

January 1, 2026

The Westport Wave

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Westport Volunteer Fire Department 2025 in Review

2025 was a busy and productive year for the Westport Volunteer Fire Department.

From January 1 through December 26 we responded to 89 incidents, including 13 motor vehicle accidents (7 of those involved injuries), 3 active fires, 31 medical calls, 2 water rescues, 12 responses to mitigate hazardous conditions and 10 public assists. One of the public assists involved rescuing a horse that was stuck in a ditch.

Our response area covers 190 square miles, from Abelobediah north to Hales Grove, and six miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. We have 13 active duty members and 2 associate members who can respond to 911 emergency calls. Two of our responders are paramedics and five are EMTs. Our Department conducts regular trainings to maintain and improve our skills on three Wednesdays and the third Saturday of each month. CalFire personnel often participate in our trainings.

With the proceeds of grants and other sources of revenue we continue to upgrade our fleet of emergency response vehicles and our equipment. Thanks to an initiative led by State Senator Mike McGuire we took delivery of a new fire engine funded by the state in October. With the net proceeds of our fundraising barbecue on the Westport Headlands in August, and a very generous private donation, we were able to pay for an upgrade package that enables the engine to meet the unique requirements of our response area. Our new 4x4 engine will be our primary response vehicle for emergencies involving hazardous conditions, cliff

rescues and vehicle extrications. With this engine now in service, we are surplusing three of the older vehicles that have been in our fleet for a number of years.



~~~ *The WVFD's new 4x4 engine.* ~~~



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**All of us in the WVFD (and The Westport Wave) wish everyone in the Westport Community a healthy, happy, and safe New Year!**



## **WVS News**

**By Thad Van Bueren**

Welcome to the New Year! Although it is the heart of winter, daylight is steadily increasing and that is cause for celebration. It is an invigorating time of year to witness the awesome power of nature. If you visit our Westport Headlands or DeHaven properties, we urge you to respect those natural forces and watch them from a safe vantage point!

This year WVS will be working to improve and maintain those coastal accesses, as well as fostering projects that contribute to the vitality and cohesiveness of our community. We were awarded a \$270k grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to improve access to the 26 acre DeHaven parcel, a property that encompasses the beach at the mouth of DeHaven Creek and the adjacent headlands. The work will be carried out in the summer of 2026 by

Wylatti, a local contractor engaged by WVS. WVS is also hiring structural and geological engineers to advise and inspect the stairway and parking improvements during construction.

Plans are also underway to estimate the costs and clarify the scope of the work needed to replace the wooden portions of the stairs at the Westport Headlands property in the village of Westport. Temporary repairs of those stairs were completed last year. However, WVS recognizes a more durable solution is needed to ensure public access to the beach is maintained. We welcome your help with this major project that will require grant funding. Please contact WVS at [wvs@westportvillagesociety.org](mailto:wvs@westportvillagesociety.org) if you would like to assist.

WVS held a special meeting November 19, 2025 to consider granting funds to improve the audio-visual capabilities available at the community center. A grant of up to \$7000 was approved to assist the Westport Community Church in its effort to build a state-of-the-art AV system that can be used for presentations and teleconferencing at the Community Center. The WCC plans to host a website that can be used to reserve the facility and a computer will be acquired to operate the system and host teleconferences for meetings and educational presentations. The WCC plans to host regular monthly events such as talks and classes of interest to the community. The system will enhance the sharing of information in person, as well as making it possible to participate remotely.

The Community Center AV system will feature a ceiling mounted digital projector and drop down screen, two wall-mounted monitors, and a voice-activated camera system that will rotate to focus on speakers. The system will facilitate remote participation using Zoom. The WCC has already improved the quality of its wifi connection in the Center. It is anticipated that fees generated from use of the Center for meetings and events will help sustain the system, while fostering more community engagement.

## Thad Van Bueren to host "Local First Nations During the Historic Period" talk on January 18<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. in Ft. Bragg

Thad Van Bueren will be presenting a talk on his local archaeological research titled *"Local First Nations During the Historic Period"* at the Fort Bragg Library's community meeting room (499 E. Laurel St.) on January 18 at 2:00pm for the Noyo Bida Truth Project (NTP).

