

a view from the

WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

December 2019 • Issue 40

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	3
Personnel Report	3
Pancake Breakfasts	3
Housekeeping Reports	4
Heritage Night	4
View From the Porch	5
Wall of Fame Award	5
Harissa Chicken Recipe	6
Cookie & Holiday Party	7
Crab Feed & Chili Round Up	7
WPI 2019-2020 Calendar	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

Chris Marcuse

Hello all! As I write this, the Inn is closed for the fourth time this fall due to a red flag fire warning and the sixth time this year. It is obvious that the climate in California has changed. It's become drier and windier. It's also anyone's guess when we will get significant rain.

All these factors are threats to the Inn. In order to protect it, we've been extremely busy working around the old place. The Fire Hardening Committee, comprised of Buildings & Grounds (Ross Asselstine & Urban Carmel), Fire Safety (Pete Martin & Scott Halsted) and me, has met several times to develop a course of action. These were based on recommendations provided by the Marin County Fire Department and FireSafe Marin.

As I've mentioned previously, those suggestions led us to create responses and preventative measures for three possible scenarios: an interior fire, a small brush fire nearby and a major "Wine Country" type fire. We concentrated on the interior fire first, making the safety of our employees, members and visitors our highest priority.

Having completed 90-95% of interior protections, we are now moving to how best to save the buildings. A major component of that is reducing the fuel load around the Inn premises. We recently had a brush removal crew come up and take down the most dangerous vegetation. This led to some small bays and oaks being cut down, but the large firs (minus some limbs) are still standing guard from the wind and sun.

Besides fire protection, the changing climate could also affect our water supply. We have been extremely fortunate in that the spring that fills our water tanks has never gone dry. However, a few years back (near the end of the last drought), the creek went so low that we were forced to investigate trucking in potable water. Luckily, the rains came before we had to choose that expensive option.

But, with longer dry seasons occurring, we may be faced with the spring getting so low that it won't fill our tanks. To get ahead of that, we started looking into four options for a more stable water source. The first is to replace our spring box with a larger one and the second was to drill horizontally into the hillside to tap into an aquifer. The third possibility is to drill a conventional vertical well and the fourth is to tap into existing pipes.

Continued on p2.

Continued from p1.

Taking the lead on this research are Bonnie Jones, the WPIA Vice President, and George Reid, a member who is a hydrogeologist. The three of us took our options to the Marin Project Coordination Committee. This group has representatives from just about every Federal, state and local regulatory agency that might have an interest in any given project. We presented our choices and received feedback from many of the agencies.

The regulators dissuaded us from pursuing the first two possibilities. Any new construction in the creek or with horizontal boring could lead to the Inn losing its pre-1914 water rights. The new rules we would have to follow could potentially lead us to lose the ability to draw from the spring during the summer months. This is because the water eventually makes its way to protected salmon runs.

We have also decided against tapping into existing pipes due to cost. The two closest water sources to the Inn are from the State Parks facilities at East Peak or from Throckmorton Fire Station. Either way, we would have to trench and pipe the water for approximately two miles. That is in addition to needing pumps to assist the water upgrade.

This leaves us with a traditional vertical well. In the future, we will be meeting with hydrologists and excavation companies to see if there is a good potential drill site near the Inn. If we find one, we will then proceed with obtaining the necessary permits to begin boring. We are tentatively looking at work occurring between April and October of next year.

Unfortunately, all this fire and water work takes money. The Board and the development committee, led by Suzie Koide, have decided that our 2020 fundraising goal will be for "climate change adaptation." The money raised from this campaign will go to fire hardening and water sourcing. You will soon receive your renewal notices from our membership committee, led by Gordy and Lynn MacDermott. If you are able, please consider giving to the Inn so we may continue to be a place of great beauty for all to visit.

On a happier note, we recently completed the repair of the front deck and stairs. It took an extensive renovation, but we now have an entrance that will welcome guests to Inn for many decades to come. Additionally, we have a practically brand-new notice board next to the stairs. Ross redesigned the board to improve its waterproofing and display area while Michael Jefferies and his son spent many hours in the heat of summer reconstructing it. Thanks also to the California Alpine Club for their financial contribution to the project.

We had a great Fall Members Meeting. I appreciate all who took the time to hike up to hear about what's going on with the Inn. This was followed by a tremendous lunch prepared by Fran Rondeau and crew. I want to congratulate Ross As-selstine on winning this year's Rusty Spike Award. He has put in an extraordinary amount of time and effort to repair and protect the Inn. Accolades also go to this year's Wall of Fame Award winner, Nancy Skinner, who has given decades of service to the Inn.

