



a view from the  
**WEST POINT INN**

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

December 2023 • Issue 56

**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.*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1-2
Membership Update	2
Reservations	3
Housekeeping Tuesdays	3
New Board Members	3
Rusty Spike Winners	4
Wampum to Expire	4
Members' Website	4
WPI Awarded Grant	5
2023 Pancake Breakfast Round Up	6
Succulents at the Inn	6
Not An Acorn: WPI Sign History	7
Fundraising Cooking Classes	8
Post Holiday Resolution	8
WPI Officers & Chairpersons	9

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**

Happy Holidays Members!

By any measure, 2023 has been a banner year for WPIA. In my previous letters, I've consistently shared our many successes: overnight use is at an all-time high, events are hosting record crowds, a new lease was signed, a part-time Executive Director was hired, site projects have been completed, and the first phase of a capital campaign has been initiated. Member volunteers and employees have worked hard to consistently push these important initiatives forward. We are fortunate to have the right people in the right roles that show a strong desire for the West Point Inn to thrive. We have a lot to celebrate at 1,781ft!

The Members' Meeting on October 22nd was a lively and well attended event in the wet weather. It was wonderful to spend time together. The results of the WPIA Board Member Election & winners of the Rusty Spike Award were announced (please see articles on both later in this newsletter).

Some news: the solar system has a new inverter and new battery packs. An upgraded generator and additional panels are scheduled to be installed soon. The goal is to be able to fully charge the batteries, even on cloudy days. In addition, the fix of the Member's Lounge ceiling sag, as well as the replacement of its roof and gutters, is planned for early 2024. The project should take 7-10 days, barring any weather delays, therefore, please note that the West Point Inn will be CLOSED from Jan 1st - Jan 16th, 2024 for construction.

In further updates, the Board has reviewed and approved several policy revisions, which are found on the (password protected) FOR MEMBERS page on the website, including:

- Sunday nights will expand to 100% occupancy starting Sunday, Dec 17th, 2023. Previously, only cabins were available. This will increase revenue and help fund maintenance projects.
- Wampum will expire and only WPI Bucks will be accepted on/after Dec 31st, 2023. Wampum may be used to pay for 2024 membership dues (but not locker or late fees) if received by the Membership Committee by the expiration date.

Continued on p2.

Continued from p1.

- Membership applications require participation at any combination of three Work Parties or Pancake Breakfasts. Previously, applications required two Work Parties and one Pancake Breakfast.
- Additional details about smoking and the use of cell phones and electronic equipment.

Serving on the Board of Directors for the past four years has been a deeply gratifying experience. I consider it a privilege to have had the chance to make a difference in the prosperity of our beloved Inn by working with so many of you shoulder to shoulder. I hope to see many of you at the Holiday Dinner on Sunday, Dec 10th!

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

### Talia Friedman

Hello Members!

2023 was a successful year for the membership. We welcomed 31 new members and have a healthy waitlist of qualified applicants.

As the end of the year approaches, we turn our attention to collecting Member Dues and Locker Fees. As in recent years, you will receive an invoice per email. You can pay online with a credit card or make arrangements to mail in a check (jot me a line at [membership@westpointinn.com](mailto:membership@westpointinn.com) for the details). If you have West Point Inn Bucks to remit, you can mail those in and the invoiced amount will be adjusted accordingly.

We are grateful to all those paying promptly as it saves volunteer time - sending reminders is tedious and costly.

**IMPORTANT:** If you do not intend to renew or are a Lifetime Member who is no longer making use of your membership, please drop me a line so I can offer your spot up to one of the waitlisted applicants.

But wait! There's more! While member dues go a long way to sustaining the Inn, did you know that you can also use the Wild Apricot site to make a donation to WPIA? After paying your invoice, click [Donate](#) and you can arrange for a one-time or recurring donation. All members have access to the site but feel free to reach out if you need assistance navigating it.

Wishing all members a joyous and healthy 2024!



Good morning photos submitted by David Durr.

