

Rio Dell-Scotia News

Kiwanis slates 3rd annual Bingo Bash

The Kiwanis Club of Rio Dell and Scotia is planning its third annual Bingo Bash, which will be held on Friday, April 12 at River Lodge, Fortuna. The event starts at 5 p.m. with dinner and social, and bingo starts at 6:30 p.m., according to Dana Webb of Fortuna, club officer.

Tickets are \$40 in advance and can be purchased at either Shotz' Coffee location, Rio Dell or Fortuna, or for \$50 at the door. Tickets include the nacho bar dinner, a beverage (choice of beer, wine, water, soda, or the Kiwanis specialty drink), a dessert, and bingo cards for all 10 games.

There will be a Dutch auction and raffle.

Desserts are being made by the Culinary Club at Fortuna high school. "We're all about helping youth of all ages," Webb notes, so the club engaged a high school student, Selene Santiago of Rio Dell, an aspiring graphic artist, to assist with the flier, publicity and social media.



Selene Santiago

Firefighters awarded

Zac Shafer was named the 2023 Firefighter of the Year in the annual recognition event hosted by the Volunteer Fire Department in late February. A lieutenant in the department, he was instrumental in getting grants for the new playground equipment and also did a lot to get the Redcrest station building completed, fellow department member Susan Pryor noted.

An award was given to Mike Belmont and Dan Collings Tree Service for their response to an October 30, 2023 incident involving a victim 150 feet off the ground in an old growth redwood tree to which the Shively Battalion responded. Recognizing the need for technical rescue, the incident commander contacted Dan Collings Tree Service and tree climbing expert Belmont responded to the scene.

"Both Dan Collings and Michael Belmont answered the call and provided their services without hesitation as they have throughout the years whenever called upon," according to the proclamation presented to the men, and Belmont "went above and beyond the call of duty when faced with extreme conditions and unexpected situations that arose during the rescue efforts" in which he showed "exemplary acts of heroism and bravery."

In addition, service awards based on years of service were given at the recognition dinner to Thomas Norris, Joseph Sancho, Zac Shafer, Rigoberto Salamanca, Brendon Harralson, Bryce Sancho, and Sonja Papas for five years of service; and to Ryan Elway and Laura Hartman for 10 years. Susan Davis was awarded for 15 years of service; Lisa Wilson for 20 years; Susan Pryor for 25 years and Joe Timmerman for 30 years, according to Fire Chief Shane Wilson.



Shafer, with axe plaque, is surrounded by 1st Asst. Chief Ryan Heussler, 2nd Asst. Chief Nate McKnight and Boardmember Joe Timmerman.

Dan Collings, left and Mike Belmont in photo from tree service website.



Meet a chamber member: Six Rivers Property Management

Six Rivers Property Management has been in Fortuna for more than 30 years, but has been under the current ownership since January 2018. It is managed by Broker/Owner Sarah Albin. The office was located at 710 Main Street, Fortuna until the building was sold two years ago. The firm moved to its current location at 755 12th Street, Fortuna. "We manage several hundred residential and commercial units throughout Humboldt County, with the majority of our units located in the Eel River Valley," Albin says. "We also manage the Rio Dell Storage Units on Wildwood Avenue."

Services to owner clients include property marketing, determining rent amounts, advertising on the firm's website, screening tenants, collecting monthly rents, paying property-related bills, taking maintenance calls, dispatching repair technicians to units, providing financial reporting to owners, keeping owners up to date on relevant laws related to property management, and providing eviction services, when needed, for owners.

The process of screening potential tenant applications includes running credit checks, obtaining past rental references, and verifying income. Tenants must make three times the rent in monthly income, which can come from various sources.

"We also strive to provide beneficial housing-related services to potential and current tenants," Albin says. "We follow all anti-discrimination laws, federal and state Fair Housing Laws, and California and Federal Consumer Credit Protection Laws."

Six Rivers consists of a team of five, including the maintenance department - Sandy and Christina; applications coordinator - Sherlyn; and operations manager, Kylee. Albin notes, "We strive to establish good working relationships with our owners, tenants, repair techs, and the local community. We are happy to be part of the Eel River Valley and to provide housing location services. For more information, please contact our office."



