



: 'Tis the Season : : 2020 :

Caspar Community News

November 2020

Center photo: Sienna M Potts

UPCOMING EVENTS WE WISH !!

Despite fires, economic downturns, closed businesses, and a pandemic that forced us to abandon almost every manifestation of community we have come to rely on, two absolutes remain:

First: the cost of owning the Center, whether we can use it or not, remains about \$6,000 a month – if you are curious why, we'll give you [a little taste on page six](#).

Second, it was a great year to get some important things done, and our Caspar Board has diligently kept things moving. Many of you have already participated heroically in keeping us afloat.

It begins to look like we may, as long as Mendocino County stays in tier two of the pandemic, we will be able to open cautiously for limited events ...but we haven't scheduled anything public yet. We have begun accepting wedding reservations, with a strict understanding that the scale has to satisfy our local health directives.

A number of ideas for "distanced events" have been floated – use the Center as a production facility for a streamed concert? Some ideas – use the kitchen to produce to-go meals – have been rejected because we value our local restaurants, and don't want to compete with them during difficult times.

Right about now, we should be holding our annual Harvest Fun-Raiser and silent auction – SAY, that's an idea! How about an ONLINE AUCTION?!?

also in this issue...

[We miss the Center](#) stories
Operating in Plague Times

A Gertie Story Little Free Libraries
2020 Accomplishments

announcing: Caspar Community ONLINE AUCTION

Remembering previous Harvest Funraisers and looking for ways to staunch the steady outflow from our rainy day fund, the Caspar Board decided it would be fun to have an

ONLINE AUCTION



Paul Reiber's
Gertie with Mask
on sale at the auction

"Let's ask our community to contribute examples of their proudest work in support of our Community Center and see what we get," they said. Most of you will have seen the call for contributions, and the response has been heartening, not to mention wonderful. If you look on page four of this newsletter, you'll find more images of available



Carolyn Zeitler's
Pine Needle Basket
on sale at the auction

items, together with all the information you'll need to participate in the auction, which opens on Saturday, November 14th, at noon.

[click here](#)
for more
auction images
and info

The Center to me stands as a vibrant example of how our community members, through years of dedication and commitment to our founding principles of inclusiveness and consensus, have created a sustainable shared neutral space that encourages participation and a sense of shared ownership!

Each time I see the Center, I am reminded and appreciative of the efforts of each and every one of us who have helped lend their skills and resources to create and sustain this community treasure.

Of course I could go on forever, each element of the center, the original procurement, the addition of the new kitchen and dining area, the greenhouse, community garden, new playground, mail pavilion, parking lot improvements, new water system and solar electric systems ...I can envision each of the people who have been involved in each one of these projects and all the supportive work of the ever evolving Board of Directors who have guided this process – it’s an amazing, unified achievement for this small community that is joyfully shared by all!

~ *Mike dell’Ara*
1st President of the Caspar Board

When I was first picking up my mail after moving to Caspar, Judy Tarbell came up to me, all smiles, asked me about myself, and invited me to a Community meeting. Before I knew it, I was volunteering in the old kitchen, where Dalen’s mastery of organization and improvisation, and the wonderfully friendly and cooperative atmosphere totally charmed me.

Then there were the Harvest Dinners, Pub Night, and all the lively meetings to plan and carry out our activities. Our Fourth Sunday Breakfasts have been a vehicle for friendships and community organizing among people from up and down the Coast. I miss these celebrations of community. I know we all do. It’s vital to keep the Center alive for when “all this” is over.

~ *Miriam Davis*
President of the Caspar Board, 2010

Discovering the Caspar Community Centre has been one of the best, most serendipitous experiences of my dotage. I can’t imagine a more open, vibrant, welcoming community centre anywhere. It has transformed the mere living in a house, into participating in a community.

~ *Peter Keat*



Missing the Center

Moon over Center: November 3rd

It was so nice to see the waning Blood Moon rising over our brightly lit Community Center on the evening of Election Day. The polling place had closed, and final tallying was going on within: an exercise in community to which so many of us cling.

Caspar’s self-reinventions have been going on for a century and a half, yet the life of our village felt permanent and vivid up until March of this year, even if we didn’t get our Center until 2000. During the last two decades, Caspar’s liveliness has enhanced property values and established a sense of neighborliness that sets it apart from other Coastal towns.

