



a view from the WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

March 2022 • Issue 49

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

Don Keeley

Greetings West Point Inn Association Members!

I am honored to have been elected by the Board of Directors to be the Association's President for a second year, and I hope to serve you well.

I want to thank Chris Marcuse, Jim Parton and Pete Martin who left the Board in January. They have all served the Inn, in a number of different roles, for many years. Chris, Jim and Pete deserve everyone's thanks for all they have done for the Inn.

Pete Karlen, Mark Northcross and Patti Schmidt joined the Board of Directors in January. Pete became a member of the Association in 2020 and is beginning his first term as a Board Member. Mark is the Treasurer of the Association, as well as a former Board Member, and is beginning a new term on the Board. Patti is a former Board Member as well as a member of several Committees and is beginning a new term on the Board. You can be confident that the Association is being led by a strong, caring Board that will always strive to make decisions that are in the best interests of members and the Inn.

Dan Ciccarone resigned from the Board of Directors and as Co-Chair of the Development Committee in January due to work commitments. Dan will be missed in both roles. According to the Association's Bylaws, the remaining members of the Board of Directors are responsible for filling Board vacancies. If you are interested in joining the Board, or want to recommend another member, please let me know by email at president@westpointinn.com.

The Board of Directors is working on the following priorities for 2022:

- Negotiate a new lease for use of the Inn with the Marin Municipal Water District
- Fully reopen the Inn to overnight guests (pre-pandemic levels)
- Add events to the calendar so members can once again gather at the Inn
- Develop a fundraising plan to assure the financial health of the Association

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Continued from p1.

As you may know, the Association does not own the Inn, but leases the Inn from the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD). The current lease began in 1997 and expires on December 31, 2022. The Board has formed a lease negotiation committee and hired an attorney to advise us with the negotiation process. We expect to have our first meeting with the Water District in early March to begin lease negotiations.

As a result of the Covid pandemic, we are required to operate the Inn in compliance with all State of California and Marin County health and safety mandates. As a result, the Inn was closed to overnight guests from March 2020 until February 2021. When we reopened in February 2021, it was on a very limited basis with only two reservation groups at the Inn at any time. Toward the end of 2021, we further reopened the Inn at a maximum of 50% occupancy. On February 22, 2022, the Inn opened at 100% occupancy. The deck also opened for all to use. However, the interior of the Inn will only be available to overnight guests, and the deck bathrooms will remain closed due to the drought and tentative water supply.

For the last two years, most events have been cancelled at the Inn, leaving almost no opportunity for members to gather together to enjoy the Inn. As the Inn continues to reopen, we are adding events to the 2022 calendar. We are planning a full season of Pancake Breakfasts (May to October); we are planning to have the Spring and Fall Members' Meetings in-person at the Inn, followed by lunch; we are planning an event at the Inn to honor our "old-timer" members; and we are planning some holiday events in December. We are mindful that State and County mandates can change at any time, but we remain hopeful that these events will actually happen.

The pandemic has taught the Board that we need to be prepared for future threats to our traditional income sources. We had no overnight guests (or income) for almost one year, and, as a result, the Association was on track to run out of money. Due to the generosity of members and non-members, we received more than \$120,000 in donations, allowing the Inn to financially survive until overnight guests were allowed to return. In response, the Board is laying the groundwork to begin a formal fundraising effort later this year that will provide for long term financial stability for the Inn. You will read more about this effort in future Newsletters.

As I said in last year's newsletter, I promise you that I will continue give it everything I have. If you have any ideas or suggestions for me, please don't hesitate to send them along.

As I end the year as your President, I want to thank my fellow Board members, Committee Chairs, members and all others who have offered their advice and support throughout the year. I truly appreciate it.

Looking ahead to 2022, your Board of Directors plans to reopen the Inn to overnight guests at 100% capacity, resume the monthly Work Parties, and begin to add events back to our calendar. Given where we have been, it will almost feel normal again.

INNKEEPERS REPORT

Lin Marcuse & Fran Rondeau

Our Innkeepers did a great job keeping the Inn clean and hospitable during the pandemic while only half the Inn could be occupied. Now, by the time you read this, we should be operating at 100% capacity. We will also be reopening the deck to day use, but the interior will only be open to overnight guests. In addition, the exterior bathrooms will continue to be closed to day visitors due to drought/low water conditions. Masks will also be required in interior common areas (until at least March 14) unless actively eating or if there is a whole Inn booking.