I must also express gratitude for all the people who contribute to keeping the Inn and the Association running. Thanks to Alison Bricker for putting up with deadline scofflaws to produce a great looking newsletter. Thanks to Fran and Bonnie for overseeing the appearance of the Inn while Ross and Urban protect and repair the exterior. Thanks to Don Keeley for coming up every month to run the work parties and thanks to Kathleen Kopp for our beautiful and productive garden.

A big thank you to Scott Liebman, Nate Lee and our reservationist, Jennifer Greene, for all their work in choosing and implementing our new reservations system. And a HUGE thank you to our Innkeepers (David Durr, Pat Williams, Jennifer Greene, Craig Gordon, Karl Jurgenson, John Slater, Jim Barry and Bob Thomson) and Housekeeper (Jennifer Barclay) for their day-to-day care of the Inn. The place wouldn't be the welcoming Jewel of the Mountain if it weren't for our tremendous employees.

Besides the people I've already mentioned, I want to thank everyone who has volunteered at a work party, a pancake breakfast or a cleanup event. Our Inn wouldn't be the glorious place that it is without the many contributions of our dedicated members and candidates. I also have a request for anyone who wants to get more involved with the Inn. Our great Board secretary, Jean Jefferies, would like to get more involved with committees. However, in order to do that, she needs assistance with recording the minutes from the Board's monthly meetings. Jean is willing to train and mentor anyone interested in helping. If you would like more information about the position, please contact me or Jean.

Finally, I want to welcome our recently elected Board members. A hearty welcome to Nancy Fox, Pete Martin and Clare Wellnitz! And a huge thank you to our departing Board members: Bob Newcomer, Mark Northcross and Patti Schmidt. We are extremely appreciative of your many years of service to the Inn and the Association.

I wish you all have the best of holidays and a Happy New Year!

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Gordy and Lynn MacDermott

It is coming up to that time of the year to renew your membership in the West Point Inn. As a reminder, Renewal letters will go out last wk. of December. Also, please note that we are sorry to say we are not excepting credit cards for payment of renewal dues. The reasons for this were in our Sept. newsletter that was sent out to all our members. You may pay with a check, money order or wampum. As always, locker payment can not be made with wampum.

Thanks from Membership,
Gordy & Lynn

PERSONNEL REPORT

Lin Marcuse & Fran Rondeau

It has been an incredibly busy three months for our Innkeepers. Besides guarding the Inn during several Red Flags and power shut-offs (we are off-grid, but PG&E can affect our internet), they've had to deal with the constant activity of the deck repair and vegetation removal.

All this activity leads to many phone calls and inquiries from the public. We appreciate how responsive and informative the team is with our guests and members. We are also grateful for all the hard work our Innkeepers (David Durr, Pat Williams, Jennifer Greene, Craig Gordon, Karl Jurgenson, John Slater, Jim Barry and Bob Thomson) and Housekeeper (Jennifer Barclay) do every time they are up at the Inn that keep the place looking beautiful. Our employees make the Inn the incredible and welcoming place that we all love so much.

Thank you team!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST REPORT

Gordy MacDermott & Lin Marcuse

We want to thank everyone that contributed to another great, albeit shortened, pancake season. This was our best year since 2015, even though we had to cancel the October breakfast due to a red flag warning and public safety power shutoff. The great success this year was because of everyone's efforts, but especially because of record revenue by the May team. We appreciate the efforts of our pancake hosts: Scott & Lisa Halsted (May), Mark & Antoinetta Northcross (June), Marilyn Skaff & Colleen Williams (July), Jan Gauthier & Wade Hufford (August), and Bob Newcomer (September). Also, the endeavors of our cleanup hosts: Nancy Fox & Patti Schmidt (May & July), Bonnie Jones (June), Don Keeley & Joanne Deveraux (August), and Lin & Chris Marcuse (September). We also want to thank Pat Kavanaugh for being ready to host the October breakfast as well as Frances & Eileen Sullivan, who were ready to lead the cleanup.

Additional thanks go to Molly Casey for keeping track of inventory and Patti Schmidt for being our media liaison. A huge shout-out to all the members, candidates and Inn enthusiasts who volunteer to be on the crews that pull off these events. And we are especially grateful to the Innkeepers who are always ready to help or answer a question during these days of organized chaos.

If you are interested in joining a breakfast or cleanup team, or if you would like to learn how to host an event, please contact us at pancakes@westpointinn.com. And thank you to everyone who comes up to enjoy pancakes with a beautiful view! See you in 2020!

