



Willits Economic Localization

The WELL Bucket

Volume 6 – Issue 2

March / April 2011

Schedule of Events

March & April

Mar. 5, 1 – 4 pm

Save the Redwoods Train Ride
Skunk Train Depot, 459-2418

Mar. 8, 7 – 9 pm

“Smart” Meter Meeting
Little Lake Grange, 459-4110

Mar. 8, 7 pm

Brooktrails CSD Board regarding
Community Garden, see page 5

Mar. 14, 6 pm

WELL CC Meeting
221 E. Lenore Ave.

Mar. 17, 7 pm

Now & Then Film Series
“The Botany of Desire”
Little Lake Grange, 459-6362

Mar. 20, 10 am

Spring Garden Blitz
County-wide volunteer in gardens
day. Brookside School Farm, WISC
Community Garden, 841-0464

Mar. 27, 8 – 11 am

Grange Pancake Breakfast
Little Lake Grange

Mar. 27, 4 pm

**WELL Community Meeting &
Growing Home Gardens Forum**
Little Lake Grange, see page 1

Apr. 11, 6 pm

WELL CC Meeting
221 E. Lenore Ave.

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GROWING HOME GARDENS

Sunday, March 27 4 pm

Little Lake Grange

WELL Community Meeting &
Forum featuring local farm experts:

**Ellen Bartholomew, Carol Cox,
Tom DeMarchi, Ellen Drell,
Michael Foley and Antonia Partridge**

Please bring your gardening questions!

**Also, the 2011 election for three seats
on the WELL Coordinating Committee**

“IMAGINING A POSITIVE FUTURE”

Sunday, April 17 4 pm

Little Lake Grange

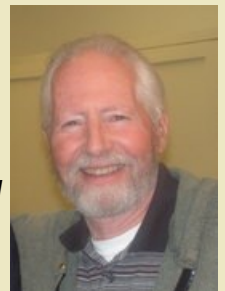
WELL Community Meeting with

Guest Speaker **Charles Bush**

*Director of the Redwood Coast Senior Center,
philosopher, educator and futurist, will speak on
the Mendocino Coast 2020 project:*

*“In the future, as a result of all of us working together to
make our home communities as good as possible, what will
it be like to live here on the North Coast in 2020?”*

<http://casparinstitute.org/c2020>



WELL GRANTS FUNDS FOR FIVE LOCAL PROJECTS

WELL (Willits Economic Localization) received a surprise gift of \$10,000 last summer. This gift was from an anonymous deceased donor who had admired WELL's work on making Willits a more self-reliant community and serving as a pioneer in the localization movement.

After soliciting ideas from its members and receiving ten suggestions for how to spend these funds, the WELL Coordinating Committee has decided on the following projects at this time:

- **\$3,500 to Michael Foley for leasing land, building fencing, and water systems to establish a Willits Intervale farmer training program.**
- **\$2,000 to Antonia Partridge for Brookside Farm interns and/or CSA share(s) to the schools;**
- **\$1,000 to Mason Giem, of the Gardens Project, for tools and supplies for the new Brooktrails Community Garden;**
- **\$500 to Bill Bruneau to develop a detailed business plan and possibly begin web design for a skills-teaching, web-based Eco-College; and**
- **\$1,000 allocated toward hiring a consultant to negotiate with affected landowners for achieving a Willits Creek trail.**

These allocations would leave \$2,000 of the gift funds for potential future projects.

WELL regretted not being able to fully fund all of the excellent projects submitted, but we intend to continue working - with volunteers and other possible funding sources - to support all of the ideas for improving our localization goals.

WHAT IS WELL?

Willits Economic Localization

Vision: An enduring local economy that provides health and security for our community.

Mission: To foster the creation of a local, sustainable economy in the Willits area by helping residents to learn valuable skills and to take action, and by partnering with other organizations to share knowledge and support projects that build a thriving community.

Schedule of Events

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Apr. 17, 4 pm

WELL Community Meeting & "Imagining A Positive Future" Forum
Little Lake Grange, see page 1.

Apr. 21, 7 pm

Now & Then Film Series
"Vanishing of the Bees"
Little Lake Grange, 459-6362

Apr. 24, 8 – 11 am

Grange Pancake Breakfast
Little Lake Grange

Ongoing Events

Every Monday, 12 – 1 pm

Heart & Soul (Transition Initiative)
Upstairs at J. D. Redhouse
Call Carlin at 459- 4850

Every Thursday, 3 – 6 pm

Farmers Market
Little Lake Grange

Now & Then Film Series presents:

"The Botany of Desire"

March 17 at 7 pm
Little Lake Grange

Do plants use us? This is a sweet story of our interaction with plants. While visiting incredible places like Peru, Kazakhstan and Amsterdam, learn from author Michael Pollan as he explains the natural history of apples, marijuana and potatoes and describes how common plants such as these deftly manipulate human desires. Based on a best-selling book, this documentary encourages viewers to look at the world from a vastly different perspective and improve their relationships with nature.

