

A word cloud featuring various terms related to real estate and community. The words are arranged in a circular pattern around a central graphic. The central graphic is a stylized house with a green roof and white walls, containing the text "It's Real Estate Section Thursday!". The words in the cloud include: "Willits", "cover", "share", "want", "good", "business", "contact", "newspaper", "local", "please", "information", "Mendocino", "paper", "web", "id", "co", "releases", "returned", "represent", "calendar", "another", "organizations", "quality", "years", "today", "well", "story", "future", "public", "columns", "support", "classes", "features", "absolutely", "able", "small", "dis", "incorporated", "week", "area", "pay", "show", "also", "right", "online", "events", "yet", "contributors", "unnecessary", "join", "sports", "write", "get", "help", "possible", "hands", "activities", "nothing", "every", "bills", "time", "grab", "places", "editor", "little", "part", "will", "subscriptions", "voting", "advertisers", "publication", "interests", "recipes", "vet", "trans", "integrating", "another", "something", "sign", "color", "working", "color", "sign", "color", "working", "color", "sign".

Donations Accepted Edition No. 622

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Election
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Willits Weekly's December 18 edition is last of the year

Willits Weekly will be publishing our last edition of 2025 on December 18, the week before Christmas. We'll be taking our Winter Break through January, and will resume publishing on Thursday, February 5, 2026.

Thank you to all our supporters – especially the display and legal advertisers who've paid the bills since our first edition in May 2013. Thanks also to all our subscribers, street subscribers, classified advertisers, donors, and readers. Thanks to all who submit events and posters for our Calendar, and public service announcements, and letters to the editor. Thanks to the institutions and individuals who put together interesting press releases about the community and about events which we are grateful to be able to run in Willits Weekly.

Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center is serving lunch in its indoor dining room, Monday through Friday, from 11:45 am to 1 pm. Drive-through lunches are available from 12 to 12:45 pm, outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road.

Thursday, December 11: Sweet & Sour Pork, White Rice

Friday, December 12: Chicken Casserole, Veggies, Roll

Monday, December 15: Chili Cheese Baked Potato and Corn Salad

Tuesday, December 16: Meatball Sub Sandwich, Green Salad

Wednesday, December 17: Chicken Tacos, Rice, Beans

Thursday, December 18: Chille con Carne, Cornbread

Friday, December 19: Pepperoni Sausage Pizza, Green Salad

Senior Center Pancake Breakfast: second Sunday of every month, on December 14 this month, 8 to 11 am. Menu choices are: 1. All-you-can-eat pancakes scrambled eggs, choice of sausage or bacon, or 2. Biscuits & gravy with scrambled eggs. Both include coffee, tea or orange juice. \$13 adults; \$12 Senior Center members; \$8 children 8 and under. Extra sausage, bacon, eggs and juice for additional cost. This month's specials: Chile Relleno Casserole and Vegetarian Casserole.

Activities: Bingo on Friday nights, 5 to 7 pm. Exercise class weekday mornings from 9 to 10 am.

Meals on Wheels: The Senior Center Meals on Wheels program delivers lunch Monday through Friday, excepting holidays. To sign up call Joliana at 459-6826, who can help fill out the application form. Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery. Delivered throughout Willits.

Transportation for seniors: Call 459-5556 to schedule. Pick up and drop off for grocery shopping, banking, doctors' appointments. Senior Center Thrift Shop: 459-2176

The Senior Center is in need of volunteers to help with the many activities here at the center, including volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers. "Volunteers are one-third of our workforce, which allows us to offer many services to our members and community." To learn more about volunteering: 459-6826.

Tips from UPD on motorized e-bike and scooter safety

Posted by UPD

The Ukiah Police Department has recently received multiple complaints regarding groups of young children operating electric scooters and electric bicycles in an unsafe manner. Reports indicate these devices are being ridden at high speeds, failing to stop at stop signs, being operated after dark without lights, and in some instances nearly causing traffic collisions.

At UPD, we want the children in our community to have fun and enjoy the many outdoor activities available. However, safety must remain our top priority. Parents and guardians should be aware that it is illegal to operate an electric scooter on a public roadway without a valid driver's license or instruction permit, and electric bicycles must follow the same laws as pedal bicycles under California law.

To help keep our youth safe, please keep the following points in mind:

- Age: Children under 16 are not permitted to operate Class 3 e-bikes on public roads. All electric scooter operators must have a valid driver's license or learner's permit.

- Obey all bicycle laws: E-bikes are subject to the same rules and responsibilities as traditional bicycles.

- Speed: Remind kids to use caution and slow down, especially when riding in neighborhoods, or through parks where pedestrians may be present.

- Helmet required: Riders under 18 must wear a properly fitted and fastened helmet – no exceptions.

- Reckless or unsafe riding is illegal: Children can be cited for operating any bicycle recklessly or for riding an electric scooter that they are not legally allowed to operate.

- Stop signs: Remind young riders to come to a complete stop at stop signs and to ride as though drivers may not see them.

UPD encourages parents to review these laws with their children and ensure all scooters and bikes are operated safely and legally. We will continue to monitor the affected areas and work closely with families to prevent accidents and injuries. If necessary, enforcement action will be taken. Our priority is keeping children safe and avoiding a tragic outcome.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Ukiah Police Department.

Editor's Note: Especially with the school holidays coming up, the UPD is giving good advice to every community.

Willits Community Thanksgiving Dinner 2025

By Bill Bruneau, Willits

As we struggle to get through difficult challenging days our Willits community thanksgiving was proof positive that we have a laudable resilience in our community Our free dinner for all comers had grown beyond any one community organization, and so many so many stepped up to help with this, bake that, etc. ; preparations spread out over a half dozen organizations (at least) came together encore at the senior center dining room It was wonderful and extra delicious this year

We came at a bit of a lull in our Thanksgiving dinner and we had a ratio of one server to every two eaters that fell to maybe one in six when all tables taken Never in my life do I get table service like this Friends and neighbors, our civic leaders all serving With a few young'ns learning what serving really is They were constantly trying to serve us our salad first because the remains were quickly, constantly removed by neighbors with such good humor and expediency

There are a few times we get a true gestalt of Willits Our sharing a modest Thanksgiving together is one Absolutely free, but ironically a benefit for the hungry As usual voluntary donations exceed expectations Full Thanksgiving dinner from 8:30 to 3:00 for all From the honestly hungry happy to be there to the well off serving others, then filling a table With their whole family and friends Youngest to old, our diversity on display

All of us breaking bread together over gratitude to have found a caring home in Willits I often ask people in conversation about what their hopes and aspirations for us together about our sharing and caring for one another Nearly everyone has this intense hunger and active hope for even more community

Unique grant opportunity for local organizations

Submitted by Law Office of Elina N. Agnoli

Notice to all Willits and Laytonville organizations and individuals!

