

Let's Keep What We've Got

Steve Brigham, Editor

In this issue of *The Westport Wave* (see page 2 and page 5), you'll read about our latest cause for town alarm, and that is the Fort Bragg School District's current decision to cease their ownership and support of our Westport Recreation Center, which was formerly the Westport School. Now I'm just speaking here as an interested private citizen, but it seems to me that this means that Westport now has a big opportunity to take over the ownership and control of this splendid community facility, for a relatively modest expense. Our Recreation Center is a tremendous community resource, and without the use restrictions that came with School District ownership, the building could be used for anything we want.

This is one of those issues where there are many public and private organizations involved, and there are so many unknowns right now – there will likely be many more meetings between the various organizations before we know what's really going to happen. But any time Westportians can control their own destiny, I'm all for it.

Having a community meeting place in Westport is vital to this community. It may not be as fancy as some people would like, but hey, this ain't Vegas. And besides, why throw away something perfectly good that you already have and you use all the time? Personally, I support all of our Westport Community institutions equally, and I really don't care who owns the building or runs it, just as long as we all can use it.

If Westport loses its Community Recreation Center, where will Santa go next Christmas? If you think that our community facilities are worth preserving, please attend the **town meeting on January 10th at 5:30PM at the Recreation Center** (see page 5). Let's all keep informed, and focus on results and **working together**.



Jeff Saunders

We are heartbroken at the passing of everyone's best friend in town, Jeff Saunders, on December 8th. Jeff and his late wife Millie were town leaders for decades and were loved so much by all. Now they are together again. Please send your remembrances of Jeff to westportwave@gmail.com for publication in future issues of *The Westport Wave*.

Thanks from the Westport Hotel and Old Abalone Pub!

Tabby Korhummel, General Manager

Our December events were very successful! Thanks to generous donations and the help of Lois Senger we were able to sponsor 12 Firemen for brunch and help to buy them Christmas gifts!

In celebration of the Winter Solstice, over 60 people came out to eat and be merry! Cheers to Goldie Westheimer for playing piano so we could all carol along!

The Westport Hotel and Old Abalone Pub would like to acknowledge the Westport community for its continued support as we get ready for a winter rest and restoration. We'll be closing after we ring in 2018, and **re-opening on Wednesday, February 14th** for our decadent five course Valentine's Lovers' Dinner, with a 5:30PM and a 8:00PM seating. We will also be serving a Valentine's Brunch on Sunday, February 18th from 10:00AM to 2:00PM. Please call ahead to make your reservations.

We are also taking submissions for future 2018 art shows and openings. If you are interested in a showing your art, please call 964-3688 or email a sample of your proposed exhibit to westporthotel@mcn.org. You can also follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/abalonepub/>

Here's looking forward to many more good times to come, and we wish you all a very Happy and Peace-filled New Year!

WVS Mini-Grants

The Westport Village Society Mini-Grant Program awards grants in three different community service categories: 1) benefit/beautification of the community, 2) events, and 3) outreach. Funds are available again this fiscal year, through June 30th, 2018. Please see the Mini-Grant Application Form on our WVS website www.westportvillagesociety.org for details.

Westport Yoga

Melinda McLaughlin

Westport Yoga classes are suspended during the month of January pending the outcome of the school building issue. Please see the articles starting below and on page 5 for details.

Westport School

Thad Van Bueren, President, Westport Village Society

The Fort Bragg Unified School District will stop paying the utilities for the Westport school by the end of 2017. Disposal of the building is expected to follow after a FBUSD committee considers the matter. The district provisionally offered the building to interested parties as an alternative to physical removal. This news is hardly a surprise since the school closed in 2010 and there is no prospect it will ever reopen.

In recent years the FBUSD allowed the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District use of the Westport School. The arrangement did not generate income. The FBUSD pays all of the utilities on the property of the Westport Community Church under a year-to-year lease. The pending changes prompted discussion among the MCRPD, Westport Community Church, and Westport Village Society. The WCC met December 9 and determined it was not interested in acquiring the building. However, it would support WVS efforts to purchase the building and enter into a lease with the WCC under terms similar to those offered to the FBUSD. Those terms involve paying all of the utilities, carrying insurance, and other obligations such as the eventual cost of building disposal. Disposal is currently estimated at \$15-20k. The WVS Board met December 17 to review the situation. The WVS directors determined the WCC offer was not viable, concluding it could not in good faith shoulder heavy financial and operational burdens that might place the organization in financial jeopardy. Under a lease WVS could not obtain grant funding to improve the facility or offset recurring operational expenses. A year to year lease could suddenly subject WVS to the disposal costs with only 30 day notice.

