

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

Online & Print



A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
Donations Accepted Edition No. 651 Thursday, August 13, 2026

Lawsuit challenges logging in Dutch Charlie Creek

Submitted by Friends of Dutch Charlie Creek

Branscomb, August 5 – Friends of Dutch Charlie Creek has filed a lawsuit against CAL FIRE to stop the destruction of one of the most critical endangered coho salmon habitats left in California. The litigation seeks to halt the recently approved “Hot Tuna” and “Lincoln Logs” timber harvest plans, west of Laytonville, which threaten imminent harm to the fragile Dutch Charlie Creek watershed and its prime coho habitat.

Dutch Charlie Creek is one of the last reliable spawning and rearing habitats for California’s endangered coho salmon. Surveys consistently show Dutch Charlie having the highest coho redd density of all tributaries to the South Fork Eel River, which is home to the most consistently abundant coho population in California. Dutch Charlie Creek’s coho habitat is key to the continued recovery of this population. Most of the watershed was only logged once, and it contains hundreds of remnant old growth trees. California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the National

Read the rest of
Lawsuit
Over on Page 9

California wildfire agencies support national response

Submitted by California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group

Sacramento, August 6 – As devastating wildfires impact multiple geographic areas around the nation, California firefighters from federal, state, tribal, and local agencies continue to step up and support the suppression response.

“We work together within the state every day utilizing one of the most coordinated and collaborative mutual aid systems in the world,” said US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Fire Director Jaime Gamboa. “But our response is not limited to California. Every day, we provide critical ground personnel, aviation assets, equipment, incident management teams, logistics, and contracted resource support to assist with wildland fires wherever the need is greatest. No matter where a community is threatened, we provide the resources to help.”

Extremely dry conditions and high temperatures led to an early start to fire season across the western United States this year.

Read the rest of
Agencies
Over on Page 9



Above: Everyone’s ready for the new school year, including, back row, from left: Baechtel Grove Middle School Principal Shane Topolinski; Blosser Lane Elementary School Principal Margaret Duran; Willits High School Assistant Principal Brandon Ludwig; Willits High School Principal Kenneth Mansfield; and Willits Unified School District Superintendent John Baker. Front row, from left: Brookside Elementary School Principal Diane Johnson; Sherwood Elementary School Principal Annapurna Steffen; and Executive Director of Student Programs and Principal of New Horizons K–8 Independent Study and Willits Adult School, Arora Chavez. Not pictured: Sanhedrin High School Principal and New Horizons Independent Study, 9-12 Yuliya Ritchley.

Welcome to Willits Unified School District

Posted at www.willitsunified.com

Willits Unified School District proudly serves approximately 1,530 students across six schools in the heart of Mendocino County, where towering redwoods, breathtaking natural beauty, and a strong sense of community create an exceptional place to learn and grow. We are committed to providing innovative, student-centered educational opportunities that inspire curiosity, foster achievement, and prepare students for lifelong success.

From strong academic programs and 1:1 classroom technology to flexible independent study opportunities and a necessary small school, Willits Unified provides personalized pathways designed to meet the unique needs of every learner. Our Career Technical Education pathways provide students with hands-on learning experiences, industry-relevant skills, and career exploration opportunities that prepare them for success in college, the workforce, and beyond.

Through our partnership with Mendocino College, Willits High School’s Dual Enrollment Program allows students to earn college credit while completing their high

school education. By expanding access to college-level coursework close to home, students can accelerate their educational journey, reduce future college costs, and gain a head start on achieving their academic and career goals.

Our dedicated Special Education Department is committed to ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education through individualized services, inclusive practices, and collaborative support for students and families. We are equally proud to offer Adult Education, providing lifelong learning opportunities that help community members build new skills, earn certifications, complete educational goals, and advance their careers.

At Willits Unified, our dedicated educators, supportive families, and strong community partnerships create safe, inclusive, and welcoming schools where every student is known, valued, and empowered to succeed. We believe education extends beyond the classroom, fostering confident learners, compassionate leaders, and engaged citizens who are prepared to make a positive impact in their communities and the world.

A letter from ...

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF WILLITS
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

John Baker

Welcome back to school!

As we begin a new school year, I want to extend a warm welcome to all of our students, families, staff, and community members. We are excited to embark on another year of learning, growth, and opportunity, with a continued focus on ensuring every student has the support they need to succeed.

This summer has been a busy and productive one across the Willits Unified School District. One of our most significant projects was the long-awaited replacement of several roofs at Willits High School. New roofing has been completed on the high school auditorium, the boys’ and girls’ locker rooms, and the woodshop shop building. These important facility improvements will help preserve our schools and provide safe, reliable learning environments for years to come.

Professional learning was also a major priority this summer. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and school psychologists from both Baechtel Grove Middle School and Willits High School attended a three-day Multi-Tiered System of Supports conference. Participants explored effective instructional practices, strategies for addressing challenging classroom behaviors, and ways to

strengthen social-emotional learning as an integral part of daily instruction. MTSS is a framework that helps us meet the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of every student, and it will continue to guide much of our work throughout the year.

As your superintendent, I have established several district priorities that will guide our work this year. We will strengthen our Professional Learning Communities so educators collaborate more effectively, share responsibility for student success, and continuously improve teaching and learning. We will continue expanding our Multi-Tiered System of Supports to ensure every student receives the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support they need to thrive. We are also committed to building stronger vertical and horizontal alignment across grade levels, departments, and school sites so that students experience a seamless, high-quality education throughout their years in Willits Unified.