Donations of \$5 (children free) are greatly appreciated and will be used to renovate the hall, also to purchase films and equipment. Organic popcorn, Fair Trade chocolate and snacks for sale also benefit the Grange Restoration.

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CELL: (707) 367-3173

www.movetomendo.com**Brookside Farm****People-Powered Produce**

... would like to thank WELL for its support.

Brookside Farm welcomes volunteers to work in a beautiful setting and learn how to garden in Willits. Low income volunteers can earn up to \$20 per week in Farmers' Market credits.

Interested? Contact Antonia at 272-1395**Therapeutic Massage****and Bodywork
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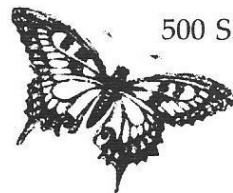
**Jed Diamond, Ph.D.****Counseling****44 Years Experience****(707) 459-5505** www.menalive.com**Gallery Gifts Games**

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Swap Meet a Great Success

WELL's first Swap Meet on Feb. 27 drew 50 or 60 people, tables full of items to trade, and a lively exchange of services, with people describing what they could offer as well as what services they needed, and then connecting with each other to make their no-money exchanges.

The tables featured musical instruments, art work, hand-crafts, clothing, books, computer equipment and other electronics, tools, kitchen wares, etc. The services included lessons, labor, special skills, and much more.

An experimental format was using "swap'em" to enable three-way trades. Each person could take an equal number of "swap'em gifts" (a service they would provide to someone else) and "credits" (that they could use to "buy" a service from someone else).

After the group circle where people described their services and needs, the room was filled with people making connections. "I got a bright pink sweatshirt and someone to help me with my computer chaos, and I will be giving guitar lessons to two new friends. My husband Tom traded some nice gloves for a set of drill bits," said Madge Strong, who helped organize the event, along with Jed Diamond.

Julia Frech of Mendocino Timebank also explained the web-based time exchange to people interested in participating in that system.

Because people had such fun finding treasures and exchanging services (and making new community connections), we hope to continue some form of swapping at future WELL meetings. We'll provide a bulletin board for posting swap items and services, and can continue to have "swap'ems" available if that is useful. Perhaps they could eventually become alternative local currency?

- Madge Strong

Agricultural Business Planning Workshop

California FarmLink and North Coast Opportunities, in collaboration with West Company and UC Cooperative Extension are hosting an Agricultural Business Planning Workshop on Tuesday, March 15 at the Agricultural Center at 890 Bush Street in Ukiah.

Registration begins at 8:30 am; the workshop begins at 9 am. \$20. Presenters include local business planning agency West Company, the Farm Service Agency, a local bank and a panel of experienced farmers in the area.

Topics to be covered include:

- ♦ **What is a Business Plan, and Why Do I Need One? - Schedule F Tax Forms**
- ♦ **Understanding Cash Flow**
- ♦ **Financing your Farm - Programs available to beginning farms, Loan Application Preparation**
- ♦ **Farmers Panel - Hear from experienced farmers about what has worked for them.**

The workshop will end with a light lunch and a meet and greet. For more information or to preregister, please contact Molly Bloom at: molly1@californiafarmlink.org or call 707-829-1691, ext. 100.

Join the WELL Group on Facebook

WELL has a new Group page on Facebook. Search for "Willits Economic Localization" and choose the Group page. "The more people who read our page and post on it the better."

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_176718939023521

WELL 2011 GENERAL MEETINGS

Jan. 23 – Water & Energy Forum

Feb. 27 – Swap Meet

Mar. 27 – Growing Home Gardens

April 17 – Guest Speaker Charles Bush

May 21 – Barn Dance

June 26 – Transportation/Land Use Forum

Aug. 28 – Walking Garden Tour

Sept. 25 – Guest Speaker

Oct. 23 – Emergency Preparedness Forum

**Nov. 20 – Community Brainstorm /
Talking Stick**

Details: Check www.well95490 and future newsletters

Reports from a week of localization events

WELL's Water & Energy Forum, Jan. 23

WELL's Water and Energy forum on Jan. 23 focused on what Willits residents can do to improve our water and energy security. The forum featured some high-powered local experts on water and energy: Larry Desmond spoke about Little Lake Valley hydrology and how to develop and store water for our uses; Quinton Roland described the City's program for installing residential grey water systems; David Partch presented a philosophical overview stressing mindfulness in our use of resources; and Keith Rutledge described REDI's home energy efficiency programs. There was also a lively question and answer period, moderated by Holly Madrigal.