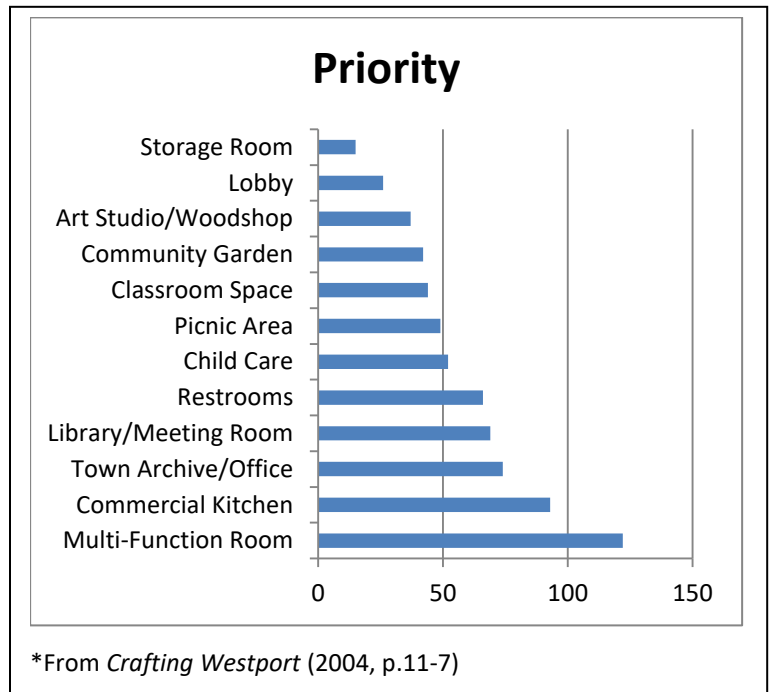
Given the eventual disposal cost of the school building, it seems unlikely the MCRPD or any other organization will step in to accept it. The community thus faces the prospect that the school will be unavailable by the end of 2017 and removed in 2018.

As an alternative, the WVS directors proposed that the WCC consider offering their property to WVS under an arrangement that would allow religious services to have reasonable priority for use. If the WVS owned the property it could qualify for grant funding, accept the school as an interim measure, and move forward with plans to improve the facility into the community center many want. The WVS made it clear it would only accept the property if there was strong community support.

The WCC met Dec. 21 and declined the WVS proposal. WCC trustees John Allison and Steve Brigham then resigned, leaving the administration of the church to the sole remaining trustee, Baile Oakes. The implications for the future are uncertain. The pending loss of a community meeting space suggests it would be valuable to engage in further discussion. If you are interested in community programs and having a place to pursue them come to the **WVS Board meeting January 20, 2018 at 10:00 AM at the Westport Church** to share your ideas.

WVS has explored ideas for a community center since 2000, offering support for programming with purchases of equipment for the Church and recreation programs. Three past surveys indicate our village favors a community facility near the center of town that will facilitate a wide range of activities. The chart summarizes input from the most robust survey answered by 51 people. Summarizing input we've received over the past 17 years, there is interest in a multi-use facility that might include the following features:

- A large multi-use hall that can be flexibly used for larger gatherings with a stage and equipment such as tables, chairs, and cots that would allow use as an emergency shelter.
- One or more separate rooms used for classes, a library/historical archive, and office including internet, computer, lockable storage, and equipment.



- A commercial kitchen also useful for craft classes, community gatherings, and in the event of an emergency (large sinks, stove, refrigerator, counters, etc.).
- Improved bathrooms to serve events and use as an emergency shelter (including showers).
- Adequate parking.
- Various other uses such as a community garden and outdoor events/sports spaces.

Making that happen is possible, but it will take a lot of effort and money. Some question whether or not there is sufficient interest to warrant pursuing it. The WVS needs a clear indication of community interest and assurance that any proposed course of action will not imperil our ability to carry out the rest of our mission. We welcome your ideas and expressions of interest.

24/7 Westport Wave

The Westport Wave is always free to everyone at any time on the Newsletter page of our website westportvillagesociety.org – where you'll always find our most current issue as well as six years of monthly back-issues, all in living color, with live links! Check it out, and tell your friends!