We are pleased to announce a unique opportunity to receive a no-strings-attached financial grant to support your charitable, artistic, cultural, scientific, or other philanthropic work in our community.

These one-time gifts will be funded through the estate of a longtime Laytonville resident who died recently, leaving the bulk of his estate for charitable purposes.

Please submit a proposal of no more than 1,000 words, describing your project or endeavor, or your organization's mission, and how additional funding would be used.

Submit proposals to:

The Law Office of Elina N. Agnoli

ATTN: GRANT SUBMISSION

140 Branscomb Road

Laytonville, CA 95454

or email to: eagnoli@gmail.com

Guidelines: Submissions must be received on or before January 31, 2026 and must be 1,000 words or less. Grantees will be notified in March. Please include the full name of your organization, your tax ID number, and your mailing address in your proposal.

Gift range: \$1,000 – \$15,000.



Photos by Mathew Caine



Willits Kids Corner

The largest indoor playground in Mendocino County is now open at the old Rexall

After two years of anticipation and curiosity, the old Rexall building has finally morphed

into "the largest indoor playground and family fun center in Mendocino County," according to the Willits Kids Corner website:

The Willits Kids Corner, which had a soft opening on December 7, is a space filled with bright colors, a plethora of activities and areas in which kids can express their desire to play and have a fun time. The space is clean, bright, safe, and appropriate for children of all ages.

The owners, Bri Adams and Carlos and Nina Swinney, wanted something to do in their retirement that would benefit the community and provide a place where kids can come to laugh and play and expend some of their childlike energy. "We're finally there," said Nina. "What we have here is an indoor playground and family fun center. We created it to be fully inclusive for all ages. There will be times when teenagers and parents can play here. There is a waiver that is required for every kid under 18 so that we are not liable for any mishaps, so every kid's parents know where they are," she explained.

The "sensory gym" at Willits Kids Corner "is catered towards the neurodiverse families in the community," Nina said, "and we also have sensory rooms underneath. There are two different themes, a lava room and a blacklight room. The lava room is lit up red with lava panels on the wall with volcanos, and we also have lava tiles on the floor, with different textures. We have sequence panels on the walls and activity panels."

In this facility, parents can either participate with their kids or sit in the cafe area, sip some coffee, and surf the internet on the free WiFi.

In the back room, there's an area where gently used clothing is available for purchase for the kids. The arcade has some exciting and colorful machines, mostly for the older children who are adept at racing cars and

shooting dinosaurs. There is a table area which can be rented for parties.

"We have an event center where companies or families or groups of any kind can have their own private party," Carlos said. "We have an 86 inch television on the wall.... You can have your company party here, and nobody has to get a babysitter. You bring your kids with you. We will always have staff available for that," he said. "We've partnered up with Loose Caboose, and Slam Dunk Pizza, and also Flying Dog and the Cheesecakeery. They have made menus exclusively for the Willits Kids Corner," Nina added.

The partners have experience with neurodivergent children, the Swinneys having a grandson on the spectrum. They have designed much of the play area with sensual games and musical instruments and sensory rooms to cater to young imaginations and the needs for stimulus.

"We have experience ourselves with our grandson who was diagnosed on the spectrum when he was very young," Nina said. "He was diagnosed a little after he was 1 year old. That drew our attention to resources that were not available in the community and Mendocino as a whole.

"We wanted to branch out and make something available for all of Mendocino County," Nina said, "so those families with kids who have different types of cognitive delays can come and really take advantage of the facility. We wanted to target those families as well. That's the concept that we came up with, a sensory gym."

Kids Corner will have two basic three-hour sessions per day, 10 am to 1 pm, and 2 to 5 pm. The sessions cost only \$12 for the three hours, and there are discounts for multiple children. They offer several tiers of memberships. There is a Classic Plan for \$49 per month with unlimited access

Read the rest of Play | Over on page 15

Above, from left: Kids of all ages can find something entertaining and amusing in the Kids Corner. Everything in the Kids Corner is colorful, padded, and designed for maximum fun. This hallway at the Willits Kids Corner is a sensual delight with several ways to make music or just noise. At left: The Willits Kids Corner occupies the familiar building that once housed the Rexall pharmacy. Below: Bri Adams rearranges some of the pads in the infant and toddler area. At bottom, left: After finding antiques and memorabilia during construction, the Kids Corner, created this memory wall. At bottom, right: Kids Corner partners with the Loose Caboose, Slam Dunk and Flying Dog Pizza to provide a special menu of meals for parties.



Above, left: Young Dario is an ace at the Jurassic Park game, running up the high score. Above, right: The slides go – quite fast – from the top level to the lower level. Below: Owners of Willits Kids Corner, Bri Adams with Dario, and Carlos and Nina Swinney, have spent the last two years creating this space that is safe and fun.



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. Deadline is end of day Monday for each Thursday edition. No letters from an anonymous source will be published, although a request to withhold the writer's name will be considered.

Willits Weekly

Willits Weekly is a locally owned independent newspaper, founded in 2013, covering the greater Willits area.

Volume 13, Number 622

3,500 - 4,000 copies printed by Western Web on Thursdays

P.O. Box 1698 Willits, CA 95490 / 707-459-2633; 707-972-7047
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At top, from left: Student Ash Fagan boldly offered an a cappella rendition of "Man in the Box" by Alice in Chains. Even after experiencing some technical difficulties with the microphone, Iris Vinzant continued with the song "Riptide." Nefera Fisher and Penny Morgan perform a dance they choreographed to "Crazy in Love." Theatre Arts instructor Billy Hetherington kept the proceedings moving along with his witty introductions. Above, from left: Pearl Marill, dance teacher, holds up ceramic magnets, made by a friend, for sale. Carolyn Hambright, the art and ceramics instructor at WCS, shows prints and ceramics at the show to raise money for Student Leadership. Miss Wendy, the science and garden teacher at WCS, brought a selection of succulents, some in ceramic pots from the school kiln. Miles Mattson performs a monologue entitled "Weirdo," about being different. Below: All of the performers joined on stage to take a bow at the end of the "No Snow" Talent Show.



Above, from left: The entire dance class choreographed and performed this number to "Where's My Love." Cori Balthrop and Gigi Riffis perform a short skit, "The Murder was Staged." "Will You Be My Nemesis" was performed by Amelia Powers and Owen Sapian of Middle School Theatre Arts. At left: Jadrian Partridge, Miles Mattson, and Noah Whitaker in "Synth Wizards." At right: Aiden Parten performs a monologue he wrote called "Scars." Below, left: Two of Mr. Lexington's fashion class walk the red carpet in clothes of their own design. Below, right: Payton Maxfield and Cori Balthrop, two middle school WCS students in "The Witch's Princess."

'No Snow' Talent Show

Willits Charter School students spotlight singing, acting, dancing, choreography, and fashion

It gets better every year. Last Friday's Willits Charter School talent show, entitled the "No Snow Talent Show," featured some of the best work in singing, acting, dancing, choreography, and fashion from the middle and upper school that has ever been on the WCS stage.