Above all, we will focus on improving the quality of instruction in every classroom by implementing research-based practices, maintaining high expectations, and actively engaging students in their learning. These efforts will be supported by cultivating a positive district culture where every



Superintendent of Willits Unified School District John Baker

student and employee feels valued, respected, supported, and proud to be part of Willits Unified School District.

We are also pleased to welcome many outstanding new staff members to our district. Several teachers have relocated to Willits to join our educational community. This year we are strengthening our music program by adding a full-time high school music teacher, and we are expanding student health services with the addition of a full-time licensed school nurse. We have also welcomed new teachers at both the elementary and high school levels, a new counselor at Brookside, a College and Career

Read the rest of
Baker
Over on page 11

Draft candidate filing list for November election is out

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
willitsweekly@gmail.com

Neither Willits City Council incumbent Larry Stranske or incumbent Bruce Burton filed to run for election to another term as of the Friday, August 7 filing deadline. Due to the incumbents not filing, the deadline for other candidates to file was extended to Wednesday, August 12.

Robin Leler, a Willits teacher, has filed to run for a WCC seat in the November 3, 2026 election. Willits Weekly will report any additional candidates filing during the extension period in next week’s edition.

In other Third District races, candidates for Third District Supervisor Buffey Wright Bourassa and Eric Hart, who were the top 2 candidates in the June primary, will compete on the November ballot.

There are three seats up for election on the Brooktrails Community Township board. Incumbent Rick Williams and appointed incumbent Mary Ziady both filed to run again, but incumbent Ed Horrick did not, so filing deadline for Brooktrails board was also

Read the rest of
Election
Over on Page 9

Gunman at illegal Covelo grow pleads no contest

Posted by District Attorney David Eyster

August 6 – With the prosecutor announcing ready for a trial set begin Monday [August 10], the trial defendant opted against a local jury deciding his fate. The trial defendant instead offered to be sentenced to 10 years in state prison, a plea and sentence bargain eventually accepted by the prosecution after consulting with witnesses and investigators.

Charged with conspiracy to commit murder and attempted murder counts, defendant Edher David Lazano Urena, age 22, of Ukiah and Clearlake, entered a no contest plea to voluntary manslaughter, a felony, and admitted he used a firearm in committing that homicide.

A defendant’s no contest plea to a felony is exactly the same as a guilty plea for all purposes, save for the spelling of the words.

Presenting as an unusual set of facts for a homicide prosecution, defendant Lazano Urena and three others were working in May 2025 at an illegal marijuana grow in the foothills above Covelo where a decision

Read the rest of
Gunman
Over on Page 4

What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

Please slow down

To the Editor:

A sure sign that summer has come to Brooktrails is the birth of new fawns. I have enjoyed looking out my window and seeing the fawns (two from one mom and one from another doe) cavorting in the grass. Unfortunately, over the past couple of weeks, most recently this past Saturday, all three have been struck and killed on Daphne Way. Not even 3 months old.

Of course these were accidents, but maybe they wouldn't have happened if the drivers were more alert. Last year some kind soul put up a couple of signs saying "Slow, baby deer." The signs have faded but the message bears repeating. Please drive carefully on Brooktrails' curvy and up-and-down roads. Your actions can prevent needless deaths of wildlife, cats, dogs, (and people). Thank you.

Deirdre Santaniello, Brooktrails

Running for school board

To the Editor:

My name is Mason Rescina. I am a fifth-generation, lifelong Willits resident. I grew up here, attended Willits schools, graduated from Willits High School, and went on to graduate from Mendocino College. This community has played a major role in shaping the person I am today, and that is a big part of why I am running for the Willits Unified School District board.

My desire to serve our community did not begin with this campaign. During my time in school, I had the opportunity to serve in different student leadership roles, including as Student Body President of Willits High School. Since graduating, I have continued to stay involved in our community through organizations like Willits Sober Grad and the Willits Rotary Club. Through those experiences, I have learned the importance of listening, working with others, and stepping up when there is an opportunity to make a difference.

I am running for school board because I care deeply about the future of our schools, students, and our community. I want every student in our district to have access to a safe, high-quality education that prepares them for whatever path they choose after graduation.

I believe our community deserves a school board that takes its responsibilities seriously. That means closely monitoring student achievement, making sure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly, and listening to students, families, teachers, staff, and community members when making important decisions.

I am not running because I believe I have all the answers. I am running because I am willing to listen, ask questions, do the work, and make decisions based on what is best for our students.

This community has shaped who I am in countless ways. Running for school board is one way I hope to give back to the place that raised me. I would be honored to earn your vote.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about me, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can find me on Facebook at "Mason Rescina for Willits Unified School Board" or email me at masonformendo@gmail.com

Mason Rescina, Willits

Rally for Jackson Forest, August 15

To the Editor:

CAL FIRE broke its word. It's time to hold the line. After the 2020-2022 protests at Jackson Demonstration State Forest, CAL FIRE promised to PAUSE new logging until the Forest Management Plan was updated. In December 2025, they broke that promise – approving the AMEX Timber Harvest Plan (THP 1-25-00044-MEN) for nearly 500 acres near Chamberlain Creek, before the 2026 Forest Management Plan is finalized, a real co-management agreement with tribes is in place, and the Governor acts on AB 2494.

AB 2494 would change everything. This historic bill would prioritize ecological restoration, climate resilience, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge over industrial timber production.

CAL FIRE shouldn't be locking in more logging and road-building at Jackson while the

Legislature is still deciding how Jackson should be managed.