The Westport Community Church

Westport Community Church January 2018 Calendar

Founded in 1880, the **Westport Community Church** is a multi-denominational church which serves the Westport community and its many spiritual paths. It is also the prime meeting hall for the Westport community and its activities. In addition to being a community meeting hall, we are also doing our best to nurture our tradition of having weekly spiritual gatherings at the Church (which is at the end of Abalone Street on the left), with all religious and spiritual denominations both welcome and encouraged to hold both regular and special services here. Please contact Baile Oakes at baileoakes@gmail.com for use of the Westport Community Church for community meetings, activities, or religious services, and also to see how you can help keep our Westport Community Church organization improving and our Westport Community Center buildings and grounds maintained and improved.

1st Sunday, January 7th, 10:00AM – Our Bi-Monthly Quaker Worship Group

Katharine White leads our regular 1st Sunday Quaker Worship Group meeting. The format is a simple, quiet meditation for 45 minutes followed by Katharine reading Quaker passages and a shared discussion of our experience including sharing of any of our thoughts or readings that one is inspired to bring to

the group. This has been and will continue to be a very peace-filled and nurturing experience.

2nd Sunday, January 14th, 10:00AM – Carolyn Cathey, “What’s Your Scheme For 2018?”

Carolyn Cathey leads a discussion on “**What’s Your Scheme for 2018?**” Carolyn asks, “How important are goals? Do we wing life day to day by staying in the now, or devise a game plan? How does faith, trust and maybe even surrender fit in with your schedule?” Join the deliberation on “the power of now” vs. “future planning”. A great way to start a New Year!

Carolyn Cathey’s new book, “Divine Messages from Jesus for a magnificent life” is now available in paperback and Kindle versions. For more information, please see

<https://carolynecathey.com/divine-messages-from-jesus/>

3rd Sunday, January 21st, 10:00AM – Our Bi-Monthly Quaker Worship Group

Katharine White leads our regular 3rd Sunday Quaker Worship Group meeting. The format is just like our 1st Sunday Service.

Court-Ordered Community Service Opportunities in Westport

Gary Quinton

Do you need to serve court-ordered Community Service or serve in a Sheriff’s Department Work Release program? Why not serve it in your community? We would value your time!

There are several places and varied types of work in Westport where you can provide your hours and get credit towards the satisfaction of your court order, including work for the Westport Volunteer Fire Department, Westport-Ten Mile Cemetery District, and the Westport Village Society. Jobs include grass and weed cutting, painting, handyman work, and more. We can help you with registration paperwork and compliance/completion documents. If you are interested, please call Gary Quinton, (707) 964-7073.

The Future of Westport's De Facto Recreation/Community Center

Baile Oakes, Westport Community Church

Greetings dear Westport community member:

At the present time the ability for our community to participate with the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District (MCRPD) programing is made possible through an agreement between the Fort Bragg Unified School District (FBUSD) and the MCRPD that allows the MCRPD to use the facilities of the FBUSD.

In December the Fort Bragg Unified School District (FBUSD) notified the Westport Community Church that they will be removing the Westport School from its facilities.

This action will result in our community losing MCRPD programing unless our community manifests a new relationship with the MCRPD.

The future of our Westport community having access to the School building/Recreation Center/Community center...the building owned by the FBUSD that is located on the Westport Community Church's property and is presently used for ongoing programing by the MCRPD is going to be determined by people in our community who wish to not only keep this valuable resource within our community, but also put their time and possibly resources toward manifesting this goal.

In order to facilitate this process, all community members are invited to attend a **meeting at the Westport Recreation/Community Center on Wednesday, January 10th at 5:30PM.**

MCRPD representatives Dan Keyes and Bob Bushansky will be attending this meeting. They are both actively engaged in a District wide strategic planning process that includes community participation and feedback meetings as a means to determine future local recreation needs. When the FBUSD leaves the property, there will be an additional financial responsibility to keep the MCRPD programing in Westport. If you are going to attend this meeting, it is imperative that you take the time to read the following update regarding this matter.

It is important for all people attending the meeting to be up to date regarding this matter so that the meeting can be dedicated to informed discussions and feasible concepts for how to keep a valuable building and MCRPD programming alive and well in our community.

A factual update:

In mid-December the FBUSD informed the Westport Community Church that the FBUSD will put the building up for sale in the next couple of months and will cancel both their PG&E account and their account with the Westport County Water District at the end of December 2017.

This action regarding the utilities on the property would have left zero water and electric service on the property come the first day of the new year.

