

a view from the

# WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

June 2023 • Issue 54

## Mission Statement:

*The West Point Inn Association exists to preserve, maintain, operate and educate the public about the significance of the historic West Point Inn.*

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The newsletter is published with funds provided in memory of Lifetime Member, Ernest E. Emig, and Honorary Member, Harold Allen Atkinson.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alyssa Jorgensen

Dear West Point Inn Association,

It was lovely to see so many of you at the Spring Meeting! Approximately 80 members gathered at the inn on Sunday, April 23rd to celebrate the signing of our new lease with a champagne toast and to hear from various Board Members, Officers, and Committee Chairs. We enjoyed coffee hour, the general meeting, and a scrumptious lunch on the deck. It was a beautiful, crisp day on the mountain and I left the meeting in a buzzy, energized state. You might say "Alyssa, maybe it was the champagne?" but I assure you it was not! I think members of the West Point Inn will know what I'm talking about...

I recently attended a lecture at a wellness resort in Arizona on the topic of "flow state," defined as the feeling of complete engagement in a creative activity, where we are highly attuned without the feeling of exerting effort, and where we experience positive energy and emotions, similar to excitement or joy. The lecturer turned to the audience and asked us to think about times when we felt this way. We looked around the room and giggled, making it clear that we generally associated this kind of thing with high-performers like elite athletes, rock climbers, or surgeons. However, after thinking about it, a few ideas started cropping up. One woman mentioned dancing in the living room with her spouse, another said he felt this way in the company of good friends when the dinner conversation "just flowed", and I offered that exercising in nature and working with others towards a common goal can get me into "the zone".

All of us have felt this "natural high" where everything just clicks and we feel intensely happy. I feel it each and every time I visit the West Point Inn. As our website states: "something magic happens here." I would bet that the entirety of our membership agrees with me and with Jim Parton III, a well-respected former board secretary who passed away earlier this month, when we say that the West Point Inn is one of our "happy places"; it is a place where it is incredibly easy to achieve a state of "flow."

So, get yourselves up the mountain and feel the good vibes!

Let's start with the 2023 Pancake Breakfasts which have been wildly popular. Big thanks to hosts Eric & Lisa Magnuson who led the Mother's Day crew and served over

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800 breakfasts. Fran Rondeau and I hosted the Father's Day event and our crew served 840 breakfasts. Even though lines wrapped around the Inn at both events, no one waited more than a few minutes for their plates to be served thanks to key upgrades made by our Building & Grounds Chair, Michael Jefferies and our Executive Director, Don Keeley. Crews are full, thanks to our crew organizer, Heather McFadden. Supplies are stocked and organized, thanks to Pancake Breakfast Chair Lin Johanson. Pancake Breakfasts will continue each month through October so please consider attending.

The next time you are at the Inn, make sure to seek out your Innkeeper and thank them for everything they do. The Innkeeper is the face of the Inn, whether they are welcoming overnight guests or interacting with daytime visitors. They keep the Inn in tip-top shape, have surprised guests with freshly baked breads, and will occasionally spook the kids with a scary story!

As always, I want to thank the Board Members, Committee Chairs, Event Hosts, and all of the volunteers that participate at Work Parties, Pancake Breakfasts and more. You are a very dedicated and special group of people. There are plenty of ways to volunteer, and we are always looking for help.

Enjoy the Summer! I hope to run into you at 1,781 ft.

## RESERVATIONS

### Jennifer Greene

To make a reservation go to our website [westpointinn.com](http://westpointinn.com) and click "stay" and then "make a reservation". This takes you to our booking engine and you are prompted to type in the member promo code.

This promo code allows you to book 120 days in advance, receive a 50% discount on ONE accommodation per night, and discount on whole inn bookings Tuesday-Thursday. We do not allow whole inn bookings on Saturdays or Sundays. Mondays we are closed.

Please do not share the promo code with anyone.

The promo code is currently **BOOTJACK**

We look forward to seeing you at the inn soon!

## RARE PIECE OF TAM RR AT EAST PEAK UNTIL OCTOBER

### Fred Runner

Only a few things remain of the historic Tamalpais Railway that built the West Point Inn.

The three remaining things are: the West Point Inn, steam engine No. 9 (now under restoration) and a 122-year old metal and wood model that runs on electricity, almost "rocket science" by the standards of 1911, the year the model was finished.

