

# Reaction to Grand Jury report

Jennifer Poole  
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Willits Weekly talked to Mayor Tom Allman, Willits City Councilmember Gerry Gonzalez, and former mayor Saprina Rodriguez about their reactions to the Grand Jury report, "Healing the Toxic Culture in the City of Willits Workplace."

"Citizens should think about this report," Mayor Allman said. "Some severe issues have been IDd by the Grand Jury, and the current city council is striving to correct these deficiencies."

Allman said he'd been asked to run for city council last year by City of Willits employees, as well as other acquaintances.

"Last year, in June," Allman said, "I had no intention of running for city council. I had a total of seven City of Willits employees, most I didn't know, stop by my house to say 'we saw what you did as sheriff, will you run for city council?'"

"When I started asking these people about their concerns, complaints, predicaments, I thought this is not the way a jurisdiction operates."

Allman also noted:

Read the rest of **Reaction**  
Over on Page 6

# Aerial fire-spotting helps firefighters find trouble fast

By Sarah Reith, Mendocino County Fire Safe Council

The holiday weekend started early in Mendocino County this year, with an outbreak of grass fires in the northern wilderness. Lightning was in the CAL FIRE forecast for Covelo, Laytonville, and Leggett, leading to five fires.

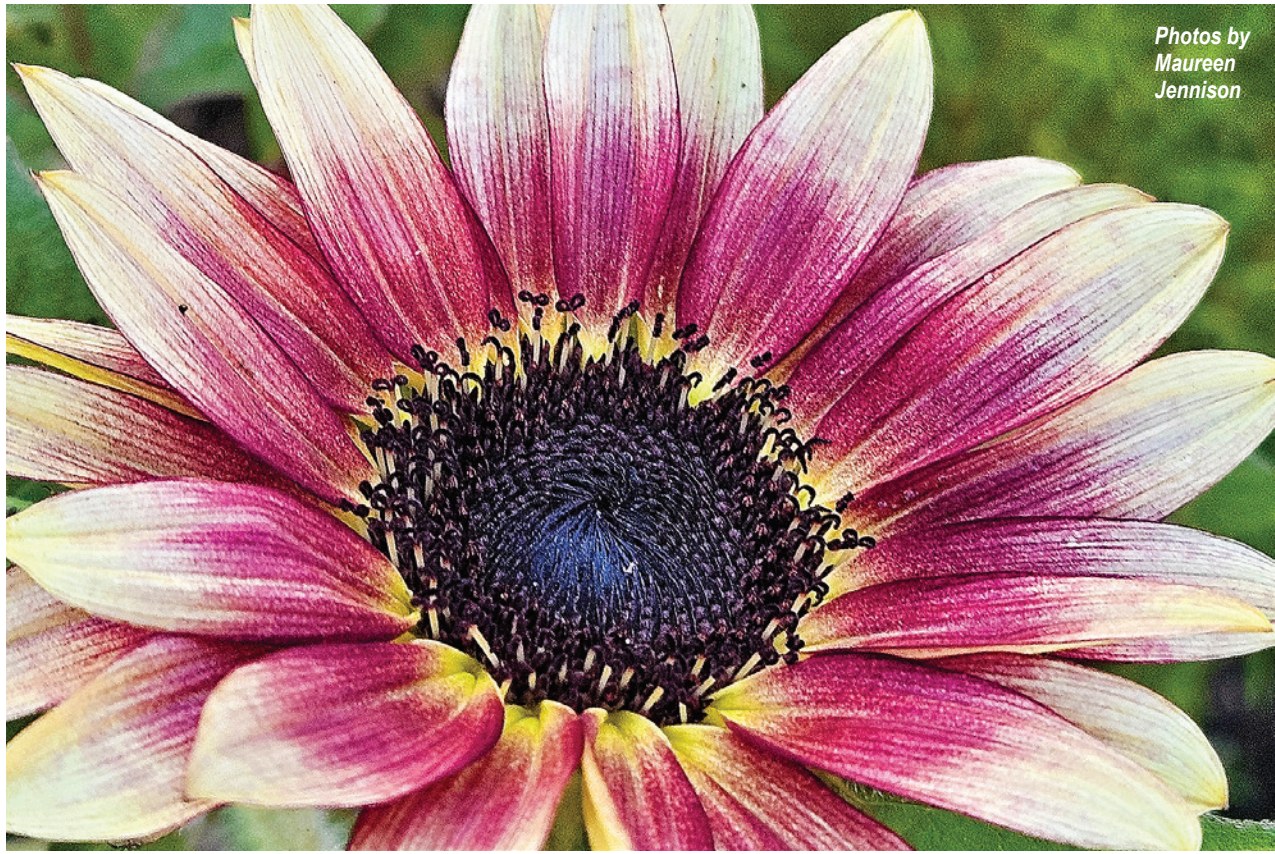
The Mendocino County Cooperative Aerial Fire Patrol (Co-op) sent up a spotting plane, flown by pilot Mike Smith, who flies out of the Willits airport in a Cessna 172. Last year, the Co-op recorded seven "first reports" of fire. Since its founding in 1950, it has documented 1,100 early fire detections.

Chris Rowney, a retired CAL FIRE chief who is now a director on the seven-member Co-op board, explained that the pilot is able to convey information directly to CAL FIRE's Emergency Command Center. "Since he's there, he actually has latitude and longitude. He can give a precise location. It's a

Read the rest of **Spotting**  
Over on Page 6



Above from left: Poppies have been one of my favorite things to grow this year – their delicate petals and amazing centers make for showy blooms. Petunias with yellow centers and purple rims are a new addition to the garden this year. Snapdragons in red and white are popping up in the garden now. This Alstroemeria bloom is a sunburst of color off of an almost purple stem. Evening primrose blossoms are the perfect place for a bee snooze, this little bud was all curled up snug in the flower's center. Below: Sunflowers come in so many shapes and colors, this one's magenta center ring against the soft yellow of the petal tips is just glorious.

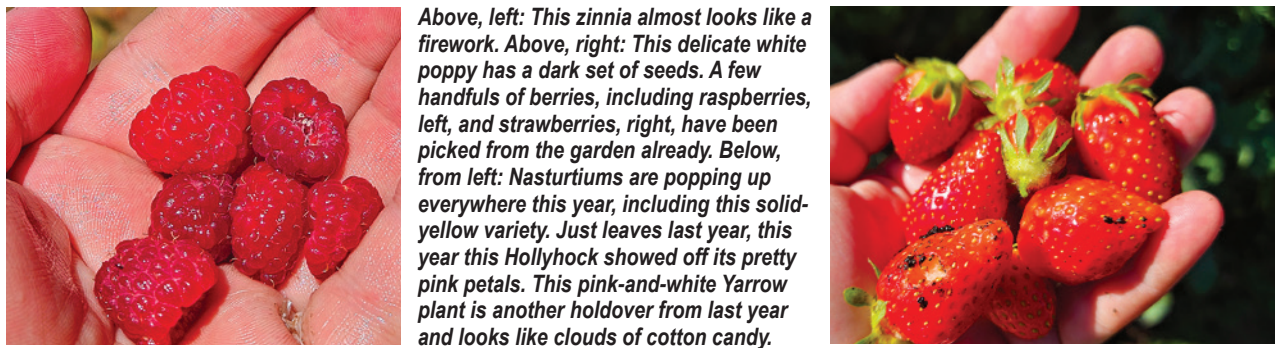


# Beautiful Blooms (and a few berries, too!)

While still waiting for the big veggie harvest, seeing all of the starts and seeds planted over the last few months turn into beautiful blooming flowers and foliage has been a rewarding sight. Several of the flowers now blooming in the garden were planted from seeds saved last year, some starts were purchased, but others also came from the Mendocino County Library's Seed Library. Vegetable, herb and flower seeds are available for free to library card holders and catalogs of available varieties and additional information can be seen here: [www.mendolib.org/borrow/seed-libraries](http://www.mendolib.org/borrow/seed-libraries).

Above, from left: Purple Sweetpea blooms smell so lovely. This black Hollyhock is a holdover from last year. Sage not only is a lovely herb, but blooms beautiful purple blossoms, too. This double blossomed Hollyhock is also a holdover from last year and its branches are almost 7 feet tall. A Foxglove bloom starts to open and reveal its spotted interior.

Photos by Maureen Jennison



Above, left: This zinnia almost looks like a firework. Above, right: This delicate white poppy has a dark set of seeds. A few handfuls of berries, including raspberries, left, and strawberries, right, have been picked from the garden already. Below, from left: Nasturtiums are popping up everywhere this year, including this solid-yellow variety. Just leaves last year, this year this Hollyhock showed off its pretty pink petals. This pink-and-white Yarrow plant is another holdover from last year and looks like clouds of cotton candy.

# Grand Jury report finds 'toxic workplace' at City of Willits

Jennifer Poole  
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The Mendocino County Grand Jury issued a report to the public Friday afternoon, July 3, with findings that "top management" at the City of Willits had created a toxic workplace.

The report, titled "Grand Jury Report: Healing the Toxic Culture In the City of Willits Workplace," identifies top management as "the City Manager and Assistant City Manager,"

Read the rest of **Workplace**  
Over on Page 6

# City council budget workshop, July 16

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At the June 26 Willits City Council meeting, council members scheduled a special WCC meeting, an all-day budget workshop, with department heads, on Wednesday July 16.

The public is invited to attend and participate.

"We need to have to have a budget workshop with the full council," Councilmember Bruce Burton suggested at the June 25 meeting. "We used to do that, it was an all-day deal and the public can weigh in, but we need to go through the budget on a page by page basis, with the department heads.... They're ugly, I mean they're not ugly, but it's time-consuming."

Mayor Tom Allman suggested turning an already scheduled Finance Committee on July 16 into such a public budget workshop, and council agreed.

"We will have unaudited fund balances for all enterprise funds and the general fund on July 16," Burton said. "I guess that's a question?" Finance Director Manuel Orozco replied, "Yeah, I'll work towards that," but then commented the request would be "a stretch" due to continuing work on a late audit.

One topic mentioned was the City of Willits usual charitable contributions to local non-profits that serve the community. Burton cited \$144,000 in donations for 2023/24, and \$144,000 in donations in 2024/35. "Every one of them quality support to the City of Willits, so what do we do with that?"

The agenda for the July 16 meeting won't come out until after Willits Weekly goes to press. At present, the timeframe for the meeting is not available.



## 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 p.m. Drive-through lunches are available from 12 to 12:45 p.m., outside the Senior Center, 1501

**Thursday, July 10:** Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Veggies, Roll

**Friday, July 11** Chicken w/Hollandaise Sauce, Veggies, Roll

**Monday, July 14:** Blue Zones Inspired: Veggie Stir Fry and Brown Rice

**Tuesday, July 15:** Kielbasa, Peppers & Onions w/ Banana Sauce Over Rice

**Wednesday, July 16:** Beer Battered Cod, Veggies, Roll

**Thursday, July 17:** Asian Honey Garlic Chicken

**Friday, July 18:** Beef Stroganoff, Veggies, Roll

**Activities:** Bingo on Friday nights, 5 to 7 p.m. Exercise class every weekday morning from 9 to 10 a.m.

**July Pancake Breakfast:** Every second Sunday, on July 13 this month, 8 to 11 a.m. Menu choices are:

1. All-you-can-eat pancakes with 2 eggs, choice of sausage or bacon, or 2. Biscuits & gravy with side of eggs only. Both include coffee, tea or orange juice. \$13; \$12 Senior Center members; \$8 children under 8. Extra sausage, bacon, eggs and juice for additional cost.

**Meals on Wheels:** The Senior Center Meals on Wheels program delivers lunch Monday through Friday. 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.

**Free mobile unit for showers  
now visiting Willits**  
*Submitted by Betsy Bruneau, St. Francis Church*

Due to a happy collaboration among the Willits Shelter Action Group, Saint Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, and the Ukiah Redwood Gospel Mission's Mobile Shower Program, free showers are now available in Willits.