We truly appreciate our Innkeepers for all their work during the pandemic and for their continued efforts as we scale up to full operations. We thank you, the membership, for your understanding during this next period.

Lastly, we want to thank Innkeeper Rosanna Petralia for her service. Rosanna is leaving us for other opportunities but loved her time at the Inn. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, she didn't get to meet as many of you as she would have liked. However, if you did have the opportunity to spend some time with Rosanna, you know she has a deep love for and knowledge about Mt. Tam. She was a great Innkeeper, and we will miss her. Thanks, Rosanna!

RESERVATION PROMO CODE

Jennifer Greene

Don't forget to use the member promo code "nora2021" when making reservations to receive your member discount. Member discounts can only be used for the member making the reservation and may not be extended to non-members.



NEW FURNITURE

Michael Jefferies

Due to the generosity of Jim and Maureen Parton the West Point Inn now has a wonderful piece of furniture. This very handsome desk is not only age appropriate and historically relevant but a wonderful addition to the members lounge.

Background information: We don't know a lot about the provenance of the desk other than it was sold by an antique shop in Birmingham, England (year unknown). We may be able to do some tracing through the antique shop in the future. The desk is English and dates from the late 1800's to the very early 1900's. This style of desk is not common and was used primarily by railway ticket agents and accountants. The desk is generally described as a "slant top standing or tall pedestal/knee hole desk". The top has two lifting sections which provides for additional storage including small drawers and cubicles. The desk was constructed primarily of mahogany with white oak drawer frames. No nails or screws were used to construct the desk and all joints are secured entirely with very fine dove tail joints. Each of the eight drawers had inset brass handles installed. Overall, the desk is in very good condition. The size and tone of the desk blends in beautifully with the size of the members lounge and compliments the rebuilt wood box which is across from the desk, next to the fireplace.

We are very fortunate to have such a historic desk donated to the Inn. It will certainly be a wonderful replacement to the old functional (funky) desk we have been using for signing in work parties and other groups.

Thank you Jim and Maureen!

PANCAKE BREAKFASTS

Lin Marcuse & Gordy MacDermott

We're just a couple of months away from our first full pancake season in two years. Assuming health metrics hold (or hopefully even improve!), we're planning on serving our delicious pancakes with a spectacular view on May 8, June 19, July 10, August 14, September 11 and October 9.

We have our breakfast hosts lined up for each event, but we're still looking for cleanup hosts for May, June and September. If you're interested in becoming more involved with the Inn, this is a fantastic opportunity. You lead a team of about a dozen in a few hours of cleanup and then you get to stay overnight on a Sunday. The Inn has a special, intimate feel when there are so few taking advantage of the whole place. Please write us if you would like to take on this leadership role.

We are also, of course, looking for volunteers for the breakfast and cleanup squads. We will be sending out an email blast in the very near future soliciting for people to indicate which date and which event they might be interested in working. We will then pass along the respondents to the hosts for each time. They are then responsible for determining the final makeup of their crews.

Lastly, if you can't work one of these dates, please come on up and join us for a great breakfast. See you at the Inn!



WEST POINT INN AND THE GREAT SNOW OF 1922

Fred Runner and Phil Rhodes

One hundred years ago, the biggest snow storm in recorded Marin history dumped almost three feet of snow at the East Peak of Mt Tamalpais.

Life as usual stopped. The Crookedest Railroad in the World was shut down, the trains were unable to climb the snow-smothered tracks. The Railroad's Inns on the upper mountain, West Point and the grand Tavern of Tamalpais at East Peak, were isolated. Ice-covered phone lines snapped and the two inns became important shelter from the cold. It was two full days before trains could reach the summit. The story was front-page news.

This story covers the epic snow storm that blanketed much of California. It's also a bit about one of the best documented inn-keeping families at West Point, the Kliewes, who were running the Inn and took photos of the snow-covered landscape.

Martin and Melanie Kliewe (Klee-way) were German immigrants. Martin had worked in San Francisco hotels before coming to West Point in August of 1919. A hiking newsletter said they had transformed the Inn. Photos show linen-covered dining room tables, silverware and cut glass vases with a few sprigs of fern. Their son, Ralph, was four when they moved in. He became friends with the train crews.