For the next few months the working 4-foot model of a Shay locomotive, the same kind used by the Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway from 1896 to 1930, will be on display at the State Park's Gravity Car Barn Museum at East Peak.

The model was built by railroad employees in their Mill Valley workshop over 3 years. It's estimated it took over 2,000 hours of hand labor to build. 122 years later, it has all the original parts. And it still works.

The December 30, 1911, Sausalito News reported the model had just gone on display in the Tamalpais Railway's ticket office window at the Palace Hotel on Market Street. It had been drawing Christmas shoppers who gathered at the window and watched dozens of metal parts turn on the new model.

The model attracted attention until the railroad went out of business in 1930. Hyman-Michaels bought the assets of the railroad and kept the model, taking it to their Chicago headquarters.

Today Hyman-Michaels is known as Azcon Metals. They have been kind enough to loan it for an exhibit at the Gravity Car Barn through the summer months. The Gravity Car Barn is a museum about the Mt. Tamalpais & Muir Woods Railway. It is open Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 4PM, at the East Peak of Mt. Tamalpais.



## WPIA ANNUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION - CALL FOR CANDIDATES

The WPIA Board of Directors and Election Committee welcome inquiries from qualified members who might be interested in serving on the board. Here is some information:

- There are nine WPIA members on the Board of Directors.
- The term for a Director is three years.
- All candidates must be members in good standing for no less than one year. Candidates must not have served on the Board for the twelve months prior to taking office.
- The Nominating Committee consists of outgoing Board members and the President.
- Any qualified member, other than those selected by the Nominating Committee, may run for the Board of Directors by delivering a petition signed by at least 10% of voting members by September 1.

All candidates are to submit a short bio. The list of candidates and their bios will be printed in the Fall newsletter. Ballots and bios will be mailed to the voting membership at least 30 days prior to the Annual Fall Meeting on October 22, 2023. Votes will be tallied and winners announced at the meeting. Specific results are kept confidential.

Serving on the Board of Directors is an excellent way to help the West Point Inn. Please consider sharing some of your time and talent to ensure that the Inn continues to operate for the benefit of the members and guests who appreciate the opportunity to experience our unique establishment.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Alyssa Jorgensen  
Talia Friedman  
Andrew Grant

### ELECTION PROCESS COMMITTEE:

Susan Aronovsky

PLEASE CONTACT SOMEONE ON THE BOARD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN BECOMING A CANDIDATE FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Contact info for members of the Board of Directors is on the WPIA website.

If you are interested in helping to conduct this election, or if you have any questions about the process, please contact Susan Aronovsky at [elections@westpointinn.com](mailto:elections@westpointinn.com)



WPI Stickers, Buttons, & Keychains



WPI Patch Hats

## WPI SWAG STICKERS, BUTTONS, KEYCHAINS & HATS!

Alyssa Jorgensen

Hats, keychains, stickers, and buttons are now for sale at Member Events and Pancake Breakfasts. They have been selling well!

Prices are as follows:

\$2 Buttons

\$3 Stickers

\$12 Keychains

\$32 Patch Hats



## REMEMBERING WPI MEMBER JIM PARTON III

Longtime Mill Valley resident and highly respected Bay Area attorney James (Jim) Parton III passed away peacefully from ocular melanoma at his home on June 4, 2023. He was 71 years old.

Jim was born in New York City and grew up in Westport, CT. He attended the Loomis School, Uppingham School in Rutland, England, and after returning to the US, the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a bachelor's degree cum laude in 1973 with a double major in history and literature. Jim then moved to Washington DC and met Diane King, who had two boys, ages six and nine. They married in 1976 and moved across the country so he could attend the University of SF School of Law. Jim adopted Diane's two boys, Phillip and Christopher, and continued to raise them after Diane's death in 1980.

Following graduation from law school, he joined the firm Lynch & Loofbourrow in 1977 where he started as an associate, achieved partnership status in 1983, and practiced for 25 years.

In 1982, Jim met Maureen Ann Brown, a second-year law student when he hired her as his law clerk. They settled in Mill Valley and wed in 1985. Together they explored the joys of hiking and mountain biking. They enjoyed traveling, journeying to Europe and New Zealand. After five years, they expanded the family to include two children, Jane and Nate.