## HOUSEKEEPING TUESDAYS

(Mini Work Parties)

**Fran Rondeau**

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The first Mini Work Party took place on November 28th. Six of us hiked up and “spiffed” up the rooms and cabins from 10-2. We changed out some of the bedding, organized the closets, and swept away the dust bunnies. Afterward we enjoyed lunch on the deck, collected our West Point inn Bucks and headed down the mountain. What an enjoyable and productive way to help keep our Inn clean and welcoming. Please check the calendar and sign up for the next one using “Signup Genius” just like the regular work parties. The Mini Work Parties are on the first Tuesday of every month. Because the Inn will be closed for part of January the next one will be on January 16.

Dates: January 16, February 6, March 5

## RESERVATIONS

**Jennifer Greene**

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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

WPI bucks are redeemed by presenting them to the Innkeeper upon arrival at the inn.

We look forward to seeing you at the inn soon!

## WPIA ELECTS THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**Alyssa Jorgensen & Susan Aronovsky**

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The results of the 2024 Board Member election were announced at the Fall Members’ Meeting. Board Members are elected for a three-year term. The three newly elected member’s terms will start in January of 2024 and end in December of 2026. The winners are: Alan Zimmerman, Allison Stockman, and Ceci Van Voorhees. Congratulations!



*Christmas tree at the Inn.*

## RUSTY SPIKE AWARD WINNERS

Alyssa Jorgensen

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On behalf of the members of the West Point Inn Association, each year the President presents the Rusty Spike award to the member(s) who show outstanding loyalty and dedication to the Inn. This year's winners were honored at the Fall Members' Meeting on October 22nd, 2023: **Nancy Fox & Talia Friedman**



## “WAMPUM” TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 31ST, 2023

WPI Board of Directors

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All values of West Point Inn currency known as “Wampum” will expire on December 31st, 2023. Members may use “Wampum” to pay for accommodations through the end of 2023 and for 2024 member dues. After the membership renewal period, all “Wampum” will cease to hold value and will not be accepted. Only “West Point Inn Bucks” will be accepted starting January 1st, 2024. This decision was approved by the WPIA Board of Directors at their meeting on February 13th, 2023.

As a reminder, “West Point Inn Bucks” may be used by members to pay overnight fees (for themselves only) and for membership dues. Members may not use “West Point Inn Bucks” to reserve the Whole Property, Whole Inn, Day Use, for late payment fees, or locker rental. These policies as well as our bylaws can be found on the password encrypted page on our website: <https://www.westpointinn.com/for-members>.

## ACCESS TO MEMBER'S WEBSITE

Alyssa Jorgensen

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Use password “member” to access the Member page on our website. The Member page is a great resource for Newsletters, Board Agendas, Meeting Minutes, Bylaws, Policies, & Committee Contacts. Please do not share the password with non-members.



*The Member's Lounge ceiling hangs low above the heads of the members at the meeting October 22nd.*

## WEST POINT INN AWARDED MARIN'S COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND GRANT

**James Hill**

On November 7th, the Marin County Board of Supervisors awarded the West Point Inn \$7500 in funding towards structural improvements for the member's lounge roof and ceiling. The improvements are scheduled to be completed during the Inn's closure from January 1st to 16th. Over the years members and innkeepers have watched, discussed and debated the sagging lounge ceiling and its saddle-backed roof as ceiling and roof sunk further and further and their supporting walls tilted further and further apart. The awarded project will restructure the roof, removing roofing to insert roof trusses to support both ceiling and roof and tie the opposing window walls together. Thanks to Michael Jeffries and Don Kelley for putting this all together.

Marin's Community Service Fund program provides grants between \$1,000 and \$10,000 to projects that provide a measurable benefit to Marin County residents. We were fortunate to be one of the 48 local organizations awarded. Next year, Marin's Nonprofit Community Partners Program will offer a larger grant up to \$40,000 in July for work proposed during the following 12 months. With fingers crossed, we hope to succeed with this grant as well.

