



a view from the
WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

March 2021 • Issue 45

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 Notes	2
Innkeepers Report	3
Pancake Breakfasts	3
Save the Inn Campaign	3-5
WPI Officers & Chairpersons	6

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 Members!

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

I want to thank my predecessor, Chris Marcuse, who served as President for 2019 and 2020. Chris did a terrific job leading the Association through the "normal" year of 2019 and through the difficult times and uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Chris will remain on the Board this year, and I look forward to his advice and guidance. I also want to thank Bonnie Jones and Johanna Sistek who completed their Board terms in January.

Two Board members, Wayne Koide and Claire Wellnitz, resigned in 2020, and Alyssa Jorgensen and Michael Jeffries were appointed to serve their unexpired terms. Alyssa was elected to her own three-year term at the Fall Members' Meeting, along with Dan Ciccarone and Robyn Fisher. 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.

During 2020, the Board was focused on making sure the Inn survived the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Inn closed to overnight guests on March 17, 2020, and all pancake breakfasts, work parties, and special events were cancelled for the remainder of the year. All of the Inn's normal sources of income (and volunteer labor) disappeared after March 17. The Board reduced expenses to the bare minimum, including only Innkeepers' wages, insurance, propane and trash removal. Even with these reduced expenses, the Board was faced with the prospect of running out of money early in 2021.

The Inn reopened on a limited basis to overnight guests on November 5, 2020, but was forced to close again on December 8 due to Marin County Health Orders. Marin County allowed overnight lodging to resume at the end of January 2021, and the Inn once again reopened to overnight guests on February 2. Even with reopening on a limited basis, with higher overnight rates, the Inn does not generate enough income to meet our monthly expenses.

Continued on p2.

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The Board began a “Keep the Inn Open” fundraising campaign during the second half of 2020, including a GoFundMe account set-up by David Durr, one of our Innkeepers. This campaign has raised more than \$120,000, including \$77,000 just since January 1. We are most grateful to everyone who has donated to the Inn, both members and nonmembers. Without the generosity of all donors, the Inn would have been in dire financial straits.

The pandemic has taught the Board that we need to be prepared for future threats to our traditional income sources. In response, we will be starting a formal fundraising effort later this year led by Jim Parton and Dan Ciccarone, the Co-Chairs of the Development Committee. They are putting together a great Development Committee with ambitious goals. You will read more about this effort in future Newsletters.

Due to a lack of income in 2020 and a decreasing bank balance, the Board did not initiate any major capital improvement projects last year. We are hopeful that we will be able to return to a more normal operating environment by the end of this year as COVID vaccination becomes more available, and we approach some form of herd immunity. In anticipation of these improving conditions, the Board is considering projects that have been deferred. One project is to rebuild the roof of the Members’ Lounge. The roof has had known structural issues for several years. The roof is not in danger of failing in the short term, but it does need to be repaired. Board Vice President Alyssa Jorgensen and her husband, Rye, own a structural engineering company, and they are donating their services to get this project off the ground. We have engineering drawings, we are working with contractors to get estimates, and we will start the process to obtain the necessary building permit. We would like to be in a position to start the project as soon as our financial position allows.

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. Since things always seem to take longer than you anticipate, the Board is beginning the process of negotiating a new lease with MMWD this year.

Finally, let me close by telling you a little bit about myself. I was born in Oakland and lived there until I graduated from UC Berkeley. I moved away to attend graduate school, worked on the East Coast and in the South, and lived/ worked near Newcastle, England for several years. My wife, Joanne, and I moved back to Oakland in 2000. Except for that 25+ year gap in the middle, I have lived in the Bay Area

my entire life. Joanne and I became members in 2015. I retired from my job in 2016, and became more involved with the Inn through volunteer activities. We always enjoyed the camaraderie of Work Parties, and when Jennifer Barclay, the Work Party Chair at the time, asked for people to help her, I jumped at the chance. When Jennifer stepped down as Work Party Chair a few years later, I stepped up to become the new Chair. A few years later I was elected to a three-year term on the Board, and now in the final year of my term, I have been elected your President.

I promise you that I will give it everything I have. If you have any ideas or suggestions for me, please don’t hesitate to send them along.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Talia Friedman

I’m grateful for the opportunity to get more involved in the WPIA. Thanks to the MacDermotts for their guidance and the Board for welcoming me to the Membership Committee role.

We are nearly done with the annual dues process for this year. Thank you to all who have remitted their payments on time. I sent reminder emails and letters to 63 members and am hoping to close the books by March 8. If you haven’t remitted, now is your last chance. Need assistance? Drop me a line at membership@westpointinn.com

Members used a total of 900 in WPI Bucks in lieu of payment and four individuals converted to Lifetime membership. We’ve also, through the annual dues process, collected over \$7,700 in donations for the Inn (I will be following up with an acknowledgement letter to those donors very soon). With the exception of two, all locker fees have been paid up.

INNKEEPERS REPORT

Fran Rondeau & Lin Johanson

We want to thank our wonderful team of Innkeepers, who are once again interacting with overnight guests! We were able to have overnight guests for a few weeks at the end of 2020 and were able to start again in February this year. We really appreciate all the hard work the Reopening Committee put in to make sure our staff and guests have a COVID-compliant and fun stay. We just ask all guests to remember the mask rules, to keep socially distant from innkeepers and other guests, and to respect the privacy of the innkeepers' quarters. Keep those guidelines in mind and everyone will have a great time at the Inn!

PANCAKE BREAKFASTS

Gordy MacDermott & Lin Marcuse

We are sorry to announce that the 2021 Pancake Season is on hold until further notice. The good news is that vaccines are becoming more widely available and Marin just entered the "Red Tier." However, the Pancake Committee and the Board feel that we should err on the side of caution and wait before we sponsor a large group of people congregating together at the Inn. We do appreciate any ideas you might have that would allow us to fundraise in a safe, COVID-compliant manner. If you have one, please contact us at pancakes@westpointinn.com.

We do want to thank our hosts, who were ready to step in if we were able to safely restart this year. Thanks to Scott and Lisa Halsted, Mark and Antoinetta Northcross, Fran Rondeau and Marilyn Skaff, Jan Gauthier and Wade Hufford, Bob Newcomer and Donald DeLave, and Pat Kavanaugh. We always appreciate your service to the Inn!

We are keeping a list of people interested in working a breakfast or cleanup in the unlikely, but extremely hopeful, event we are able to start up again by the fall. Please contact us if you would like to be placed on that list and we will notify you when we can start. A last bit of housekeeping: we will never send an encrypted attachment. If you ever receive one from our email address, please delete it and we apologize for any inconvenience.

Here's to hoping we get to see you at the Inn in '22!

SPRING SAVE THE INN DONORS LIST

Chris Marcuse

We want to express our deep gratitude to everyone who has stepped up to help save the Inn in our time of need. Thanks to the donors listed below, we have reached our goal for our short-term needs! This will allow us to keep the Inn operating during the COVID pandemic until a vaccine becomes widely available. But, we have longer term needs. Due to the pandemic, we have had to delay major capital projects that are important for the Inn's continued good health and well-being.

We apologize if you have donated but don't see your name listed here. We are doing our best to keep up with the paperwork and will acknowledge you in a future newsletter. However, every donation from \$5 online to \$25,000 bequests, is GREATLY appreciated.

Thank you all for saving the Inn!

West Point Inn Board of Directors

(Donor list on the following pages)

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