This reprises the talk he gave at the WVS Annual Meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, for those who may have missed it.

For more information about the NTP visit  
<https://thenoyobidatruthproject.org/>.

## Westport Community Church Election News By Erin Detrick

The WCC had one applicant for the available 3-year seat. Congratulations to Sheila Winslow. We look forward to working with her. I, personally, want to thank Sheila for all her community service since she has moved to Westport. Sheila has brought our little town together with her beautiful holiday decoration, potlucks, and her active involvement on several local committees.

Congratulations Sheila!

## Connecting the Coast: A New Community Network

As internet choices in our neck of the woods can be sparse, problematic, or unavailable for some residences, the following communique deserves mention in this month's issue.

Megan Smithyman, a customer service support representative of the **Further Reach Network**, recently reached out to us to let us know that their expanding internet service now includes Westport.

As the system is a peer-to-peer network, depending on your location, some residences may not be reachable yet, but it's certainly worth noting they've now expanded into the Westport area.

Further Reach now maintains nearly 250 interconnected relay sites which are hosted by community members - who allow them to mount small, discreet equipment to extend coverage to surrounding homes and high up in redwood trees. Megan says that the result is a true community mesh network that is resilient, adaptable, and virtually invisible after installation.

The network now extends along the coast and inland valleys, including Albion, Anchor Bay, Anderson Valley, Boonville, Caspar, Comptche, Elk, Fort Bragg, Gualala, Little River, Manchester, Mendocino, Philo, Point Arena, Stewarts Point, and The Sea Ranch.

For more information, visit their website at  
<http://www.furtherreach.net> or give them a call  
707-278-8899.

## Support the Westport Volunteer Fire Department... Our Department depends on your donations!



[www.westportvfd.org](http://www.westportvfd.org)

Your support and contributions will enable us to meet our goals and improve our equipment and training. Any amount helps... and helps keep our community safer.



To Donate  
Today



Babaji

## Forbearance

At our ashrams in the U.S. and India we choose a single word to inspire us throughout the year. For 2026, the word is:

### forbearance

Forbearance is the ability to withstand - the capacity to remain grounded through pain or pleasure, gain or loss, sorrow or happiness. While this may seem impossible, we are all capable of practicing forbearance to some extent in our lives.

The Earth, who holds everything in creation, is the embodiment of forbearance. Whether a person is virtuous or a sinner, without judging, Mother Earth bears us all.

To hold anything, you have to be still, steady, standing in one place. The practices of connecting with your Self, meditation, self care, and all that I've been sharing in this column over the years, are all about developing that capacity. Forbearance requires coming back to our Self instead of surrendering to our habit of constantly flowing out in a reactive mode.

Try to catch yourself as you start to react to something - a person, a comment, a news story, whatever. Bring your attention to the navel, let the breath rise and fill your heart space. Don't react right away. I'm not suggesting that you completely ignore

what is happening, but in any situation, it is possible to take a little space so you can act from a place of groundedness. This is a very simple, yet powerful practice. If you do this several times throughout the day, with full presence, you will see the difference it can make in your relationships with others and in your life.

When we practice forbearance, we can have a great impact on the environment around us, but we have to learn how to hold ourselves first.

It is important that we all pay attention and take some responsibility for the vibrations that we are putting out into the world. Are we in a state of fear, anger, greed or lust? If so, those vibrations are permeating the space around us. At the same time, vibrations of peace, contentment and appreciation will also have a great impact.

Darkness is vast. But when you strike a match, the darkness is removed in that instant. Such is the power of our thoughts, such is the power of our prayers, while grounded in our hearts. We are all a part of promoting harmony in the world through our thoughts and prayers for peace and tolerance.

Through forbearance, we become a stable home in which the Divine can reside and express itself in the form of our good thoughts and actions. Make yourself that temple of the Divine. Acknowledge that you are a Divine being, you are capable and worthy of hosting divinity within you. Spread the light. When we truly hold that prayer in our heart, it does make a difference.



