



a view from the
WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

September 2023 • Issue 55

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

Happy September WPI Members,

The Inn has had a busy summer! Reservations are up from last year with June, July, & August bookings at close to 100% occupancy. This is a great time to give extra kudos to our fabulous Innkeepers Bob, David, Janice, John, Jim, Pat, & Rosanna, Reservationist Jennifer Greene, and Executive Director Don Keeley. These nine employees of the West Point Inn handle the core of our daily operations and we should all appreciate the incredible work they do to accommodate 100+ guests every week.

The Old Timer's Event in June saw a record number of attendees at 65 people. WPIA's oldest member Dorothy Maur(98yo), as well as our longest standing member Marge Goody (member since 1957) were both able to attend. Thank you to Fred Runner for his touching storytelling and to Patti Schmidt, Nancy Fox, Olene Sparks-Toby, Marilyn Skaff, and Fran Rondeau for hosting the event.

Pancake Breakfasts continue to thrive in 2023. Our hosts have been working incredibly hard to serve hundreds of customers: May saw 800+ guests, June 840, July 889, & Aug 700+ respectively. The Inn grossed approximately \$15k at each event, with an estimated net of \$8k per breakfast. We have been selling hats, stickers, keychains, and magnets alongside melons, coffee, and tea, which have added to our bottom line. Huge thanks to Eric & Lisa Magnuson, Fran Rondeau, Renato Jose & Debra Kahn, Monty & Caroline Stephens, Cassandra Benjamin, Colleen & Pat Williams, Lin Johanson, & Chris Marcuse for stepping up to host these iconic events and to all of you who have been part of the volunteer crews. Heather McFadden, Jean Jefferies, Patti Schmidt, and Nancy Fox have been instrumental in their support for the pancake season taking on such roles as crew signups, melon purchasing, email communication, marketing, and trial sales of gluten-free offerings.

The Inn wouldn't be able to bounce back from these popular, sticky, butter-smearred, batter-caked messes without the aid of the Pancake Clean-Up crews who arrive just as the event ends. They return items to their place and bring the Inn back to its former glory with their fresh energy and attention to detail. Thanks to our 2023 Clean-Up hosts Chris Sheetz, Diane Driscoll, Bonnie Jones, Lin Johanson, & Chris Marcuse as well as the many crew members who have cleaned up after a busy Pancake Breakfast.

Continued on p2.

Continued from p1.

Some of you have been asking how to access the Membership Directory. If you are looking to contact another member, go to the members page (<https://www.westpointinn.com/for-members>), enter the password "member" (please do not share this with non-members), and click on "Member Directory". The link will take you to Wild Apricot, our membership database. You may need to register if you haven't created a username and password previously. Thank you to Membership Chair Talia Friedman for working to make the directory accessible. You may email membership@westpointinn.com with any questions or to request assistance with connecting directly with another member.

Executive Director Don Keeley and Building & Grounds Chair Michael Jefferies have been working on important projects such as: a new backup generator, the roof sag in the Member's Lounge, and a solar panel expansion. All of these projects have taken a fair amount of planning and come with large price tags. We are working hard to make sure we complete these in a timely manner, with minimal impact to overnight guests, and within budget. Thank you to board member James Hill for researching local and federal grants that can help make these projects within reach.

Many of you may have been attempting to make reservations for the week after Christmas through January 2024. We are currently coordinating a timeline for the Member's Lounge roof fix and may need to close the Inn for a portion of dates at the beginning of 2024. It may be that we offer modified availability during construction, but for now the schedule is tentative and contingent on various contractors and we need to keep options open. Email reservations@westpointinn.com if you would like to be added to a list of members who will receive notification when reservations open for dates within the 120 day booking window that have been previously unavailable. Thank you for your patience with this process.