We demand:

- An immediate halt to the AMEX THP and all further logging in Jackson Forest
- No new Timber Harvest Plans until the Forest Management Plan, tribal co-management, AB 2494 are signed and implemented
- A real road maintenance and cultural site protection plan – over 25 years overdue
- An independent archaeological survey of Jackson Forest
- Governor Newsom's signature on AB 2494

Bring your family, your neighbors, your voice to our Rally for Jackson Forest, Saturday, August 15 at Fort Bragg Town Hall, from 12 to 4 pm. Stop the logging – pass AB 2494. Organized in solidarity by tribal nations and allies working to protect Jackson Demonstration State Forest. This is our forest, our history, our future.

Naomi Wagner, Willits, for the Coalition to Save Jackson Forest

Thank you

To the Editor:

Dear Willits: All of us at Tommy G Presents and the Mendocino Producers Guild thank you so much for showing up like you did to the 2nd Annual WillitsFest Local Talent Showcase! We had such a great time and by the looks of it, so did you. Whether it was the delicious food, curated craft scene, kid zone, the music, or the fire dancers, there was something for everyone. Willits has such deep pockets of talent, and it was our pleasure to present this year's local offerings on such a gorgeous day.

There were robots, gourmet cookies, ribs, a giant swing, a kid's scavenger hunt, face painting, fruit smoothies, and a big birthday party for Carlin Diamond, a local treasure!

The greatest feature was the ripple you all set off by gathering with family, friends and neighbors in the spirit of fun and community. That ripple goes on forever, and we all get to relive those memories free-of-charge for the rest of our lives. Willits has a big heart, and the ripple effect is real every time we get together and celebrate.

Thank you to all the participants, attendees, volunteers, Willits Charter Schools, and the City of Willits for being partners in community. This town is a positively amazing place to live, thanks to you.

We look forward to doing it again and seeing you all next year on Saturday, July 24!

Tom Girdauskas, co-producer, Tommy G Presents

Willits Heat Box

Welcome to summer and the heat box. After a generally mild July, August began with one of the warmest string of days so far this summer. While only a few reporting stations reached triple-digit high temperatures, highs across the Little Lake Valley averaged 96.5 F for the week of August 3 through 9. Those daytime high temperatures averaged roughly 10 degrees hotter than July daytime highs.

In most locations, the nighttime temperature dropped to the mid to upper 50s, providing some comfortable sleeping weather. This, however, was nearly 5 degrees warmer than July nighttime lows. Although forecasts vary, most call for a cooling trend, with highs in the upper 70s to low 80s through August 19.

The rain box will return from hiatus when measurable precipitation returns to the Little Lake Valley. Based on prior years, that should occur within the next six weeks, but only time will tell.

– Tim Hanna, Willits Heat Box

Little Lake Valley high temperatures (°F)										
location	Mon Aug 03	Tue Aug 04	Wed Aug 05	Thur Aug 06	Fri Aug 07	Sat Aug 08	Sun Aug 09	weekly average	July 2026 average	
Northbrook Way	100.6	97.5	93.0	93.4	98.2	101.1	94.6	96.9	86.9	
Brooktrails Dr @ Sherwood Rd	98.6	95.4	92.7	94.6	97.2	97.2	94.3	95.7	84.1	
Valley Rd	101.8	99.5	94.6	93.9	99.3	100.8	95.4	97.9	87.7	
Canyon Rd	99.1	98.1	93.7	94.3	99.0	100.8	94.1	97.0	86.6	
Pine Mountain	96.4	95.5	92.8	92.7	95.9	96.4	92.3	94.6	83.9	
South Main @ East Oak	101.1	98.6	92.8	93.7	99.0	100.6	93.6	97.1	87.4	
Daily average high	99.6	97.4	93.3	93.8	98.1	99.5	94.1	96.5	86.1	
Daily average low	55.1	59.7	58.5	56.8	55.7	57.0	56.8	57.0	52.4	

data compiled from wunderground (https://www.wunderground.com)

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Brooktrails 2nd Access Project Meeting, August 18

Posted by Mendocino County Department of Transportation

Join the conversation on the Brooktrails Second Access Project.

Mendocino County is preparing an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Brooktrails Second Access Project, a new roadway designed to improve emergency access, evacuation routes, and everyday travel.

A scoping meeting for the Second Access Project is set for Tuesday, August 18, at 6 pm at the Brooktrails Community Center, 24850 Birch Street. Join us to learn about the project and share your thoughts on environmental impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures.

The purpose of the scoping meeting is to present information about the proposed project, describe the state's CEQA process, and solicit input, including written comments, on the scope and content of the EIR. Comment forms will be available for those who wish to submit written comments at the meeting.

For more information, to see environmental documents, or to submit a public comment, visit www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/transportation/current-projects/brooktrails-second-access

Public comments accepted through 5 pm on September 4, 2026.

Mendocino College begins its 54th year

By Tim Karas, superintendent/president, Mendocino College

As Mendocino College begins its 54th year, I find myself reflecting with gratitude on the college's half a century of service to the students, families, and communities of our region. For more than 50 years, Mendocino College has helped people build careers, transfer to universities, explore new interests, and strengthen our local communities. That commitment remains at the heart of everything we do.

We are also beginning this academic year with record-breaking enrollment and the largest student body in the college's history. That growth is an encouraging reminder that Mendocino College continues to play a vital role in our region. While we are proud of our history, we are also looking ahead – responding to the changing needs of our students, strengthening our programs, and creating new opportunities for learning and workforce development.

Most importantly, I want our community to know that Mendocino College is here for everyone. Whether you are a high school student planning your future, a working adult looking to build new skills, someone considering a career change, a retiree pursuing a personal interest, or simply looking to connect with others through arts, culture, athletics, or lifelong learning, you are welcome at Mendocino College.

