

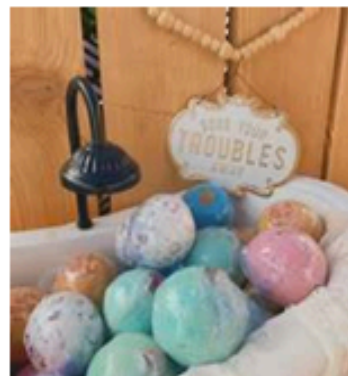
February 2026 Vol. XXXV Number 2

Self-care products just part of what Hills of Humboldt holds

Scotia native DJ Sterling launched her home-based business of bath and body products, Hills of Humboldt, in 2002, initially as a hobby after her son was born. "Trial and error" is how she describes the process of developing items, using locally sourced products whenever possible, to develop an array of soaps, scrubs and cleansers. She describes them on her social media pages as featuring ingredients including goat's milk, coffee grounds, orange and turmeric, and essential oils. A favorite in her product line is bath bombs, which combine citric acid and baking soda, resulting in a bubbly, fizzing reaction when they contact water. They come with or without CBD as an ingredient.

Sterling sells her products at vendor booths throughout the area, along with her art, which she describes as abstract, and multi-media, drawing upon a wide range of techniques from paint to wood burning. She holds themed art classes as well. At Pineapple Express in Eureka, where she works full time, she sells pineapple-flavored chap stick.

In addition, one can find Sterling's products at EmeraldZ Humboldt County Gift Shop and Games in Rio Dell and Fortuna Farmhouse on Main Street in Fortuna. She can be messaged through social media and plans to build a website. This will be the third year she has coordinated a Valentine's Sip and Shop event which, she notes, provides home-based businesses a showcase in the dead time between the holiday season and the start of Farmer's Markets. This year it will be held at the Van Duzen Grange in Carlotta and feature more than 40 vendors.



What would you like to see the theme of this year's Wildwood Days be? Go to the Rio Dell Scotia Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page and see where/how to make your choice. Voting will follow, with the winning theme announced May 1.

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Deadline for March newsletter is February 9th.
Call the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce at 707-506-5081 to advertise.

Temporarily operating as "Element 7," a new dispensary opened its doors in December in the site of the former dispensary of that name, now closed for several months.

Manager Richie Rodelas says of the new store's parent company, "We own and operate one of the largest stores in Southern California. Our Rio Dell site is now officially our second. Soon, it is our plan to rebrand both stores and continue to expand into other areas of the state."

He explained a bit of history: "Haven Nectar purchased the store in Santa Ana in early 2023. Prior to that, it was owned and operated as Blüm, as well Peoples OC before that. The Santa Ana store has been an established dispensary since 2016, winning multiple "people's choice" favorite dispensary awards. We believe this is due to several factors: We provide outstanding and knowledgeable service; our team reflects our love and respect for the plant and for our customers who use it."

Rodelas started his cannabis career "freshly out of high school back in 2014 during the Prop 215 era" as a delivery driver in the East Bay area. "My passion for cannabis operations grew tenfold," he says, "from helping patients with medical needs, to your typical stoner, I knew this is the industry that I was meant to be in. I've worked my way up, working for some of the most well-known dispensaries in the Bay Area. It's only right that a decade later, I emerged in the one place that made all my dreams possible."

"We have an amazing staff local to Humboldt County. They are critical to helping curate the best menu and culture that caters to our location here in Rio Dell," Rodelas adds, noting "as well as offering an excellent assortment of great brands from across the state, I should add that part of our core belief is respect for the communities we serve, as well as for the brands who cultivate and create the outstanding products we sell."

Why Rio Dell? "Humboldt County is globally recognized as the epicenter of cannabis, and we wanted to be where both innovation and legacy meet. Therefore, when the opportunity presented itself, we had to jump on it," Rodelas said, adding, "I want to tip my hat to everyone before me, who paved the way for our cannabis culture, and all who benefit from their devotion, passion, and sacrifices. My plan is to contribute my knowledge and passion to this store in Rio Dell, and all surrounding areas of Humboldt County. As well as continue passing the torch forward in this cannabis industry we all love and respect."

The business is currently open every day, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. with plans to extend hours in the near future, and to hold a grand opening after the branding is complete.



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CREATIVE CLUB CONNECTS LOCALS WITH CRAFTS

It's Wednesday evening at the Rio Dell Community Resource Center and the place is humming. Tables are loaded with craft materials – markers, paints, paper, felt, templates of various types and sizes. More than a dozen people – adults and children – work on a variety of projects such as making greeting cards and holiday-themed placemats to be laminated and used for upcoming community meals.

"Sewing is a big thing," Resource Center coordinator Sarah Reback says of the group, called the Creative Club. She credits Resource Center staffer Andrea Edington with launching the gathering, and for reaching out for additional sewing machines when the one, old model at the center wasn't meeting the demand. A total of six machines were donated by Sholtz Coffee, James and Cari Williams, Laurie Quinn, Ania Smith and Robyn Roberson.

Edington, in turn, says the club was "a seed sprouted by Ania Smith" last August. It meets on the first Wednesday of every month. "We have three to five crafting stations that include things like wood burning, mask making, and holiday-themed crafts like making Christmas stockings or trick or treat bags". The sewing station has definitely been the most popular, Edington says, and is "run by our wonderful volunteer, Becky Williams, with the help of her husband, Mike"





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The Kiwanis Club of Rio Dell-Scotia shared this photo of the team that distributed gifts to area children last Christmas. Club treasurer Dana Webb reports on Friday, Dec. 12, the Kiwanis "gave out 545 holiday gifts to the students at the Rio Dell Elementary School District and the Scotia Union School District. The day started with the gifts being dropped off by the fire department. Santa Claus also made an appearance and met with each of the students and took photos, followed by ice cream sundaes." Webb adds that the students were able to pick their gifts from tables where the presents were arranged by age group, with older students able to pick gifts for younger siblings. Proceeds from the club's Bingo Bash last year paid for the presents.



photo includes the following:
Megan Barnett Hall and Jennifer Crenshaw from the Redwood Rural dentist van; Lex Luther, Liv Barker, Dana Webb, Aundrea Ashely Ruth, Shannon Brasher, Kirt Morrill, Tyler Keener, Hunter Hatten (a firefighter who brought Santa on a fire truck and stayed to scoop ice cream), Jose Beltrane, Patrick Reeves, and Santa.

Free puppet show slated

The Rio Dell public library is hosting Quack and Wabbit, billed as a puppet show literacy tour, on Wed., Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. The show, geared for younger children, is called "Mr. Gumpy's Outing," and tells a musical story of friendship and cooperation based on a book by John Burningham. The free event is sponsored by the Humboldt Literacy Project. For more information, call 707.445.3655.

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