John Jeavons. Willits and the World, 2011: The Zero Mile Diet, Jan. 25

The John Jeavons event on Jan. 25 was well attended and people got a chance to hear from a world expert about the difficulties that lie ahead if we continue to use large-scale agricultural practices to feed the world. Jeavons by his work over the last 40 years that people can learn to grow their own food in a small family farms and create what he describes as



"the zero mile diet." This way of growing food not only allows for a more secure food supply, but uses less of our limited resources, and is good for the planet. He offered support for our local efforts here in Willits and the need to work together make the transition we are facing less stressful. - *Jed Diamond*

"We Need Each Other: Building Gift Community" with Bill Kauth and Zoe Alowan, Jan. 28

On Jan. 28, Bill Kauth and Zoe Alowan offered a unique exploration of ways we can form more effective communities, including information from their book of the same name. The simple premise is that we need each other, in response to what author Richard Heinberg calls, "Peak Everything." We're not only running out of easily available oil, but water, land, and other resources.

In Willits, people have been coming together under the auspices of WELL, the Grange, and other organizations. The unique contribution that Bill and Zoe described was the formation of what they call "core communities" — a small group of people chosen as family to share, laugh and cry with. Jed Diamond and a number of people in the Making Ends Meet group are planning to form "core community" groups in Willits. For more information contact Jed at 459-5505 or email Jed@MenAlive.com - *Jed Diamond*

Brooktrails Community Garden Project

The Brooktrails Community Garden Project is making rapid progress, reports Mason Giem of the North Coast Opportunities Gardens Project. "We had a great meeting on Sunday, Feb. 20th with 25 people showing interest in participating in a community garden." The Brooktrails Community Garden Project aims to empower people to grow their own food, organize for a common cause and form community.

On Feb. 24, the Brooktrails Parks and Rec. committee voted to recommend the Brooktrails board allocate \$3,000 to the garden project at the board's next meeting, March 8.

The design committee has met a couple of times and has come up with different garden designs, incorporating hay bale gardening and raised beds for elders and the physically challenged. "We want to have the whole community," said Brooktrails resident Peter Norris, who's been attending the garden meetings. "Maybe a kid's garden, shared garden space, herbs and perennials."

The next step is the Brooktrails Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, March 8, where the board will vote on whether to allocate money for garden development. All interested people are encouraged to attend.

The meeting starts at 7 pm, at the Brooktrails Community Center. Call Mason at 841-0464 for more information.

WELL Coordinating Committee 2010 – 2011

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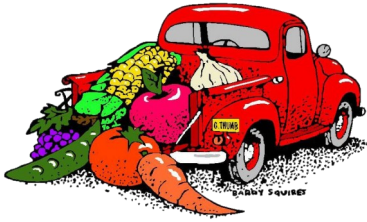
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A Self-Interested, Public-Spirited Appeal

from your Farmers Market Manager, Michael Foley

A resilient local economy depends upon a lively local food economy. Any member of WELL can spell out the reasons as well as I. Some of you can do so at greater length and more eloquently than I can. Yet Willits Farmers Market, your farmers market, is struggling this winter, as it has since Jen Lyon started it two years ago. So are local CSA's for that matter. So is the Grains Project. But I want to concentrate on Farmers Market.

***A vibrant year-round
Farmers Market
depends on achieving
a critical mass of
customers who come
week after week to do
a substantial portion
of their shopping.***

The winter market is struggling, not for lack of farmers and ranchers and artisans -- we started the season with almost twice the vendors we had the year before, and we still have produce at the end of each market, with a new produce vendor starting

up this month. It's struggling for lack of customers.

Let's be perfectly clear. A vibrant local food economy must include a vibrant year 'round farmers market. And a vibrant market depends on achieving a critical mass of customers who come week after week to do a substantial portion of their shopping.

Why do we need a farmers market? Because the sorts of small farmers who are going to make up our local economy just can't afford to sell at wholesale prices. Mariposa Market is more than willing to stock local products. Mary Anne, bless her, is dedicated to keeping produce prices low so consumers can afford organic and local. In fact, she has the lowest produce prices in town -- aside from Farmers Market, that is. But that means that farmers get no more than the going wholesale price for organic produce. And that's not enough to

sustain local farmers.

Big farms exploiting lots of cheap labor can get by with these sorts of prices, even throwing in the transport costs and brokers' costs. But their margins are tiny, and they have to be big, indeed, to make it selling wholesale. Willits farmers aren't big, and they aren't going to get big. When Tom Palley or Irene Engber or I sell to Mariposa, it's because we have more than we can move through direct sales to consumers or restaurants. But we're basically dumping our produce on a wholesale market that can't offer us decent prices. And, you may have noticed, there has been no local produce at Mariposa for weeks and weeks.