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

In addition to the stage work, Student Leadership and the art classes offered some interesting and well-crafted items for sale. Even succulents from the WCS gardens were on sale, some in ceramic containers from the art classes.

The show, as always, began with the Theatre Arts teacher, Billy "Mr. Billy" Hetherington, announcing the acts in his sometimes zany, sometimes poignant style. "This show is basically 90% student run," Hetherington told the crowd. "They are running the lights, the sound. We have backstage managers that are students. They coordinated a lot of this stuff. The students came in and decorated this place, put down all of the blue and all the seats. Without their help, things like this wouldn't be possible.

"We have a great lineup tonight," Hetherington said. "We have everything from the rock band, to theater, to dance, a fashion show. We have things from the Student Leadership, the arts, the culinary program. This is our way of showcasing what our students are doing in this community."

First up was Mr. B's (Tyler Balthrop) rock class rock band, the 6/7 Nation Army (6/7 being a nonsense phrase used by kids for fun). The band, consisting of students from several grades, played deftly, as the two singers hit all the notes with style. Next was a courageous a cappella rendition of Alice in Chain's Man in the Box, by Ash Fagan, who bravely sang out without the need for a microphone.

Miss Pearl (Pearl Marill) helped her students choreograph their own routines. "I'm so proud of all the students getting up here tonight," she said, "It takes so much bravery to be in front of you and be so vulnerable. This is a CTE course (Career Technical Education), and we're trying to expose them to as many real-life opportunities to get experience performing in front of a crowd, getting a sense of the theater. This is a class that has sixth through 12th graders, and what you're about to see is a combination of choreography that I created and all the stuff they made up themselves," said Marill.

Her students performed their own steps on several numbers including "Mystical Magic," an ensemble piece, "You Can't Catch Me Now" (choreographed by Marill, Aiden Parten, and Irene Almonte), "Where's My Love" (choreographed by all the dancers). The students managed to hit all the steps and make it seem liquid in their renditions.

In between the dance numbers, Iris Vinzant sang "Riptide," and Parker Smith sang "When I Come Around" by The Beastie Boys.

After intermission, the middle school students did well-prepared monologues with some standout performances. Next up were the Senior High students performing monologues that they wrote themselves, expressing their feelings of isolation, angst, and feeling different. They were raw and heartfelt and dynamic.

After the monologues, Mr. Lexington, fashion teacher, presented his students, walking the red carpet in fashions of their own design and creation. The students' interpretation of fashion was on point, and most of the clothing fit well with their personalities and expressed the teacher's desire to repurpose and upcycle materials to create a sustainable industry.

At the end of the performances, all the participating students gathered on stage for a round of appreciative applause and to bask in the light of a job well done.



Above, from left: The Balthrop kids pose happily with Santa, who arrived at the engine house by rail car. A wagon full of toys is offered via raffle. Kids find plenty of activities to keep them occupied before getting in line to see Santa.



Holiday Express

Families catch a ride on an antique steam engine and visit with Santa at annual Roots of Motive Power event

Santa seemed to have left his reindeer and sled (and Mrs. Claus) at home, although he did bring two elves to assist him in meeting the hundreds of kids who patiently waited in a line that circled the interior of the engine house at the Mendocino County Museum. After arriving at 11 am by train, Mr. Claus greeted all of the children who came to see him and express what they wanted for Christmas.

The Roots of Motive Power Holiday Express is a tradition that has been happening for several years, to the delight of families from all over Mendocino County, who come to meet Santa, sip hot chocolate, eat hot dogs (provided by Sober Grad), create some art, and ride the train around the track that encircles the Roots facility.

In addition to the activities going on in the engine house, the event was also a chance for families to catch a free ride on the Port of Olympia steam engine. The antique engine pulled a car with giant logs, behind which were two open-air cars trailed by the caboose. As the train made its way around the sports fields, it puffed out a thick blanket of white steam from its boiler, its whistle screaming out a hello and a warning to stay off the tracks. After two circles around the course, the train stopped to let off passengers and to take on the families who had been waiting by the station, tickets in hand to board whichever car they chose. Some enjoyed the open-air cars for their views and fresh air. Some chose the caboose, which is more enclosed, and offered a few seats in the upper section for the kids to enjoy a heightened view. After a ride on the train, many of the families headed inside to warm up with some hot chocolate.

"We have hot dogs and chili and hot chocolate and chips and water, sodas," explained April Lamprich, president of Sober Grad, the organization that provides a safe and fun party on graduation night to seniors. "There are a bunch of kids in here and they are ready to give you hot chocolate. This is the last day for our fall raffle basket. We are going to draw at the end of the day. We have gift certificates from all over town. We have an Ugг blanket. We have a cutting board. We have a load of rock from Northern Aggregates that will be delivered to the winner's house. We have gift certificates for 101 Drive-in, April May's, Loose Caboose, a Stanley cup from J.D. Redhouse. A \$25 gift certificate to J.D. Redhouse." This year's lucky basket winner was Mackenzie Erickson.

Roots held its own raffle, as they do each

year. The prize was a Red Ryder wagon chock full of toys. "These are donated toys from stores in town that are part of our raffle," said Bruce Patterson. "You win the wagon and all the toys. It's \$1 a ticket and six tickets for \$5. The raffle drawing is at 3 pm today."

Troy James has been with Roots of Motive Power for several years and has served as president of the organization. He could be found at the train station, helping families on and off the train. "Every year, the first Saturday of December, we give rides all day, free, until 4 pm," said James "Santa gets here at 11. We delivered him. This is one of my favorite events because of all the kids. They line up around the engine house to see Santa. We've garnered interest in children that now are operators. Eddie Kimball, he's one of our newest members, not quite 21 yet. We've had him since he was 11, when his Willits grandparents dropped him off here so he could learn some things. Now he's here and he's a restorer. He restores locomotives and logging equipment for Chris Baldo. We're getting a few younger people as members now."

Roots, dedicated to the restoration and display of machines from the era of steam engines and implements, is a museum, a restoration facility, and a place where steam aficionados can receive training to be able to work on and operate these behemoth machines. Classes are available a few times a year to familiarize students with the workings and rules of safety for operating the steam implements, donkeys, engines, tractors, and shovels.

"Our Steam Safety Class will be the first weekend in April. The Railroad Safety Class will be the first weekend in June. Sometime in July, we're going to do some kind of shovel-operation training. Not with the big steamer but with the diesel and the Caterpillars. We're starting to look into giving classes on our tractors," said James.

In addition to the Holiday Express, the Roots of Motive Power offers two days of Steam Fest each year, coinciding with the Willits Frontier Days and the Fourth of July parade. Roots is a mecca for steam enthusiasts who love to relive the days of logging and steam trains. Memberships are available, which include a periodic magazine of the history of the steam era and a barbecue at Steam Fest.