The plague and its economic downturn have changed us all utterly. As a mostly elderly, at risk population, it is impossible to imagine how, in times of social distancing, we can restart our communal traditions, Fourth Sunday Breakfast or Second Friday Pub Night. Nor can we envision, yet, “life after Covid.”

Seeing the Center’s lights on after a well-organized and successful election day, served as a potent reminder that community, however we achieve it, is a major reason that I, and so many Casparados, consider this “the best place in the world.” We are busily evolving a new way to practice community, and at its core is our drive to preserve our Center – to redefine its function during plague times, to find ways to use it that are safe and satisfying. Election night’s lights reminded me that, with patience and another of our most abundant resources, tenacity, we will reinvent our village.

With your help.

~ *Michael Potts*
Founding Caspar Board Member

Even though I don't live in Caspar any more (I did for 17 years) I will always feel like a Casparado. The center started being an important part of my life back in the early 2000's. I spent a good number of years organizing events there, flea markets, craft fairs, etc. and also being involved with groups that organized others. I did book sales in conjunction with the monthly breakfast 7 or 8 times a year for 10 years and more recently twice a year. I believe some of my health, strength and energy at 78 years old is due to the lifting and moving boxes of books thousands of times over those years, that's one of the things I miss the most, that and connecting with all of the people who come to the center for various events, meetings and classes each year. A lot of the people who I am closest to I first met at the center. I hope that the center will be able to open next year and again become an enriching place for so many people.

~ *Jima Abbott*
Caspar Bookster

more Missing stories on page 6

2020: not our best year . . . but we got a lot done!



Smokey skies over Caspar photo: Sienna M Potts

Of course the big bumper was no breakfasts or Pub Nights, and no event income. [More about this on page 6](#)



We held two successful elections

THANK YOU, precinct workers, led by Dana Fox and Dalen Anderson. Democracy is alive and well here.

Special thanks to the Holy Goats that munched Gorse in the southeast corner of the field east of the Center. Their keeper, Matt Davis writes "last month my herd of *Holy Goats: Your Fire Prevention Angels* has been chomping away, testing whether they can effectively eat down the gorse and other vegetation like the blackberries. Conclusion: Yes we can!"

Matt and his fellow Ranger Rose are adding "Celestial Sheep" to the mix. Anyone wishing to explore this low-impact method for dealing with offensive vegetation can request an estimate from Matt at 707-337-9045.



Managhan parcel



Katlin parcel looking North



Holy Goats and their faithful guardian dog

We painted the Center

THANK YOU to Cesar Yanez and the CY Painting crew



Probably our biggest accomplishment this year has been the massive reduction in highly flammable Gorse: 28 acres cleared for \$54,000. Tons of gratitude to Helene Chalfin, who masterminded the project, and David Lindstrom and Jerry Beaty, who did the prickly work.

As any of you who have grubbed Gorse in the past know, knocking it down is only the first act in an ongoing struggle. No one really knows what "finishing the job" means, as Gorse is a stubborn invader. All of us in Caspar are at risk as long as Gorse covers as much of our open space as it still does, but let's remember 2020 as the beginning of the end for Gorse in Caspar.

Little Free Library Report from the Caspar Bookster

The Little Free Library in Caspar is working well, I try to check it every week or two and put new books in it whenever there is space. I find a book for my personal use every once in a while. So Far I have put 376 books into it and they have mostly been taken.

I have tried to locate every LFL on the coast and have

created a blog with pictures and directions to the ones I've found, 13 so far. I have another picture to add of the one on Point Cabrillo Drive by the water towers. So far I have put 2,225 books in them. (You can see that I'm a compulsive record keeper.) [Keep up with local LFLs on my blog.](#)



detail from Julie Higgins's *Full Moon, New Moon Healing* on sale at the auction

Caspar's Online Auction Opens Saturday, November 14th

Someone once said, "Turn Caspar upside down and shake it, and a *whole lot* of talent would fall out!" You can see that in the rich selection of arts, crafts, gifts, and services available for bid at the Caspar Online Auction, opening this weekend on an internet-connected device near you.

It is important to remember that this is a fund-raising event to support the maintenance of our Community Center during the time of Covid-19. This is not Costco, and the purpose isn't to get stuff cheap; it's to vote with your dollars to keep our Center solvent until we can once again get together there and support it with events and fund-raisers. Bid early; bid often!

