

October 1, 2012

The Westport Wave

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Twenty Years of Service to the Westport Community

Steve Brigham, Editor

Somewhat isolated as we are from “the Outside World”, Westport has always been a place where the community members take care of both one another and their environment. Although every decade has had its hallmarks, the 1990s in particular saw a great wave of community involvement, with a number of town “visionaries” working together to create a non-profit organization that still serves Westport well 20 years later (as do those same visionaries). This year, we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the founding of both the Westport Village Society and its monthly newsletter *The Westport Wave*.

June 1992 was a big month for the young Westport Village Society, as it submitted its Articles of Incorporation to the State and began publication of its monthly newsletter, *The Westport Wave*. A quote from that application states that the purpose of the organization is “to provide charitable and educational services to Westport residents in order to promote civic improvement, preservation of the historical tradition of our town, and (eventually) to aid in preserving its scenic rural character by serving as a Land Trust”. (Indeed, the successful effort to preserve our Community Headlands would prove to be the most important project the WVS ever did.)

The WVS officially incorporated on October 28th, 1992, with interim officers Lois Senger, Marie Fostiak, Becca Killion, and Lee Tepper joined by Nedra Lancaster, Harvey Chess, and Dorine Real to comprise the founding Board of Directors, a slate that was ratified at the first annual members’ meeting in March of 1993. All of us today owe these selfless founders a great debt of gratitude for their vision and hard work – come to the meeting on October 5th and

say thank you to them for 20 great years of service! Oh, and one other thing – if it’s time for the WVS annual members’ meeting, Halloween can’t be far behind! So HAPPY HALLOWEEN to all of you!



Join Us at the Annual Meeting of the Westport Village Society!

Thad Van Bueren, President, WVS

We’d like to remind you that the 20th Annual Meeting of the Westport Village Society will take place on Friday, October 5th. The public and our members are invited to attend. There will be a social mixer starting at 6:30 PM at the Westport Community Church with snacks, coffee and juice available. You can join for the first time or renew your membership, and if you become a member, the new community history book published jointly with the Kelley House Museum will be available for a discount. We will also have WVS T-shirts for sale and some historic materials to view. The meeting will run from 7:00 to about 7:30, followed by a half-hour slide show about the WVS history project and the new community history book. Please join us!

Westport Municipal Advisory Council

The agenda for the October 2nd meeting of the WMAC (7:00PM at the Westport Church) will include further consideration of two local projects involving coastal access, among other topics. There is a connection between the MacKerricher Dune Rehabilitation Project proposed by State Parks and the Pacific Coast Bicycle Route that Caltrans and MCOG are currently studying. Please join us if this issue interests you. For information, visit http://www.westportmac.org/next_meeting.jsp.

Water District News

All is running quite smoothly these days at the Westport County Water District. Our large final treatment pond has been successfully drawn down this summer in preparation for winter rains, so now we are more prepared than ever for even heavy storms. Thanks to this summer's rate increase, our financial picture is looking much better for the first time in years, and we thank our customers for supporting our efforts. One note on that: those of you who have automated bill-paying services should check carefully to make sure your service has been updated with the new rates, so that your monthly payments are the correct amount. Thanks so much for looking into this!

Community Garden News

Steve Brigham

Thanks to all of you who have been using the Westport Community Garden! We (actually you) are currently harvesting tomatoes, Italian beans, swiss chard, cucumbers, squash, and many kinds of salad greens on a daily basis. This first year, of course has been somewhat of a "trial run", as we become familiar with our site and greenhouse. The weather this summer has been cool but variable, and with only passive ventilation, the greenhouse has typically been either too cold or too hot. But that just leaves room for improvement, and we still plan on having salad greens in the greenhouse throughout the winter months. Needed now are more big plastic pots (the size of a half wine barrel) and money for and delivery of potting soil mix. If you can help the Community Garden in these ways, or have any other ideas for the Garden, please e-mail me at westportwave@aol.com.

20 Years Ago in *The Wave*

Steve Brigham

The September 3rd, 1992 edition of *The Westport Wave* contains a heroic report from a few days before of three-year old Amanda Semorile remarking to her father Russ, "Daddy, is that house going to blow up?" What Amanda saw across the field was smoke coming from the Dodge-Millberry house (which is next to the current Westport Landship on Highway 1). Russ immediately ran to the Westport Inn to call for help. What had happened was that the residents of the house had gone for a walk on the beach, and had left a pot of chicken cooking on the stove that ignited a kitchen fire which quickly threatened the entire home.