Spring into action at the community garden

Volunteers are needed to get the Rio Dell Community Garden in shape for a season of growth and opportunities. A cleanup day has been set for Saturday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and people willing to spend some time getting exercise and fresh air are needed. The garden is on the land of the First Baptist Church of Rio Dell.

Managed by the Rio Dell Community Resource Center, it has most of its plots rented, as well as a section where an after-school activities group of children come to work Thursday afternoons. A pumpkin patch has been planted along the lower end where the garden parallels Wildwood Avenue.

Events are envisioned for the coming year. "We're planning a garden party Saturday, May 11," with tabling and vendors, according to Andrea Edington, volunteer coordinator at the community garden. "We want to reinvent the garden space and encourage people to help us do that."

Celebrate!

Celebrate!

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The Plight of the Feral Cat Lady

I've been a Cat Lady my whole life. I grew up surrounded by many pets, but my favorites were always the cats. I've always had housecats that don't go outside and live pampered lives with as many toys and fuzzy blankets as they could possibly imagine. But it wasn't until I moved to Rio Dell that I became a Feral Cat Lady, and that is a different thing entirely.

It started with one stray cat showing up in my yard. He had obviously been someone's pet. I posted signs, posted pictures online, asked around the neighborhood, but nobody claimed him. He was neutered and seemed to like my yard so I started feeding him and accepted him as my "outside kitty." But when you start feeding one cat, more appear, especially in Rio Dell. Fast forward to now, years later. I've got 12 cats waiting for me on my patio every morning.

Some showed up as strays who once had a home, and some have been born in my yard. I find homes for them when I can. But nobody wants a mean, hissing, spitting feral cat who hasn't learned to trust humans. If I take them to a shelter, I fear they'll never find homes. So I trap them, have them spayed/neutered and vaccinated, and I bring them back to my property to live out their lives. My husband has built houses for the cats and my patio has been labeled 'the catnip forest.' These cats are safe, cared for, and loved.

Rio Dell is full of cats that don't get that treatment, however. I see plenty of cats around town that are obviously living a rough life. They're skinny, their fur is matted, and they're often banged up from fighting. I feel bad for these cats, but I also feel bad for the surrounding environment and neighborhoods. Feral and stray cats can present quite a nuisance—anyone who has ever platted a lovely vegetable or flower garden can attest to that. They poop everywhere, they wake us up at night fighting or mating, and generally cause problems. Beyond that, they wreak havoc on the endemic bird population and on our soils. Feral cats are the most destructive invasive species there is. "Exponential growth" is a phrase we've all heard, but you don't actually know what that looks like until you've seen one female cat turn into 100 cats in just a year!

Some would say Rio Dell has a "cat problem" and I understand the logic behind calling it that; but it really is a "human problem" in many ways. We really, REALLY need to be diligent about. Or a well-intentioned person starts feeding the stray or feral cat that keeps showing up on their patio in an effort to care for an animal that doesn't seem to have a home. Before too long, that one cat turns into many, many more. My call to the citizens of this fine city is this: please spay and neuter any and all cats you've taken responsibility for in any way. If you aren't sure whether the cat is already spayed/neutered, please take it in - the vet will know.

I know transportation, cost and time can be major barriers, but there are organizations and individuals there to help. Luckily for us, we have a new low-cost spay/neuter clinic in Fernbridge, Critters Without Litters, opening in July. In the meantime, there are several other organizations that can help.

Humboldt Spay Neuter 707-442-7729
Sequoia Humane Society 707-442-1782
Companion Animal Foundation 707-296-4629
Bless The Beasts 707-845-9748
Critters Without Litters (open in July 2024) 707-682-6366

Many of these organizations provide traps on loan, as does the Rio Dell Police Department. If you need help with transportation or advice on trapping, or if you're another Feral Cat Lady who would like to help others, please contact the Rio Dell Community Resource Center (707-764-5239), or reach out to me directly (cartera@cityofriodell.ca.gov). Our efforts aren't just about helping the cats live a better life, but also about helping our local community and our larger ecosystem. We really can make a difference if we work together and do the right thing, and that's the spirit of Rio Dell!

Amanda Carter
Mayor Pro Tem

Rio Dell-Scotia News

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Call the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce at 506-5081 to advertise.



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