Finally, I want to invite everyone to attend our Fall Members' Meeting at the Inn on Sunday, October 22, 2023. Piping hot coffee will be ready at 10a, the meeting will begin promptly at 11a, and a wonderful lunch will be prepared and served after the meeting. A few rooms may be available if you would like to stay over on Saturday night. Payment for accommodations will be taken in WPI Bucks or cash. Thank you to Patti Schmidt and Nancy Fox for organizing the event. Please see their article later in this issue if you are interested.

Thank you and I very much hope to see you up at the Inn soon!

RESERVATIONS

Jennifer Greene

To make a reservation go to our website 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!

“WAMPUM” TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 31ST, 2023 WPI Board of Directors

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>.

WORK PARTY UPDATE

Joanne Devereaux

This summer has been a challenge with unusually hot temperatures for almost all the work parties. A group of members and non-members repeatedly sign up and graciously contribute all year to clean and maintain the West Point Inn.

Marc Le Blanc and his daughter Simone are enormously appreciated as our frequent Saturday work party father-daughter chefs. Marc's own words recount the important connection between food, friends, and community.

"On a scorching summer Saturday in 2016, my 2-year-old daughter Simone enjoyed her lunch on the terrace of the inn, happily eating with her fingers. She sat in an orange bucket partially filled with water, carefree despite her soaked diaper. Her radiant smile while nestled in her plastic shell is a cherished memory that brings a smile to my face.

This memory encapsulates my sentiments toward the West Point Inn, where I've spent a significant amount of time, especially in its kitchen. Over the past decade, I've had the pleasure of cooking for work party volunteers, friends, family, and even strangers. While the sentiment might be clichéd, the enduring connections forged around the kitchen's butcher's block stand as a testament to time. From lasting friendships to brief yet engaging conversations while chopping vegetables, the kitchen has been the backdrop for meeting intriguing individuals and deepening existing bonds.

Some memories linger, like the aroma of a beloved vinaigrette, moments of frustration over a lack of butter, or the unfortunate scent of a burnt croque monsieur. Admittedly, there were occasions when Saturday morning cooking felt like a chore. However, the minute we set foot on the lush slopes of Mount Tam, a sense of privilege envelops me. The captivating panoramic views and the anticipation of reuniting with old acquaintances in this unique setting make the effort worthwhile. Even just last week, driving above the sea of clouds evoked heartwarming emotions.

The inn holds a spiritual significance for me and stands as my favorite kitchen in the world. I often refer to it as a magical place, and my daughter, now a 9-year-old adept baker, knows she can always find me in the kitchen."

In the past two years, I have tried to make sure we have a positive experience for everyone who makes the trek up to

the West Point Inn. I manage our Sign-Up Genius and always feel calmer seeing Gary Munoz's name. Gary frequently comes early to a work party and begins his day making coffee for everyone. Gary has been a member long enough to know where everything is and more importantly, he knows how to do almost everything. He knew how to sharpen all the garden tools and did so carefully at the July work party. Gary works non-stop and is always happy to teach you how to use a power saw, split wood, and lead a group doing just about anything including pour-over coffee.

If you've ever ventured into the basement, it was a crazy mess until January when we got together with Michael Jefferies and decided to do something about it. It turns out 100 years is a long, long time to "put it in the basement". We laid out our strategy and gathered 6-8 people at our first three basement clean-outs. Nell Gharibian quickly jumped in with her skills in the basement. She said, "I had fun organizing the WPI basement zone. Everyone seems to come through looking for *something* during the work parties... now they can find what they need and GET BACK TO WORK. It was great to meet other members/volunteers (and to "make myself useful as well as ornamental" as my 88-year-old mother would always say to us...)

Weed whacking and brush clearing were important parts of our early spring-summer work parties. Once again, we had a member Ken Malvino come through with superior skills in this area. It was amazing to see dead limbs stacked so neatly next to our recycling areas. Scott Halsted has managed establishing the important chipping of fire risk materials that gather all year.

All in all, I've realized what Studs Terkel so clearly wrote about in his book WORKING, people like to work with their hands, and they like being part of a good community.