The mobile shower trailer will be in Willits on Mondays and Tuesdays each week from 2:30 to 4:30 pm, in the parking lot in back of St. Francis Church at the corner of Main and Commercial.

The mobile trailer contains two private showers, each with a toilet and small sink. Toiletries and towels and washcloths are provided. The water is heated, and the rooms are air-conditioned.

One of the rooms has a ramp to the door, but there is no room inside for a wheelchair, so a disabled person might need to bring a helper along.

Anyone who has no access to a shower is welcome, and after the shower, sack dinners are served as usual from 4:30 to 5:30 pm by Willits Daily Bread, who are there Monday through Thursday.

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to [willitsweekly@gmail.com](mailto:willitsweekly@gmail.com). Willits Weekly prints letters and commentaries about Willits and the 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.

## Correction

In Matthew Caine's story in the July 3 edition, "Rummage and Mingle: Willits Mini Storage holds annual garage sale with a wide selection of unique and useful goods," the facility manager for Willits Mini-Storage was misidentified. Marie Maddux is the manager of Willits Mini-Storage. Willits Weekly regrets the error.

# What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

## Beer Wagon Raffle winner

To the Editor:

The American Legion, Willits Post 174 sincerely thanks our community members who participated in our annual Beer Wagon Raffle fundraising activity. Your continued support allows us to fund our programs for children and youth, community giving, and veterans.

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This year's grand prize winner of the Radio Flyer "All Terrain" Wagon loaded with craft beer was Willits resident, Suzy Lewis. We had two secondary winners as well who each "trucked off" a pile of beer . Thank you, community, for your support.

## THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S REPORT **July 2025 update**

The Board unanimously passed a balanced budget. The difficult part will be implementing the budget plans. The strategic hiring freeze will delay response times, limit services, and reduce outreach. Six million dollars of one-time-only money will be used for one-time-only projects such as microwave public safety radio communications and the last payment on the pension obligation bonds.

The federal budget bill passed. It will have serious implications for health care in our county. The analysis from CSAC (California State Association of Counties) states that cuts to Medicaid (MediCal is CA's version of Medicaid) will affect the County's overall budget, impact hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and federally qualified health center, while vulnerable populations will be most affected. While Mendocino County has 47% of its residents on Medicaid, these cuts will shift costs to our county and negatively affect health care providers.

I am working with staff to do a workshop on how healthcare providers see the future of healthcare in our county. I hope that this can happen at the July 29 Board meeting.

SNAP (aka CalFresh) cuts will shift a portion of SNAP benefit costs to states and counties. Half of CA recipients are children. These cuts will put increased stress on already overwhelmed food banks. The cost shifts will be unfunded mandates for the state as well

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SNAP (aka CalFresh) cuts will shift a portion of SNAP benefit costs to states and counties. Half of CA recipients are children. These cuts will put increased stress on already overwhelmed food banks. The cost shifts will be unfunded mandates for the state as well as our county. Our local farmers markets rely on the CalFresh matching funds programs.

There was a proposal in the U.S. Senate to sell off public lands. This proposal was stripped from the budget bill but will probably be brought back soon. In Mendocino County, Cow Mountain and Mendocino National Forest were part of this ill-conceived plan. These lands provide recreation, economic development, and environmental benefits in our backyard.

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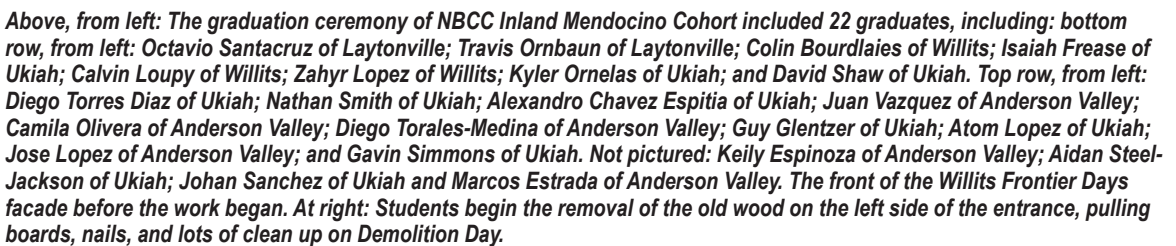
When the Board voted 4-1 (with me as the dissenting vote) to approve the Master Tax Sharing Agreement with the cities of Mendocino County, it was said at the time that it would be a big hit on the County's budget. Since then, the City of Ukiah has been pursuing the annexation of large parts mostly north, south, and east of the city limits. The Board again discussed the agreement and proposal on June 24 considering the pros and cons of this annexation. Mostly the pros are for the City of Ukiah and the cons are for the County. The public was overwhelmingly against the proposal. The Board was very skeptical of Ukiah's plans. Two members of the Ukiah City Council said that they would go back and reconsider the proposal's size and scope. They need to do that.

This month's "Talk with Your Supervisor" will be on Tuesday, July 15 at 10 am at the Brickhouse. As always, to contact me, you can email [hascchkj@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:hascchkj@mendocinocounty.gov) or call 707-972-4214.

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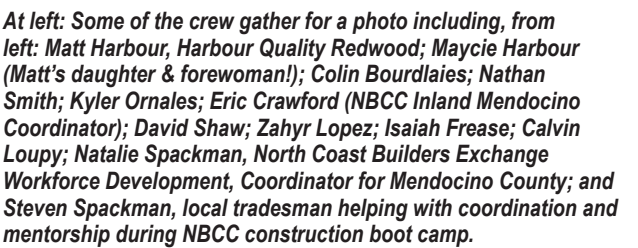
**Submitted by NBCC** Coordinator: "It's about creating lasting pathways

The North Bay Construction Corps, a regional hands-on training program of the North Coast Builders Exchange designed to prepare high school seniors for careers in the construction industry, celebrated the graduation of 30 students this past weekend in ceremonies for its Inland and Coast cohorts.

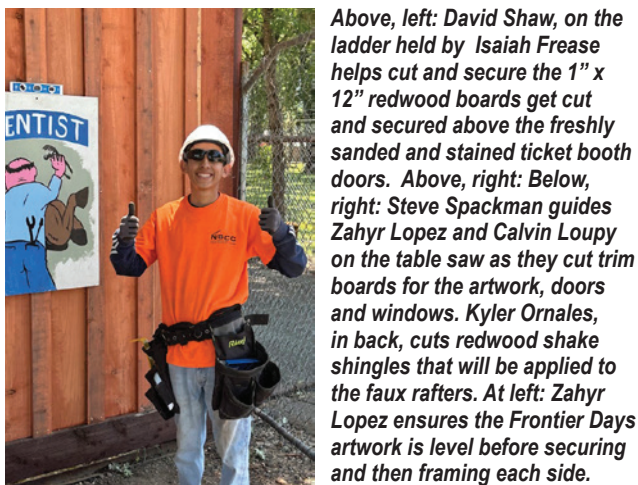
Launched through a partnership between the North Coast Builders Exchange and the Career Technical Education Foundation, with support from the Mendocino County Office of Education, NBCC offers students direct exposure to the trades through immersive job-readiness training, industry partnerships, and real-world construction projects.

This year's program saw 23 students graduate from the Inland cohort and seven from the Coast cohort. In addition, eight students completed the intensive NBCC Construction Boot Camp at the Willits Frontier Days grounds, and 11 secured internships with local contractors across Mendocino County.

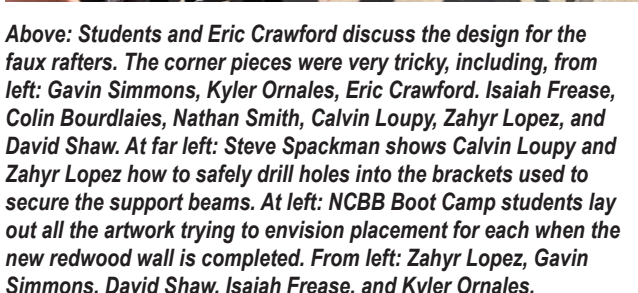
“This program is about more than just teaching technical skills,” said Eric Crawford, NBCC Inland Mendocino



*At left: Some of the crew gather for a photo including, from left: Matt Harbour, Harbour Quality Redwood; Macya Harbour (Matt's daughter & forewoman!); Colin Bourdlaies; Nathan Smith; Kylan Ormales; Eric Crawford (NBCC Inland Mendocino Coordinator); David Shaw; Zahry Lopez; Isiah Frease; Calvin Loupy; Natalie Spackman, North Coast Builders Exchange Workforce Development, Coordinator for Mendocino County; and Steven Spackman, local tradesman helping with coordination and mentorship during NBCC construction boot camp.*



Above, left: David Shaw, on the ladder held by Isaiah Frease helps cut and secure the 1" x 12" redwood boards get cut and secured above the freshly sanded and stained ticket booth doors. Above, right: Below, right: Steve Spackman guides Zahyr Lopez and Calvin Loupy on the table saw as they cut trim boards for the artwork, doors and windows. Kyler Ornales, in back, cuts redwood shake shingles that will be applied to the faux rafters. At left: Zahyr Lopez ensures the Frontier Days artwork is level before securing and then framing each side.



**Above:** Students and Eric Crawford discuss the design for the faux rafters. The corner pieces were very tricky, including, from left: Gavin Simmons, Kyler Ornales, Eric Crawford, Isaiah Frease, Colin Bourdlaies, Nathan Smith, Calvin Loupy, Zahyr Lopez, and David Shaw. At far left: Steve Spackman shows Calvin Loupy and Zahyr Lopez how to safely drill holes into the brackets used to secure the support beams. At left: NCCBB Boot Camp students lay out all the artwork trying to envision placement for each when the new redwood wall is completed. From left: Zahyr Lopez, Gavin Simmons, David Shaw, Isaiah Frease, and Kyler Ornales.

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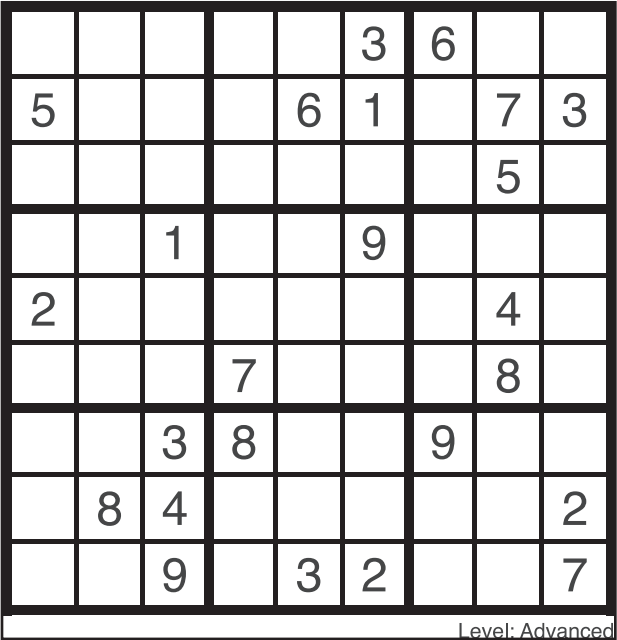
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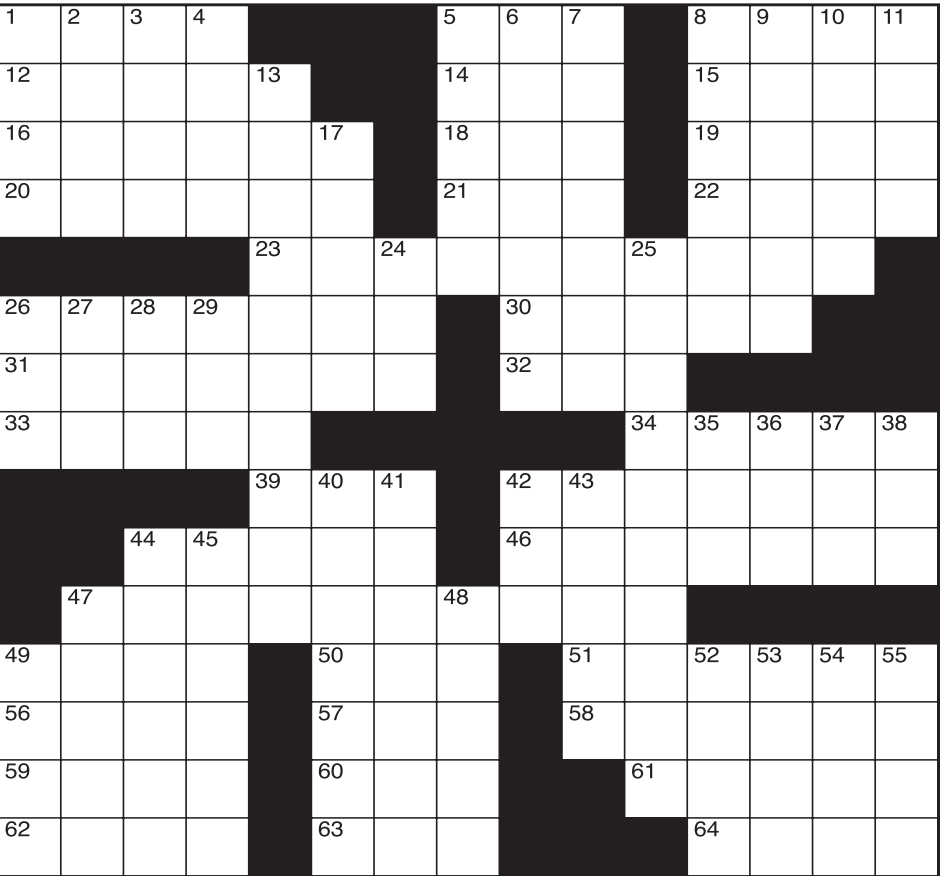