Beyond taking a class, one of the best ways to experience the college is to visit one of our

Read the rest of College Over on page 9



From far left: Makayla Brinkerhoff, of Willits, named her pig Curly because of the way it's tail curls. Curly loves her mud pit at home. Malyna Lavenduskey named her sheep Dolly Parton. Cailin Kelsay's sheep is named Thor. Mia and Sophie Chavez of Willits brought market sheep to the Jr. Livestock Auction. Below, left: Landyn Martin-Lundgren of Willits showed his Grand Champion Poultry Meat Pen with the help of his friends. Below: Grady Fenson of Willits with his Berkshire Champion Market Swine, named Ham. Grady has successfully shown and sold several pigs at the auction over the years.



Junior Livestock Auction

Local FFA and 4-H youth show their animals at the Redwood Empire Fair

"Hello, my name is Alayna and I am 13 years old. This is my third year of Willits 4-H. This is my turkey. His name is Armin."

Mathew Caine
Features Writer
willitsweekly@gmail.com

He is a Bronze Tom turkey. I have been enjoying taking care of him since he was

4 days old. I have enjoyed raising him and training him to get ready for fair," says the sign on Alayna and Armin's pen. She and the rest of the Willits 4-H and FFA kids waited Saturday to show the animals they have raised, fed, and nurtured to auction off at the Redwood Empire Fair's Jr. Livestock Auction.

Alayna's sign also educated the public about the things she has learned about turkeys. "Fun facts about turkeys: Turkeys can see better than humans. Among the more surprising facts about turkeys is that they have three-times better vision than humans. They can also see in color, and their eyesight covers 270 degrees."

Raising these turkeys, chickens, sheep, rabbits, goats, swine, and beef animals, teaches the kids many lessons which they are able to take with them throughout their lives: responsibility, empathy, and the reality of knowing where their food comes from. Several kids had a difficult time parting with their animals, who had become their best friends. Almost all of the animals had names. Samantha Espinoza named her Grand Champion Market Swine "Bubba." Some named their animals to keep a whimsical, but realistic view of the



Above, left: Danielle Estrada of Willits poses her Reserve Grand Champion Market Goat for the bidders. Above, right: Eva Pinon of Willits with her Reserve Grand Champion Market Goat. At right: Daniel Hosford of Willits showed his market goat while his brother Wade brought his sheep to show.



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Willits Weekly's
Puzzle Page

Sudoku, Word Search & Crossword

8	9		5	6				
	6		4				8	
		3						
					7			2
	1						3	9
7	3		8		9	5		
		6	7		1			
							3	
5					4		9	7



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!

SCHOOL YEAR WORD SEARCH

H A I B W K E P N K Y B T H N W X P M K R C
B K H L M T U E G R O C B A T I D I O P M T X
T B R U O U S X P E A T P G W P A P R T X
A A I E R S C L L T E E E D M E G R K R E Y
E A C E S S R S O B H O M D B K Y E I L S
T O D H S S N K E O H O O H E P X C N U K
N I W A A R Y A S D H O R Y A O M C R R
R S G M L Y R G R A D E K M O Y M I H D
O N S H C D X A R N O T A L B O O K P R E
T O P X L H Y A S R O T A L U C L A C H
E S H W L I A H C C E N O I S L O I R G
A S O A I W G I Y H H E A T M B I K X I
C E T D Y S S H R W C U E K O C A A E
H L S N M D G W T H U D U C Y A K D H R
E D Y H N T K N A E E A U P T X A M M
R K R X O D P L G N R L I E K L E D R D B
Y O P D X I K P T L B M C E I E S D Y L
P T N E M N G I S S A A Y R A R B I L L
U Y D E S K S M I G D B U G B A U W W I U

ASSIGNMENT
BACKPACK
BLACKBOARD
CALCULATOR
CHAIR
CHALK
CLASSROOM
DESK

EXAM
GRADE
HIGHLIGHTER
HOMEWORK
LESSON
LIBRARY
MARKER
NOTEBOOK

PRINCIPAL
RECESS
RULER
SCHEDULE
STUDENT
TEACHER
TEXTBOOK
WHITEBOARD

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17				18						19				
20				21				22						
23							24	25					26	27
		28				29				30				
31	32					33		34	35	36			37	
38					39	40						41		
42				43						44	45			
46		47	48					49		50				
51				52	53	54				55			56	57
		58							59					
60	61						62	63					64	
65						66							67	
68						69							70	

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Midway between south and southeast
- 4. Fathers
- 9. Wine grape
- 14. Al Bundy's wife
- 15. Derived from ammonia
- 16. Venezuelan state
- 17. Interest rate
- 18. Experts
- 20. Vascular tissues
- 22. Smooth and glossy
- 23. Administrative region in S. Korea
- 24. One from Damascus
- 28. Special interest group
- 29. It cools your home
- 30. Oh, God!
- 31. Intestinal pouches
- 33. Men
- 37. Twelfth star in a constellation
- 38. Former CIA
- 39. Arrange in grades of size
- 41. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- 42. 'The Great Lakes State'
- 43. Having earlike appendages
- 44. Momentarily stop
- 46. Ancient kingdom
- 49. Of I

- 50. White clerical vestment
- 51. Songs to one's beloved
- 55. Charges
- 58. Computer application originator
- 59. A place to dock a boat
- 60. One guided by reason
- 64. Slang for cigarette
- 65. Sailboats
- 66. 'Jerry Maguire' actor Zellweger
- 67. Screen type
- 68. Country legend Haggard
- 69. Puts together in time
- 70. When you anticipate arriving

