can contact Turner at 490-8872.

Willits Weekly T-Shirts

A perfect gift for this holiday season!



What could be better this holiday season than to unwrap one of Willits Weekly's brand new "I ♥ Willits Weekly" T-shirts? The crisp black shirts are printed with white lettering on the front and our signature "WW" circle logo on the back.

Shirts are available in unisex sizes from medium to XXL and cost \$20 each. They come festively wrapped in cellophane and ribbon, ready for immediate gift giving.

Gift subscriptions are also available this year and make great gifts for locals as well as out-of-towners. Getting the paper delivered in the mail is a great way for people no longer living in the area to stay connected with our community, as well as convenient for locals who don't want to track down a copy in town.

– Maureen Moore

Six-month subscriptions are available for \$40, and one-year subscriptions are available for \$75. A sewn newspaper bag with ribbon handles and fancy presentation certificate makes a Willits Weekly gift subscription a festive and quick choice for readers of all ages.

T-shirts will be for sale at J.D. Redhouse starting Friday, November 28, and will also be available at Willits Weekly's Winter Willits Farmers Market booth. The market is on Thursdays from 3 to 5:30 pm at the Little Lake Grange (skipping Thanksgiving Day).

For more info or to place an order: 972-7047 or email willitsweekly@gmail.com.

Puzzle Answers
From Page 4

OBITUARY
Herb Kamphausen
January 16, 1936 - November 26, 2013

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

208 E. San Francisco Ave. Willits 459-6791

Herb Kamphausen was born in China to missionary parents, and came to America at age 11. He was a manufacturing engineer. While living in Willits, Herb worked at Metalx and Warmboard. He was one of the pastors at Agape Bible Church in Willits. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, two sons-in-law, a son, a daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, two sisters and a brother.

Memorial services will be held at a later date. For service information contact Agape Bible Church. Eversole Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

Memorial service for Pat Simonson

A memorial service will be held for Grace Patricia "Pat" Simonson, Saturday, December 7 at 1 pm at the Willits Methodist Church, 286 School Street.

Pat passed peacefully on Thursday, October 31 in St. Helena. (See November 7 edition of Willits Weekly for full obituary.)

Remembrances may be made to the Frank R. Howard Foundation of Willits Seniors, Inc.

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SEASONAL FUDGE FLAVORS

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27th annual Holiday Crafts Fair

Gifts from local artists and artisans

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, with the City of Willits holiday decorations going up on Highway 101 and with the cold overnight temperatures and thick white frost on the roofs in the mornings.

And it's getting close to Holiday Crafts Fair time, too, which for the 27th year will offer fine arts and crafts at the Willits Community Center, Friday, December 13 through Sunday, December 15.

"It's all about creating community," said Karen Gridley, who will offer her hand-sewn potholders, tote bags, purses, lunch bags and cosmetic bags at the fair. "People love buying something from somebody who made it themselves."

Gridley uses colorful cotton fabric: "lots of batiks and specialty and animal fabrics," she said. Her potholders are available in heart shapes and traditional squares, usually in sets of two, with discounts for multiple sets. Her "It's in the Bag!" purses are available in four different sizes, in addition to a larger tote bag.

Gridley was originally inspired to make "practical affordable things that are useful and beautiful," after her travels in Africa, where the people "had everyday things around their place that were beautiful." She started with

a focus on reusable shopping bags: "People didn't carry shopping bags 20 years ago." Gridley was working as a recycling advocate for the County of Mendocino, and wanted to make a reusable bag "people identified with because they loved the fabric, so they'd take it with them."

Gridley will share a booth with Wolfgang Ronnefeldt, whose "Mendocino Medicinal" products are "innovative and traditional herbal medicines, salves and seaweed products" that blend "traditional European herbalism and the new innovative medical herbalism of Northern California." All the plant materials are wild-crafted or organically grown.

Ronnefeldt has been working with medicinal plants all his life. "I remember the first time my father sent me out into the field to pick yarrow, and I was not older than 5 years old," he said. "He just came back from a Russian prison camp, and wanted yarrow for a salad. That was a horrible salad," Ronnefeldt laughed.

Mendocino Medicinal's Royal Tyrolian healing cream for skin and muscles is made with basil leaves, comfrey leaves and roots, Vitamin E and, "of course, the famous dwarf pine oil," Ronnefeldt said, which grows as high in the mountains as trees can grow. "It has a wonderful smell." He got the recipe for this salve while hiking in the Swiss Alps, where it is called the "empress's salve."

See Calendar page for more details about the Crafts Fair, which is a benefit for the Willits Center for the Arts.

- Jennifer Poole



Top left: Karen Gridley's potholders adorn a Christmas tree, with tote bag and purse to the side. Top right: Kelp Help, one of Wolfgang Ronnefeldt's herbal medicines, is made with wildcrafted kelp. Above: A hand-sewn tote bag and purse from Gridley's "It's in the Bag" line.

Photos by Jennifer Poole

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