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ASTER	DAISY	MARIGOLD	SNAPDRAGON
AZALEA	DANDELION	ORCHID	STEM
BEGONIA	FLOWER	PEONY	TULIP
CARNATION	IRIS	PETALS	ZINNIA
DAFFODIL	LEAVES	POLLINATE	



CLUES ACROSS

- 50 percent
- Records electric currents
- Charlize Theron flick "\_\_\_ Flux"
- More frosty
- Disfigure
- Sky color
- A thoroughfare in a town or city
- Actress de Armas
- Spend time in a relaxed way
- California peak
- Lodging option
- Small amount of a thing
- Expresses sorrow
- Keeps an ear warm
- Babies (Spanish)
- A conceited and self-centered person
- No seats available
- Pouches
- Hip joints
- A place to bathe
- Evading
- Minute, one-celled unit
- Losing one's hair
- A country in W Africa

49. One point north of northeast
50. Pointed end of a pen
51. Extreme
56. Norse personification of old age
57. Doctors' group
58. Member of U.S. Navy
59. Mens' fashion accessories
60. A way to allow
61. Gloomy
62. Grads wear one
63. Between south and southeast
64. Jaguarundi cat

CLUES DOWN

- Snakes do it
- Hormone
- The standard monetary unit of Turkey
- Fixed charges
- Electronic communication
- Artilleries
- 'Strangers on a Train' actor Farley
- Burning
- Makes ecstasically happy
- Greek liqueurs
- Tropical Old World tree

HOW TO SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT  
POLICE LOG

June 23 to June 29  
By Danya Davis, Willits Weekly

The officers of the Willits Police Department reported **67 incidents** in this 7-day period.

Summary of Active Investigations and Arrests

June 23

6:56 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 100 block of Bush Street and issued a warning.

June 24

12:27 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 200 block of South Main Street.

6:14 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1200 block of Locust Street.

8:52 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1400 block of Baechtel Road.

11:45 pm: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 100 block of Franklin Avenue.

June 25

12:16 am: Officers conducted a stop in the 100 block of Barbara Lane and issued a warning.

11:51 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of Mill Creek Drive.

3:24 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 100 block of Bush Street.

3:42 pm: LEON, Levi Manual (37) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of East San Francisco Avenue. He was arrested on misdemeanor charges of disobeying a court order, contempt of court, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

6:01 pm: SMITH, Arlen Bruce (47) of Willits was contacted in the 1700 block of Elm Lane. He was arrested on felony charges of domestic battery and on misdemeanor charges of cruelty to a child and domestic battery.

June 26

10:40 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 200 block of North Humboldt Street.

3:26 pm: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 300 block of North Main Street.

8:47 pm: Officers conducted a stop near the intersection of South Main Street and East Mendocino Avenue and issued a warning.

Howard Memorial hosts free Back to School Fair on Sunday

Adventist Health Howard Memorial is proud to host its annual Free Sports Physicals, Back to School and Community Resource Fair for school-age kids on Sunday, July 13, from 7 am to 12 pm. The event will take place at Adventist Health Howard Memorial's Redwood Medical Clinic at 3 Marcela Drive, Suite C. in Willits.

This free event will provide sports physicals for youth athletes, along with backpacks and school supplies for students. In addition to medical services, families can enjoy a community fair featuring local organizations offering resources and engaging activities.

Parental consent is required for youth physicals; forms will be available on site.

The Back to School and Community Resource Fair will feature booths and activities from a variety of local partners,

Nature Joe and his animal friends at the Library, July 12

Submitted by Willits Library

Join us at the Willits Branch Library on Saturday, July 12 from 2 to 3 pm as Nature Joe introduces the audience to the many fascinating creatures that share our world. Possible animal friends may include insects, arachnids, amphibians, small and large reptiles, and parrots.

For more than 30 years, Nature Joe has been dedicated to enriching the lives of people and animals by providing the opportunity to interact and learn about each other.

The event will be held in the main area of the Willits Branch Library, 290 East Commercial Street. For more information, please visit [www.mendolibrary.org](http://www.mendolibrary.org) or contact the Willits Branch Library at 707-459-5908.

9:01 pm: Officers conducted a stop at the intersection of West Mendocino Avenue and School Street and issued a citation.

9:32 pm: MANUS, Adam Paul (40) of Willits was contacted in the 800 block of South Main Street. He was arrested on misdemeanor charges of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, possession of a controlled substance, and resisting an officer.

June 27

6:24 am: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 100 block of East Oak Street.

2:25 pm: Officers initiated a fraud investigation in the 800 block of South Main Street.

3:39 pm: LOPES Sr., Anthony Frank (55) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of Bush Street. He was arrested on felony charges of resisting or threatening an officer and misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct (alcohol).

June 28

12:18 am: SCHULER, Jake Joseph (37) of Willits was contacted near the intersection of Hazel Street and Poplar Street. He was arrested on felony charges of first degree burglary, unlawful possession of tear gas, and possession of ammunition by a prohibited person, and on multiple misdemeanor charges.

12:35 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of Madrone Street.

10:26 am: Officers initiated a theft investigation in the 1200 block of South Main Street.

10:55 am: Officers initiated a burglary investigation in the 100 block of South Main Street.

4:17 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.

9:26 pm: RAYMOND, Andrew James (39) of Willits was contacted in the 800 block of Coast Street following a report of a disturbance. He was arrested on felony charges of domestic corporal injury and willful cruelty to a child.

June 29

12:10 pm: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 400 block of East Commercial Street.

including:

- Adventist Health Howard Memorial featuring Back-to-School supplies and the Registered Dietitian team with diabetes education, a trivia game, and fresh fruit to snack on
- County of Mendocino Public Health with vaccination
- MCHC Health Centers with Dental Care resources
- Worthington Neurointegration Applied Kinesiology
- Mendocino County Youth Project
- Face Painting
- Balloon Animals
- And more

– Adventist Health Howard Memorial

Nature Joe – ¡Animales en la biblioteca!

Acompáñenos en la sucursal Willits de la Biblioteca del Condado de Mendocino el sábado 12 de julio de 2 a 3 p.m., mientras Nature Joe presenta al público las fascinantes criaturas que comparten nuestro mundo. Entre los posibles amigos animales se incluyen insectos, arácnidos, anfibios, reptiles pequeños y grandes, y loros.

Durante más de 30 años, Nature Joe se ha dedicado a enriquecer la vida de las personas y los animales, brindándoles la oportunidad de interactuar y aprender unos de otros.

El evento se llevará



Above, from left: Members of the Little Lake Grange smile from the float including Rob, left, Ellie, and Erica. A hula hooper walked in front of the Willits Community Theatre float, that was decked out in a Shrek theme. Third District Supervisor John Haschak waves as he walks in the parade. At right: The Willits Walk'n Wag float took first place in the Miscellaneous category. At right, below: The Bouthillier's Construction float featured a full friends-and-family cast including: Jadyr riding the "bull" on the back of the loader; Gracie, Maddie, and Nora riding on the loader; Kevin R. running the loader; Mattea as Uncle Sam; Jamie as the Statue of Liberty; Kevin B. driving the truck; and Hannah riding on the side of the truck. At right, bottom: Chuck Persico smiles from his horse as he carries the state flag. Below: The fire engines are always some of the first down the road during the annual Willits Frontier Days Main Street Parade.



Main Street Parade  
Annual downtown Willits celebration a delight with varied entries and fabulous weather

About 55 entries made up the 99th annual Willits Frontier Days Main Street Parade that took place in the morning hours of July 4 and, as usual, the sidewalks were filled with excited onlookers and those wanting to celebrate the annual holiday.

Tom Allman and Jennifer Drew announced the parade from in front of J.D. Redhouse, and Tabatha Hulsey and Shannon Folsom announced across from the Willits Post Office, giving attendees a chance to hear the float information from both ends of the main parade route. Jon Jessup kicked off the parade by

reading the National Anthem live for all to enjoy.

The judging was done before the parade, so as the floats came down the street, they carried the banners declaring their awards.

"We had several new entries this year and many returning participants," said parade committee member Katie Cooley. "Everyone came in great spirits and ready to celebrate the 4th of July and our small town. Thank you from our parade committee, Mattie Pinon Owen, Heather Miya, and Katie Cooley."

Read the rest of the Parade Over on page 15



At top, from left: McFarland Trucking hauled big logs down Main Street and won first place in the Auto/Truck/Open/Modified class. First place went to Kimber LaRue in the Future Horseman pony class. Willits Frontier Days President Fred Barry and his wife WFD Vice President Marcy Barry come down the road in Jack Sharp's old tractor.

Above, from left: The Vaqueros Mexicanos are always a wonder to watch with the group of prancing horses dancing down the road. They also won first place in the Fancy Dressed horse class. Spartime Supply took home first place in the Group of Vehicles class with their squad of golf carts, each decorated in the theme of a different decade. The Affordable Plumbing truck and trailer was decorated in bunting and flags as it came down Main Street.

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without naming names to identify former City Manager Brian Bender, whose last day with the city was March 21, 2025, and current Assistant City Manager Cathy Moorhead.

In the report, all allegations are phrased as due to "top management" or "managers" or "them" – so without inside knowledge there's no differentiating whether the complaints in the report made against "top management" were referring to the now-departed Bender or to Moorhead, or both.

Down on page 7, the report acknowledges "During the drafting of this report, the former City Manager separated from employment with the City of Willits. Events mentioned in this report occurred before the current interim City Manager was hired."

When asked if she was able to comment on why the Grand Jury report was issued more than three months after former city manager Bender left, without revising to differentiate between the one former and the one current member of "top management," Grand Jury foreperson Mary Leittem-Thomas said she was unable to answer that question.

She did comment: "We published the report we wanted to publish."

Part of the "Discussion" section of the Grand Jury report lists "examples of testimony to the Grand Jury from employees, or language taken from their written or verbal statements about top management, [that] confirm an unprofessional, intimidating, intolerable and, at times, toxic workplace has been allowed to fester within the City of Willits."