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Involuntary muscular contraction
- 2. Eastern US transit agency
- 3. Leaves a place
- 4. Cease to participate
- 5. Current units
- 6. Cease to exist
- 7. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 8. Earth vibration
- 9. Very strong winds
- 10. For each one
- 11. A bog
- 12. The creation of beautiful or significant things
- 13. Affirmative

- 19. Pie ___ mode
- 21. Nonclerical
- 24. Indonesian island
- 25. Educational environment
- 26. Namibian peoples
- 27. Bring out or develop
- 31. Moves into a place of thought
- 32. Out of the way
- 34. Loads a ship
- 35. Beloved Hollywood alien
- 36. Distinguishes
- 40. The ancient Egyptian sun god
- 41. Secondary or explanatory title
- 45. Relating to a wing
- 47. One who gives a speech
- 48. In the middle
- 52. Loop with a running knot
- 53. Airborne (abbr.)
- 54. Sweet persons
- 56. Put into play
- 57. Small cattle breed
- 59. Millisecond
- 60. Revolutions per minute
- 61. They ___
- 62. Moon crater
- 63. A place to stay the night

WILLITS POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE LOG

July 20 to July 26
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

- July 20**
- 4:07 pm: VANANTWERP, Russel Armando (42) of Willits was contacted in the 100 block of Madden Lane. He was arrested on felony charges of domestic corporal injury.
 - 6:30 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 300 block of East Commercial Street and issued a warning.
 - 9:15 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 1100 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.
- July 21**
- 10:47 am: Officers responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle in the 24000 block of North Highway 101.
 - 12:04 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 1400 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.
 - 8:33 pm: FISKMCCARTHY, Monte Roy (35) of Willits was contacted in the 1600 block of South Main Street. He was arrested on misdemeanor charges of possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, disobeying court orders, and failure to appear.
- July 22**
- 1:56 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 100 block of Madrone Street and issued a warning.
- July 23**
- 4:59 am: Officers responded to a report of vandalism in the 100 block of School Street.
 - 10:00 am: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 1500 block of South Main Street.
- July 24**
- 2:07 pm: Officers responded to a report of an unwanted subject in the 800 block of South Main Street.
 - 5:54 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 300 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.
 - 6:29 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 1400 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.
 - 6:42 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.
- July 25**
- 1:31 am: Officers responded to a report of suspicious activity in the 100 block of West Van Lane.
 - 1:23 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 500 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.
 - 3:57 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 1200 block of South Main Street and issued a warning.
 - 4:02 pm: Officers conducted a stop in the 800 block of South Main Street and issued a citation.
 - 4:24 pm: Officers conducted a stop near the intersection of East Commercial Street and Madden Lane and issued a warning.
- July 26**
- No incidents to report.

The rest of
Gunman

From page 1

was made to ambush and kill two former workers who had come by the grow to ask to be paid money they were owed.

When told the owner was away, the two men left a message for the owner to give them a call and left the location.

The two men who were owed money had barely driven back towards Covelo when they were chased down, their vehicle blocked on the road, and told they were about to die.

Like a scene perhaps out of the documentary "Murder Mountain," when the two men under attack ran for their lives into the woods by pushing past the attackers' mouthpiece, the other three armed attackers – spread out as if a firing squad at the ready – opened fire.

Approximately 17 rounds of three different calibers of ammunition were believed to have been fired at the escaping men when all the spent casings were counted up.

The mouthpiece who had approached the two men and made the robbery and death threat, also armed, was killed by "friendly fire."

Defendant Lazano Urena also sustained gunshot wounds believed to have been caused by his loose cannon "friends" and bad positioning in a gunfire zone.

It remains unknown which of the three firing squad gunmen fired the fatal shot that killed the front man. Likewise, it remains unknown which one or both of the two remaining firing squad gunmen wounded the defendant. What is believed is that the evidence shows that the four acted in concert with one another with a group intent to kill.

Not unscathed, the two men who were attacked successfully escaped into the woods. One was eventually found by a Sheriff's Office deputy the next morning and flown out to Enloe Hospital in Chico for surgery and care. The other escaped the ambush without being hit by a projectile.

The homicide charge and firearm allegation that defendant Lazano Urena admitted on August 6 constitutes a violent felony and also a future strike, within the meaning of California's voter-modified Three Strikes law.

Given the violent nature of the conviction, the good time/ work time credits Lazano Urena may attempt to earn in prison towards early release on parole should be limited to no more than 15 percent of the overall 10-year sentence.

The law enforcement agencies that investigated what can only be described as challenging crime scenes were the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, the Department of Justice crime laboratory, the local forensic pathologist, and the District Attorney's own Bureau of Investigations.

The prosecutor who prepared this case for trial and would have presented the People's evidence to the jury is District Attorney David Eyster.

Mendocino County Superior Court Judge Keith Faulder accepted the admissions of criminal responsibility on August 6. The defendant will be sentenced to the 10-year prison commitment by Judge Faulder on August 28 at 9 am in Department A of the Ukiah downtown courthouse.

Sparetime Supply

will be hosting a private event for our wholesale customers

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12th through SATURDAY, AUGUST 15th at NOON

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A letter from ...
THE PRINCIPAL OF BLOSSER LANE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Margaret Duran

Dear BLES Families:
Welcome to the start of the school year!
Blosser Lane Elementary is excited to welcome back our students and families for the 2026-2027 school year! We look forward to seeing everyone on Wednesday, August 19.



The Principal of Blosser Lane Elementary School
Margaret Duran

Our school gates will open at 7:40 am, and the first bell will ring at 7:55 am.