Roots of Motive Power is located at 420 East Commercial Street. More information about joining can be found at <https://rootsofmotivepower.com> or on their Facebook page.



Above, left: Many young riders came dressed in their Christmas sweaters and hats. Above, right: Thyri, a unicorn enthusiast, insists she is a Christmas elf. At left: The steam-powered Port of Olympia engine pulls four cars around the track. Below, left: Fireman Mattie May has been on the job for about a year, and is in training to be an engineer. Below, right: So many sweet goodies are available for free in the engine house.

Photos by Mathew Caine



At left: Sober Grad volunteers sell hot dogs, hot cocoa, chili, and other treats to raise money for their year-end party.

Below: The Holiday Express event affords many opportunities for selfies and family portraits.



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Call for information.
ALL ARE WELCOME
The Rev. Betsy Bruneau

St. John Lutheran Church
Sunday Service
10:00 a.m.
(707) 459-2988
24 Mill Creek Drive
Facebook.com/stjohnswillits
ALL ARE WELCOME

Willits Seventh-Day Adventist Church
707-459-5714
Friendly, open worship
Saturdays
Bible Study - 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service - 10:45 a.m.
Zoom Transmission Available.
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
399 W. Mendocino Ave.
All are welcome!

Willits United Methodist Church
Labyrinth and Peace Garden
A place to find comfort
where all are welcome
Pastor Jaime Rogers-Fairchild
Sunday Worship at 10:30 am
286 School St. (at Pine)
707-459-2855
wumc@outlook.com
www.willitsumc.org
Facebook: facebook/willitsumc

If you want to be included in
this column please call:
April Tweddell
(707) 972-2475
april@willitsweekly.com



Thursday, December 11

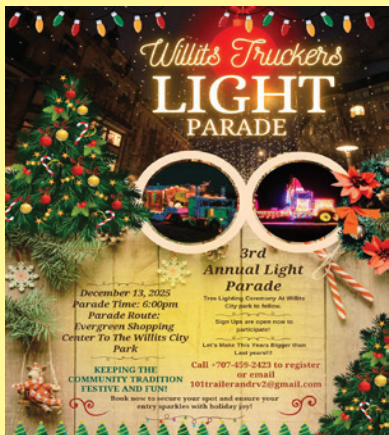
Willits Farmers Market at the Grange: Thursdays from 3 to 5:30 pm for the freshest produce available, local meat, farm fresh eggs, hot and cold food, and tasty treats from local businesses, crafts, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. The market honors EBT and WIC cards and matches benefits to double your dollars.

LegoSeriousPlayWorkshopatWCA: adultintroductory workshop on exploring abstract concepts by building representations using Legos on Thursday, December 11 from 5 to 6 pm at Willits Center for the Arts. Cost is \$5. Space is limited. Register at willitscenterforthearts.org.

Trivia Night at The Munchery: 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 6 pm at 1797 South Main Street, Willits.

Friday, December 12

Friends of Round Valley Library Holiday Market in Covelo: holiday gifts, jewelry, skincare products, ornament and greeting card making booth, food vendors and Farmers Market plus a Craft Supply Exchange, Friday, December 12 from noon to 6 pm in the



Library Commons, 23925 Howard Street, Covelo.

Create It, Make It, Break It at the Library: Kids 9 to 14 can learn science and technology with a new project every Friday from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. This week: Hot Air Balloons!

1212 String Show at the Grange: Twelve 12-String Guitars played by 12 guitarists on Friday, December 12 at 6 pm at the Little Lake Grange. Tickets \$12 and available at JD Redhouse and Flying Dog Pizza.

Art Talk with Gary Martin at WCA: presenting the rich history and aesthetics of Japanese Art, and exploring its evolution on Friday, December 12 at 6:30 pm at Willits Center for the Arts.

Mendocino Camerata A Capella Choir at WCT: fundraiser for music programs in the Willits Unified School District and Willits Charter School on Friday, December 12 at 7 pm at Willits Community Theatre. Admission by donation.

Latchkey at Shanachie: Friday, December 12 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub.

Saturday, December 13

Willits Holiday Craft Fair at Willits Community Center and WCA: 40 booths featuring specialty foods and handmade works by local artisans, plus food catered by Scoops, live entertainment and a raffle to win artwork by vendors on Saturday, December 13 from 10 am to 7 pm at 111 East Commercial Street and 71 East Commercial Street, Willits, and Sunday, December 14 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Willits Photography Club at WCA: open to all skill levels and meets on Saturday, December 13 from 10 am to noon in the classroom at Willits Center for the Arts. (Enter through back door).

Willits Truckers Light Parade & Tree-Lighting: Parade will begin at 6:30 pm on Saturday, December 13 at the Evergreen Shopping Center and end at Willits City Park with a tree-lighting ceremony at 7 pm along with live music and vendors.

Hillshaker at Shanachie: Saturday, December 13 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub.

Sunday, December 14

Pancake Breakfast at the Senior Center: Second Sunday of the month from 8 to 11 am. Menu choices: 1) All-you-can-eat pancakes

with scrambled eggs, sausage or bacon or 2) Biscuits & gravy with scrambled eggs. Includes coffee, orange juice or milk. \$13 adults; \$12 Senior Center members; \$8 children 8 and under, and benefits Nutritional, Transportation, and Outreach services for Willits seniors. 1501 Baechtel Creek Road.

Guitarist Luis Banuelos at WCT: Acoustic Flamenco Fusion on Sunday, December 14 at 2 pm at Willits Community Theatre. Cost \$20. Tickets and more info: wctperformingartscenter.org.

Craft Faire at Willits Community Center and WCA: Sunday, December 14 from 10 am to 4 pm with special performance at the Community Center by 'Musical Christmas Fairy' Deanne 'Bunny' California at 2 pm. More info see Dec 13 listing.

Christmas Choral at LDS Church: showcasing community talent and lots of cookies on Sunday, December 14 at 6 pm at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 265 Margie Drive, Willits.

Monday, December 15
Gem & Mineral Society Potluck at the Grange: Bring food ready to serve and a wrapped rock or gem-related gift to exchange, receive a free cool rock and enter the Crystal Raffle at this monthly meeting on Monday, December 15 from 7 to 8:30 pm at Little Lake Grange. No alcohol or dogs.

Kids Christmas Craft Night at Buzzard's Roost: Cost is \$25 (cash preferred) and includes a kids meal and drink plus two crafts to take home on Monday, December 15 from 5 to 7 pm at 150 South Main Street.

Wednesday, December 17
Willits Stamp Club at the Library: Bring your collection and enjoy refreshments on Wednesday, December 17 from



5 to 6:30 pm. More info: talsofam@pacific.net

History Makers Paper Crafts at the Museum: Make vintage ornaments and keychains at this family-friendly craft event on Wednesday, December 17 from 2 to 4:30 pm.