Fortunately, three WVFD firefighters, Chris Stensgard, Bryan Dalton, and Chuck Linker, were at the firehouse practicing rope training at the very moment they got the dispatch, and they actually had water on the fire within four minutes after receiving the call! And just as quickly, half the townsfolk also showed up to help fight the fire, including Russ Semorile, Jeff (Homer) Whitehouse, Jeff Saunders, Gus and Duane Killion, James Andregg, Kevin Erickson, and Paul Jacobs. Thanks to this incredibly fast response, damage was limited \$50,000 to \$70,000 dollars, and the Dodge-Millberry family was soon able to restore their house in its original style.

The very next issue of *The Westport Wave* on September 23rd had a front-page reproduction of a charming and most heartfelt handwritten note from the Dodge-Millberry family thanking Amanda, the WVFD, and all the community members who helped save their home, and saved their dream.

This is, of course, just another example of the great community spirit that is truly what Westport is all about. So many of us do so many great things for one another and our community, and there is much thanks to be given. Is there someone you'd like to thank for helping you or our community? Well, the November 1st Thanksgiving issue of *The Westport Wave* is going to be all about Thanks, and I'd love to print your contributions! Just e-mail me this month with your submissions at westportwave@aol.com, or send me a note at PO Box 237, Westport, CA 95488. Thanks!



“Harvesting hay ca. 1880 at Kibesillah with Church in background (Robert J. Lee Collection, Mendocino County Historical Society.)”

The Time Traveler

Thad Van Bueren

With the Autumn equinox behind us, it is now officially fall. It's a time of change that has given me incentive to hasten preparation for the winter ahead. Little things like stacking and covering the firewood and harvesting the seasonal bounty. It is a reminder of the circular pattern of the solar year.

Like many of you, we've been enjoying a particularly bountiful berry crop this year. Bears visited our outlying (decoy) apple trees and broke off some branches, so we decided to harvest our apples and pears a little early. They also seem to have ripened earlier than usual this year. Other crops are coming in like gangbusters, so there has been a lot of canning and pickling going on too. There is something special about growing food and knowing that it is truly fresh, organic, and did not require a lot of petroleum to get it on the table. I also like it because it eliminates our dependence on going to the store.

H. E. Whipple wrote a letter to the editor of the *Pacific Rural Press* on February 22, 1879 that talked about his experiences growing grain near the nascent town of Kibesillah:

I reside in a part of California where there is not level land enough to the acre. To gain a greater breadth for grain, I last year, plowed a hillside and seeded it with barley. The plowing was attended with some

difficulty. I first tried two patterns of hillside plows, but soon became disgusted with both of them. I then resorted to a common 11-inch plow, turning a furrow one way and returning empty. This was more satisfactory. The seed was harrowed in December, but it did not get well rooted before the excessive rains of last winter caused some damage by cutting channels in its eager haste toward the ocean. But, on the whole, the crop was a very fine one; better, by far, than on the old plowed fields below. This season I have sowed the same hillside in barley again, and it promises well.

After my oats and wheat dried out, I finally got around to threshing and winnowing. It was a learning process, and a good bit of exercise too. I experimented with various hand methods for threshing, and ended up finding a new use for my archaeological shaker screens in the process! I put the seed heads in the screen and used a broom to separate the oats. Then I used gloved hands to separate grains of wheat from their seed heads in the screen because it turned out to be more efficient. Traditional methods predating the machine age have involved beating the seed heads on a threshing floor and walking on them to loosen the seeds.

Then I used a large, tight weave basket with a shallowly dished shape to do the winnowing. On a breezy day, you simply toss the broken up seed heads in the air gently, and let the wind carry away the chaff. The heavier seeds fall back into the basket with each toss. As a result of my “hands-on” history experiment, I discovered wheat is MUCH easier to process than oats. This month I'll be preparing my field again for sowing wheat, fava beans, and barley. You guessed it—no oats this time!

The early ripening of many crops in Westport this year coincides with an earlier fall all around the state. You can already see the poison oak turning red along Branscomb Road, and our peach is already getting color as I write this. We've been keeping an eye on reports of aspens turning gold in the high Sierra, uphill from our previous home in the Mother Lode country. With aspens already turning color in mid-September, we headed out for a little road trip to see them, visit old friends and haunts, and enjoy Grover Hot Springs once again. By the time you read this, I'll be back, busy getting together a slide show on the history of the Westport area. Come see it Oct. 5th at the WVS Annual Meeting at the Church!