Mt. Tamalpais was a far more popular place for hiking than today. Thousands came most every weekend from all around the Bay Area by ferry boat and train. They were a hardy lot with nearly every hike on the mountain beginning at the train depot in Mill Valley. In 1922, there were no automobile roads on Tamalpais, and camping was unrestricted.

The surprise blizzard caught many off guard. Forty members of the Alpine Club (whose club house still stands on Panoramic Highway) had planned a weekend hike, stopping at West Point Saturday night.

The Mill Valley Record reported, "Forty members of the Alpine Club were snowbound at West Point Inn Saturday night. They ventured down the old stage road Sunday morning but finding the snow two or three feet deep, returned to the Inn and made their way to Mill Valley by way of the track, Ridge Trail and Pipeline Trail below the (Mine Ridge Cut) bridge (at the Mountain Home Inn)."

As West Point members know, forty people is a full Inn. Imagine that many on a night with temperatures below freezing and only two fireplaces to keep people warm. (West Point did not have propane gas until the early 1950s.)

A family of three was out camping at "The Hammocks", an informal campsite they visited each weekend near the Mountain Theater. The Record described it: "Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Everard of San Francisco and their nine-year-old son were camping at Mountain Theatre Saturday night. Mr. Everard was born in New Zealand. He and (his son) Boy had never before seen snow. They awakened Sunday morning to find themselves shut in with the cold, white barrier, three to five feet deep in places. They were equipped to prepare a hot breakfast, after which they started for West Point by way of the Rock Spring Trail. It took them three and one-half hours to cover the trail which is ordinarily made in one hour or less."

In 1898 the US Weather Service began collecting weather data at East Peak and comparing it with San Francisco. In 1899 the Weather Service moved into its own building next to the Tavern's dance pavilion. (What a great job: collecting data by day and dining at the Tavern in the evening.) For a time the Mill Valley Record reported East Peak weather on the front page. A small spreadsheet shows normal daytime temperature on Friday, January 27, of 49°. Saturday the temperature dropped to 33°, and then below freezing. That night precipitation began and did not stop until almost 3-feet of snow had fallen. It remained below freezing for another day.

Innkeeper Martin Kliewe shot a few photos of the snow at West Point on 4 x 5-inch glass negatives. The Inn looks different. In those days there were no trees. (They were planted by hikers in the 1930s.) Railroad tracks nearly encircled the Inn. In 1920, the scenic railway added a siding down the stage road, laying about 500-feet of rails to park trains when the railroad brought people to see the mountain play. A special platform was built along the steep edge of stage road for passenger boarding. It's covered in snow in one of the photos.

There is much more to tell about the Kliewes: Martin was an enterprising innkeeper. He raised chickens for fresh eggs at the Inn and fresh chicken dinner too. He also sold chickens. For a little more income, he became a deputy sheriff and wore a 6-point star and cowboy hat. He also built and sold custom tube radios for \$250. Huge money in the 1920s. There was a showpiece radio hanging on the wall in the "Member's Lounge", which was known as the dining room then. Martin's radio played music at dinner. In those days radio was broadcast live from the finest ball rooms in San Francisco. After dinner, Martin's radio played ballroom music and couples danced together in the middle of the room.

The Kliewes ran the Inn from 1919 until 1924. I met Martin and Melanie's son Ralph, in the 1990s. He had great memories of life at the Inn and how the Inn trembled as trains departed for the summit.

The Kliewes were at the Inn when Engine No. 9 came to Mt. Tam 100 year ago. As you may know, No. 9 is the only surviving piece of Mt. Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railway and a unique example of that era, just like the West Point Inn. The 34-foot long, 36-ton steam engine is currently under restoration by Friends of No. 9. (FriendsOfNo9.org)

Both the engine and the Inn have a wonderful story to tell of those days on Mt. Tamalpais. With a little imagination you can see it.

Thanks to Phil Rhodes for his research on the 1922 snow storm and Sydney Durkovich for the glass negatives.



West Point Inn
January 28, 1922, is incorrect. Snow fall started on the evening of Jan. 28 and heavily on Jan. 29.

Photo by Innkeeper Martin Kliewe, Courtesy Sydney Durkovich



West Point landmarks from right: "Honeymoon Cabin" (unclear when the cabin got that name), rooftop of Cabin 1 and the chicken coop. (Note telephone lines.) Railroad Grade in foreground. West Peak looms above.