The Grand Jury reports the committee conducted 15 interviews with "employees, department directors, and top management," and interviewed three City Council members.

Foreperson Leittem-Thomas was not able to say whether they were current or former council members. Witnesses to civil grand juries are protected, as are the names of the members of the specific committees each year's grand jurors serve on.

"At its request," the report also states, "eight employees gave written reviews of top management to the City Council," and copies of those documents were shared with the Grand Jury by those who wrote them. The Grand Jury report then states they "conducted interviews with current and past employees who shared concerns about the actions of top management".

There are multiple bullet points about, for example, employees fearing retaliation if they brought concerns forward, feeling belittled and bullied, thinking about leaving their jobs, feeling that their complaints "are routinely ignored, dismissed or used against them."

The list also includes allegations that employees were forced out or improperly dismissed, and "numerous meetings and conversations included disparaging, negative or unprofessional language when referring to other employees."

Two more items are: "Some employees personally witnessed derogatory comments about those who oppose top management" and "Blame is often placed by managers on others to avoid responsibility."

Mostly the comments from employees were reported in general terms, but several items had more specifics. One item said: "One employee was told that top management discussed the type of bra that she wore. That employee was mortified." Another item: "In a fit of anger, top management swiped files off a desk instead of trying to calm down the situation." A third item was: "An employee was told by top management to change their personality and 'grow a pair.'"

Another finding of the Grand Jury report is incorrect: "The Grand Jury found that the Willits City Council had not conducted annual performance reviews of the Willits City Manager by April 30 of each year."

Willits Weekly confirmed the council did performance reviews of former city manager Bender at the February 8, 2022, March 22, 2023, and April 10, 2024 meetings, as required, and as confirmed by agendas, minutes, and videos of the meetings.

When asked whether the Grand Jury had looked up the meeting agendas to confirm the City Council had failed to do the required reviews, foreperson Leittem-Thomas said, several times, that the Grand Jury had evidence for and had verified everything in the report.

"What the grand jury didn't report out on, that's the biggie, private consultants or spending above and beyond what the council financed."

Allman said he thought interim City Manager Rod Wilburn was "doing a very good job of righting the ship, I have a great deal of respect for him, he listens and he's accountable."

"Employee morale should be a very important part of city management, said Mayor Allman.

"We have sewer plants to operate, and streets to pave and to mow.... The employees we have are our greatest asset, they are. Those that are still here. They did put up with a lot of tension, and my job as mayor is just trying to work with the city manager, correct the financial situation, and keep our employees, so they can do their job."

Willits City Councilmember Gonzalez, who was reelected to council last November, said: "Every organization can do better, and in the next couple months, we'll be looking at how we can address our personnel issues."

Gonzalez did say, as did former mayor Rodriguez, that one of the Grand Jury report's findings, "The Grand Jury found that the Willits

City Council had not conducted annual performance reviews of the Willits City Manager by April 30 of each year" was not true.

The Willits City Council did do the required evaluations of the city manager all three years, in 2022, 2023 and 2024, as Willits Weekly had already confirmed with agendas, minutes and video links.

"This report is clear as mud," commented former mayor Rodriguez. "It's hard to understand the findings of the Grand Jury, there's no dates in the report, it appears to be written at the behest of those who're trying to reinforce a theory of a negative culture at the City of Willits, while there are many many good people that work within the agency, and this report doesn't accurately articulate the culture at the City of Willits. Within any large agency there will be challenges and I'm disappointed that this report wasn't able to give us the information, or proper findings, or a plan for a vision for the future."

Rodrigues said former HR Manager Karen Stevenson, who retired after June 2024, was the "designee" for the non-existent HR Director to receive employee complaints. After Stevenson retired, Rodriguez says, the city "did a search and we didn't find a fully qualified candidate, and that's why the city has the individual" that the city has working in HR instead of an HR Director.

little better reporting than if it was someone from the general public who doesn't have access to that kind of information," such as access routes. "It works very well with all the CAL FIRE systems for mitigation," Rowney concluded. The pilot is also able to report on what kind of fuel is burning, how fast the fire is spreading, and if any buildings or other infrastructure are in danger.

Randall Vann, another Co-op director and a retired CAL FIRE dozer operator, recalled an instance years ago where he was glad to have a guide in the sky. "We had a lightning bust come through, north of Covelo," where a maze of logging roads makes it easy to get lost in the woods.

"We could see the smoke when we left the station, and Co-op said, you're headed in the wrong direction – you need to go up Mina Road and in through Hulls Valley," The navigation saved the firefighters about 45 minutes, and Vann remembers that their earlier arrival allowed them to contain the fire to only 5 acres.

Vann added that aerial fire patrol is especially useful now that staffed lookouts are so rare. The U.S. Forest Service has one intermittently staffed lookout on Anthony Peak in Covelo, and CAL FIRE lookouts are a thing of the past. And even though cell phones have increased the public's effectiveness at calling in emergencies, many parts of Mendocino County don't have reliable reception.

The Co-op is funded solely by donations, mostly from timber companies and landowners with more than 10 acres. But "everyone reaps the value from this early detection," according to Norm Brown, chair of the Co-op board and a retired CAL FIRE Deputy Chief and air attack supervisor. Pilots fly 4 to 6 hours a day during the heat of the summer, when fire danger is highest.

"Instead of having a stationary lookout on a mountaintop, now we have one that's mobile, that flies the county, looking for new starts," Brown said. The plane went up again over the holiday weekend on July 4, 5, and 6, but "we're going to shut him down for a couple weeks," likely until August. "If we get some extreme fire conditions, high temperatures, high winds, more lightning, things like that, then we'll put him back in the air," he promised.

Brown says that 90% of wildland fires are caused by humans, either accidentally or purposely. He reported that no larger fires were caused by fireworks after the July 4 weekend, but fire danger is still high from activities like cutting grass with bladed mowers during the heat of the day. His advice will sound familiar to anyone who is familiar with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council's messages: maintain defensible space, and get the mowing done in the cool of the morning.

Timing is crucial, including when it comes to booking a pilot for flight hours. "The reason that we have to shut him down for part of this fire season," Vann added, "is that our bank account's pretty low. We're having to cut corners" or cut down on early-season flying days, to save money for the hot, dry months from August through October.

The aerial fire-spotting service costs about \$35,000 a month, between paying the pilot and fueling the plane. "I don't think we're getting the contributors we used to, and the cost of fuel and maintenance is going up," Vann reflected. "It's tough. It's tough for everybody right now, I'm sure."

But Rowney thinks it's worth the money. "In the larger scheme of things, this investment is pretty small when you consider the cost of fighting a fire when it reaches several thousand acres in size," he calculated.

For more information about the Mendocino County Cooperative Aerial Fire Patrol, contact Norm Brown at (707) 489-9727. To make a donation, mail your check to Co-op Aerial Fire Patrol, PO Box 2036, Ukiah, CA 95482.



Above: Mike Smith, a pilot for the Mendocino County Cooperative Aerial Fire Patrol, flies his Cessna 172 fire spotting plane out of the Willits airport. Photo is courtesy of Mike Smith.

## County homeless services group seeks board and general members

Submitted by MCHSCoC

The Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care invites residents with lived expertise of homelessness, members of the public, and other stakeholders to join in making a difference in the lives of our unhoused neighbors in Mendocino County.

MCHSCoC is a collaboration of individuals and agencies committed to the goal of ending homelessness in our community. This group is instrumental in bringing federal and state funding into our community to assist families and individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness to gain access to stable housing.

MCHSCoC focuses on developing solutions to homelessness that also have a positive impact on the larger community.

The next meeting of the MCHSCoC will provide an overview of what it means to be an MCHSCoC member. This meeting will be held on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 1:30 pm at Adult and Aging Services' Big Sur Conference Room at 747 South State Street in Ukiah. For additional meeting details, please visit <https://mendocinococ.org/meetings/2025/02/24/board-meeting-m546>. To join the MCHSCoC, please

complete a membership application form accessible at <https://mendocinococ.org/s/General-Member-Welcome-Letter-and-Application-Fill-In-4-23-2024.pdf>, and return it to [hometeam@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:hometeam@mendocinocounty.gov) or 747 South State Street, Ukiah, CA 95482, ATTN: Housing Coordination Unit.

The MCHSCoC will also be electing six new Governing Board Members at this meeting for the following seats: one dedicated board seat for an Individual with lived experience of homelessness, one dedicated board seat for a housing developer or property manager, and four representative group seats.

MCHSCoC is accepting nominations for available Governing Board Seats now through Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 5 pm. To submit a nomination, please complete the MCHSCoC Governing Board Seat Nomination Form available at <https://forms.gle/hyWFOzSnHjztzbq8>.

To be eligible for MCHSCoC Board Seat nomination, organizations or individuals must operate or reside within Mendocino County and be a general member of the MCHSCoC. For questions or to request additional information, contact Veronica Wilson at [wilsonv@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:wilsonv@mendocinocounty.gov) or (707) 468-7071.

## July Art Talk: Modern women artists in Paris

Submitted by WCA

The Willits Center for the Arts is pleased to present an engaging lecture by Professor Paula Birnbaum titled "Self-Fashioning as Modern Women Artists in Paris." This illuminating talk will explore the lives and works of three remarkable Paris-based women artists – Maria Blanchard (1881–1932), Tamara de Lempicka (1894–1980), and Chana Orloff (1888–1968) – all émigrés who forged influential careers during the inter-war period.

Professor Birnbaum will delve into how these artists navigated and redefined prevailing artistic norms through their explorations of female embodiment. Central themes include self-representation, portraiture, motherhood, and the female nude – expressed through painting in the work of Blanchard and Lempicka, and sculpture in Orloff's art. Together, these pioneering women challenged artistic conventions and reshaped both the trajectory of modern art and the cultural politics of their time.

Paula J. Birnbaum is the inaugural Ann Getty Endowed Chair and Academic Director of the Museum Studies Master of Arts Program and Professor of Art History and Museum Studies at USF. She is a specialist in modern and contemporary art and holds a doctorate in Art History from Bryn Mawr College. Professor Birnbaum is a former Fulbright Scholar and fellow at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford University.

This is a free event. The art center can be located at 71 East Commercial Street. For more information contact [willitscenterforthearts.org](http://willitscenterforthearts.org) or call Gary Martin at 707-972-3326.



Above, from left: Loudon Spain, who won the mutton bustin' contest, runs his horse through the barrel racing event. This smiling kid is being lowered down to his sheep for the mutton bustin'. A roping team tries to rope both the horns and rear legs at full speed. At right: Jordan Shull from Willits tries to wrestle his steer to the ground in the Chute Dogging contest.

Photos by Mathew Caine



# Junior Rodeo

## Young riders show off their skills in 25 competitions ranging from barrel racing to chicken wrangling

"These kids start as young as 2. Most of these kids we follow through high school rodeo," said Marcy Barry, vice president of the Willits Frontier Days. The Junior Rodeo is

for participants under 18. It includes 25 different competitions, including a youthful mad dash stampede to grab one of several chickens that were released in the arena. Many of the kids have worked and lived on ranches since they came into the world, making the competitions second nature to them. They handled themselves with a combination of skill and confidence, and one can see a bright future for them in the rodeo arena.

The first event was probably the most fun, at least for the littles. It was called Mutton Bustin' and consisted of kids as young as three years trying to hang on as their sheep ran as fast as it could out of the starting gates. Only one youngster, Loudon Spain, was able to hang on for an appreciable amount of time, only being forced off when his sheep hit the opposite fence. Needless to say, he won the competition. The remainder of the kids had fun even

though several of them walked back to the gate with tears at not being able to stay on the animals.

Next up was the Single Stake run, consisting of one pole that the competitors had to race around, against time. Then there was an event called Goat Tail Untying, in which they had to ride to the opposing end of the arena and untie a ribbon from the tiny goat's tail. The next competition was Senior Tie Down Roping, in which the competitors had to upend the animals and tie their legs in the fastest time.