NANCY MACOMBER SKINNER AN APPRECIATION

Fred Runner

On Thursday, July 20, Nancy Skinner passed away in San Rafael. She had been the Historian and Archivist of the West Point Inn starting in the early 1980s. She loved and supported the Inn whenever she could. She was 92.

Starting in the 1970s Nancy led hikes and told the history of Mt. Tam. She was a founding member of the Mt. Tamalpais History Project. The History Project spawned a community of people who loved the history of Mt. Tamalpais, inspired a book, "Mt. Tamalpais: A History" (by MTHP President Lincoln Fairley) and published 51 newsletters filled with stories of Mt. Tamalpais in the 19th and 20th century.

Nancy's interest in Tamalpais history began when someone asked her who Matt Davis was? (Builder of the Matt Davis trail.) She said, "I'll find out." That set the hook.

From there she joined the Mt. Tamalpais History Project, created classes through College of Marin, led hikes, that included one on the Scenic Railway with a hike up the RR Grade and dinner and an overnight at the West Point Inn. She wrote a 2 volume book, sponsored by Sonoma State College, that had many stories of popular campsites on Mt. Tamalpais and the people who used them in the years before MMWD and State Parks managed the landscape.

In the 1980s she became the Inn's historian while digging through dusty boxes with the records of the West Point Club. Her research created the list of Presidents and Innkeepers that hangs on the wall of the Member's Lounge. She helped write brochures and newsletter stories and created rotating history displays that she posted quarterly in the big green display case at the foot of the Inn's stone steps. The hardest part, she said, was keeping them brief.

Nancy's bubbly enthusiasm made her fun to be around. She will be greatly missed.

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 for more information.

ACCESS TO MEMBER'S WEBSITE

Alyssa Jorgensen

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.



OLD TIMER'S EVENING

Fran Rondeau

A wonderful evening celebrating our "old timers" (members of 20 years) took place at the Inn on June 24th. Following a delicious dinner Master of Ceremonies Carle Nolte engaged both old and new members as they recounted their personal stories and memories.



SUMMER PANCAKE REPORT

Lin Johanson

We're more than two-thirds of the way through our pancake season, and we're going gangbusters! Historically, our Mother's and Father's Day breakfasts saw 800-1,000 visitors, while the other four months saw 400-600 visitors each. However, since we went back to a post-pandemic full season last year, we haven't had less than 700 attendees per event. The popularity of our breakfasts is incredible!

Thanks to Nancy Fox and Alyssa & Rye Jorgensen for leading the July 9 event and to Colleen & Pat Williams for overseeing the August 13 breakfast. We want to send good wishes to Renato Jones, Debra Kahn and Caroline & Monty Stephens who will do an awesome job leading the September 10 event while I will finish out the season with the October 8 breakfast. We also want to thank our cleanup leaders like Bonnie Jones and Chris Scheetz.

We additionally greatly appreciate 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. Everyone's contributions are greatly appreciated!

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

FALL MEMBERS MEETING

Patti Schmidt & Nancy Fox

Please join us at the Inn for the Fall Members Meeting on Sunday, October 22nd. Coffee will be flowing accompanied by delicious pastries at 10am. The meeting will start promptly at 11am, and lunch will be served at 12:30p. Your co-hosts are Nancy Fox, Fran Rondeau, Jean Jefferies, and Patti Schmidt. Please email events@westpointinn.com to RSVP for the luncheon no later than Oct 9. An emailed flyer to follow.

A limited number of accommodations are available the night before; priority will be given to volunteers and then to membership on a first-come, first-served basis. Volunteers will pay for their rooms (in WPI Bucks, check, or cash) and will receive a complimentary dinner on Saturday night as well as breakfast the next morning. Please contact Nancy Fox if you'd like to volunteer nancy@nfassoc.com.



MONTHLY MINI WORK PARTIES

Don Keeley

The regular monthly Saturday Work Parties complete numerous projects to keep the Inn in great shape and perform regular maintenance activities. However, the Work Parties are not always able to clean the rooms and cabins as well as we would like, or to change the mattress and pillow protectors on a regular schedule. This is due to a large number of rooms and cabins being rented for both Friday and Saturday nights, making it impossible for Work Party volunteers to enter the rooms and cabins.