Thursday, December 18

Willits Farmers Market: Thursdays from 3 to 5:30 pm at the Little Lake Grange. See Dec 11 listing for more details.

Creative Writers Workshop at the Library: Share your fictional works in a supportive environment, receive constructive feedback and discuss publishing. This free event is open to ages 13 and up. Thursday, December 18 from 4:30 to 6 pm.

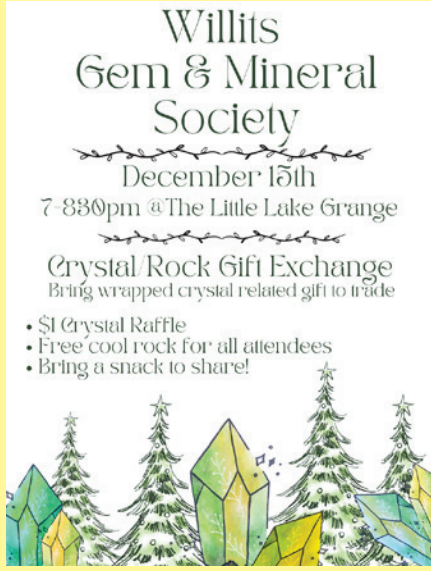
Burlesque Variety Show at WCT: Madam King Presents: Season of Tease for 21 and older on Thursday, December 18 at 7:30 pm. It's a night for esthetics so dress up and bring lots of dollar bills to give out to these talented performers at Willits Community Theatre.



Friday, December 19

Book Lovers Discussion Group at the Library: Come talk about books, authors, and genres on Friday, December 19 from noon to 1 pm at the Willits Branch Library.

Food Not Bombs in Rec Grove Park: a free meal, zines and supplies every first and third Friday around 5 pm at the picnic tables. Everyone welcome.



Small Works Show and Extended Hours at Willits Center for the Arts

Showcasing local artisans with items for purchase on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 am to 5 pm and at the Holiday Craft Faire on Saturday, December 13 and Sunday, December 14 with extended hours from 10 am to 7 pm both days, and on Christmas Eve as well, at WCA.

Community 'Sing for Peace' December 18 in Ukiah

All ages, voices and traditions are invited to join in singing songs of the season and of peace, hope, and light at the Solistic Sing on Thursday, December 18, at 6:00 pm in the Mary & Martha Room at Holy Trinity Church, 640 S. Orchard Ave, Ukiah. More info contact Madge Strong at 707-459-1493.

Hurricane Relief for Jamaica Event at the Mateel December 20

Performances by Prezident Brown & I-Sound Band, Seed n Soil, Irie Rockers and more along with a kids bounce trampoline, face-painting, food and beverages. Cost is \$20 and, along with any cash, nonperishable food, household and clothing items will be given directly to Jamaica's relief efforts. Saturday, December 12 from noon to 11 pm at the Mateel Center, 59 Rusk Lane, Redway. Tickets at eventbrite.com. More info: jerrkitchen@gmail.com



Burlesque Variety Show at WCT: Friday, December 19 at 7:30 pm. More info see Dec 18 listing.

Those Guys at Shanachie: Friday, December 19 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub.

Saturday, December 20

Solstice Celebration and Spiral Dance at the Grange: songs, candle lighting, drumming, and a midwinter children's story followed by a community Spiral Dance on Saturday, December 20 at the Little Lake Grange. Suggested donation \$5 to \$10, children free. Doors open at 6 pm for tea and garland making and close promptly at 6:30 for the Ceremony.

Costume Party and Open Mic at the Munchery: All ages invited on Saturday, December 20 beginning at 5 pm at the Munchery, 1797 South Main Street.

Holiday Lights Event at Commonwealth Garden: Enjoy light displays in the orchard along with cocoa, raffles and more on Saturday, December 20 from 5:30 to 9 pm at 90 Haehl Creek Drive, Willits.

Burlesque Variety Show at WCT: Saturday, December 20 at 7:30 pm. More info see Dec 18 listing.

Carlos Hernandez Duo at Shanachie: Saturday, December 20 at 8 pm at Shanachie Pub.

Sunday, December 21
Holiday Lights Event at Commonwealth Garden: Sunday, December 21 from 5:30 to 9 pm.

COLUMN | AT THE MOVIES

Five Nights at Freddy's 2

The Story: Video game inspired movie. Horror movie. Thriller movie. Child kidnapping and child murder movie. Jump-scare movie. The quite shadowy and gothic Freddy's restaurants are (apparently, though not certainly) inspired by Chuck E Cheese pizza parlors with games aplenty, and also ponderous bug-eyed metal robo-tronic animals that kill people (though I'm never sure exactly why). Also, there are smaller robotic heads that chase and devour people (and again I'm not sure why. Perhaps this flick is wholesale pro-pizza anti-robot propaganda.



Dan Essman
Columnist

Remarkably, this is a movie that does not have a plot, or at least what is generally conceived of as a plot. There is no actual beginning. There is no actual end. It's all noisy scary middle. There are chases and jump scares and plenty of action. There is something like a climactic battle and chase ... but no real climax or finality. In point of fact, the flick ends with an almost sure-fire promise of a sequel which means No End at All.

My Thoughts: One thing about this movie of which I am sure is that there are faithful fans of the Freddy-verse who grew up on the video games of the same name, and they absolutely love the flick!!!

I believe the reason this movie does not have a plot is that the folks who love the World of Freddy don't want it to end. These devoted fans want it to go on, and on, and on. And that is just fine. And more power to 'em! They want an unending narrative Freddy Party that goes on, and on, and on. Just like a video game.

Willitsian Daniel Essman prefers his reality attenuated by the wisdom of the imagination.

TOWN-WIDE ONGOING EVENTS

Free Meal by Willits Daily Bread: Every week on Monday through Thursday from 4:30 to 5:30 pm at 66 East Commercial Street.

Willits Tennis Club: Meets every Monday and Wednesday from 9 to 11 am at the Willits High School Tennis Courts. All levels welcome. More info: 707 484-3385.

Drop-In Life Drawing Group at WCA: Every Thursday from 1 to 4 pm at Willits Center for the Arts. Cost is based on sliding scale. More info: Margaret 707-459-9251.

Brown Bag Lunch Program: Saturdays at 1 pm, sack lunches are served by local churches, community organizations, and families at Bud Snider City Park on East Commercial. Come at 1 pm to be assured a lunch!

Willits Indivisible Democracy Vigil: Every Friday from 5 to 6 pm at Babcock Park on South Main Street. More info: "Willits Indivisible" on Facebook.

Lunch to Live Music at Brickhouse Coffee: every Wednesday from noon to 2 pm featuring various artists. Corner of Main and Commercial Streets, Willits.

Pickleball: Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays at 5 pm and Saturdays at 9 am at the Willits High School tennis courts. Free to play and all levels welcome.

Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Group: Meets every Monday at 6 pm at the Muse in Willits, 30 East San Francisco Street. More info: 707-354-1866.