The Breakaway Roping contest was divided into junior and senior divisions. Even though less than half of the competitors were able to complete the actions of roping the cattle on the run, it was extremely entertaining to watch due to the speed and determination and skill.

Steer Stopping consists of roping the steer on the run as they burst out of the chute with the horse riders in hot pursuit. They had to stop the steer and cause them to turn

Read the rest of  
**Juniors**

Over on page 13



Above: Rylee Gamble cuts the barrel close to save time – she took first place in the senior barrels. Below: Austin Cline was one of two competitors in the Saddle Bronc event, neither of which stayed on long enough to place. At bottom: Isabel and Markie hold the chickens they managed to grab during the Mystery Scramble.



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Above, from left: Danielle Barry slides to a stop carrying the American flag in the Grand Entry of the CCPRA rodeo on July 3. This CCPRA bronc rider gets some air as the horse leaps forward. End of the ride for this CCPRA cowboy when the score increases by one for the horses. Event co-organizer and Willits local, Clayton Cooley, watches bids come during the Bulls and Broncs Calcutta auction where spectators can bet on which cowboy will win by "buying them" during the live auction before the event, and then share in some of their earnings if that cowboy wins. This CCPRA cowboy slides off his steer and catches the horns before trying to flip it to the ground in the CCPRA steer wrestling contest. Another win for the horses, and a near miss of hoof-human contact as this CCPRA cowboy hits the ground during the July 3 rodeo. At left: "Rearing to go" couldn't be more clearly represented visually as it is for this CCPRA cowboy's horse who is really ready to get out of the bucking chute and go. At left, below: This CCPRA cowboy missed his window to catch the steer, and tried to climb back up into the saddle; unfortunately, the quickly approaching fence at the end of the arena made contact with horse and rider, both, knocking down both horse and rider, and landing inches from this photographer's feet. Thankfully they were both OK. Below: Champion Bulls and Broncs Mutton Busting rider, Stetson Sedita, not only won the competition, but did so in style with rosined rope, and only one hand hanging on. Below, right: This little Mutton Busting cowgirl gets lowered over the gate and into the chute and onto her awaiting sheep.



# Bulls, Broncs and the CCPRA

Three main events showcase rodeo skills for contestants young and old

The main rodeo events held on July 3 and July 4 every year during Willits Frontier Days featured some locals, but mainly California Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association riders, who compete across the state for big cash and prizes.

While traditionally the July 4 rodeo started at 4 pm, this year, the decision was made, partially due to the extreme heat of last year's afternoon show, to move this rodeo to match the evening time, 7 pm, of the July 3 rodeo. This allowed patrons to enjoy the event in the cooler evening hours, even though this year sure didn't need it with the glorious, temperate weather enjoyed by humans, and the livestock, too.

The final event for the 2025 series of events this year was the Bulls and Broncs competition held on July 5, that was put on by Clayton Cooley and Kevin Rountree, two local high schoolers with an interest in rodeo. While top billing did focus on bull and bronc riding (including variations of saddle, ranch and bareback broncs), mutton busting (sheep riding); and breakaway roping (loop a calf from horseback as it runs) events were also included.

For Bulls and Broncs, Logan Cook was the only bull rider with a qualified ride and won a payout of \$3,040 for his efforts and his Calcutta auction buyer, Julius Moreno, won \$4,114. Breakaway winners included Kylyn

Watkins with a time of 2.15 seconds and \$464 payout; second to Bethany Grieve with a time of 2.4 seconds and a payout of \$278.40; and third place to Josie Pereira with a time of 2.9 seconds and payout of \$185.60.

In Ranch Bronc, three riders qualified; first place went to Matt Olvera with a total of 69 points earning a payout of \$1,160; second to Cash Robinson with a score of 66 points and a payout of \$696; and third to Kyle Starkey with a score of 65 points and payout of \$464.

Mutton Busting had three qualified riders; Stetson Sedita won with a score of 96 points and earned \$90; second went to Ryatt Retzliff with a score of 82 points earning \$54; and third went to Hunter Sizemore with a score of 76 points earning \$36.

CCPRA results included first-place winners in the following categories; to see full results, visit <https://www.ccpa.com/>:

Calf roping: Out of 19 contestants with 6 placings, the winner was Weston Smith with a time of 10.22 seconds, earning \$900.94.

Steer wrestling: Out of 13 contestants with 4 placings, the winner was Zane George with a time of 5.35 seconds earning \$1,028.36.

Breakaway roping: Out of 41 contestants with 8 placings, the winner was Kylyn Watkins with a time of 3.25 seconds earning \$1,166.40.

Read the rest of CCPRA Over on page 13

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At right, top: Little kids got to enjoy two rides – the zoomy cars, left, and the choo choo train, right, at the Willits Frontier Days carnival. At right, below: Maggie tried to toss two ping pong balls into a bowl of colored water to win a goldfish but, alas, ended up fishless. At right, below, far: Even though unlimited wristbands are all the rage for the big kids, thankfully there's also an option to purchase a set of tickets, good for a few rides.

Below: The traditional beef barbecue held at the Rec Grove Park included beef, beans, salad, a roll and a cookie. At bottom: This bunch was ready for the barbecue, but paused for a quick moment mid-line-wait for a photo, including, from left: Michael Trevey, Marta Bartow, Mary Anne Trevey, Billy Potter (behind), and Tami Ball-Potter.



Photos by Maureen Jennison



At right: The horseshoe tournament also included young participants. Below: An elegant toss from this participant during the July 4 tournament.



Above, right: Firefighters battle the barrel, trying to get it across to the other team's side only using water hoses during the July 4 water fight. Below: Russ Roundtree and Mike Frahm work the bean pot at the Willits Frontier Days barbecue.



## Fun on the Fourth

Willits community gets to enjoy barbecue, carnival, water fights and horseshoe tournament before and after Main Street Parade on July 4



Photo courtesy LLFD

## Battle of the Hoses

Little Lake Fire Department holds water fight during Frontier Days

Submitted by Harry So for the Little Lake Fire Department

Little Lake Fire hosted a water fight in hopes of bringing back a time-honored tradition partnered with the Willits Frontier Days group. Many spectators young and old got to live and relive the fun experience of a water fight! The teams consisted of 3 teams from Little Lake Fire, 1 team from Ridgewood Ranch Fire, and 1 team from Fort Bragg Fire. Fort Bragg ultimately took home the win because they practice and host their own water fight every year. They are a tough team to beat and there are no trick plays. We hope to see everyone and more next year especially since it will be the Frontier Days 100th year!

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## LEGAL NOTICES

WW547

### Fictitious Business Name Statement

2025-F0293

The following person or persons are doing business as Lettuce Make You Happy, 18950 Walker Road, Willits, CA 95490.

Registered owners: David N. Weigt and Deborah M. Weigt, 18950 Walker Road, Willits, CA 95490.

This business is conducted by copartners.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on June 1, 2024.

FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on June 23, 2025.

/s/ Deborah M. Weigt and David N. Weigt

Publication Dates: July 3, 10, 17, 24, 2025

WW545

### Fictitious Business Name Statement

2025-F0266

The following person or persons are doing business as 3 Pronged Attack, 3PA, 32 Fort Bragg Road, Willits, CA 95490; 707-731-7562.

Registered owner: Omar Sisemore, 32 Fort Bragg Road, Willits, CA 95490.

This business is conducted by an individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on December 10, 2020.

FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on June 4, 2025.

/s/ Omar Sisemore

Publication Dates: June 26, July 3, 10, 17, 2025

WW545

### Fictitious Business Name Statement

2025-F0258

The following person or persons are doing business as Greenwood Gardening, 43 Alameda Avenue, Willits, CA 95490.

Registered owners: Deanne Ledebuhr, 162 East Mendocino Avenue, Apt. B, Willits, CA 95490, and Garrett Moore-Zachary, 43 Alameda Avenue, Willits, CA 95490

This business is conducted by copartners.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on April 20, 2025.

FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk-Recorder on May 23, 2025.

/s/ Garrett Moore-Zachary

Publication Dates: July 3, 10, 17, 24, 2025

**Willits Weekly can run legal notices including fictitious business name statements, foreclosure notices, storage unit auctions, and more. Contact us for more information at willitsweekly@gmail.com**

COLUMN | AT THE MOVIES



Dan Essman  
Columnist

## ‘Jurassic World Rebirth’

**The Story:** I didn't count the dinosaurs, but there were lots of them. One was kinda small and cute (spoiler, I suppose). In general, the dinos were bad-dinos, ill-tempered and persistently ferocious and apparently jonesing for human flesh (which I have heard tastes like pork, so no real surprise).

But I digress. Scarlett Johansson plays a highly-competent mercenary adventurer who's been hired by a scummy pharmaceutical corporation to lead an expedition. Its goal is to harvest blood samples from furiously violent ex-Jurassic Park dinosaurs which are still living (and mutating!) in the Wild, decades after the bloody and horrifying events which caused the shuttering of that infamous tourist attraction.

It's a world of apex predators, and not a world for puny and delicious homo sapiens. (Spoiler, no spoiler.) Some humans live. Some are eaten alive.

**My Thoughts:** This movie is all-around bloody thrilling and terrifyingly ghastly. The flick has great music. It's based on variations of John Williams' hauntingly beautiful and instantly recognizable Jurassic Park score.

The movie was produced by Steven Spielberg and features his trademark visual storytelling where disasters are

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## LEGAL NOTICES

WW548

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Willits City Council, acting as the Willits Planning Commission at its regular meeting on July 23rd, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., will conduct a public hearing on the following matter at the time listed or as soon thereafter as the item may be heard:

PROJECT: Variance No. V 25-01

REQUEST: To allow construction of a 760 sq.ft, detached garage in the required rear yard setback area. The applicant is requesting a reduction in the required rear setback from 20 feet to 6 feet due to the shape of the lot and limited usable backyard space. The structure is also designed to accommodate rooftop solar panels and provide safer on-site vehicle maneuvering, eliminating the need to back onto the public street.

LOCATION: 124 State Street, Willits, CA 95490

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Categorically Exempt from CEQA, pursuant to Section 15303 (Class 3 - New Construction of Small Structures) and

Section 15305 (Class 5 – Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**MEETING LOCATION:** Council Chambers at City Hall located at 111 East Commercial Street, Willits, CA 95490.

**HOW TO PARTICIPATE:** Prior to the meeting, electronic copies of the staff report and agenda will be available on the City's website at <http://ca-willits.civicplus.com/AgendaCenter/City-Council-1>.

• Written public comments regarding the proposed project may be submitted by email to Swetha Hiranya Venuturupalli at [svenuturupalli@cityofwillits.org](mailto:svenuturupalli@cityofwillits.org), or the City Clerk's office, 111 East Commercial Street, Willits, California, 95490, no later than 5:30 p.m., on Tuesday, July 22nd 2025. All public comments received will be provided to the Council and uploaded to the City's website in advance of the meeting.

• Oral comments may be presented to the Willits Planning Commission during the public hearing. If you challenge the project in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Willits Community Development Department or the Willits City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing. All persons are invited to appear and present testimony in this matter.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in the public meeting, please contact the City Clerk at (707) 459-4601. Notification at least 48 hours prior to the meeting will assist staff in assuring that reasonable accommodations are made to provide accessibility to the meeting.

/s/ Delores Pedersen, City Clerk

**Publication Date: July 10, 2025**

prefigured – that is, all the elements of a disaster are first shown to the audience and then we watch them play out just the way we had already figured and feared they would. But sometimes there are unexpected twists, surprising and thrilling but still logical. I admired this movie. I don't need exclamation points. I liked it. I watched it twice.

**Parents:** This flick is too scary for little children. If I were 10 years old when this flick came out, I would have loved it as the greatest movie ever made, and I would have had a crush on Scarlett. But really, it's for teens and adults.