In 2008, Jim formed the law firm of Parton, Sell, & Rhoades in San Rafael, CA. Jim specialized in employment law, product liability and commercial litigation and was honored as a "Super Lawyer." He was a member of the California, the Northern and Eastern Districts of California and the U.S. Supreme Court Bar Associations. A member of the Defense Research Institute, Jim was also program chair of the 2008 Employment Law Committee seminar. He retired from the practice of law in June 2016.

Jim was dedicated to outdoor recreation and the arts. He served on the Mill Valley Parks and Rec Commission, on the boards of the Antenna Theater and the Acoustic Vortex, a storied house-concert series in Larkspur, CA. The pinnacle of Jim's community service was at his "happy place;" the West Point Inn atop Mount Tamalpais. The Inn became the focus of Jim's volunteer work with his nomination to the board of directors. Jim's goal was to assure that the West Point Inn Association, a nonprofit formed to operate and maintain the Inn, would be around for another century of offering escape, solace and lodging to visitors to the magnificent mountain. To do this, Jim established a Fundraising Committee and urged board members to begin ongoing, professional fundraising campaigns and outreach. Jim & Maureen have donated generously to the Inn over the years. One gift stands out: an English railway ticket agent's desk dating back to the late 1800's/early 1900's, which can be seen in one of the Inn's lounges.

At his 50th Loomis Reunion, when asked for a piece of advice to new graduates, Jim wrote, "Stay active and healthy. Find a physical fitness regimen that works for you and stay with it. Forty years from now you will be glad you did. Remember that health is the crown that only the sick see." In his early fifties, Jim was diagnosed with prostate cancer and successfully treated.

At the start of the Coronavirus pandemic in April 2020, Jim learned he had ocular melanoma with a genetic marker revealing it as terminal and without effective treatment. Undeterred, Jim enrolled in an experimental immunotherapy drug trial at the University of California, San Francisco but the cancer progressed, metastasizing to his liver. Upon learning the FDA had approved the first-ever drug for treatment of uveal melanoma, Jim became Stanford University Medical Center's first patient to receive Tebentafusp; but it too failed to halt the disease. Yet almost to the end he remained active, upbeat and devoted to seeing friends.

Jim was widely admired by clients for his honesty, integrity and clear advice, always to the client's benefit. Friends relied on Jim for his intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, insight, sense of fun, and warmth. He didn't believe in sugar coating or hiding the bracing truths of life behind soft, feel-good language. He chronicled his experience with clear, brute-force language. Near the end, in the ICU, Jim said, "Dying is crappy" and "I don't want to live like this." Jim was clear he wanted to die, to die at home. And, that he did.

Fernwood Cemetery and Mortuary is handling the arrangements. The family requests in lieu of flowers that donations be made to the organizations that Jim loved most: The West Point Inn Association (<https://www.westpointinn.com/support-the-inn>), The Loomis Chaffee School (<https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/22039/donations/new>), or Pine Island Camp (<https://givebutter.com/2022-23annualfund>).

## GARDEN OF EATIN'

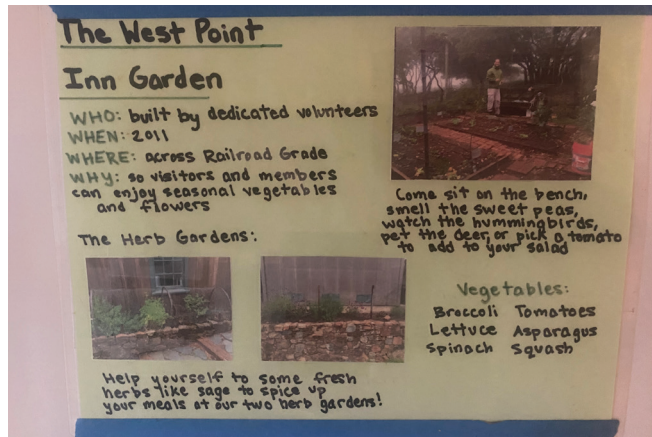
Kathy Kopp

First of all thanks to our fine Innkeepers David and John. After months of battling and feeding invisible and visible critters in our garden, David and John came up with a wonderful deterrent system. The critters were attacking from air, land, and underground. Our veggie starts are now nestled into safe boxes and developing very well!