We continue to look further for additional grant funding.

Preservation grants are of personal interest. Federal preservation grants are awarded to National Register listed properties of national significance and influence. Unfortunately the West Point Inn is listed at a level of regional significance. To this end we have considered amending our registration, arguing in favor of the inn's place and influence in the history and development of the national conservation movement for public access. We see WPI's involvement in the histories of William and Elizabeth Kent, Muir Woods, the National Park Service and the GGNRA. A more direct connection is the history of the preservation of the Inn itself thanks to the activist/hikers of the Tamalpais Conservation Club, the Sierra Club and the volunteerism of the West Point Inn Association. Nowhere can the history of conservation be better witnessed and felt than from the deck of the Inn itself. Regardless of the challenge of the federal grant, the inn, its history and view continue to support us and one suspects those who support our goals.

If member have other sources for grant and project funding or insights on the Inns relation to the conservation movement, please get in touch.

## 2023 PANCAKE ROUND-UP

Lin Johanson

We had another great pancake season this year! In ye olden times (pre-pandemic), we would expect 800-1,000 guests for the Mother's and Father's Day breakfasts and about 400-600 diners for the July through October dates. This year our least attended event had over 750 people. Even after raising prices for the first time in a decade, we had lines around the Inn and down the hillside.

None of this could have been possible without the incredible hard work and dedication of our volunteers. Every one of them is essential to the successful execution of these events. We owe them a great debt of gratitude, but we are especially thankful for our breakfast team leaders: Scott & Lisa Halsted and Eric & Lisa Magnuson; Fran Rondeau; Alyssa & Rye Jorgensen, Nancy Fox and Cassandra Benjamin; Colleen & Pat Williams; and Renato & Debra Kahn and Monty & Caroline Stephens. We also couldn't return the Inn to its beautiful shape without our cleanup crews and their leaders: Nancy Fox, Patti Schmidt, Chris Sheetz, Diane Driscoll, Janice Hayes, Eileen McCrystle, and Bonnie Jones. Thank you all!

We also need to give shout outs to Heather McFadden, who had an incredible first year as our volunteer coordinator and all-around email returner; Patti Schmidt, for another incredible round as our media liaison; and Nancy Fox, Bonnie Jones, Alyssa Jorgensen, and Fran Rondeau for all their work in prepping and planning for the season and generally filling in whenever needed.

So, thank you again for all your hard work to support the Inn. We couldn't do it without you! And, if you're inclined to volunteer for next year, please contact us at <https://www.westpointinn.com/pancake-breakfasts> and fill out the form to be notified when the sign-up lists open for 2024.



The succulents are spreading! Submitted by John Slater.

## NOT AN ACORN?

### A Short History of the Big West Point Inn Sign

Fred Runner

When stagecoach service was abandoned between West Point and Willow Camp (Stinson Beach), the Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway no longer had a use for the West Point Inn.

Innkeepers Bob and Nora Stanton worked at the inn for the rest of the 1915 tourist season then locked up and moved out at the beginning of November.

In early 1916, members of a new fast-growing hiking group, the Tamalpais Conservation Club (TCC), talked the railroad into reopening the Inn with a focus on promoting hiking. It would be their mountain headquarters where you could renew a membership or be part of work party doing trail maintenance or maintaining the Inn. They asked the railroad to improve the facilities, add lockers and expand the porch.

TCC member Henry Boese, an architect who has worked on projects that include the UC Berkeley campus, designed the new porch. He also added a large rustic sign. In large letters are the words “West Point Inn” It was mounted on a sturdy post at the southwest corner of the building. At the lower left corner of the sign is the silhouette of the club emblem, a shield that also appears in their newsletters along with their motto: The Club That Guards the Mountain.

The TCC shield shows an evergreen tree and the letters “TCC” laid over the ridges of Mt. Tamalpais. Across the bottom it says “Guardian” and the membership number of the owner.