The Wild World of Westport

Steve Brigham

Well, friends, it's September 28th, and it's freezing cold outside here at Happy Acres on Pacific Avenue. I've had the wood stove going all day, and I even had my winter coat on when I was out gardening today. Weatherwise, it's still summer 2012 (and a mighty cold one at that) on the Westport coast. Oh yeah, you folks just a few miles inland have had some nice warm weather this summer, and you're probably sitting in the sun right now, sipping *mai-tais* and sitting on your *chaise lounges*. Bully! But will the sun ever come out here on the coast again? Must be just about time for my annual *Wild World of Westport* "Fearless Winter Weather Forecast" for 2013!

OK, I know what you're thinking. The very idea of publishing my annual Fearless Winter Weather Forecast this year would seem to indicate that I am also predicting that there will be a Winter 2013. This despite many people's predictions of an "end of the world" on December 21st, 2012. So let's put that baby to bed first-off. Simply put, I don't think so. Most people say that it's just a (in this case Mayan) calendar turning, sort of like our A.D.2000 of several years ago. Of course, there are always rogue comets, errant asteroids, and even transitory black holes to worry about, but then again there always are. That doesn't mean nothing will happen, though. Time will march on, but perhaps with a consciousness shift, subtle or otherwise, or maybe even a tipping point in Global Warming.

Which brings me right back to my Fearless Winter Forecast. If it's Global Warming we're worried about, why is it so darn cold here in Westport? Well, in case you hadn't noticed, it's been hot everywhere else in the world but here this year. Hot inland from us, too, and that's what makes us cold, with chilly fog right along the seashore. The big story this year is that our familiar northern jet stream just gave up on us this spring, and continues to remain further north than we'd like it to be – way up in Alaska. In recent years, much talk has been made of El Nino and La Nina influencing our weather (which they have), but those weather forces are functions of water temperatures in the tropics. Can the North Polar Oscillation trump an El Nino? Yes it can, and our northern jet stream is way north right now, likely due



BOO!

in some part to the melting polar ice sheets. Hurricanes in Alaska? Believe it. A dry fall for us? Entirely possible. Cooler than normal? Don't rule it out. Am I sounding like Donald Rumsfeld yet?

Bottom line at this point for Winter 2013, folks, is whether the so-far still developing El Nino will beat the Weak Polar Jet Stream. If that sounds like an early Super Bowl analysis, well it's just about as dicey at this point, and we may not know the real answer until the Super Bowl itself. But I'm thinking there will be some good rain developing by January. If not, look for a year maybe like this past winter, but perhaps a little drier. And quite possibly a little cooler. More information will undoubtedly appear in the coming months, so I'll keep you posted. Until then, the oldest method of predicting weather is still the best – look out the window!

In other Nature news, there's been a very active mountain lion recently causing havoc in the Ponderosa area, with precious animals maimed or killed, so it's really important especially at this time of year to be aware of the danger that poses to your animals. The Screech Owl family has been very active in town recently, as have the foxes and lots of other smaller animals as well. Time for birds of a feather to flock together now, and my bird feeders have really been inundated lately with hundreds of birds of many denominations. It's September 30th today as I finish this, and I woke up before dawn to a big, beautiful full Harvest Moon over the ocean – unobscured by fog! Brings me back in touch with my animal (or Klingon) nature, it does. K'Plagh!

Fall Colors, Working Toward the Change

Liza Saenz-Bernard

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once she/he grows up.”

-- Pablo Picasso

Still life as it is. Big exploding red tomatoes, bolting lettuce and plants, apples, figs, and budding broccoli tell us what change in the weather does. The cows are walking back to the barn earlier. The shadows are moving in another direction. These colors and shapes of things inspire painters and artists.

“Milk Can and Apples” (1879-80), oil on canvas, by Paul Cezanne was pictured in the S.F. Chronicle’s September 15th Datebook. The de Young Museum is showing “The William S. Paley Collection: A Taste for Modernism”, which includes works by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Pablo Picasso, Paul Cezanne, and Henri Matisse, to name a few. This show runs through Dec. 30th. Go to www.deyoungmuseum.org for more information, or call (415) 750-3600.

“YOU ART WHAT YOU EAT SHOW”

at Gallery This! @ The Westport Hotel

The red beets and tomatoes, the yellow corn, bananas, and squash flowers – just a small example of what’s showing right now in our little town of Westport. Local artists showing now at Gallery This! @ The Westport Hotel include Donna Traycik, Shirley Washburn, Elaine Todd, Pam Brown, Lynzee Holt, Joe DuVivier, Carolyn Yale, and Carol Deetch. Carolyn’s photo and Carol’s water color capture the true representations of a pear, and a pear tree. Donna’s photo collages “Salsa Dancer” and “Kachina Dancers” will give you an example of her incredible vegetable garden.