**Parents:** No little ones. Too, too scary. Characters are swallowed whole and alive by dinosaurs. That's nightmare stuff.

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

HELP WANTED:

## Casino Controller at Sherwood Valley Casino

Benefits, Salary: \$98K - \$110K

The Casino Controller directs the cashing, vault, drop and count areas in a manner that safeguards the assets of the Sherwood Valley Casino, while establishing and maintaining acceptable accounting procedures and internal controls and assures all external and internal regulations are met. Has direct supervision of Cage/Vault, Drop, and Count Supervisors. Exercises management responsibility for all activities of the Accounting/Finance Department. Activities include direct hands-on oversight of audit, accounting, general ledger, reporting, payroll, purchasing, cashing, and count room operations. Responsible for the company's overall operating and capital budgets, internal control policies, insurance and risk management programs, and relationships with financial institutions, casino's compliance with provisions of the State Compact, NIGC, Tribal ordinances, Gaming Commission regulations, cash transactions reporting, and IRS withholding and reporting requirements. Contact the General Manager at [mftzgerral@svrcasino.com](mailto:mftzgerral@svrcasino.com) or 707-459-7350.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

### Brown Bag Lunch Program

Every Saturday at 1 pm sack lunches are served by local churches, community organizations, and families at Bud Snider Park on East Commercial. Come at 1 pm to be assured a lunch!

### Do you need food?

Willits Food Bank, 344 Railroad Avenue, Willits, CA 95490. Open Wednesdays & Fridays, new expanded distribution hours: 11 am to 4:30 pm. New Client Choice model where you select your own items. Bring shopping bags, Bring an I.D. Info: (707) 459-3333

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### For Rent

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### Free Food for All Pop-Up

Mendocino Food Network presents food pop-ups with free food for all: Due to the impact of federal budget cuts, there will be only one monthly pop-up in Willits, on 1st Thursdays, from 10 to 11:30 am at 1250 Blosser Lane. In Laytonville, every 4th Thursday, 12 to 1 pm at 300 Cahlo Drive. In Covelo, every 2nd Thursday, from 12 to 1 pm, at NEW ADDRESS: 24065 Rifle Road. In Leggett: Every 1st Tuesday from 12 to 1 pm at 65100 Drive-Thru Tree Road. Info: [Rachelle@mendocinfood.org](mailto:Rachelle@mendocinfood.org); 707-615-6654.

### Indoor Yard Sale

Giant Indoor Yard Sale – Deep Valley Christian School, 8555 Uva Drive, Redwood Valley, (across from the Broiler). **Saturday, July 19** – 8 am to 2 pm (note shortened end time).

### John Ford Ranch Beef

John Ford Ranch still has the 50 lb. Rancher's Choice Box for \$390.00 and the 25 lb. Hamburger Box for \$170.00. Please contact Debbie Arkelian at 459-5049.

### Love Willits Weekly?

Help support our free-circulation community newspaper by becoming a "street subscriber"! You send in an annual donation, and pick up the edition on the street each week! We love our regular subscribers too: \$75 for home delivery in the Willits area; \$100 for a year's subscription in the U.S. mail. Visit <https://form.jotform.com/61915582053153> for a sign up form and more info.

### RV/Trailer Space for Rent

Space for RV's and Trailers – starts at \$500 per month, includes water & garbage. Close to Safeway in Willits. Call Tony (707) 972-4696. See at <http://www.oaknrvine.net/tip>

### Tattoo Shop

Tattoo Shop in Downtown Willits! Clean, cute, and private shop with 10 years experience. Love to tattoo botanicals, cute critters, and sceneries! Appointments and bookings: [kikibattoos.com](mailto:kikibattoos.com)

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Above: An art quilt by Melody Williams that depicts her process of collecting materials for Pomo baskets. At left: Tina Southerland stands with photographer Craig Gardner at the "No More Fallen Sisters" exhibit. Below, left: A drill pump used in drilling holes in clam shells and abalone. It's still used in traditional work. Below, right: Selena Southerland is the subject of this photo portrait on slate, part of the "No More Fallen Sisters" show at WCA.



Below, left: Monique created this quilt square of an eagle. Below, right: Claudia Wenning is intrigued by some of the Pomo jewelry.

Photos by Mathew Caine



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3:15, 6:30

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## Pomo at the Art Center

July exhibit features Native art and craft, and tragic portraits in 'No More Fallen Sisters' show

Khadijah Britton has been missing since 2018. A young, 23-year-old Round Valley Native woman with a family and a future, Khadijah has tragically joined the massive number of missing and murdered indigenous women who have had their lives and those of their families destroyed by death or uncertainty.

Indigenous women are murdered at 10 times the national average. According to the National Institute of Justice, 84% of Native women experience violence in their lifetimes. Over half are victims of violence, 96% from non-active perpetrators. Khadijah Britton's family refuse to allow her name to be forgotten, and there are so many more whose names are not known to the public but are missed by those who know and love them and by the communities in which they were a part.

In order to keep these women (and men) from slipping out of memory and to open the veil that keeps them hidden from the public in general, the MMIW (Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women) movement

was formed to publicize this marginalized population's plight.

Last Saturday, the Willits Center for the Arts opened a very heartfelt set of exhibits, a dual exhibit entitled "Pomo Land," to bring both the art and the MMIW movement to light in a show that is, at the same time, beautiful, horrific, and moving.

The north gallery is showing "Pomo Family Art & Craft," featuring the traditional basketry of the Pomo tribes, as well as jewelry, quilts, and other related works of art, including a look at the traditions of the family of curator, Melody Williams.

The exhibit in the south gallery, "No More Fallen Sisters," contains 55 haunting portraits, etched into slate, of Native women, with the symbol of the MMIW movement, a handprint over their mouths, as if to say, "We will not be silenced or forgotten."

"In the past, the exhibits we've had here, I believe we've had three, have just been Pomo baskets," explained Williams. "On

Read the rest of **Pomo** Over on page 15

The rest of **Juniors** From page 5

toward the riders. In Steer Daubing, the object was to get close enough to the steer to place a spot of paint on them with a long stick.

Barrel Racing is always one of the most exciting and skillful competitions, as the riders raced through a series of three barrels, getting as close as they can without knocking any over, in order to maximize their speed and minimize the amount of time needed to traverse the course. There was only one competitor in the Bareback Bronc Riding, Quentin Personeni, who managed to ride the requisite amount of time, while being flung about by the bucking horse. Only two competitors participated in the Saddle Bronc Riding, neither of whom managed to ride long enough to score. There were six competitors in the Senior Chute Dogging contest where the participants had to wrestle a steer to the ground.

The Senior Bull Riding had eight competitors, with only two managing to go the distance, Clayton Cooley, who participates in adult events, and Richard Ferri. The Junior Steer Riding attracted 16 riders who tried to stay on their steers for the time required.

Next up was the Team Roping, both junior / senior and junior / junior. There were several brother or sister mixed teams. Only one team, Riley and Jacob Sleight, were able to get a rope around the horns and around the rear legs within the allotted time in the junior / senior division. In the junior contest, no one was able to complete the routine.

The final rodeo competition was the junior and the senior Pole Bending, where the competitors had to weave through a slalom of six poles, receiving an extra five seconds of time for each pole that they knocked over. The juniors attracted 21 participants and the seniors 16.

At the end of this event, about 20 kids were released to race to be the ones that were able to take chickens home in the Mystery Scramble.

The first few places in each category received a percentage of the entry fees of all the competitors. The results and the winnings:

**Mutton Bustin':** Louden Spain \$126, Kimber La Rue \$100.80, Oaklee Graves \$90.72, Judson Leonard \$75.60, Maylee Jewell \$60.48, Hudson Giuntini \$50.40

**Chute Dogging:** Ilan Davis \$115, Austin Cline \$76

**Dummy Roping:** Parker Sleight \$60

**Goat Tail Untying:** Jarrett

Johnson \$100.80, Louden Spain \$67.20

**Junior Barrel Racing:** Makayla Black \$192, Briar Testa Grieve \$160, Rylie Sleight \$128, Dana Arkellian \$96, Sydney Burnet \$32, Kierra Felton \$32

**Senior Barrel Racing:** Rylee Gamble \$172.80, Alexandra Hundley \$144, Eden Brenn Saunders \$115.20, Vivian Arntz \$86.40, Natalie Marcos-Soto \$57.60

**Junior Goat Tying:** Joey Schreiner \$192, Triniti Freudenberg \$144, Addilyn Davis \$96, Riley Shreiner \$48

**Senior Goat Tying:** Avery Davis \$160, Summer Smith \$96, Emerald Mueller \$64

**Junior-Junior Team Roping:** All disqualified

**Junior-Senior Team Roping:** Rylie and Jacob Sleight

**Junior Steer Daubing:** Clint Earley \$192, Lilly Glass \$115.20, Rylie Sleight \$76.80

**Senior Steer Daubing:** Rylee Gamble \$166.40, Austin Cline \$124.80, Alexandra Hundley \$83.20, Blake Earley \$41.60

**Senior Saddle Bronc:** All disqualified

**Junior Breakaway Roping:** Triniti Freudenberg \$153.60, Clint Earley \$102.40

**Senior Breakaway Roping:** Caleb Gonzales \$192, Blake Earley \$144, Quentin Personeni \$96, Ilan Davis \$48

**Senior Pole Bending:** Alexandra Hundley \$204.80, Rylee De Marta \$153.60, Emerald Mueller \$102.40, Maiah Masterson \$51.20

**Senior Bareback Bronc:** Quentin Personeni \$80.00

**Senior Bull Riding:** Clayton Cooley \$384, Richard Ferri \$256

**Senior Saddle Bronc:** no qualifiers

**Senior Steer Daubing:** Rylee Gamble \$166.40, Austin Cline \$124.80, Alexandra Hundley \$83.20, Blake Earley \$41.60

**Senior Steer Stopping:** Blake Earley \$179.20, Tanner Dudley \$134.40, Caleb Gonzales \$89.60, Ella Thornton \$44.80

**Senior Tie Down Roping:** Jace Kelley \$134.40, Blake Earley \$89.60

**Senior Pole Bending:** Alexandra Hundley \$204.80, Rylee DeMarta \$153.60, Emerald Mueller \$102.40, Maiah Masterson \$51.20

**Junior Steer Stopping:** Clint Earley \$128

**Y-G Barrel Racing:** Louden Spain \$86.40, Jarrett Johnson \$67.60

**Senior Chute Dogging:** Ilan Davis \$115.20, Austin Cline \$76.80



At left: Ryden Sizemore, who rides steers, and his brother, Hunter, who entered the mutton busting. Above: Danielle Barry, Frontier Days Sweetheart from 2022, carries the United States flag for the opening of the Junior Rodeo. Below, left: This competitor is running down cattle in the Junior Breakaway event. Below: Frank Sands, with his son, Ace, who enjoys riding steers.

Photos by Mathew Caine



The rest of **CCPRA** From page 9

The rest of **Builders** From page 3

**Barrel racing:** Out of 49 contestants with 10 placings, the winner was Nina Moore with a time of 17.62 seconds earning \$1,215.

**Team roping:** Out of 23 pairs and 6 placings, the winners were Case Hirdes, header, and Joe Shawnego, heeler, both earning \$922.75 each.

**Saddle bronc riding:** Out of 15 contestants and 4 placings, the winner was Jace Angus with a score of 82 points earning \$1,156.20.

**Bareback bronc riding:** Out of 5 contestants and 4 placings, the winner was Quentin Personeni with a score of 72 points earning \$761.40.

**Bull riding** failed to have any qualified riders.



Photos by Maureen Jennison



Above, left: This CCPRA cowboy hits the dust, but the bronc is still bucking. Above, right: Watching the ground get closer and closer can be a startling sight. At far left: It's all focused business for this cowboy as he gets settled into position on his bronc. At left: 2025 Willits Frontier Days Sweetheart Lisa Arkellian looks back at the stripping chute to make sure the steer made it inside and back to the holding pen.



WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS' 14TH ANNUAL MARY BURGESS MEMORIAL

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TOMMY G PRESENTS  
A BENEFIT FOR CHARTER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF WILLITS ARTS PROGRAM

**WILLITS FEST**  
LOCAL ARTISTS SHOWCASE

LIVE MUSIC BEGINS AT NOON WITH  
**HAL A LOOYAH**  
**AURALIE**  
**COSMIC FAMILY BAND**  
**ALCHEMIC TRANSMUTATION**  
**THE POSERS**  
**FRIENDS ANONYMOUS**  
**TANGLED ENDS**  
**TASTES LIKE CHICKEN**  
**LEZA**  
**SELF FULFILLING PROPHECIES**  
**AZALEA SNIYE MORNINGLIGHT**  
**SOULEVITY**

**WILDFIRE DANCERS** **MAKERS AT WORK**  
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**FREE EVENT** **ALL AGES**  
**FLOW TOTS WELCOME**

**12:00 PM - 9:00 PM**  
**SATURDAY JULY 26**  
**2025**

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**GET FREE SUMMER MEALS**

Un desayuno y almuerzo saludables se brindan GRATIS a niños de 0 a 18 años, inscritos en WUSD o no, independientemente de sus ingresos. Disponible de lunes a viernes, del 9 de junio de 2025 al 8 de agosto de 2025, en la Escuela Primaria Brookside Elementary School.

- Desayuno de 08:00 a 09:00
- Almuerzo de 11:00 a. m. a 12:30 p. m.

\*Almuerzo caliente en el lugar o comida fría para llevar\*

**GET FREE SUMMER MEALS**

A healthy breakfast and lunch are provided FREE to children 0-18 years old, **enrolled in WUSD or not**, regardless of income. Available Monday-Friday, June 9, 2025, through August 8, 2025, at Brookside Elementary School.

- Breakfast 8:00am-9:00am
- Lunch 11:00am-12:30pm  
\*Hot lunch on site or a cold meal to go\*

Questions? Please call the WUSD Food Director at (707) 459-7700 ext. 1554

\*\*Closed 6/19 and 7/4\*\*

Improvapalooza – unscripted comedy takes over WCT, July 11, 12, 13

Submitted by WCT

The laughs will be loud and the competition fierce as Improvapalooza arrives at the Willits Community Theatre playhouse for three nights of unscripted entertainment, July 11–13.

The weekend kicks off on Friday, July 11 at 7 pm, with the ultimate Improv Battle. Evan Gaustad's Ukiah Improv Team takes on Schuyler Marcier's Willits Improv Team in a fast-paced showdown where your laughter helps decide who reigns supreme. Expect wild characters, ridiculous scenarios, and spontaneous comedy at its finest.

On Saturday, July 12 at 7 pm, the Willits Improv Team returns to the stage with a one-of-a-kind Improv Storytelling Master Class. Watch as they build entire worlds and craft unexpected plots all made up on the spot with audience suggestions guiding the ride.

The weekend wraps up with the future stars of comedy as the Mendocino County Teen Improv All Stars hit the stage on Sunday, July 13 at 2 pm. Led by Evan Gaustad, this showcase of the region's top young talent proves the next generation of comedians is ready to steal the spotlight.

Improvapalooza is part of Willits Community Theatre's Mosaic Series, bringing unique, short-run performances to local audiences. The WCT playhouse is located at 37 West Van Lane in Willits. Tickets are \$20 per night, available at wctperformingartscenter.org or by calling (707) 216-1826. Season Sponsors for WCT are NC Financial Group, Community Foundation of Mendocino County, Penserra, KZYX Radio, KLLG Radio, Jerry Drew Painting, Julia Morgan Redwood Grove, and Big Fish Construction.

Sherwood Valley Band hosts 32nd annual Big Time Celebration, July 12

Posted by the Sherwood Valley Band

The Sherwood Valley of Pomo Indians hosts the 32nd annual Big Time Celebration, Saturday, July 12 from 11 am to dusk.

Come celebrate with us!

Enjoy:

- Delicious Salmon BBQ
- Native Dancers
- Crafts & Food Vendors
- Health & Wellness Booths
- The exciting “Commod” Cook Off

This is a family-friendly, alcohol-, tobacco-, and drug-free event.

For vendor info: call Jodi Sjolund at (707) 354-0647 To register your dance group: contact Carmen Ochoa at (707) 459-9690.

Let's come together to honor tradition, culture, and community. See you there!

**Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians**  
"Sin Tah Mana" Welcome

**32nd Annual Big Time Celebration**

**SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2025 • 11:00 AM-DUSK**

- **Salmon BBQ • Native Dancers**
- **Crafts & Food Vendors**
- **Health & Wellness Booths**
- **“Commod” Cook Off**

• "Commod Cook Off" 11 am to 1pm. Free to enter, registration forms available at Sherwood Tribal Office. Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winning dishes.

This is an alcohol, tobacco, and drug free event

For vendor application and more information call Jodi Sjolund @ (707) 354-0647. For your convenience vendor applications can be picked up at the Sherwood Tribal Office.

For more information or to register your dance group contact Carmen Ochoa at (707) 459-9690.

**Ladies, Take Charge of Your Health!**

**Screening Clinic Saturday July12!**

**Join Us for PAP-A-PALOOZA and Protect Yourself Against Cervical Cancer with a Pap test!**

Early detection can save lives — don't wait! Take advantage of these special events and make your health a priority. We will have the clinic the **second Saturday of each month** for PAPs. Together, we can fight cervical cancer!

Call **MCHC** now to schedule your appointment and protect yourself today.  
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Above: Photographs by Craig Gardner etched on black lacquered slates of Native women with the symbol of the MMIW movement, a handprint over their mouths are featured in the “No More Fall Sisters” exhibit at WCA in July. From left: Dixie Frease, Kirra Wilburn, and Morningstar Hoaglan.



The rest of Pomo | From page 10

this exhibit, I wanted to show the basket material that we use to make the baskets.

"I brought my sedge plant here that was growing in my backyard." Williams continued. "There are rhizomes that are like the roots. As the rhizomes grow, they pop up and make another plant. It's the rhizomes that we use for the quail baskets. Then, we have grey willow that we use as the foundation of the basket. When I'm driving down the road, I will just stop when I see it and pick some. Gathering baskets are made out of willow."

One of her quilts depicts her passion for stopping at the side of roads to gather the sedge and other materials that go into the construction of her baskets. She also exhibited photos of her great grandmother and her grandmother who kept the tradition alive by teaching her the art of basketry.

The south galley is ringed with the stark but beautiful faces of 55 indigenous women. The exhibit was created by photographer Craig Gardner, with the cooperation of Misty Reyes, a Native woman with strong roots in the indigenous community.

To create more powerful images, Gardner used a laser to etch the images onto black lacquered slates, causing the photos to be deep, dark, and stark, exhibiting the reality of the tragedy of the MMIWs

"Craig actually approached me with this project, and I was super interested in getting involved," said Reyes. "I am an indigenous woman, and it's a really important topic to bring attention to. It's been very, very underrepresented in media. Actually, my cousin, Khadijah Britton, has been missing for several years now, and the family is still looking for answers. We would love to bring

her home and put her to rest, properly. We're just not getting answers.

"It is one of the more covered cases and it's purely because the family has put in so much effort keeping it shared and on everybody's mind. We are lucky and fortunate to have that momentum behind it, but there have been so many other women who have just disappeared and there is no coverage whatsoever."

Michelle Merrifield, another cousin of Khadijah Britton, is coordinator at MMIP (Missing and Murdered Indigenous People). She spoke to the attendees at the opening. "We were in the parade yesterday," said Merrifield. "The spirits called me to do this, and it's my responsibility now and my commitment to my people to be there for them and help them out with any crisis and to bring awareness that this is still happening to our people.

"My purpose, right now,," Merrifield said, "is to reach out to the community because our reservations ae away from town. They are outside the mind, and I'm coming out inside the community now to ask for help."

Both exhibits will be at the Willits Center for the Arts until July 27. They deserve to be seen, if only to bring to light the inherent crises of this Native community that is deeply ingrained in the history and art of the Little Lake Valley and throughout the USA and Canada. For more information, visit the "No More Fallen Sisters" page on Facebook.

Galleries at the Willits Center for the Arts, 71 East Commercial Street, are open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 am to 5 pm. Visit www.willitscenterforthearts.org/



MCSO Search and Rescue finds 2 missing bicyclists in JDSF

Posted by Mendocino County Search and Rescue

After an initial hasty search on Sunday, July 6, 2025 from 8 pm to 1 am, Mendocino County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue successfully located and extricated two bicyclists on Monday, July 7, 2025. The bicyclists were off-course in the Jackson Demonstration State Forest.

Utilizing last known location coordinates and extensive mapping, Mendocino County deputies were able to determine the location

of the two bicyclists, who were deep in the wooded State Forest.

MCSO would like to thank Fort Bragg Fire Department and CAL FIRE for their efforts in locating the bicyclists.

Please remember, never hesitate to contact local law enforcement and always provide loved ones with a course of travel when in remote areas. Please have a safe and adventurous summer.



Above: Members of Mendocino County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue crew pose in Jackson State Demonstration Forest.

At left: Rescued bicyclists smile with new friends in Jackson State Demonstration Forest on Monday.

The rest of Parade | From page 5

Parade Awards

Submitted by Willits Frontier Days Parade Committee Member Katie Cooley

Floats:

**Best Patriotic Float:** First place went to Bouthillier's Construction; second place to Sherwood Valley Casino; and third to 101 Trailer & RV Supply.

**Best Theme-Based Float:** First place went to Flowers By Annette; second to Mendocino Railway; and third to Nuestra Alianza de Willits.

**Miscellaneous Float:** First place went to Willits Walk'n Wag and second to Baechtel Creek Medical Clinic.

**Youth Organization:** First place went to the Willits Community Theatre.

Cars:

**Decorated Non-Year Specific:** First place went to the Agape Bible Church; second to LaRue Trucking and Equipment; and third to the Native American Veterans.

**1960-1970 Original:** First place went to Chris Orr.

**1960-1970 Modified:** Steve Quinliven.

**Vintage:** First place went to Roots of Motive Power and second place to Smokey's BBQ.

**Auto/Truck/Open/Modified:** First place went to McFarland Trucking; second place to Smokin' G's and Big D's BBQ; third went to Redwood Waste Solutions.

**Group of Vehicles:** First place went to Sparetime Supply; second to All in Heating & Cooling; and third to the Willits Senior Center.

**Group of Motorcycles:** First place went to the Willits Wild Bunch and second to Henry Arkelian.

**Individual Motorcycle:** First place went to Joe Arkelian.

Horses:

**Matched Pair:** First place went to the Arkelian and Ford families.

**Fancy Dressed:** First place went to the Vaqueros Mexicanos.

**Family or Group:** First place went to the Willits Horseman's Association.

**Working Western:** First place went to Eva Pinon.

Ponies:

**Fancy Dressed:** First place went to Dani Owen.

**Future Horseman:** First place went to Kimber LaRue.

**Working Western:** First place went to Caroline Pinon.

Sheriff's view of July 4th

By Sheriff Matt Kendall

We had a lot of moving parts during the 4th of July weekend throughout Mendocino County. This week it started with a little track meet at the Comptche Store where we had to chase down a wanted subject who had pulled a crime in Boonville. Luckily my commanders from central sector and the coast responded quickly, and we took the gold with no injuries to the suspect or our deputies. This was largely due to the locals being good communicators. My hat is off to them.

The Comptche store had quite the crowd gathering to see why all the patrol cars were in town. I think they could have sold tickets to the event. Following this arrest they were kind enough to set up a small station with water and a bottle of Tecnu for those deputies who don't respond well to poison oak.