As a result, we are proposing a monthly Mini Work Party to focus specifically on cleaning the rooms and cabins, including changing the mattress and pillow protectors. These Mini Work Parties would occur on Tuesdays, since there are no overnight guests on Monday nights and all rooms / cabins will be empty. Here is an overview of the proposal:

- Mini Work Parties would be held on the last Tuesday of each month
- Mini Work Parties would be held between the hours of 9:00AM - 2:30PM
- There would ideally be two Co-Hosts
- Four (4) to six (6) additional crew members
- Crew will sign up using Sign-Up Genius, similar to the regular Saturday Work Parties
- Mini Work Parties will focus on cleaning all rooms and cabins and changing mattress and pillow protectors. Crew members must be physically able to perform these types of cleaning activities.
- Mini Work Parties are for Members only; this is not a path to membership
- Crew members will receive WPI Bucks (\$35 value) for each Mini Work Party
- Crew members can elect to spend Tuesday night at the Inn (using WPI Bucks or credit card) and must make their own reservation
- Crew members may sign up for a maximum of six (6) Mini Work Parties per year
- Crew members will receive a light lunch paid for by WPIA

If you are interested in being a co-host or volunteer, or are looking for more information, please send an email to workparty@westpointinn.com.

REFURBISHED DISPLAY CASES AND SIGNAGE

Signs by by Franklin Amster

IMI Signs in San Rafael



ROESTI RECIPE

Fran Rondeau

I recently experienced this traditional potato dish while hiking in the Bernese Alps.

Winter hikers and skiers always encounter it as they travel from hut to alpine hut. The hut host serves it in its simplest form, with a fried egg on top. Restaurants in cities such as Zermatt, Interlocken and Zurich, however, offer the option of speck (German smoked ham), or Alpen Kase (local Swiss cheese) mixed into the potatoes. Served with a fried egg or with ham and cheese it is delicious. I suggest serving it as a main course along with sautéed greens like swiss chard or spinach on the side. Summer or winter this dish is guaranteed to transport you to the land of Heidi.

Ingredients:

2 medium size Yukon gold potatoes

6T butter+ extra to surround roti as it is cooking (oil also possible)

1 t salt to taste (more to taste)

Instructions

The day or night before, boil the whole potatoes for about 25 minutes.

Let them cool completely in the refrigerator.

Grate the cold potatoes with a coarse grater. (cuisinart not advised).

Mix with salt and form 1 large (or 2 small) discs about 1/2 inch thick.

Heat a NON STICK pan and add 3-4 tablespoons of the butter.

Let the roesti cook for a full 10 minutes on medium heat till golden brown and crispy.

Drizzle or rub butter all around the roesti as it cooks- this will help make it crispy.

Add 3 more Tablespoons of butter and flip and cook for another 10 minutes.

Place in warm oven while you fry 1-2 eggs.

Put the eggs on top and imagine you have just finished a challenging trek in the snow!



Notes:

Small pieces of ham are a nice addition: mix them in with grated potatoes.

A hand full of grated Swiss Gruyère on top of the flipped roesti is also yummy.

If you choose not to pre cook and chill the potatoes make sure you squeeze a maximum of water out of the raw potato. The resulting flavor will be different, but still delicious.



HUMMINGBIRDS

AT THE INN

Nancy Fox

Most of us enjoy sitting on the deck and watching the hummingbirds at the feeders; a favorite activity at the West Point Inn. But many aren't aware of the awesome opportunity to see, close-up, hummingbirds at rest.

The hummingbirds go back and forth from the feeders to the redwood and bay trees in front of the West Point Inn early in the morning and late afternoon/early evening. If you are patient and watch, you will be rewarded with a continuous show. A great opportunity for photographers and hummingbird lovers!

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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

WANT TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE?

PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS

AND PHOTOS TO

EDITOR@WESTPOINTINN.COM