Throughout the summer, our maintenance, grounds, and custodial teams have worked tirelessly to prepare our campus. From refreshing classrooms to improving our outdoor spaces, their hard work has ensured that Blosser Lane is clean, safe, and ready to welcome students for an amazing first day and a successful school year.

This year, we remain committed to strengthening our academic, behavioral, and social-emotional programs, so every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. We know that our greatest successes happen when families and school staff work together, and we invite you to become an active part of our school community by joining our Parent-Teacher Organization and School Site Council. Your support and involvement played a tremendous role in our success last year, and we look forward to building on that partnership.

To ensure you receive important updates throughout the school year and can easily communicate with your child's teacher, please make sure you are connected to ParentSquare, which will be our primary communication platform. Your child's teacher will also reach out to you within the coming week with additional classroom information.

Our dedicated staff is committed to providing an exceptional educational experience and supporting every student every day. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at margaretduran@willitsunified.com or (707) 459-3232.

Thank you for being an important part of the Blosser Lane family. We are excited to begin another year of learning, growth, and memorable experiences together.

Go Blosser Bears!



New Blosser Lane Elementary mural welcomes families back to school

Submitted by BLES Garden Mural

A colorful new mural at Blosser Elementary is helping welcome students and families back to school while reflecting the values and diversity of the campus community.

The mural project grew out of Principal Maggie Duran's vision of making the third- through fifth-grade school a welcoming, engaging place for students and their families. Earlier this school year, Duran applied for and received a grant from the Rural Professional Learning Network to support the Willits Unified School District's Blosser Lane School Beautification Project.

Students and staff contributed ideas by suggesting words and phrases that describe Blosser Lane. Students will have the opportunity to paint garden ornaments with the phrases in art class. These will be incorporated into the completed mural in a variety of languages representing the diverse families who attend the school.

The mural begins at the front gate, where colorful paintings of vegetables decorate each of the entrance poles, leading visitors to the front office. The centerpiece is a vibrant garden mural featuring local flowers, herbs, and edible plants. As a Blue Zones school, Blosser emphasizes healthy living and nutrition, making the garden theme a natural fit. Two local educators, Rebecca Daun Widner and Valarie McCourtney, donated their time to the project.

The design also incorporates the "Sky-Grass-Ground" handwriting guide, a classroom tool that helps students learn proper letter formation by using three visual boundaries for correct letter placement.

The mural currently surrounds the main building, which houses the front office and library. Plans are underway to expand the project around the rest of the campus through the school's student leadership program during the coming school year.

Above, left: A vibrant new mural featuring local flowers, herbs and edible plants welcomes students, families and visitors to Blosser Lane Elementary School.

Above, right: Blosser Lane garden mural volunteer Alissa "donated a day to carrots."

Below: One of the entrance poles at Blosser Lane, painted with colorful vegetables.

Photos courtesy Valarie McCourtney



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SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

Agape Bible Church
290 S. Lenore Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
Where love is first and the Bible is central.
Sunday Services: 10:00 a.m. - Worship
Adult Sunday School 8:30 a.m.
Info? 707-459-1905
www.agapebilechurch.com

Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church
803 Coast Street
P.O. Box 489, Willits
Worship Service - 5:00 p.m.
Pastor Kris Strickland
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

Church of Christ
"What must we do to be saved?"
Acts 2:37
1095 S. Main St., Willits
(next to Super 8)
(707) 459-5023
Sunday Bible Study-10:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship-11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service- 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study- 7-8:00 p.m.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
265 Margie Drive
Willits, CA 95490
ALL ARE WELCOME
Sacrament Meeting
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Eckankar: The Path of Spiritual Freedom
• A University for Soul
• Spiritual Living Courses
• Spiritual Discussions
• ECK Light & Sound Services
More information?
Call 530-224-8703
www.eckankar.org

Grace Community Church
Celebrating Life In Christ
25 Hazel Street, Willits
Worship Service 10 a.m.
For appointments call: (707) 459-3106

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
61 W. San Francisco Ave.
Willits, CA 95490
Father Aaron Bandanadam
Mass times:
Wednesday-Friday 9:00 a.m.
Saturday-5:30 p.m.
Sunday-9:00 a.m. - English
10:30 a.m. - Spanish
Confessions on Saturday 4:45 - 5:15 p.m.
Or by appointment at 707-459-2252
https://santhonywillits.org/
santhonywillits@gmail.com
We welcome All Walks of Faith

St. Francis Episcopal Church
1 North Main Street, Willits
707-272-0177
Sunday Service - 10 a.m.
In-person and on Zoom
Call for information.
ALL ARE WELCOME
The Rev. Betsy Bruneau

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

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

Willits United Methodist Church
Labyrinth and Peace Garden
A place to find comfort where all are welcome
Pastor Jaime Rogers-Fairchild
Sunday Worship at 10:30 am
286 School St. (at Pine)
707-459-2855
wumc@outlook.com
www.willitsumc.org
Facebook: facebook willits umc
If you want to be included in this column please call:
April Tweddell
(707) 972-2475
april@willitsweekly.com

Thursday, August 13

Book Club at the Library: Come be a part of a welcoming community centered around the love of reading every 2nd Thursday of the month at 3:30 pm, Thursday, August 13 this month, at the Willits Branch Library, 390 East Commercial Street. This club welcomes readers 18 and over to discuss notable books. Titles will be chosen during the meetings.

Willits Farmers Market: Join your neighbors at Summer Market outdoors at City Park on Commercial Street, Thursday, August 13, from 3 to 5:30 pm, for the freshest produce available, local meat, farm fresh eggs, hot and cold food from local businesses, along with crafts, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. The market honors EBT and WIC cards and matches benefits to double your dollars.