We have healthy tomatoes, peppers, lettuces, carrots, squash, beets, broccoli, peas, beans and more.

We've also added to our flower sections along the fence lines within the garden. The critters aren't as interested in the nonedibles. Smart diners.

Hope you can visit the inn soon and share in the garden bounty this summer.



## LOOKING FOR INNKEEPERS

Don Keeley

Have you ever thought about being an Innkeeper? If so, you may be just the person we are seeking!

Innkeepers are the first point of contact for most visitors to the Inn, and this initial contact plays a large role in forming a visitor's first impression of the Inn. Innkeepers are the day-to-day, on-site managers. They are responsible for checking-in and checking-out overnight guests, they monitor all of the Inn's systems (especially the water and solar systems), they clean the Inn as needed, they complete basic repairs (or notify others that repairs are needed), and they provide basic first aid for overnight guests, hikers and bikers. And they answer lots of questions. These are just some of the Innkeeper's responsibilities, but they are responsible for much more.

Innkeepers are paid employees of the West Point Inn Association. They are on-site, on duty for seven straight days. Innkeepers typically work this schedule 5-7 weeks per year. Because of this time commitment, most Innkeepers are retired or have a job that allows them to spend 5-7 weeks per year at the Inn.

If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, or know someone who may be interested, please send an email to [executivedirector@westpointinn.com](mailto:executivedirector@westpointinn.com) for more information.





## RAVIOLI WITH SAGE BUTTER

Fran Rondeau

As we all wait for summer tomatoes and basil to appear here is an early summer dinner using fresh sage leaves and butter.

### Ingredients:

- 1 package of fresh or frozen spinach ricotta raviolis
- 1 small handful of sage leaves
- 3-4 ounces of unsalted butter ( about 1 stick)
- 2 T fresh parmesan, salt, coarse pepper
- 1 pot boiling salted water

In a small frying pan melt the butter. Gradually increase the heat until the butter bubbles. Keep it going until the butter turns brown and dark golden.

Quickly add all of the sage- let it sit and absorb the flavor for 10-15 minutes.

Add raviolis one by one to the boiling water-when they float to the surface they are done. Strain through a sieve.

Add most of the raviolis to the butter, swirl and then place all raviolis on to a warm oval platter. Pour remaining butter and sage over all.

Sprinkle with parmesan and lots of coarse ground pepper. Enjoy with an ice cold glass of sauvignon blanc and a green salad!

## SUMMER PANCAKE REPORT

Lin Johanson

It's summertime and our pancake season is in full swing. We had a great Father's Day with 840 guests. This was preceded by our Mother's Day breakfast where we served another 800. We are looking forward to our next four events, with hundreds more visitors to the Inn each time.

Thanks go to our hosts-in-training, like Eric & Lisa Magnuson who learned from Scott & Lisa Halsted on how to run Mother's Day. We're also grateful to Renato Jose & Debra Kahn, who learned from Fran Rondeau and Alyssa & Rye Jorgensen on how to direct Father's Day. We also appreciate Nancy Fox & Patti Schmidt for leading the May cleanup and Chris Sheetz & Diane Driscoll for supervising June. And a thank you to Matt and Terry Hanley for delivering pancake supplies to the Inn.

We wish good luck to our future hosts, like Nancy Fox and Alyssa & Rye Jorgensen who will be leading the July 9 event while also training Caroline & Monty Stephens. Colleen & Pat Williams will oversee the August 13 breakfast while Nancy Fox & Bonnie Jones will lead the cleanup efforts. Renato, Debra, Caroline & Monty will put their training to good use by leading the September 10 event while I will be leading the October 8 breakfast.

We additionally want to thank Heather McFadden, who has been kept quite busy handling all volunteer and guest inquiries, and Patti Schmidt, for being our media liaison. Finally, a BIG THANKS to all our volunteers who make these events possible.

And, if you're not working any of these breakfasts or cleanups, please come on up and enjoy pancakes with an incredible view!

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**CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR EMAIL?**

**PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO**

**BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO:**

**[MEMBERUPDATE@WESTPOINTINN.COM](mailto:MEMBERUPDATE@WESTPOINTINN.COM)**

**WANT TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE?**

**PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS**

**AND PHOTOS TO**

**[EDITOR@WESTPOINTINN.COM](mailto:EDITOR@WESTPOINTINN.COM)**