Port Costa Christmas Party 2019

On December 4th, local residents, friends, and family gathered at the Port Costa School to celebrate the holiday season. Revelers enjoyed the warm spiced apple cider (with or without a little extra "holiday cheer") and potluck dishes while listening to the festive musical stylings of Port Costa "Mayor" Mitch Polzak, Fiddlin' Tom List, and Lorne Salt on bass. Carols were sung, lights twinkled, and Santa and his helper, Sarah Louise Humann, pictured left, gave the amazing gift of hand-puppetry to all the children in attendance. Here's hoping for a puppet-show act in the upcoming Port Costa Talent Show!

Photos on this page by Kristen Lucas

PCCS Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

November 21st marked the night of the 2019 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, hosted by the Port Costa Conservation Society. PCCS Board Members generously provided a delicious meal to show their thanks and appreciation to those who volunteered time, effort, and support during the past year. Active volunteers from the area came together to break bread and reflect on the wonderful sense of community that working towards a common goal provides. For us, our shared goal is to preserve the historic school and promote its use for community activities. Some volunteer accomplishments over the past year include the incredible ongoing archiving work and establishment of the "Port Costa Museum" project, extensive clean-up of the school auditorium and stage, the Port Costa Car Show, and the 2nd Annual Community Garden Harvest Party, to name a few. The Conservation Society thanks all of its active volunteers and supporters and hopes to continue the momentum going into 2020!

The next volunteer work day at the school is scheduled for **Saturday, February 8 at 9am**. We will use this work day to clean and organize our two ground-floor storage rooms. Please consider lending a hand!

This is the original 1982 flyer announcing the very first Port Costa Talent Show (edited to include 2020 details)!

Return of the Port Costa Talent Show!

Mark your calendars! The next meeting to discuss and plan the upcoming Talent Show will take place Wednesday, January 29th, 7 p.m. at the Port Costa School. Things are moving along rapidly and we can use as many bright minds at these meetings as possible! (This is a community-enrichment event after all!)

Some items discussed at the last meeting were ticket prices, which will be tiered according to age, and the need for an outside food vendor. Anyone reading this with festival/event experience regarding food vendors, we would love your input and expertise!

Please contact Anne and Suzanne at **PortCostaTalentShow@Gmail.com** for additional information regarding upcoming meetings, Talent Auditons, registering an act, and more!

Break-In at Port Costa School

The newly installed security cameras that we reported to you in the last PCCS Newsletter have already proven valuable. On November 27, 2019, a young couple unlawfully broke into the school through a back door. Our new cameras recorded their actions and we were able to watch their approach, break-in, and exit. We are happy to report that no damage or loss occurred in this incident. We have not yet been able to identify the couple, but both still images and video footage have been published on social media and forwarded to the Sheriff's Office. The doors have been repaired and reinforced to prevent future break-ins of this nature.

Revenue and Grants Updates

In addition to our regular Board Meetings every 3rd Monday of the month, the PCCS Board also holds Grant Meetings one hour prior to each regular meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to brainstorm, research, and discuss ways to raise money for our endless, much-needed projects and necessary maintenance. Over the last decade it has become increasingly difficult to be considered for any grants, mainly due to the small population in Port Costa and the relatively few people who will benefit from a renovated school.

During recent years we have, among others, applied for The Google Grant and in late 2019 The Wayne & Gladys Valley Grant, but unfortunately, we were denied both. We were successful with two very important Grants; one from the Crockett Community Foundation for security and archive work and another from the East Bay Regional Parks District for electrical infrastructure. Grant applications are, to be candid, a lot of work. Countless hours are spent compiling documents and numbers and trying to comply with the grant founders' intentions.

In addition to monies secured from grants, we are very fortunate to have people in Port Costa who, through their work, receive matching funds for donations given to nonprofit organizations like PCCS. "**YourCause"** is a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Platform that helps to facilitate and manage the employee giving programs of a large number of corporate clients. The CSR platform connects companies and their employees to nonprofit organizations with worthy causes such as ours. Companies like PG&E have this program, among many others, so if you are interested in a monthly donation taken directly from your paycheck, please ask your employer about this program.

If you have any experience in grant writing or know of grants that might fit the PCCS profile, please contact us. The PCCS Board appreciates any assistance and inspiration that can assist us moving forward.