RESERVATION & POLICY CHANGES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020

1. No whole inn bookings are allowed on Saturday nights.
2. Whole inn bookings are \$1,400 for members and non-members.
3. Changes are in effect for bookings made from 01/01/20 to 12/31/20.
4. New reservation system has been implemented. Instructions for members are in the members' section of the website.

HOUSEKEEPING UPDATE

Fran Rondeau, Bonnie Jones,
Nan Torrey and Nancy Fox

ince the last newsletter housekeeping activities have including replenishing the spice cabinet, sewing and patching bedding, curtains and pillows, replacing broken glasses, purchasing glass carafes, and the never ending purchase of adequate sheets rented by overnight guests.

Thank you to Jennifer Barclay for her detailed attention and work on Mondays; she keeps us on our toes for what needs attention.

After several years of planning to organize the boxes of documents in our storage unit we finally dug our heels in and did it- a start that is. A thank you to David Durr who supplied us with all of the pieces and Lin and Chris who put them together and built desperately needed shelves. Bonnie and Fran started organizing files and putting them in fresh boxes.

Suggestions always welcome.

HERITAGE NIGHT 2020

Fran Rondeau

This year we will celebrate the centennial of the April 24, 1920 opening of the member's lounge with a dinner dance. On Friday, April 24th 2020 we will "reenact" the historic celebration with music, dancing, and appetizers. On Saturday, April 25th Fred Runner will recount for us the dramatic story involved in the final completion of this room and the bee hive of activity that happened at the Inn in the 1920s with steam trains, horses, actors and hikers. Dinner will be served. Both or either of these two evening events is open to everyone. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for the flyer and details.

HOUSEKEEPER'S REPORT

Jennifer Barclay

This is Jennifer, your West Point Inn Housekeeper. As many of you may know, I've had the privilege of working four Mondays a month at our beloved West Point Inn since late 2017.

Given only 6 hours, the Innkeeper and I, work hard and fast as a team to get the Inn back in shape after the previous week's bookings and prepare it for the upcoming week. We put things back in order, replenish supplies, perform a deep clean and report to the various committees any need for repairs, additions, etc.

Sometimes the IK's don't have time to work with me as a team because Monday is their transition day. They're going home after spending a week at the Inn! So they often do their work that we sometimes do together before I get there, leaving the rest to me and the incoming IK. Whatever the scenario, everything gets done in addition to what Don Keeley's work parties do once a month.

I love the Innkeepers (and Buildings & Grounds co-chair Ross Asselstine too, because he's often there on Mondays doing his magic). We are so lucky to have them working their magic up at the Inn. They each bring their special talents to help make the Inn what it is today (the best ever!). Stop and imagine only one person taking care of our second home-without-a-mortgage all by themselves with the current booking levels? These people work hard!

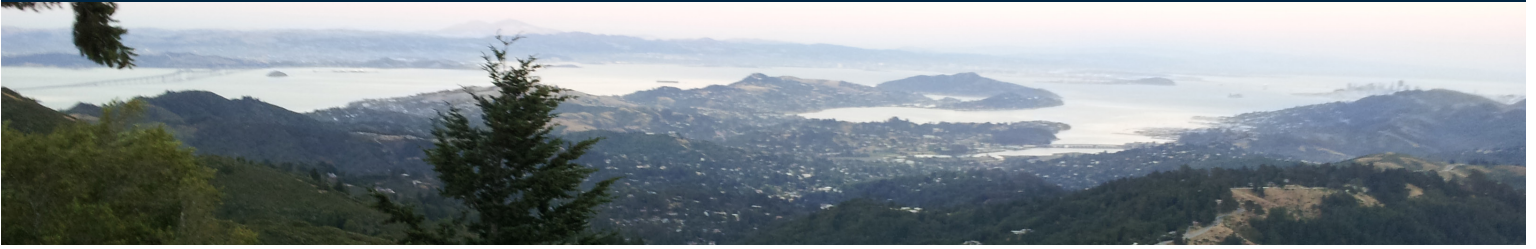
I go home very tired but satisfied. So, thank you Lin, Fran and the Board for allowing me to be part of this wonderful team.

With gratitude,

Your loyal (suspended member) employee :)

Jennifer Barclay
510-759-4669

PS We have a membership of 600 people and during the Spring and Fall meetings we only have at most 50 people show up. It's important that you join in on these meetings. We're only as good as your involvement. Please join us. They're fun, the lunch is fabulous, you learn a lot and can speak with the Board members up front and personal. I want to see some new faces, please.