What You Need To Know:

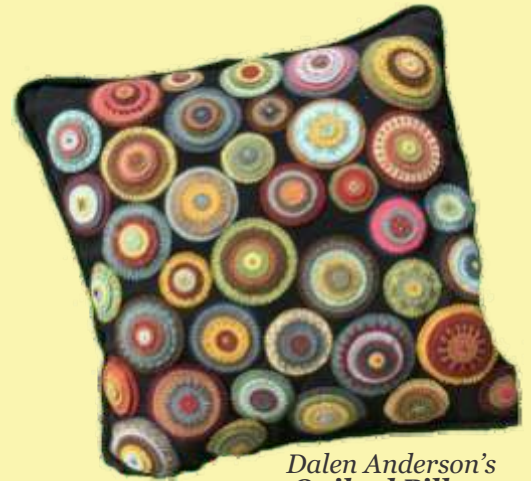
The auction opens for bidding at NOON on Saturday, November 14th ...but you can get your bidding paddle and view all the items now:

CasparCommons.org/auc

You will need to register for a bidding paddle in order to bid; you will also need an email address so you can be notified of your winnings.

Bidding will continue until 8pm on November 28th. Once or twice during the bidding, paddle holders who have unsuccessfully bid on items will receive emails to say they've been outbid. During the bidding, all paddle holders may get an email telling about new items and reduced minimum bids.

Saturday evening after 8pm, winning bidders will receive emails notifying them of the items they have won. Item pick-up details will be included with the winner notifications. Most items will be available for pick-up on Sunday and Monday, November 29th & 30th, at the Community Center; social distancing precautions will be observed. Payment may be made by check or cash (our preference) or by credit card.



Dalen Anderson's *Quilted Pillow* on sale at the auction

We are still accepting auction items
Your own work preferred

email lists@casparcommons.org to contribute



Heidi Tarver's *Two Mugs*



English Wall Clock circa 1900



8 weeks of home-baked bread from Marty Johnson



Rhoda Teplow's *African Pink Opal Necklace*



Mendocino Trail Stewards Forest Cleanup Day

This Saturday, 11/14, is the Mendocino Trail Stewards' Forest Cleanup Day. We will be bagging trash which Cal-Fire (and possibly State Parks as well) will haul off. We will also be spiffing out the trails, which have seen a lot of windfall and branch encroachment recently. We are working two zones. Meet between 9:00 and 9:30 at either Caspar Scales (one mile up the Caspar Logging Road) or the gate where Mitchell Creek Road meets the recently cleared Gibney Lane Fire Road. We will be giving instructions there. Bring gloves, and, if you also want to do minor brush work to clean trails, a hand saw, loppers, or both.

This event is masked and socially distanced.

It will be helpful if you come with a partner or small team. Kids are welcome! We will have Mendocino Trail Stewards shirts available for a donation to the cause.



Gertie the Gorse Monster with Joe Craven and friends at the 2008 Caspar Fest

A Little Gertie Story

Many of us remember with fondness one of our founding Casparados, Jerry Juhl. With his wife Susan, he invented *The Fraggles* and it would not be a stretch to say he was Kermit the Frog's father. That's Jerry in the top hat at right, with Kermit in the eaves. Little known outside of Caspar: another of his creations, Gertie the Gorse Monster, who stands for some of Caspar's most long-lived and unfortunate residents: *Ulex europæus*.

Lily Parsons, Sienna Potts, and the late Stuart Tregoning are a few of the adult natives we know about. Most of us, Jerry and Susan included, classify with Gorse as *invasive exotics* who came (or got dragged) here for the quality of life. Recognizing this fact, Jerry commissioned Tommy Brown to sculpt a Chinese New Years style dragon to enliven Halloween Parades and Caspar Fests, and Gertie was born.

As we slip into Winter, we do well to remember the big achievements, happy times, and enduring friendships we have made here during the thirty years since we started considering ourselves a Community ...and how much would be lost if we fail to "preserve and protect the quality of all live in Caspar.

Right now, the best way to do that is to [bid generously at the auction](#), or [just make a pledge](#).



This edition of
Caspar Community News
was laid out by Michael Potts

Submissions of activities, events, or information of interest to Casparados is invited. Send them to lists@casparcommons.org

We  Caspar

The Caspar Community Center means more to me than I can say in just a few words. It was always a place to connect with the whole coastal community, and beyond, in so many wonderful ways: Pub Night, gourmet breakfasts, fundraisers, concerts with varied styles of music, disaster prep, classes and workshops, outdoor festivities and my personal favorite, dancing to live music. I miss the smiling faces, the camaraderie, my community. I so look forward to a future when we can all come together again in this special place.