Willits Drum Circle: Every second and fourth Friday at 7 pm, at St. Francis of the Redwoods on the corner of Main and Commercial Streets. Info: Bill Bruneau: 459-3390.

Literacy Volunteers of Willits: We teach adults to read! Free personal tutoring at the library.

Call or email to make an appointment: LiteracyWillits@gmail.com or 707-456-7729.

Mobile Showers Available in Willits: Mobile shower is in Willits every Monday and Tuesday from 2:30 to 4:30 pm, behind St. Francis Church at the corner of Main and Commercial Streets. Toiletries, towels and washcloths provided. Those with disabilities may need to bring a helper. Sack dinners are served from 4:30 to 5:30 by Willits Daily Bread.

Inland Valley Women's Chorus: Every Thursday (except holidays) from 6 to 7:30 pm to sing songs of peace, joy, social justice and healing. No audition or experience required. Carpooling available from Willits. Holy Trinity Church, Mary & Martha Room, 640 South Orchard Avenue, Ukiah. More info: Madge Strong, 707-459-1493.

Shanachie Pub Ongoing Events

Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street

Saturday Sessions at Shanachie: Every 2nd and 4th Saturday from 3 to 6 pm, Tommy G will host an open jam at Shanachie Pub. Bring any instrument and explore your creativity!

Bluegrass String Jam: An official jam for the California Bluegrass Association, every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month starting at 3 pm, with all Bluegrass musicians welcome!

Wednesday Open Mic Night: Every Wednesday- Enter your name in the lottery from 3 to 7 pm to choose your 20-minute time slot, with performances beginning at 7:20.

Ongoing Events at the Willits Library

Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Info: www.mendolibrary.org or 459-5908. Open hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10 am to 7 pm; Friday, 10 am to 6 pm; Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; Closed Sunday and Monday.

Penny University Coffee Klatch: Wednesdays, 11 am to 1 pm, in the Willits Library meeting room to discuss various topics while enjoying a "cup of joe."

LEGO Club: Tuesdays from 4 to 6:30 pm. "Bring your imagination and start building."

Tech Help: Saturdays from 11 am to noon, come get computer help and your technical questions answered!

Spinning and Knitting: Saturdays at the library; from 1 to 4:30 pm. All skill levels welcome! Spinning, 1 to 2 pm; Knitting, 2 to 4:30 pm.

Story and Playtime: Fridays from 11 am to noon, bring the kids for a story followed by play time in the Children's Area.

ABC Art Artists Meet-Up: Work on your personal art project, meet other artists and find inspiration Thursdays and Fridays from 1 to 3 pm. Ages 18 and up.



Above, from left: Sophia Punihaole-Figueroa smiles at the camera after winning a great match. Ivan Estrada makes his way down the court against Upper Lake. Photo courtesy of Nina Corona Cecily Potter on the free-throw line. Photo courtesy of Nina Corona



Above: Allaya Glass looks for the ref to call the pin on her opponent. At right: The WHS boys wrestling team poses after a long day of battle. At far right: Emelia Owsiany gets the hand-raise after pinning her opponent.

Photos by Ava Dockins Kline



WISHING YOU A *Healthy & Happy* HOLIDAY SEASON

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btheantidote@gmail.com

COMMUNITY SPORTS NEWS

Winter athletes start the season with determination and a schedule packed with tournaments

Winter sports at Willits High School have officially launched! The wrestling and basketball rosters are full of dedicated and talented athletes ready to take on an exciting set of scheduled competition. Schedules can be found on "wolverines.den2026" on Instagram and "Wolverines Den 2026" on Facebook.

The Willits Wolverines wrestling team is stacked this year with amazing coaches. Both the girls and boys teams are traveling every weekend to tournaments. They have made a comeback with some brand new, and returning, grapplers, all as tough as nails.

The girls wrestling team set out on the road at 4 am this last Saturday to head to their first tournament at Albany High School. These Bay Area tournaments are as gritty as they get, and the lady wrestlers learned a lot against some very rowdy competition. The girls wrestled hard matches throughout the day, with some notable improvement in each one.

"Each time one of our girls stepped out on the mat, they showed what Willits wrestling is all about: grit, focus, and an unstoppable drive," said Assistant Coach Jerry Punihaole-Figueroa. "These girls are tough and I can't wait to see what the season brings."

It was awesome to see their determination and performance as they gave it their all on the mat. Leaving with metals were Bella Glenn in first place and Emelia Owsiany in third place. Newcomers Sophia Punihaole-Figueroa and Allaya Glass had some impressive wins as freshman wrestlers.

"First-competition jitters kicked in this weekend at Albany. However, they all rose to the occasion, showing a lot of heart and grit. Very proud of them all!" said Head Coach Dana Karkar.

The boys wrestling team loaded in the vans on Friday night to head to the annual Doc Petersen Tournament in Orland on Saturday.

"They competed against 20+ teams for the Northern Section and there was a lot of

learning for our wrestlers," Coach Dunaway said.

It is always impressive to see these young athletes have school and practice all week, then travel to go sleep on the mats, get up, and grind through several taxing matches the next day. There was some fierce competition and these boys gave it their all. Coming out with metals were Donald Glenn in first place, Vladimir Bertolino in second place, and Gavin McFadden in third place.

We want to congratulate our cross country team for taking the victory as CMC Champions for the 2025 season, along with Cole Lane for taking league champion once again this year! This has been one of the most impressive seasons for cross country and this is an amazing accomplishment to be proud of! Fabulous job, Cole, and cross country Wolverines!

"I'm proud of this group," said Head Coach Kenny Smith. "They worked harder than any team I've coached before, starting in July and continuing through November. They earned every bit of that league championship."

The lady Wolverines JV and varsity basketball teams have begun the season treading waters, learning the ropes with their new coaches, and getting ready to jump deep into a successful season. The JV girls played an exciting two-day tournament in Kelseyville this last weekend. They took home a beautiful third-place trophy.

"We lost to Upper Lake Friday night in a very physical game. Because we lost, we had to play Fort Bragg at 9 am on Saturday," said Head Coach Matt Moratti. "We played really well. We got off to a big lead early and kept it throughout the game. I think everybody was anxious to have a better outing than the night before."

"Because of the way the tournament was organized," said Moratti, "we ended up having a rematch with Upper Lake for the third-place trophy. They led by 12 at halftime, but the girls came out with a different attitude and started finally playing as a team. We pressured Upper Lake

Read the rest of Sports | Over on page 15

VOLUNTEER MENTORS NEEDED

Mentor local youth at Willits High School on Wednesday evenings.

Youth in Willits need adults like YOU.