I had my GMO/AMO (artistically modified) squash flower enlarged. Zooming in on this flower had me sitting at the computer too long, so I know the CHANGE of my medium will soon take place. Painting these colors will slow one down and be able to enjoy the preparation for a new discovery. Cameras capture instantly. Paints take time to blend, just as thoughts need to settle.

“A discovery is said to be an accident meeting a prepared mind.” -- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi.

Elaine Todd’s corn tapestries are from an International Traveling Show. The 50 tapestries were woven by women from Canada the USA and three from Mendocino, to bring awareness to the GMO (genetically modified organisms) corn being sent to Mexico. Her mushroom tapestry was woven with mushroom yarn.

Speaking of awareness, the Westport Village Society Annual meeting is coming up and my WVS board position is at an end. Making a small difference in our community has been very rewarding, and I want to pass on this opportunity to some one else with more time, ideas, and energy to help our community grow into the future.

If you missed Last Saturday Reception on September 29th, NO WORRIES, go see the art show on your own time and eat something. There is room for more FOOD ART. Give me a call at 303-6376 or email me at saenzphoto@yahoo.com if you want to submit work for the Last Saturday Reception on October 27th. The next show, in late November, will be CHANGE. See you at the Church for the Village Society meeting on October 5th!

Pie Contest at the Old Abalone Pub

Dorine Real

The Westport Hotel will celebrate Fall with a Fall Pie Contest. There will be prizes for pumpkin and “other” categories. The contest will take place on Saturday, November 3rd. To enter a pie, please contact Shannon or Dorine at the Hotel (964-3688). Entry is free. To participate in the judging (this is the fun part), come to the Old Abalone Pub on November 3rd any time between 3:00 and 9:00. For a \$5.00 donation to the Fire Department, you will get several tasting portions of pie; tea or coffee; and the chance to vote for your favorite pie and sound off about what makes a pumpkin (or apple? pear? cranberry?) pie great.

The annual Food Art show has become a tradition. It is already open and will run until November 20th. A few more pieces can still be accepted, so call Liza if you have a work of art depicting or made of food. A midshow reception will be held on Last Saturday,

October 27th, at 5:30. This show is probably the most colorful the Hotel has ever hosted, full of juicy reds, oranges, and greens.

Friday night music continues: Sean Hathorn will play flamenco all Fridays except October 5th, when Alejandro Yañez will return with his Spanish classical guitar. We will be open for Neighborhood Nights, Sundays and Mondays, throughout October. Then we'll go back to our winter schedule. If you haven't tried Caitlin's specials, don't miss them!

You are reading *The Westport Wave*, a free monthly community newsletter published on the first day of every month by the **Westport Village Society**, a non-profit organization. Members of the WVS receive their free copies on or before the first day of every month by e-mail (or postal mail, if requested – please allow a few days extra for postal mail). Printed (black-and-white) copies of each month's newsletter are also available free to all at the Westport Community Store, from the first day of each month on. WVS member dues pay for this newsletter production – which is a good reason in itself to join our Society – join the **Westport Village Society** today, and sign up for your free monthly newsletter at www.westportvillagesociety.org. Contributions for the November 1, 2012 edition of *The Westport Wave* are due by **October 29th**, and should be sent to editor Steve Brigham at westportwave@aol.com, or P.O. Box 237, Westport, CA 95488.

Are You Reading This In Color?

Well, if you're reading a paper copy that you've just picked up from the Westport Store and you're seeing it in color, you've got quite an imagination! We may not have the money to print *The Wave* in color, but if you sign up for the email version of this newsletter on our website www.westportvillagesociety.org (it's free), you'll be one of the first folks to get each issue, in glorious, living color (and you can make the photos and print bigger, too!) Sign up today, and save a tree!

October 2012 Westport Calendar

- October 2nd** – WMAC Meeting, 7PM at the Church
- October 4th** – Bookmobile, Store, 9-9:30AM
- October 5th** – **Westport Village Society Annual Meeting, 6:30PM at the Westport Church**
- October 15th** – New Moon, 5:03AM
- October 18th** – Bookmobile, Store, 9-9:30AM
- October 18th** – Westport Village Society Board Meeting, 7:00 PM at the Westport Church
- October 27th** – Last Saturday FOOD ART Show Reception, Westport Hotel, 5:30PM to 8:00PM
- October 29th** – Full Moon, 12:49PM
- October 31st** – HALLOWEEN!
- November 1st** – Bookmobile, Store, 9-9:30AM
- November 3rd** – Pie Contest, Westport Hotel
- November 4th** – Daylight Savings Time Ends, 2AM
- November 6th** – Election Day