With the celebrations in Willits, Fort Bragg, Mendocino and Point Arena we were stretched a little thin. That being said things went very smoothly and we saw a lot of old friends out for the celebrations while making new ones as well. Our small towns are incredible places with very supportive people.

One thing for certain: everywhere I went our residents treated each other, and my deputies, well. I can't thank folks enough for that. It gives me hope that the noise being blasted throughout our nation hasn't infected all of us in Mendocino County.

God bless America and God bless all the folks in Mendocino County for continuing to look out for each other. Thank you.



Spunky Bruh

Bruh is one smart boy! He wants to learn and please his people. Bruh is a quick learner and we think he will make an awesome working dog, herding dog, ranch dog, agility dog, running partner, you name it. He walks well on leash, loves water, is very playful and spunky, but also has a gentle affectionate side to him. Come meet Bruh soon!

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino is located at 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley. Feel free to visit us, no appointments needed! We are open Wednesday through Friday, 1 to 5 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm; closed Monday and Tuesday. Check out all of our available dogs and cats on our website: www.mendohumanesociety.com, on our Facebook page, and on www.petfinder.com.



Demure Daisy

Daisy came in with a group of dogs from another rescue that fell on hard times. She is a lovely little dog with a sweet personality. Daisy is shy and demure, wanting to crawl into your lap for some love. She gets along with other dogs, and though we've not tested her, we believe she would be great with kids.

She has good recall, which is great because she does need a little leash work. She would bring such joy to a home looking for a loving companion to be added to a family.

To learn more about Kobe, or to view other adoptable animals, visit www.milofoundation.org or the Milo Foundation Sanctuary Facebook page. The sanctuary is currently doing pet adoptions by appointment only. Please complete a pet-adoption application before requesting an appointment. You can reach the Milo Foundation at 459-4900.



Gorgeous Crush

Crush has been at the shelter for almost a year. He came in with a few of his siblings that have since been adopted. Crush can be a little shy with new people at first, but he warms up quickly and loves to play and explore the cat room. If you're looking for a playful, loyal companion, come down to the shelter and meet this handsome fella!

The Mendocino County Animal Shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, is open to the public from 9:30 am to 5 pm Tuesday through Friday, and 10 am to 3 pm on Saturdays (closed for lunch each day from 1 to 1:30 pm). Make sure to pre-fill out the adoption application available at www.mendoanimalshelter.com. Call 707-463-4427 for more information.





OBITUARY |

# Percy Cartwright

Percy Cartwright, long-time resident of Willits, died on November 2, 2024, at the age of 84.

Percy is survived by his daughter, Rhonda Cartwright-Ladendorf (and husband, Barry Ladendorf), son, Bruce Cartwright, granddaughter, Jenifer Evans (and husband, Jeff Evans), grandson, Bruce Evan Cartwright, and great-granddaughters, Scarlett, Autumn and Harlow Evans. He is also survived by his sister-in-law, Lucy Simonson Hensley, brothers-in-law, Carl Simonson, Robert Simonson and Jeff Brewer, and niece, Sharon Sandoval.

Percy is predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Pomella (Brewer), his parents, Ben and Carrie Cartwright, and his sister, Gale Hamilton.

Percy was born on January 12, 1940, in Cove, Arkansas. In 1955, the Cartwrights headed west to Washington and eventually to Willits where Percy graduated from Willits High School in 1957. There, the pretty majorette, Pomella Brewer, caught his eye. Percy played on the school basketball and baseball teams, and worked at the old Texaco gas station south of town.

After graduation, Percy attended Santa Rosa Junior College. He and Pomella married in 1959 in Willits. Percy worked at the Purity and Safeway grocery stores. He briefly worked at Safeway in Santa Rosa, but returned to Willits to raise his growing family.

Percy worked for Safeway for over 30 years, always greeting those at the cash register with a smile and friendly words. He was active in the Willits Volunteer Fire Department, the RV Club, and the Willits Amateur Radio Society. He also served as a union representative for the local Retail Clerks Union. Percy loved spending time with family and friends, always providing a laugh, or witty saying or two. He also enjoyed time at the Willits Senior Center with friends. And, nobody kept his trucks cleaner than Percy!

An old-fashioned “Heavenly Hoedown” and BBQ in memory of Percy will be held at the Willits Senior Center on August 23, 2025, from 2:30-to 7 pm. Family and friends wishing to join the celebration are asked to bring a dish to share: Last names beginning with A-M (a side dish), N-Z (a dessert). Barbeque, drinks, music, and great stories about Percy are on the menu.



Garlic, potatoes and onions were a few of the offerings at a previous farm stand event.

Photo by Maureen Jennison

## Commonwealth Garden opens this Friday

The Commonwealth Garden would like to welcome back the community to our seasonal farm stand starting this Friday, July 11, and continuing on Fridays from 10 am to 1 pm. Farm stand may look a little different this year as the needs for fresh produce at our local Willits Community Services and Food Bank are growing by the week, and that means the Commonwealth Garden is stepping it up with our weekly donations. That also means not all produce will be available at the stand every week, but our weekly offerings will be as abundant as the garden will allow us. We do encourage patrons to bring their own bags/boxes to transport their garden goodies home. See you Fridays 10 am to 1 pm.

– Submitted by Mellisa Bouley for the Commonwealth Garden

OBITUARY |

# Jennefer Greenlaw-Wright

Jennefer Greenlaw-Wright (nee Greenlaw-Ortiz), 51, of Willits, CA passed away at UC Davis Medical Center after a brief illness, finally culminating in a fatal heart attack on June 7, 2025. Jennefer leaves behind distraught family members Andy Wright, her devoted husband of 22 years, and Sarah Greenlaw, her loving sister; many close friends, and local Willits children whom she babysat or assisted while she worked at Willits Family Center.



She also leaves behind several furry family members: including Muddflapp, Marzipan and Maya, and she will be joining Merlin, Marcel and Mylo. All family furry or otherwise, she loved with her fullest heart.

Jennefer was a master needle artist with hundreds of creations in embroidery, needle painting, crochet, felt ornament creation, and many other types of needlework. These items are distributed to family and friends all over the North counties, and some as far afield to friends in Alaska, where Jennefer took her lifelong dream trip; a month-long, solo driving trip to visit Juneau, in 2019.

A Memorial Service/ Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Jennefer and Andy were in the midst of moving house when this illness happened, and all moving plans had to continue even through and beyond Jennefer’s passing. Family deeply appreciates all help and well wishes, and will need some time to organize during both these life-changing upheavals.

Jennefer will be missed forever by family Andy and Sarah, who loved her entirely, and by many more friends that were lucky enough to come into the orbit of this beautiful, celestial soul.

# Charles Ronald “Ron” Stamps

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Charles Ronald Stamps, affectionately known as “Ron” or “Charlie”. Ron lived a remarkable life marked by love, adventure, and an enduring dedication to family, friends, and community.



Ron was born on June 13, 1941, in Colgate, Oklahoma and lovingly raised by his mother, Vivian Recagno, and dad, Frank Recagno in Willits, Ca. While he lived in many places, he ultimately spent most of his life in Willits. Ron passed away at home on June 23, 2025, at the age of 84, surrounded by his wife and daughters.

Ron is survived by his devoted wife of 57 years, Joyce Stamps; his cherished daughters, Tanya (Greg) Musgrave, Michelle (Michael) McCaffrey, and Alicia (Gage) Stamps-Haneir; and his beloved grandchildren, Devin McCaffrey, Owen McCaffrey, and Cedar Stamps-Haneir. He also leaves behind his fostered family members: Kate Fisher-Lémon, Rikke Tambour-Johanson (Denmark), Kristin Brokamp (Germany), and Alexei Kotovenko (Russia), as well as a wide circle of friends and extended family.

He is preceded in death by his parents Vivian Recagno, Frank Recagno, biological father Cecil Stamps, his brothers Wendell Stamps, Aubrey Stamps, and his son Derek Stamps.

Ron loved his Country and served as an Air Police Officer in the United States Air Force from 1961 to 1965 during the Vietnam War. Following his honorable discharge, Ron embarked on a storied career. His first job out of the military was with Northwestern Pacific Railroad as a relief telegrapher. In 1967, fate brought him to his wife, Joyce (Andrews), on a blind date in Santa Rosa, and ten months later, they began their lifelong journey together as husband and wife.

As life evolved and his family grew, Ron found new adventures in the transportation industry. Moving a few times between Lake, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Sacramento counties, he at one point moved his family from California to Colorado and then New Mexico to work for Nobel Food Distribution overseeing both the Denver and New Mexico facilities as the Vice President of Transportation Logistics. Family events brought him back home to Willits, California where Ron became fondly known as “Charlie” while working as a truck driver for Lyly & Sons Trucking, Dockins Trucking, Rabanda Transportation, and Mathews Logging before retiring in 2005.

Ron loved fishing in his younger years and taught his children to fish. He was physically active in his fifties and regularly rode his bicycle with his best friend from childhood, Mike Hinton. They talked each other in to a few wild adventures with experiences in Mexico and from Willits, rode their bicycles to places like Soda Bay, Fort Bragg and Santa Rosa without pause.

Ron’s life was filled with enthusiasm for exploration. An accomplished storyteller, he often recounted tales from his days on the road, including memorable celebrity encounters and joyful mischief. He was a passionate world traveler alongside Joyce, exploring 43 countries independently. Their adventures included a 4.5-month journey through Asia and Southeast Asia and a 3-month excursion in South America.

When traveling was no longer easily accomplished, Ron found enjoyment writing short stories and ultimately authored a self-published book, “Cowboys, Loggers, Airports and Airplanes”, in 2013. During his senior years he reconnected with many high school friends who were also in Willits. Warren Lewis and Ron walked regularly throughout Willits Westside. Ron and John Yde were two of the original founders of the Willits Shifters Car Club. These friends, along with Johnie Meader, Dave Edgar, Pat Rowan, Mike Hinton and others started a “coffee club” where they met regularly for downtown morning coffee to swap stories of grandeur, pains and ailments, and argue politics.

Ron’s life was a tapestry of love, resilience, and adventure. His legacy will continue to inspire all who had the privilege of knowing him. A celebration of life for family and friends will be announced at a later date.

# Kelly Ann (Whittle) Cowan

August 12, 1959 – May 1, 2025

Kelly Ann Cowan, born to Joan and Warren “Bud” Whittle on August 12, 1959, in Ukiah, California, passed away peacefully at her home with her beloved husband Jeff by her side after a courageous nine-month battle with cancer. She was 65.



Kelly graduated from Ukiah High School in 1976. She later lived in Spokane, Washington, where she worked in a window factory.

In 1981, Kelly met Jeff through a mutual friend, and the connection was instant. They went on to build a loving life together and raised three children: Jenny Cates, Joel Cowan, and Katie Cowan. Kelly devoted herself to being a stay-at-home mom.

She filled her home with love, laughter, music, and poetry. Kelly often said music was her medicine. She loved concerts, amusement parks with her daughters, and summer days spent kayaking with her family. One of her favorite places was the 10-foot swing her husband built on their backyard hillside, where she’d relax and listen to her music for hours.

Kelly loved deeply and gave love freely. She was strong in every sense and fought with incredible spirit until her final day. She adored her family and her three beloved cats: Eva, Meeka, and Lieba. Though she is gone, her presence and love will be felt always.

Kelly was preceded in death by her parents, Joan and Bud Whittle, and her brother, David Whittle. She is survived by her husband of 43 years, Jeff Cowan; her children, Jenny Cates, Joel Cowan, and Katie Cowan; her sister, Karen Daugherty; and many loving aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

“Those we love don’t go away. They walk beside us every day—unseen, unheard, but always near. Still loved, still missed, and forever dear.”

A celebration of Kelly’s life will be held on Saturday, July 19, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. until sun down at Brooktrails Lodge, 24675 Birch St, Willits, CA 95490.

All are welcome to attend.