Be A Mentor
Questions?
Stacey Durborow
707-593-6366



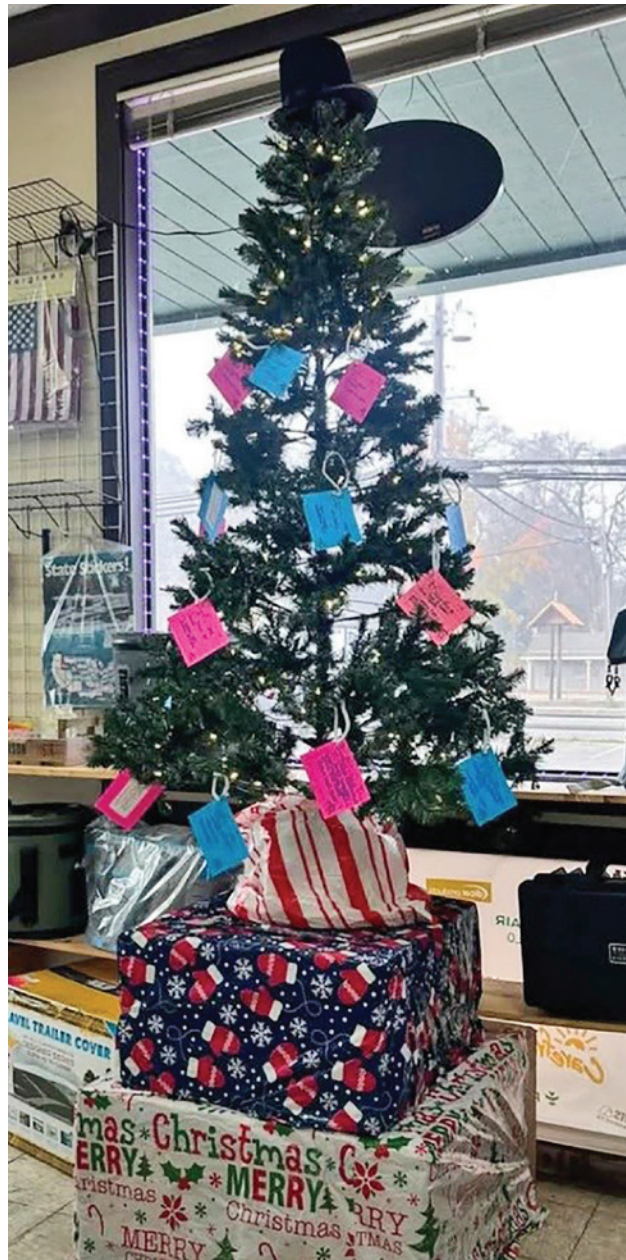
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Attendees at the centerpiece event at The Buzzard's Roost

Tag Trees

Willits Christmas Program urges donators to bring in their tags before the December 15 deadline

'Tis the season for tags on trees, and while organizers of the Willits Christmas Program are excited to see tags selected and taken from the trees, they're even more excited to see the tags – and their outlined requests – returned by the December 15 deadline so presents can be readied in time for the upcoming holiday.

There are still lots of tags on the trees located at J.D. Redhouse, Mazahar, the Roots Restaurant at Howard Memorial, Les Schwab, 101 Trailer & RV Supply, and Coast Hardware, and there are collection bins at J.D. Redhouse, Coast Hardware, Les Schwab and Mazahar to receive the unwrapped gifts listed on the tags.

"It's important that we receive the tags, and the gifts asked for, so we can fill family's requests in time for the holidays," said WCP's Marcy Barry. "But if you changed your mind, or only were able to fill some of the requests on the tag you selected, that's totally fine, please return the tag with whatever portion you were able to contribute as soon as possible, and we will help fill the rest. We just need to know what we need to still shop for, and getting those tags back in a timely fashion gives us the most time."

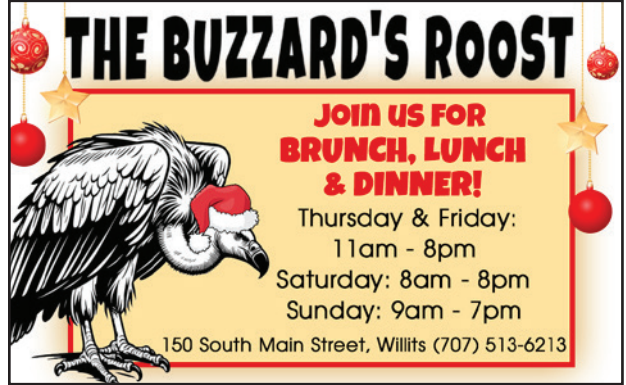
Each of the 236 kids who are a part of the Willits Christmas Program this year will also be receiving a stocking from the Willits Frontier Days Juniors club, who fundraise separately to create this special addition to the program. Parents will be notified when the family's tags are complete to come pick up the gifts at the old Remco Building across from Safeway starting next week through Christmas Eve.

— Maureen Jennison

Holiday Centerpieces at The Buzzard's Roost

Flowers by Annette teaches attendees how to make lovely florals for the holiday

"I wanted to give the community an opportunity to have a fun night," said Buzzard's Roost owner, Taylor Buzzard. "We invited Annette and Mattie from Flowers by Annette to come on December 9 and hold a floral centerpiece making class." There were 24 participants who followed along with the florist's demonstration creating their own creative arrangement. The group enjoyed special appetizers and drinks which were available to purchase. Next up will be the Kids' Craft Night, which will be held on Monday, December 15. More info: 707-272-4458.

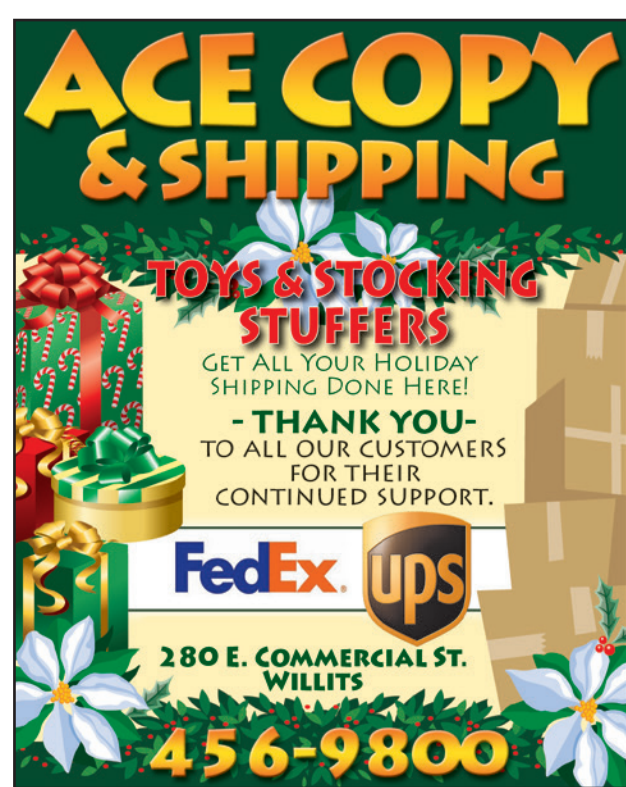
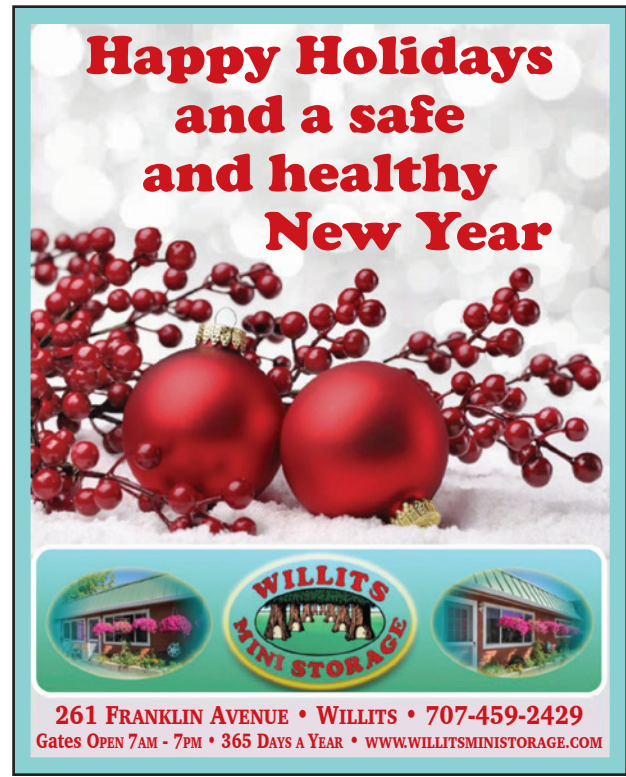