~ Star Decker

Caspar has been my home for over 50 years and I can easily say that the Caspar Community Center is so much more to me than just a venue for playing music. The center has become the HUB of the coastal community that has offered folks in the area a myriad of ways to come together and find joy and a strong sense of really belonging. All can participate with their ideas and creativity and it shows in the end product...a gorgeous and well run community center for all to enjoy.

~ Gene Parsons

Operating a nonprofit in plague times

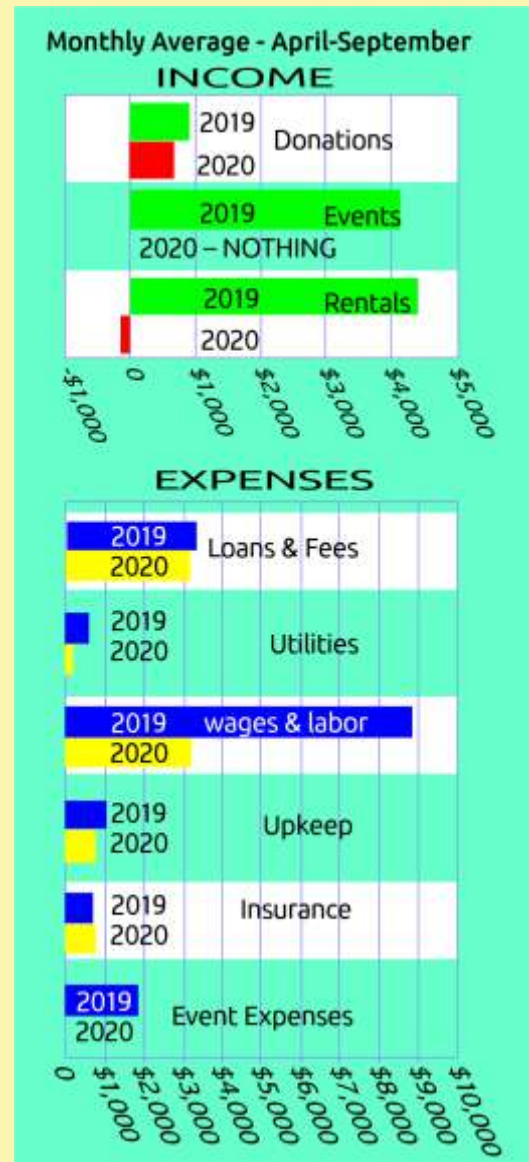
We hate to talk about money. It's so much nicer when it's just *there* and we can do what needs doing, like feeding great breakfasts to our neighbors on Fourth Sundays, hosting open-mike evenings with great simple food and good company, and providing a welcoming place for weddings, meetings, and wakes.

Those offerings stopped abruptly in mid-March 2020, and since then, [the Caspar Board](#) has been preoccupied with keeping our operations afloat despite the sudden disappearance of fund-raising and rental income. The chart at right compares the six months from April through September of 2019 and 2020. We have used the time well, to paint the Center and repair the hard-working kitchen floor, while holding maintenance costs steady. We have, with the conscientious help of our employees, reduced wages and labor costs dramatically. But there are some costs, like mortgage payments (\$3,034 each month) and insurance, that don't stop. Every month, these add up to a bit more than \$6,000 even with the heat turned down and the lights mostly off.

Luckily – well, really, because of years of prudent management – we have a good “rainy day” fund, and we're in better shape than some sister nonprofits. A recent “keep yourself alive” grant from the Community Foundation helped. Even so, we only have enough to weather about twelve more months without our normal rentals and fund-raisers.

Donations are down 26%, and we understand: for our community as for the world, these are trying economic times. Many of you have responded to our SOSes by doubling your pledges – [pledges are our life blood!](#) – and contributing generously. **THANK YOU!**

At the beginning of every fourth quarter, we are usually “in the red” and looking to the Harvest Fundraiser and your open-handed responses to our annual begging letter (coming soon!) to bail us out. Of course this year has to be different. [PLEASE participate enthusiastically in our upcoming ONLINE AUCTION](#), and consider gifting Caspar Community if you can. Consider it lifestyle insurance, and an investment in Community, to be enjoyed sometime soon (we earnestly hope) when something like normal resumes.



And THANK YOU for reading to the bitter end of this newsletter! [Let us know if you liked it.](#)