It's the same with our wonderful meat providers, who produce some of the best meat you can buy anywhere. They need direct sales to make it using the longer, more labor-intensive techniques of free-range and organic production. Ditto for our egg producers. They deserve (and need) every penny of the \$4.00 to \$5.00 a dozen they ask.

Farmers Market offers farmers and ranchers decent prices -- and they're still usually lower than what you pay at the supers. I published a comparison of prices in the three supermarkets and Farmers Market last summer in The Willits News, and again this past January, and it just confirmed what

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Winter squash at the Willits Farmers Market

WELL Coordinating Committee Briefs

January 11, 2011 Meeting

Plans for the Jan. 23 Water & Energy Forum were finalized, with Holly Madrigal taking the lead for that event.

Jane McCabe and Pat Norris volunteered to monitor meetings and issues. The BT Community Garden is agendized for a committee meeting Jan. 27.

The CC reviewed the 2010 Profit & Loss statement, which shows a net income without counting the \$10,000 gift funds. The CC also approved the 2011 budget, with the only substantial change from 2010 being an estimated \$900 expense for the contract newsletter editor.

Following up on our Fall CC retreat, we discussed goals for the future. One summary is: "Look at the whole community; support what people are doing; look for 'holes' and find people to fill them. Filter everything through criterion of 'How can we move toward self-reliance?'" That has room for us to be both connectors and doers.

The need for continual outreach & education is also vital, including presentations to local groups, inspiring guest speakers, and possible "open community" meetings.

We began discussion of draft "Goals & Action Plan for 2011", covering only a couple of the topics. Holly will follow up on ideas and networking for promoting local business.

In view of growing excitement and urgency, we decided to have monthly (rather than bi-monthly) general meetings. See the scheduled line-up in a separate article in this issue. Most of these will include a brief presentation on 'What is WELL?' and opportunities for volunteers to get involved.

February 7, 2011 Meeting

The major topic of this meeting was reviewing proposals and making decisions for the use of our \$10,000 in gift funds. This is covered in a separate article in this newsletter.

We also heard an update on the potential Willits Creek Trail, ideas for additional guest speakers coming to Willits, WELL's power point presentation, and plans for the Feb. 27 Swap Meet.

Complete minutes will be posted on our website: www.well95490.org

2011 Election for WELL Coordinating Committee, March 27

WELL will hold its 2011 election for three seats on the WELL Coordinating Committee at the March 27 General Meeting, 4 pm at the Little Lake Grange. Anyone who's been a WELL member for more than six months is eligible. Terms are for one year.

If interested, please submit something brief about your experience and interests, and why you'd like to be on the Coordinating Committee to office@well95490.org.

For more information, call Laura Toomey Rowland at 354-3410.

WELL Power Point Show Ready to Go on the Road!

We now have an up-to-date Power Point slide show that captures some of the exciting localization activities going on in Willits. This show covers some of the background — why localization is such a powerful way to take action, how WELL was born, and the fact that many other groups are involved. It also stresses what each of us can do to help build more local self-reliance.

This presentation can be as brief as 5 minutes or up to 30 or 40 minutes. We want to schedule showings at numerous venues: local civic groups, churches, schools, neighborhood parties, etc. Contact Madge at 459-6675 or madgetom@comcast.net to arrange a showing for any group you know about.

Many thanks to Laura Rowland for technical support and to Holly Madrigal, Quinton Roland, Annie Waters, and others for contributing photos.

Continued from page 6

studies have shown all over the country. You can afford to shop at Farmers Market; it's cheaper than the competition.

But Farmers Market will not survive or provide the basis for a real local food economy without customers. It needs a critical mass of customers to attract more people to growing food and bringing it to market. It's a reciprocal thing. The more vendors, the more customers find to buy and more people show up for market. The more customers, the more vendors -- and thus the more farmers and ranchers serving the local economy.

Where is this critical mass going to come from? Not the folks committed to shaving the dollars and dimes off their already tiny food bills by shopping Costco, Wal-Mart, Trader Joe's, or Safeway. Convincing the mass of Willits residents to come to Farmers Market is an uphill battle. We may be able to win it, but not until we have achieved a much bigger scale.

No, the critical mass has to come from people like the members of WELL. How many of us are there? Lots. How many come to Farmers Market on

a regular basis, meaning every week? A few.

Look at it this way. In the rest of the world, including Europe, everyone knows what day is market day. So everyone plans to shop that day. It's a matter of habit. It isn't hard. It isn't "inconvenient." It's convenient. It happens at the same time and place, week after week, rain or shine. And you get the best, freshest local produce, grains, beans, eggs, meat, reliably -- no labels to read, no worries about how old it is or whether it'll keep, with the face of a real farmer behind it. The local food movement needs real commitment. It needs you to come to market.

**Willits
Farmers
Market
Thursdays
3 to 6 pm
Little Lake
Grange**



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Willits Economic Localization

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