Kids & Art

Willits Center for the Arts hosts art-loving youngsters

Posted by Gary Martin

Today's December 9 visit with the 4-year-olds from Imagination Station demonstrated how quickly young children build connections across artists and ideas. Their enthusiasm for Vincent van Gogh – paired with their eager recall of last month's lesson on Picasso – shows how early exposure to art can nurture memory, curiosity, and a growing sense of creative identity.





Above, left: Owners Maria and Jose Fierro and their family, center, Willits dignitaries, Chamber of Commerce colleagues, and friends joined together for the Chamber ribbon cutting at Jalos Market. Above, right: Willits Mayor Tom Allman greets the attendees at the Jalos Market grand opening on Sunday.



Photos by Mathew Caine

Willits Chamber hosts ribbon cutting for Jalos Market

The Willits Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting and Chamber mixer to celebrate Jalos Market's official grand opening on Sunday, December 7. Jalos Market is Willits' new Hispanic grocer, owned by Maria and Jose Fierro, also owners of Taqueria Jalo and Taqueria Maria.

Dignitaries Willits Mayor Tom Allman and Willits City Council members Gerry Gonzales and Matthew Alaniz celebrated the opening of this new Willits business, several years in the making, along with friends, family and Chamber colleagues.

Jalos Market has a butcher who can custom cut beef and pork for customers and sells certain cuts of meat that are indigenous to Mexico.

The market offers fresh vegetables and fruits, a selection of festive pinatas, and also unique products that cannot be found anywhere else in town, including hot sauces, pottery, Mexican breads and coffees, remedies, sugar cane, and much more.

Visit the market at 1569 South Main Street, next to Mendo Made Salon and Barber Shop.

The rest of Toxic From page 1 mistaken for safe, edible mushrooms due to their similar appearance and taste. Consuming these mushrooms can lead to severe poisoning. Cooking, boiling, drying, or freezing these mushrooms does NOT make them safe to eat.

Healthcare providers should be aware of the potential for toxicity following wild mushroom ingestion. Initial symptoms, such as watery diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and dehydration can occur within 6 to 24 hours following ingestion of these toxic mushrooms and usually go away within a day. However, this brief improvement can be deceptive, as patients may still develop serious to fatal liver damage within 48 to 96 hours after eating the mushrooms. Healthcare providers are advised to contact the **California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222** for guidance on diagnosing and treating patients with suspected mushroom poisoning.

Between mid-November and early December 2025, the California Poison Control System identified 21 cases of toxic mushroom poisoning (likely death cap mushrooms (*Amanita Phalloides*)). Several patients have required intensive care, with at least one individual potentially needing a liver transplant. One adult fatality has also been reported to date.

The California Poison Control System is closely monitoring the increase in calls related to hospitalizations of individuals who have consumed toxic foraged wild mushrooms. The California Poison Control System is also providing guidance to health care providers treating patients with toxic mushroom poisoning.

Death cap mushrooms are found in many parts of California, particularly near oaks and other hardwood trees, including pine trees. Rain events in the fall and winter months create ideal conditions for their growth. Given the grave risk posed by consuming these toxic mushrooms, CDPH strongly advises the public to avoid foraging wild mushrooms and to only consume mushrooms purchased from reputable stores or known commercial sources.

For more information, please contact the California Poison Control System at <https://calpoison.org/contact> Or visit the CPPH page on poisonous mushrooms www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPP/DEOD/EBID/Pages/EIS/Poisonous-Mushrooms.aspx



WILLITS CENTER FOR THE

ARTS

Presents

The Spirit of Line and Brush

An Introduction to Japanese Art

ART TALKS

Presented by Gary Martin, M.A.

Discover the Beauty of Japanese Art

Experience the harmony of nature, simplicity, and spirit that defines Japanese art. From elegant ink paintings to vibrant woodblock prints, Japanese artists capture the essence of beauty in every line, form, and gesture.

Friday, December 12,

2025 at 6:30 pm.

71 East Commercial St.

Willits, CA 95490

www.willitscenterforthearts.org

Art Talks: An introduction to Japanese art, December 12

The Willits Center for the Arts is pleased to announce the next installment of its Art Talks series, "The Spirit of Line and Brush: An Introduction to Japanese Art," on Friday, December 12, at 6:30 pm at the Art Center

Gary Martin, M.A., will present an engaging lecture on the rich history and aesthetics of Japanese art, exploring its evolution from ancient traditions to modern expression.

This presentation will highlight the unique balance of simplicity, harmony and symbolism that defines Japanese visual culture, from early ink paintings and screens to the refined elegance of woodblock prints and contemporary works. Martin will discuss how Japanese artists have influenced global art movements and how their approach continues to inspire artists today.

This event is free and open to the public. Join us at the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street, for an evening of insight and appreciation for one of the world's most enduring artistic traditions.

For more information, please visit willitscenterforthearts.org or call (707) 459-1726.

Just in Time for

CHRISTMAS

NOVEMBER 3 TO DECEMBER 21

Every 100 Daily Points earned receive a Virtual Entry for \$1,000 cash drawings

\$1,000

Cash Drawings

Five winners will be drawn from 8 PM to 11 PM each night on Friday, 12/19 Saturday, 12/20 and Sunday, 12/21

Saturdays: Just in Time for Christmas

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