To mitigate the utilities situation, two community members have stepped forward to pay for these services in the short term with the hope that this will buy us time as a community to come to an informed decision as to the worth to our community of keeping the school building in Westport as well as our ability to continue having events and MCRPD programing at the school building.

As far as the FBUSD process of selling/disposing of the building, the Board of the FBUSD will need to approve of the idea of removing the Westport School building from their facilities. If approved, the building would be put up for sale to the general public.

If there are no offers on the building, the FBUSD will demolish the building...The Westport Community Church Board passed a resolution that forbade the FBUSD to burn the building due to environmental hazards that this action would bring to the church grounds as well as to the general Westport community.

There is a very low possibility that the school building will be purchased and moved off the Church property, because the building is worth much less than the cost that would be incurred removing the building from the property...at the same time, there is always the chance that some person will buy the building and remove it from the property.

Presently, FBUSD has a lease agreement for one dollar per year with the Westport Community Church



The Westport Recreation Center (formerly The Westport School)

for use of the property. This lease agreement commits the FBUSD to pay for all utility and maintenance cost associated with their use of the church property. The lease also requires a 60 day notice for changing and/or terminating terms of this lease agreement.

Bottom Line: It will take well over a month for the FBUSD to go through all their internal approvals that are needed to take action on the future of the school building.

Upon hearing this news from the FBUSD, The Westport Community Church Board agreed to contact the Westport Village Society (WVS) and offer them the same terms of the FBUSD lease of the Church grounds if they decided to take possession of the FBUSD building.

The Westport Village Society's response to this offer was conditional on the Westport Community Church donating the entire church property to them. Prior to the Church board's offer to the WVS, the Church board had informed the WVS that transfer of any part of the property to any other person or organization is contrary to the protection of the Westport Community Church's Articles of Incorporation.

The bottom line:

1. The Westport Community Church would like to help find a way to keep the school building accessible for community events and MCRPD programming into the future.
2. The donations to the Westport Community Church at this time are well short of paying the additional cost of insurance as well as water and power for the School Building and MCRPD programming.
3. MCRPD has indicated that even with FBUSD paying for the insurance and utilities on the school building, it is questionable whether they can continue to afford to offer MCRPD programming at the present amount of MCRPD programs and the attendance they draw in our community.
4. If our community wants to keep MCRPD programming here, our community members need to get more involved/active in manifesting and attending community service programming.

MCRPD wants to serve us.

Do we have the community members who can help manifest and are interested in ongoing attendance at MCRPD programming?

There has been much talk in our community about wanting to build/manifest a new Community Center. Community Centers need programs and special events. We presently need to build programming to keep MCRPD here. Taking first steps along the path to growing into a newer facility in the future.

Yes?

Possible Scenarios:

1. MCRPD takes possession of the school building and leases the property from the Westport Community Church.
2. Residents of Westport form a new 501C3 organization: Westport Community Center which takes possession of the school building and leases the property from the Westport Community Church.
3. The Westport Village Society takes possession of the school building and leases the property from the Westport Community Church.
4. The Westport Community Church takes possession of the school building and establishes a Community Center Endowment Fund to cover the ongoing cost of additional insurance on the school building, utilities and maintenance of the Westport Community Center building.
5. The Fort Bragg Unified School District retains ownership of the School Building and sells it to another party who removes the building from the Westport Community Church property.
6. The Fort Bragg Unified School District retains ownership of the School Building and demolishes the building and disposes of its remains in large dumpsters.
7. ???

In closing, there has been some hesitation in our community to the idea of taking possession of the school building because of the eventual cost of removing the building in the future. With proper care and maintenance the school building can serve our community for up to another 20 years. At any time within this time period our community chooses to dispose of the building, a good sized excavator, a day or two and some large dumpsters would take care of this matter.

Hope to see you at the **meeting at the Westport Recreation/Community Center on Wednesday, January 10th at 5:30PM.**

For more information/help in this matter please feel free to contact the Westport Community Church through this email: baileoakes@gmail.com

Fearless Winter Weather Forecast

Steve Brigham

I remember the good old days, when I used to publish my Fearless Winter Weather Forecast every year in October. Then the weather got so hard to predict that I decided it wouldn't be "fearless" any more unless I wrote it much later in the year when winter was already happening. This year, our weather has been even more unpredictable, and I still don't know what's going to happen.