Construction Update – Field Semester Program

Thanks to funds provided by the Crockett Community Center we have completed all the work we expected to and even a couple of additional small projects under the Public Safety and Security Grant we were awarded. Once we completed the long and bureaucratic path through Historic review, the Building Department work was able to proceed and be completed. Final reports are being prepared to close out the project.

The East Bay Regional Park Measure WW Local Grant Program electrical infrastructure project began first thing Monday morning, January 13, 2020. Conduit is being installed, conductors are being pulled, outlet and lighting boxes are being installed with the work scheduled to be completed over the next couple of weeks. Once this work is complete, we will have the rough electrical work finished for the entire upstairs with lighting available at a flip of the switch in every room! Ceramic bases and simple switches will remain until sheetrock is installed and then final fixtures and trim will follow.

We are currently working on fundraising for future construction and infrastructure improvements with the Field Semester Program. Final plans, estimating, fundraising, are the responsibilities of each party- the Conservation Society as the owner and the Field Semester as tenant: these are some of the many details that need be worked out in preparation for making the next steps in the long process towards planning, permissions, and finally completing the school to ensure that the building fulfills the needs of the Community, the Society and the Field Semester as our tenant.

January 2020 Newsletter
Port Costa Conservation Society
PO Box 36, Port Costa, CA 94569
pccs.portcosta@gmail.com

PCCS Grant Committee Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of every month, 6pm, at the Port Costa School, followed immediately by **PCCS Board Meetings** at **7pm**.

Updated PCCS Contact Information

We have recently renamed our website to more accurately reflect our status as a nonprofit organization. The PCCS website is now **www.portcostaconservationsociety.org**

Concurrently, we have updated the Society's email address to: **pccs.portcosta@gmail.com**

We kindly ask that you use the above web and email addresses for all future online communications.

Linda Clark

July 13, 1941 – October 11, 2019

We lost our former PCCS Board Member, Linda Clark, this year to complications from COPD. Linda and her husband, Mario Sigeunza, moved to Port Costa 30 years ago when she purchased and restored two of the 120-year-old Victorian homes on the Prospect hill.

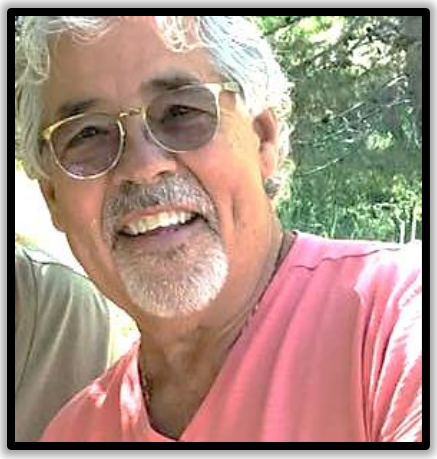
Linda was a well-known community member. She always used her trip to the Post Office to catch up on what was going on, she volunteered at the school, and could be seen taking her daily walks in the hills with friends.

In 2006, Linda started interviewing Port Costa residents to capture their memories of town. She and her videographer friend Betty Bailey interviewed nearly 100 people! Her vision of preserving the oral history of Port Costa will become a significant part of the Port Costa Museum at the Port Costa School.

Family and friends gathered to celebrate Linda's life at the Port Costa Schoolyard on Nov. 10, 2019. The Port Costa Conservation Society is grateful for the legacy donation she left us and for requesting donations be made to the PCCS in lieu of flowers. Linda will be missed dearly.

Rene Beauchemin

February 4, 1947 – November 27, 2019



Rene and Laurie Beauchemin moved to Port Costa in 2015 from Holyoke, Massachusetts and quickly became very loved and appreciated in our little town. It was very, very sad that we, after only 4 years, had to say goodbye to Rene, whom we got to know as an outgoing, caring, and loving man.

Rene owned and ran a bakery for 40 years and was happy to share his knowledge and skills, which he did with bread-making classes at the Port Costa School. After retiring Rene took the Master Gardener Program and in this field as well, willingly shared his knowledge at the Community Garden, where his garden box was full of vegetables well-cared for.

Rene was open and interested in his fellow humankind and always had a kind word to share. He will be very much missed in our daily life.

A memorial was held at the Port Costa School on Sunday Jan. 5th, 2020.