In those early years TCC members could buy a small bronze version for 50¢. They were sold at the Inn and a number of outlets in Marin and San Francisco.

The Club was initially formed in 1912 to pick up litter on the trails. The membership quickly swelled to over 1,000 as they encouraged hiking on Mt. Tamalpais. Members were people who came from all walks of life: lawyers, doctors, secretaries, laborers. The Ghirardelli family were members. For many years the West Point innkeepers were TCC members.

Today the TCC is a shadow of its former self with a much smaller membership. They still work to “guard” the mountain, guarding against commercial exploitation and supporting wilderness preservation.

The next time you look at the grizzled 107-year old “West Point” sign in front of the Inn, you’ll know you’re not looking at an acorn but the emblem of Tamalpais Conservation Club and the era when hikers became the Inn’s main focus.



*TCC emblem used in all TCC publications from the earliest days.*



*Early TCC members could buy a bronze badge for 50¢.*



1922

*The 1916 sign first hung at the southwest corner of the Inn where innkeeper Melanie Klee-way (Klee-way) poses in front of the Inn. Her husband, Martin, worked both as innkeeper and deputy sheriff on Mt. Tam in the early 1920s. (A land line telephone was a BIG deal. The Inn had one from its earliest days. The AT&T sign meant long distance was available.)*

## FUNDRAISER COOKING CLASSES AT THE WPI

### Fran Rondeau

Cooking classes at the West Point Inn? Yes!! Grab your apron and come join a fun morning preparing and tasting an array of mouth watering favorites. Each session will include all ingredients and materials and detailed recipes for four or five dishes. Each class will focus on a theme using a variety of local, seasonal, and organic ingredients whenever possible.

#### WHEN:

Tuesday February 13  
10am-2pm  
"WINTER VEGETABLES AND COOL WEATHER FAVORITES"

Sunday March 17  
11am-3pm  
"AROUND THE WORLD WITH GRAINS AND GREENS"

Sunday April 14  
4p.m.- overnight  
"SPRING HAS SPRUNG"

#### COST:

Tuesday February 13 and Sunday March 17  
\$100.00

Sunday April 14  
\$125.00 +Overnight stay rate

#### INSTRUCTORS:

Nancy Fox, Marc Leblanc, Fran Rondeau

#### SIZE:

6 minimum 10 maximum

If you are interested in one or all of these or if you have questions please email [franrondeau@gmail.com](mailto:franrondeau@gmail.com) with your name and contact information. Deadline for sign up and payment is 2 weeks prior to the class.



## POST HOLIDAY RESOLUTION

### Fran Rondeau

The Holidays are over and you have resolved to slow down and simplify. My version of French "potage" should do the trick. Use whatever vegetables you have in the fridge but broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots work best. One large Idaho baking potato thickens and enriches the broth. Top your potage with either a dollop of sour cream or crème fraîche or 2 Tablespoons of heavy cream swirled around and enjoy.

Ingredients: makes 3 servings

- One large potato, peeled and cut in quarters
- 10-12 ounces broccoli, flower and stem
- Optional : 1/2 head of cauliflower, cut in pieces
- 1 peeled carrot
- 3-4 cups of water, enough to cover all
- 1-2 t salt

Preparation:

- Cook everything together in a large pot for 20-30 minutes until soft.
- Put everything through a food mill, cuisinart, or immersion blender 2 cups at a time.
- Taste for salt.
- Reheat gently.
- Just before serving stir in a dollop of sour cream or 2 T heavy cream for each person.

Complete this meal with a slice of cave aged Emmenthal or a piece of Point Reyes Blue cheese on a cracker. If you can still find a bottle of 2023 Beaujolais Nouveau, pour a glass, and savor all.

On another note:

Is there a dish that you would like to see described in this newsletter? Would you like to contribute a recipe? Please share. Think about picking up some ideas and tips and attending one of 3 cooking classes/fund raisers coming to the Inn this winter. All of the details are included to the left.



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

**WANT TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE?**

**PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS**

**AND PHOTOS TO**

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