One thing that you can typically count on with California weather, though, is that it's always quite different from one year to the next. Our 2016-2017 October thru September "Water Year" was a wet one (65.03" here on the Westport Headlands), and so you'd expect that this 2017-2018 year would be drier, and so far that's exactly what's happening. October 2017 here on the Headlands was a dud as far as rainfall goes, with just 1.06" of rain, as opposed to the whopping 10.70" we got in October 2016. November 2017 was a little better, with 6.67" of rain, which was almost as good as November 2016's 7.43". Then we hit a very dry December 2017, with just .92" of rain (as opposed to 7.39" in December 2016).

So right now, on January 1st, we're at 8.65" of rain for the Water Year, whereas a year ago we were at 25.52". That's not real good if you like rain. There are some indications of more rain in January, which should be our wettest month anyway (last year, we got 13.04"). But we're back to this drought thing again, with the "Ridiculously Resilient Ridge" of high pressure off the California coast blocking all weather from the north, and it will take a lot to change things.

Well, at least we got enough rain in November to green things up around here. But Southern California hasn't had a drop of rain since last Spring. Unless a miracle happens, this will be a relatively dry year for us, and a very dry one in Southern California.

Super Moon, Micro Moon, and Blue Moon Eclipse This Month!

Steve Brigham

Hey, **Happy New Year**, boys and girls! This first month of 2018, we'll get to see a Super Full Moon, a Micro New Moon, and a fully eclipsed Blue Full Moon, *all in one month!* At least if it's not too cloudy. On New Year's Day, we'll start right off with a Super Full Moon, which is when the Moon is just a little closer to Earth than it usually is, and so it looks just a little bigger than it usually does. Watch for high tides!

Two weeks later, the New Moon will be a Micro Moon, which is when the Moon is just a little farther away than it usually is, and so it looks just a little smaller than it usually does. The joke here, boys and girls, is that when the Moon is completely "new", you can barely see it at all, no matter what size it looks like! Isn't that funny? Astronomy is full of surprises!

There aren't usually two full moons in one month, but this month there are, and the second one in the month is called a Blue Moon, even though it's not really blue. This one is on January 31st real early in the morning, and guess what, the Moon will be fully eclipsed, which means it will look kinda grayish-red instead of pure white. So get up early on January 31st and watch the Lunar Eclipse (from 5AM to 6AM) to see the Moon look real pretty. Unless it's cloudy then, in which case the Moon won't look like anything!

January 2018 Westport Calendar

Monday, January 1st – New Year's Day

Monday, January 1st – Super Full Moon, 6:24PM

Thursday, January 4th – Bookmobile, 9-9:30AM, Westport Community Store

Sunday, January 7th – First Sunday Quaker Worship Group, 10:00AM at the Westport Church

Tuesday, January 9th – Westport Municipal Advisory Council Monthly Meeting, 7:00PM, Westport Community Church (check <http://www.westportmac.org/> for possible cancellation or agenda)

Wednesday, January 10th – Community Center Meeting, 5:30PM. Westport Recreation Center (end of Abalone Street, next to Westport Church)

Wednesday, January 10th – Westport Volunteer Fire Department Monthly Meeting, 6:00PM, Westport Firehouse

Friday, January 12th – Fort Bragg School District 711 Meeting, TBA

Saturday, January 13th – Westport County Water District Monthly Board Meeting, 10:00AM, Westport Firehouse

Sunday, January 14th – Carolyn Cathey, "What's Your Scheme For 2018?", 10:00AM, Westport Community Church

Monday, January 15th – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Tuesday, January 16th – Micro New Moon, 6:17PM

Thursday, January 18th – Bookmobile, 9-9:30AM, Westport Community Store

Saturday, January 20th – Westport Village Society Quarterly Board Meeting, 10:00AM, Westport Community Church

Sunday, January 21st – Third Sunday Quaker Worship Group, 10:00AM, Westport Church

Wednesday, January 31st – Total Lunar Eclipse, 4:51AM to 6:07AM (maximum totality 5:29AM)

Wednesday, January 31st – Blue Full Moon, 5:26AM

The Westport Wave is a free monthly community newsletter published by the **Westport Village Society**, a non-profit community-benefit organization. Internet subscribers to *The Wave* receive their **COLOR** copies on or before the first day of every month by e-mail. Printed (black-and-white) copies of our current newsletter are also available for free at the Westport Community Store. **Check out our website www.westportvillagesociety.org, to read and download both our current issue and over five years of past issues of *The Wave*.** Contributions for our February 1st, 2018 issue of *The Westport Wave* are due by January 27th, and should be sent to Editor Steve Brigham at westportwave@gmail.com, or P.O. Box 237, Westport, CA 95488. Thank You!