*Babaji's mission is to help people experience fullness in life through simple spiritual practices and meditation. He divides his time between the Sonoma Ashram in Sonoma and Upasana Hilltop Sanctuary here in Westport. He is currently in India at his Ashram in Varanasi to check in on the many social service projects serving impoverished communities nearby. For more information, please visit [www.sonomaashram.org](http://www.sonomaashram.org) or reach out by email at [info@sonomaashram.org](mailto:info@sonomaashram.org). We'd love to hear from you!*

## January 2026 Westport Calendar

**Thursday, January 1st, 2026** – New Year's Day

**Saturday, January 3rd, 2026** – Full Moon, 2:02AM

**Thursday, January 8th** – Westport County Water District Monthly Board Meeting, 7:00PM, Zoom. Call Kayla Cooper at (707) 367-1057 for information on attending by Zoom.

**Wednesday, January 14th** – Westport Volunteer Fire Department Monthly Meeting, 6:00PM, Westport Firehouse.

**Thursday, January 15th** – Bookmobile, 9:00AM-9:30AM, Westport Store.

**Sunday, January 18, 2026** – Thad Van Bueren presents *"Local First Nations During the Historic Period"* talk at the Fort Bragg Library's community meeting room at 2:00pm for the Noyo Bida Truth Project (NTP). For more information about the NTP visit <https://thenoyobidatruthproject.org/>.

**Monday, January 19th, 2026** – Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

**Wednesday, January 28, 2026** - WVS Quarterly Board Meeting at 6:30pm at the Community Center. Contact [wvs@westportvillagesociety.org](mailto:wvs@westportvillagesociety.org) for Zoom details.

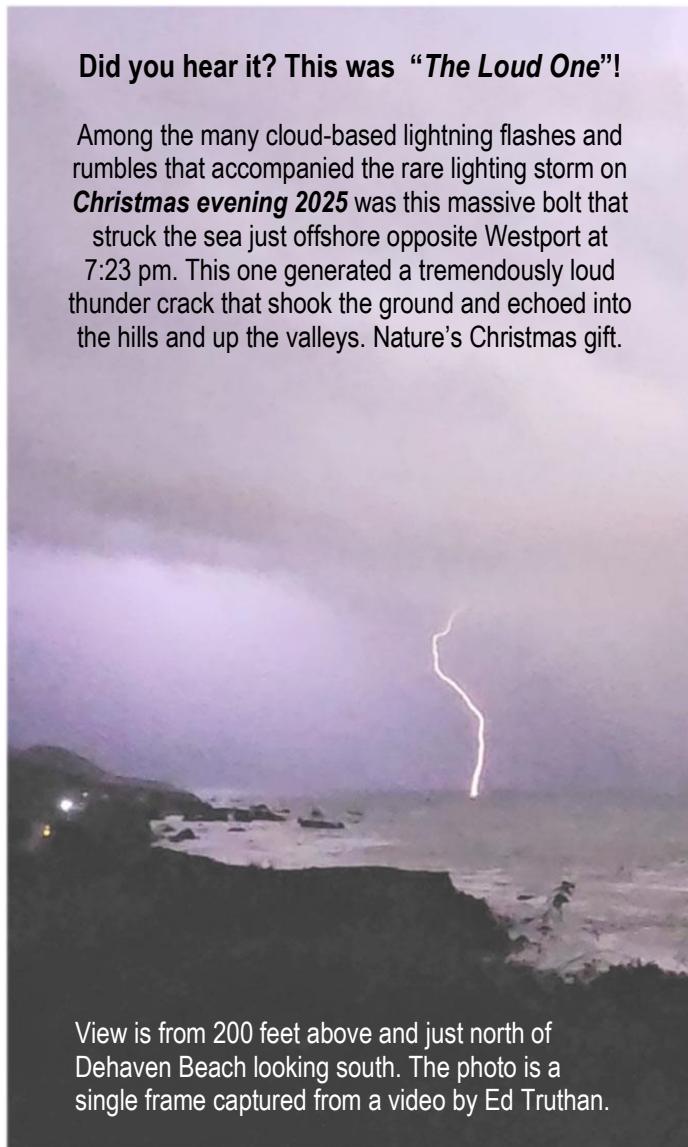
**Thursday, January 29th** – Bookmobile, 9:00AM-9:30AM, Westport Store.

*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. Both the current *Westport Wave* and 14 years of monthly back-issues are also on the Newsletter page of our WVS website [www.westportvillagesociety.org](http://www.westportvillagesociety.org).