Friday, August 14

School Supply Giveaway at the Library: While supplies last, all school supplies will be given away to students under the age of 18. Friday, August 14 from 3 to 5:30 pm, at the Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street.

Acoustic Showcase at Shanachie: featuring local musicians, each performing acoustic sets. These nights have been known to be memorable events, featuring any number of notable local musical artists. Friday, August 14

at 8 pm. Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street.

Saturday, August 15

Round Valley Blackberry Festival: Saturday, August 15 and Sunday August 16, 2026 mark the weekend of the 43rd annual Round Valley Blackberry Festival. The festival kicks off at 10 am on both days, and runs through 6 pm on Saturday and 5pm on Sunday. Free admission! Festivities include over 30 artisan vendors offering their arts & crafts and food, including blackberry delicacies, Mendocino wine tasting, and live music both days. Children's activities promise fun for the entire family. Enjoy an art show in the Round Valley Library Commons adjacent to the festival grounds, and a car and motorcycle show on Sunday. More info: www.roundvalleyblackberryfestival.com for more info.

"Spirit of Place" reading at WCT: An evening of poetry celebrating "Spirit of Place: Mendocino County Women Poets Anthology" will be held at Willits Community Theatre on Saturday, August 15 at 7 pm. Sponsored by the Starlight Raffle and free rocks for all attendees.

Lounge Poetry Series, the reading will feature work from women across Mendocino County who have written poems responding to the phrase, "spirit of place." Admission is by donation. An open mic follows the featured reading. 37 West Van Lane in Willits. More info: contact Kirk Lumpkin at kirk@twinberry.net, or (707) 621-3215.

Blue Luke at Shanachie: Prodigy guitarist "Blue Luke" Andrews takes the soul of the blues, the groove of funk, the grit of rock & roll, and the harmonies of jazz into the modern world. Saturday, August 15, 8 pm at Shanachie Pub, 50 South Main Street.

Sunday, August 16

Round Valley Blackberry Festival: Sunday August 16, 2026 is the second day of the 43rd annual Round Valley Blackberry Festival, from 10 am to 5 pm. Free admission. See Saturday, August 15 listing for more details.

Summer of L.O.V.E. Vegan Potluck: Laytonville's Organic Vegan Experience (L.O.V.E.) is hosting our annual Summer of L.O.V.E. Vegan Potluck, Sunday, August 16, from 4 to 6 pm at the Long Valley Garden Club, 375 Harwood Road, Laytonville. Please bring a dish that contains no meat, dairy, eggs, gelatin, bone broth or honey and label if containing the common allergens gluten, nuts, or soy.

Monday, August 17

Willits Gem & Mineral Society at the Grange: the monthly meeting of the Willits Gem & Mineral Society is set for Monday, August 17, from 7 to 8:30 pm at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. Meeting includes: Minerals that begin with the letter "A," bring show 'n' tell and a snack to share. Crystal Raffle and free rocks for all attendees.

Wednesday, August 19

Lhasa Summers at Brickhouse: Singer / songwriter Lhasa Summers does a lunchtime show, Wednesday, August 19, from noon to 2 pm, at Brickhouse Coffee, 3 South Main Street.

Willits Stamp Club: Monthly meeting at the Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street. Wednesday, August 19 this month, from 5 to 6 pm. Bring your collection, and enjoy an evening perusing stamps. Refreshments provided. More info: talsofam@pacific.net.

FOWL Pop-up Book Sale, through August 18

Friends of the Willits Library presents a Pop-Up Book Sale at the Willits Library, 390 East Commercial Street. The sale opened August 8, and continues until Tuesday, August 18. A wide assortment of books in excellent condition. Only \$1 each. Willits Library hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10 am to 7 pm; Friday, 10 am to 6 pm; Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; Closed Sunday and Monday.

Harvest Exchange Table at the Willits Library

Wondering what to do with the surplus zucchini or apples in your garden? Bring them to the library! There will be a table set up for a harvest exchange at the Willits Library, beginning August 4, and open during Library hours. Open hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10 am to 7 pm; Friday, 10 am to 6 pm; Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; Closed Sunday and Monday. Please drop off produce no later than 15 minutes before closing.

MARTIN HAYDON POST 759 AMERICAN LEGION
BLACKBERRY Festival Pancake Breakfast
A Sweet Start to Sunday!
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2026
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
23900 HOWARD ST., COVELLO, CA 95428
\$15.00
SERVED WITH YOUR CHOICE OF BLACKBERRY or MAPLE SYRUP
BLACK PANCAKES: 2 eggs to order, 2 pancakes, 200g butter, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup.
MEAT: 2 eggs to order, 2 pancakes, 200g butter, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup.
SIDE: 2 eggs to order, 2 pancakes, 200g butter, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup.
FRUIT: 2 eggs to order, 2 pancakes, 200g butter, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup, 200g blackberries, 200g maple syrup.

WILLITS GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
-MONTHLY MEETING-
AUGUST 17TH 7-8:30PM
@THE LITTLE LAKE GRANGE
MINERALS THAT BEGIN WITH THE LETTER 'A'
BRING SHOW 'N' TELL AND A SNACK TO SHARE
CRYSTAL RAFFLE & FREE ROCKS FOR ALL ATTENDEES

August 5 - September 27, 2026
ImPRESSED: Community Events in Print!
Join Us For A Celebration of Community Printmaking!
Friends by Allen Watters

LEGAL NOTICES

WW623
Fictitious Business Name Statement
2026-F0271

The following person or persons are doing business as Al's Redwood Room, 207 South Main Street, Willits, CA 95490; 707-367-7594.