Photo by Innkeeper Martin Kliewe, Courtesy Sydney Durkovich



circa January 30, 1922
Mt Tamalpais's heaviest snowstorm on record dumped almost 3 feet of snow at East Peak and reportedly 2 to 3 feet in areas around the Inn. This is the Inn's front steps and the treeless view to East Peak. (West Point's trees were planted by hikers in the 1930s.) Trains of Mt. Tamalpais's Scenic Railway were stopped by the snow. Newspaper reports said they could not make it further than the Bootjack siding switch, about 1/2 mile down the Railroad Grade from West Point. (The Railroad's grand Tavern of Tamalpais is visible in the sunshine near East Peak.)

Photo by Innkeeper Martin Kliewe., Courtesy of Sydney Durkovich



Jan. 1922
On January 29, 1922, the biggest snow storm ever recorded in Marin, buried Mt. Tamalpais. Approximately 30-inches were measured at East Peak. The Scenic Railway was shutdown, unable to run trains on the smothered tracks. No doubt the West Point Inn fireplaces were burning around the clock.

West Point Inn, stage road and the Railroad's Mountain Play boarding platform are in the middle of the frame. "Rock Spring Trail" at left.

Scanned from 4" x 5" glass negative.

Photo by Innkeeper Martin Kliewe, Courtesy of Sydney Durkovich

WEST POINT TREASURE TO TURN 93

Fred Runner

In the summer of 1939, the last commercial Innkeepers moved into the West Point Inn. “Doc” Dean, his wife Marie and their 2 daughters, Pat and Barbara, saw things change on Mt. Tam. The busy weekends of the 1930s slowed when the ferry and train service that carried hikers to Marin stopped and the Golden Gate Bridge opened and people began driving everywhere.

Barbara Dean was 10 when the Dean family began running the Inn. It was the same summer that the Wizard of Oz opened in theaters. There were definite similarities between Judy Garland and her Kansas farm and young Barbara Dean sitting on a wooden gate at West Point. (You can almost hear Somewhere Over the Rainbow...)

In the summer of 1941, the Army came to the mountain and set up camp at the Mountain Theatre and the East Peak Tavern. In December, America entered World War II. Suddenly everyone was involved in the war.

The Deans had to dig into their personal savings to keep the Inn going. That became expensive and the Deans had to close the Inn.

On March 25, Barbara will turn 93. She remembers those days well. She has newspaper clippings and photos and fun stories.

Like so many of us, for her the Inn has always been like home. As we all know, there’s no place like home.



Ten year old Barbara Dean and her dog Judy (right) at their new home in 1939.



WPIA SPRING MEETING

Marilyn Skaff & Fran Rondeau

LIVE AND IN PERSON

Sunday, April 24, 2022

Coffee at 10 / Meeting at 11 / Lunch on the deck

Hosts: Marilyn Skaff and Fran Rondeau

The last time we gathered in person was 2018 so this is a chance to celebrate and be together again. Come hear President Don Keely and your committee chairs as they bring you up to date on what’s happened, what’s new and what’s coming.

Be ready to share your ideas and questions.

A mouth watering Spring buffet lunch will be served following the meeting.

For Saturday or Sunday overnight accommodations please contact: franrondeau@gmail.com

CLAIRE'S BRISKET

Fran Rondeau

Here is a family recipe handed down from my great grandmother to my grandmother to my mother, Claire. It is the epitome of slow cooking, has only 4 ingredients, and no fixed measurements. All of the flavor comes from the meat and spices in which it is braised. This means all you need is a bit of time and 4 ingredients. I never measure but I have included quantities for those of you who like precision. Takes 4 hours. Serves 4-6 people. Freezes well.

Ingredients:

1 4-6 pound brisket

paprika

4 large potatoes

Garlic powder

Optional: carrots, rutabagas, turnips

Directions:

- Heat oven to 350
- Use a lidded heavy duty pot that can go on top of the stove as well as in the oven.
- Sprinkle both sides of the meat with: salt (1-2t), pepper (1-3t), garlic powder (1/2-1t) and a huge handful of paprika. (4T)
- Brown the brisket on both sides in a tiny bit of oil.
- Surround the brisket with water that comes up to 3/4 of the way up to the meat.
- Bring to a boil and then lower till barely simmer.
- Cover and place in the oven.
- After 2 hours check to make sure you still have liquid. If not, add water or beef broth.
- After 1 1/2 more hours carefully remove meat, slice across the grain into 1/4 inch slices. Place back in pot along with peeled and quartered potatoes, optional vegetables. Sprinkle with a lot more paprika (3T) and salt. Simmer on top or in the oven another hour or until the potatoes are super soft. Guaranteed to melt on your mouth!
- Serve with fresh horseradish.