**Contributions for our February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 issue of *The Westport Wave* are due by Wednesday, January 28th, 2026** and should be sent to our new Editor Ed Truthan at [thewestportwave@gmail.com](mailto:thewestportwave@gmail.com). Thanks!

### Did you hear it? This was "The Loud One"!

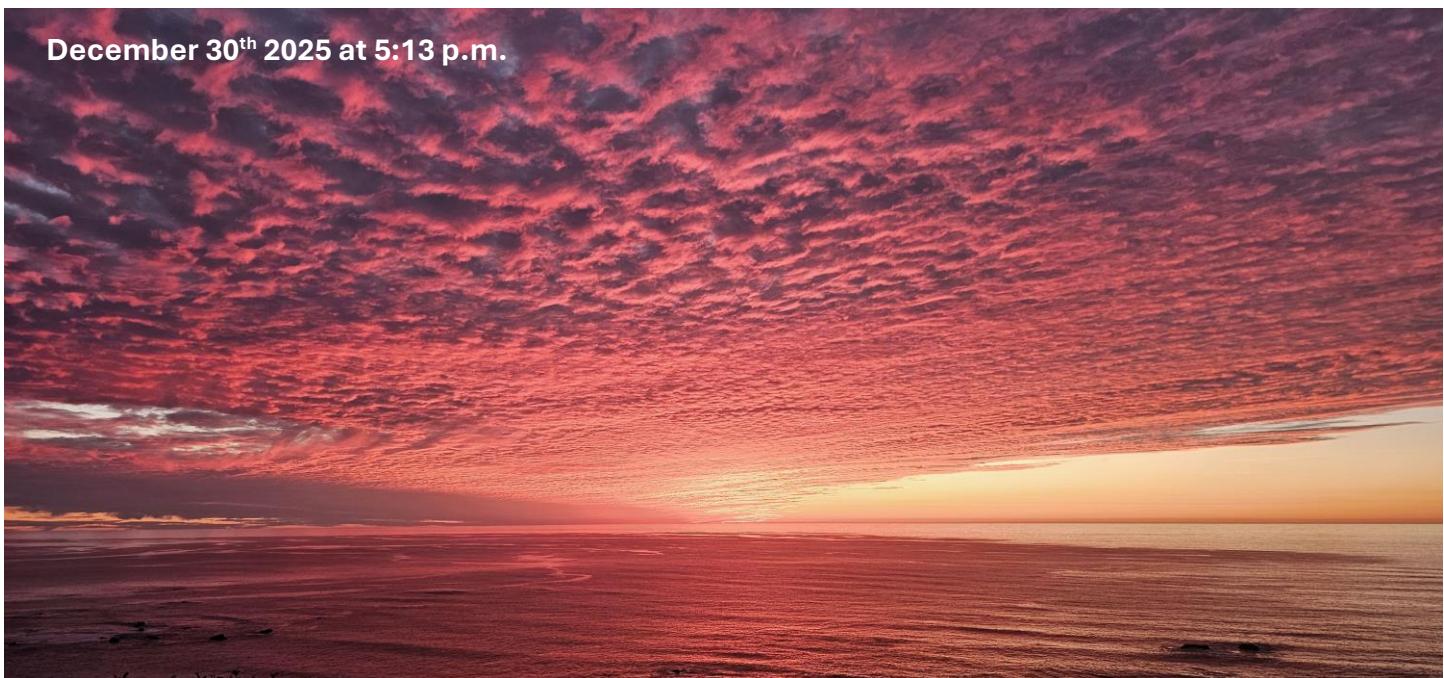
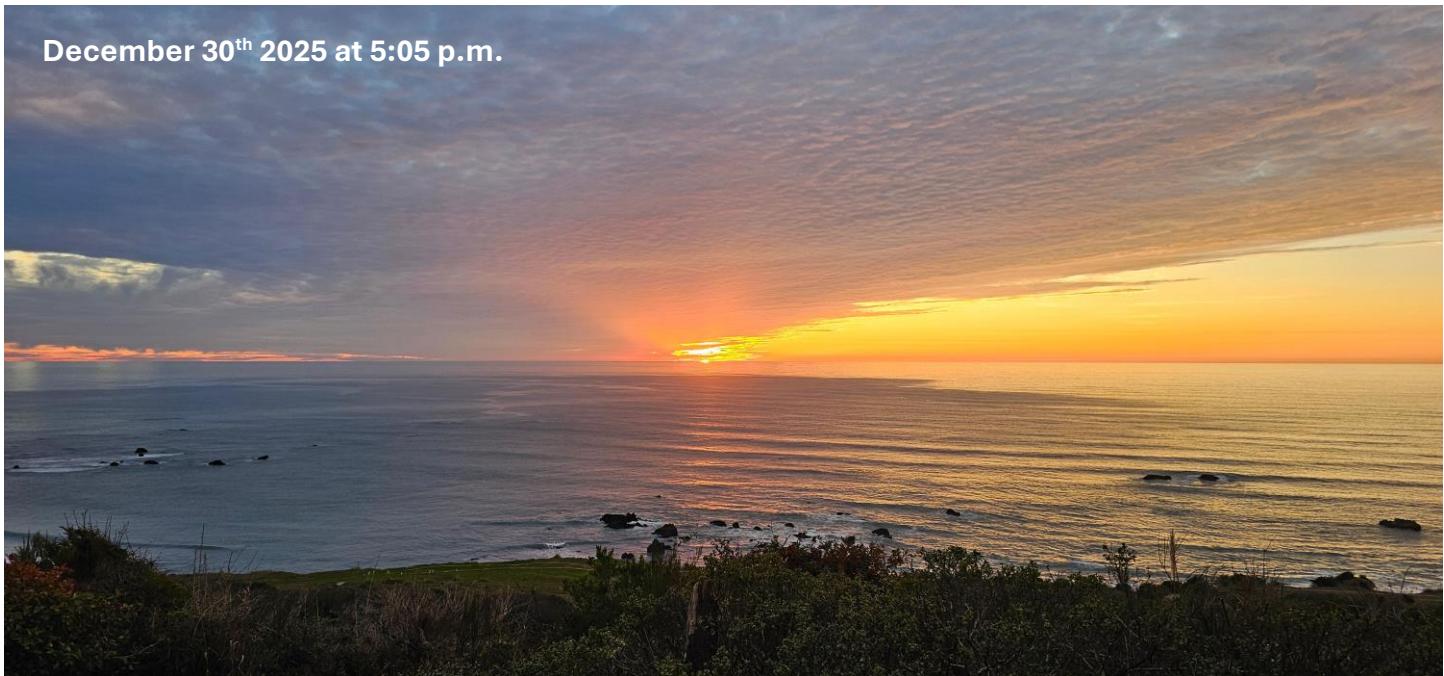
Among the many cloud-based lightning flashes and rumbles that accompanied the rare lighting storm on **Christmas evening 2025** was this massive bolt that struck the sea just offshore opposite Westport at 7:23 pm. This one generated a tremendously loud thunder crack that shook the ground and echoed into the hills and up the valleys. Nature's Christmas gift.



View is from 200 feet above and just north of Dehaven Beach looking south. The photo is a single frame captured from a video by Ed Truthan.

2025 bids us farewell with one of the year's most spectacular sunsets.

**Sometimes you just can't tell.** Clouds are moving in and looks as if the sun will simply sink into a dull gray evening sky. That's how it looked shortly before sunset on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at around 4:45 p.m. And then... it happened. The thick sheet of alto-stratus clouds offered just enough clearance to let the sun get under them. And over the next 30 minutes, the sky caught fire. If you saw it, you won't soon forget it.



*Photos by Ed Truthan*

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!