Registered owners: Sarah Mayfield and Corey Unangst, 24292 Cypress Drive, Willits, CA 95490.

This business is conducted by a married couple.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A.

FBN statement filed with the Mendocino County Clerk Recorder on July 24, 2026.

/s/ Sarah Mayfield

Publication Dates: August 6, 13, 20, 27, 2026

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

WW 622

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:

Sharon Colleen Convery, aka Sharon Convery, Decedent

Case No. 26PR00549

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of: SHARON COLLEEN CONVERY, aka SHARON CONVERY

A Petition for Probate has been filed by: Thomas James Convery III and Sean Convery in the Superior Court of California County of: Mendocino

The Petition for Probate requests that: Thomas James Convery III and Sean Convery be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an Interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A hearing on the petition will be held in this court as follows: Date: September 4, 2026, Time: 9:00 a.m. Dept: E. Address of Court: 100 No. State Street, Ukiah, CA 95482

If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for petitioner: Jennifer M. O'Brien (#278821), Neary and O'Brien, 110 So. Main St., Ste C, Willits CA 95490. Telephone: 707-459-5551

Publication Dates: July 30, August 6, 13, 2026

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The rest of

Baker

From page 1

Counselor, and many other dedicated employees whose work will positively impact our students every day.

Preparing our campuses for the first day of school is truly a team effort. I want to express my sincere appreciation to our maintenance, grounds, custodial, transportation, and technology for their hard work throughout the summer. Their dedication behind the scenes ensures our schools are clean, safe, welcoming, and ready for students and staff.

We know that the strongest schools are built through meaningful partnerships with families and our community. I encourage parents and guardians to stay connected with their child's school, attend school events, communicate regularly with teachers, and become active participants in their child's educational journey. Working together, we can create the best possible learning environment for every student.

I would also like to thank our dedicated teachers, classified staff, administrators, Board of Trustees, families, and community partners for their continued commitment to the students of Willits Unified School District. Education is truly a shared responsibility, and our students benefit when we work together with a common purpose and a shared belief in their potential.

On behalf of the Willits Unified School District, welcome back to school! We look forward to an outstanding year filled with learning, achievement, and success for every student. Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and support as we work together to provide every student with the opportunities they deserve.

I am honored to serve as your superintendent and excited for what lies ahead. Together, we will continue building schools where every student is supported, inspired, and prepared for a successful future. Here's to a wonderful 2026-2027 school year!

JULY 2026	WILLITS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT DISTRICT CALENDAR	JANUARY 2027
S M T W TH F S	SCHOOL BEGINS SCHOOL ENDS	S M T W TH F S
1 2 3 4	August 19, 2026 June 10, 2027	1 2
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	August 19, 2026	3 4 5Mm 6 7 8 9
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	June 10, 2027	10 11 12Mm 13 14M 15M 16
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	HOLIDAYS	17 18 19Mm 20 21 22 23
26 27 28 29 30 31	July 3 Independence Day	24 25 26Mm 27 28 29 30
	September 7 Labor Day	31
	November 11 Veteran's Day	
	November 23 - 27 Thanksgiving Break	
	December 21 - January 1 Winter Break	
	January 1 New Years Day	
	January 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	
	February 15 - 19 President's Week	
	March 26 - April 2 Spring Break	
	May 31 Memorial Day	
	June 18 Juneteenth	
	TK - 5 CONFERENCE WEEK	
	10/12/26 - 10/16/26	
	6-12 SEMESTER DATES	
	1ST SEMESTER 08/19/26 - 01/15/27	
	2ND SEMESTER 01/19/27 - 06/10/27	
	TK - 5 TRIMESTER DATES	
	1ST: 08/19/26 - 11/13/26 2ND: 11/16/26 - 03/12/27 3RD: 03/15/27 - 06/10/27	
OCTOBER 2026	NON-ATTENDANCE DAYS FOR STUDENTS	APRIL 2027
S M T W TH F S	Teacher Work Day August 17	S M T W TH F S
1 2 3	Teacher Work Day August 18	1 2 3
4 5 6Mm 7 8 9 10	Make-up Snow Day March 25	4 5 6Mm 7 8 9 10
11 12m 13Mm 14m 15m 16m 17	Teacher Work Day June 11	11 12 13Mm 14 15 16 17
18 19 20Mm 21 22 23 24	CERTIFICATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS	18 19 20Mm 21 22 23 24
25 26 27Mm 28 29 30 31	August 13	25 26 27Mm 28 29 30
	August 14	
	October 23	
	MINIMUM DATES	
1 2 3Mm 4 5 6 7	M = minimum day grades 6-12	2 3 4Mm 5 6 7 8
8 9 10Mm 11 12 13 14	m = minimum day grades TK-5	9 10 11Mm 12 13 14 15
15 16 17Mm 18 19 20 21		16 17 18Mm 19 20 21 22
22 23 24 25 26 27 28	SCHOOL INFORMATION	23 24 25Mm 26 27 28 29
29 30	Baechtel Grove Middle School (707) 459-2417	30 31
	Blosser Lane Elementary School (707) 459-3232	
	Brookside Elementary School (707) 459-5385	
	District Office (707) 459-5314	
6 7 8Mm 9 10 11 12	New Horizons (707) 459-4801	6 7 8 9M 10Mm 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18Mm 19	Sanhedrin High School (707) 459-4801	13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	Sherwood School (707) 984-6769	20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30 31	Transportation Department (707) 459-5111	27 28 29 30
	Willits High School (707) 459-7700	

Board Approved:06/16/2026

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