**WEST POINT INN
OLD TIMERS' APPRECIATION PARTY
Saturday, June 4th 2022**



3:30 – 5:00 DRINKS AND SOCIALIZING
5:00 DINNER
6:00 STORY TELLING & MEMORY SHARING

LIVE MUSIC

RSVP Required by Wednesday, May 24

Dinner reservations: contact Marilyn Skaff at 415.713.5259 or marilynskaff@gmail.com

Overnight lodging: Contact Olene Sparks-Toby at 510.236.8293 or email olenes@aol.com

All members are welcome, you don't have to be an Old Timer (20 years membership) to attend!

Questions or requests for transportation: contact Marilyn Skaff

Cancellation of event: Rain or Red Flag Alert (Fire Danger)

Permission to hike out after dark

Updates: Contact Innkeeper (415) 388-9955

NOTE: PARTICIPATION LIMITED TO 50 PEOPLE

WEST POINT INN OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

PRESIDENT

Don Keeley
510.388.0765, donkeeley1@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Alyssa Jorgensen
415.686.7731, alyssajorgensen@gmail.com

TREASURER

Mark Northcross
415.380.9746, mark@nhainc.net

PARLIAMENTARIAN

SECRETARY

Wing Pepper
415.260.1507, wingpepper@gmail.com

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Wayne Koide
415.847.2865, yuzuru3632@gmail.com

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

DEVELOPMENT

development@westpointinn.com

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Lin Marcuse & Gordy MacDermott
415.516.4253
pancakes@westpointinn.com

MT. TAM LIAISON

Bob Newcomer
rjnewcomer43@gmail.com

COMMUNICATION

Jan Gauthier
415-328-2083, jangauthier08@gmail.com

GARDEN

Kathleen Kopp
707.328.9009, katkopp@gmail.com

FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE

Pete Martin & Scott Halsted
415.706.8852, scott.halsted@gmail.com,

HERITAGE

Fred Runner
415.302.7677, onesoundfred@mac.com
Linda Hulley
415.233.0123, linhulley@gmail.com

HOUSEKEEPING

Fran Rondeau
415.924.9132, franrondeau@gmail.com
Bonnie Jones
415.868.0974, bmjones4123@sbcglobal.net

INN HISTORIAN

Fred Runner
415.302.7677, onesoundfred@mac.com

MEMBERSHIP

Talia Friedman
415.283.6657, membership@westpointinn.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Alison Bricker
415.596.3922, editor@westpointinn.com

EVENTS

Patti Schmidt and Nancy Fox
events@westpointinn.com

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Lin Marcuse
415.516.4253, tover@aol.com
Fran Rondeau
415.924.9132, franrondeau@gmail.com

ELECTION

Chris & Lin Marcuse
elections@westpointinn.com

WORK PARTY

Joanne Devereaux
workparty@westpointinn.com

BOOKKEEPER

Marta Gomez
bookkeeper@westpointinn.com

OLD TIMERS LIAISON

Marilyn Skaff
415.713.5259
marilynskaff@gmail.com

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Nate Lee
natetlee@gmail.com

ARCHIVIST

Nancy Skinner
415.457.9491
nancyskinner@comcast.net

INN RESERVATIONS

Jennifer Greene
reservations@westpointinn.com

WEST POINT INN PHONE/ INNKEEPERS

David Durr
Pat Williams
Karl Jurgenson
John Slater
Jim Barry
Bob Thomson
Janice Hayes
415.388.9955
innkeepers@westpointinn.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Nancy Fox
Talia Friedman
Michael Jefferies
Alyssa Jorgensen
Peter Karlan
Don Keeley
Mark Northcross
Patti Schmidt

WEST POINT INN ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 796
San Anselmo, CA 94979

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



CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR EMAIL?

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO:

MEMBERUPDATE@WESTPOINTINN.COM

WANT TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE?

PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS

AND PHOTOS TO

EDITOR@WESTPOINTINN.COM