VIEW FROM THE PORCH: Nancy Skinner: “The Queen of Mt. Tamalpais History”

Marilyn Skaff

Nancy Skinner has been a member of the West Point Inn since the early 1980's. She is a Bay Area native, born in Orinda, and graduated from UC Berkeley. She and her husband, Jack, moved to LA in the 50's, but returned after 2 years, realizing that they were truly Northern California people.

Much of Nancy's life history is closely linked to Mount Tamalpais. In addition to raising 3 sons, she was a professional guide on the mountain for over 25 years. She led Sierra Club hikes as well as teaching a “Beginning Hiking” class at College of Marin. The COM class with Nancy was a real adventure (this author had the privilege of being one of her students). Not only was the class known for the teacher's wealth of knowledge about the mountain: its history, zoology, botany, geology. It was also well known for the midterm (an oyster barbecue at Drakes Bay) and final exam (a white table cloth picnic at Rock Springs).

She once took a Sierra Club hike to the Inn. One of the hikers asked Nancy how the Inn was connected to the Army. When asked whatever gave the person that idea, they replied, “Well, it's called “West Point.” In addition to leading hikes, Nancy gave lectures about the mountain at the Mill Valley Library. She was introduced as the “Grand Dame of Mt. Tam history,” but prefers the title of “Queen” and bought a tiara to wear for her lectures.

Nancy has been a member of WPI since the early '80's and has served as Historian and Archivist. She has been the keeper of the bulletin board at the Inn since 1983. She worked at the very first Pancake Breakfast, with chef Pete Martin. She tells of the challenge of the old stove and the hundreds of hungry people who waited almost 2 hours for their breakfast at that first PCB. She says she hung up her apron after that experience! She also recalls a time when the innkeeper had to be away to care for a sick relative and Nancy and friends substituted. She remembers the wind blowing all night long and people stopping by after midnight, asking for a cup of coffee. (The hours of the Inn were a little more lax in those days.)

Although Nancy can no longer hike, the Inn remains an important part of her life. When she is not working on the displays for the bulletin board, she does needle point with words of wisdom (e.g., “God Says: Go Play!”) She is also an avid Giants fan and loves classical music and the biographies of composers.

When asked what the Inn means to her, she describes it as a lovely place to hide, near yet far away. She loves to sit on the porch and look at the “diamond necklace” of airplane lights taking off from the airport. Her hope for the future of the inn is that it stay “funky,” not “slick and modern.”



THE WALL OF FAME AWARD

In 2002, the Wall of Fame award was established to recognize long time members who have given many years of their time and energy to service to the Inn, often without official recognition. It is a very special award, celebrating very special people. This year at the Fall Membership Meeting, this award was presented by Charlie Evans to Nancy Skinner, a woman who is well-known, not only at the Inn, but throughout Marin. In 2012, she was interviewed for this column and that interview appears below. Congratulations, Nancy!



HARISSA CHICKEN

Fran Rondeau

Here is the perfect pre or post holiday dish to serve to your family and friends. A light green salad is all you need to add to complete your dinner. I have modified the recipe to my taste but it was inspired by Melissa Clark of the NY Times, suggested by our event planner, Gail Shahan, and served twice at the West Point Inn. It earned rave reviews. I hope you enjoy it too!

4-6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

1 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 by 1/2-inch chunks

3-4 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

4-5 tablespoons harissa (or any spicy sauce you like siracha)

1-2 teaspoons ground cumin

4-5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed

2 leeks, white and light green parts, halved lengthwise, rinsed, and thinly sliced into half-moons

1teaspoon grated lemon zest

1 cup plain yogurt

1 large garlic clove

1 cup chopped cilantro and /or parsley and/or dill to stir into yogurt

1 splash fresh lemon juice, as needed

1. Combine the chicken and potatoes in a large bowl. Season them with 2 teaspoons of the salt and ½ teaspoon of the pepper. In a small bowl, whisk together the harissa, cumin, and 3-4 tablespoons of the olive oil. Pour this mixture over the chicken and potatoes, and toss to combine. Let it stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the leeks, lemon zest, ¼ teaspoon of the salt, and the remaining olive oil.
3. Heat the oven to 425°F.
4. Arrange the chicken and potatoes in a single layer on a large rimmed baking sheet, making sure there is some space between chicken pieces. roast for 20-25 minutes. Then stir the potatoes and chicken lightly, and scatter the leeks over the baking sheet. Roast until the chicken is cooked through and everything is golden and slightly crisped, 20 to 25 minutes longer.
5. While the chicken cooks, place the yogurt in a small bowl. Grate the garlic clove over the yogurt, and season with the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper.
6. Spoon the yogurt over the chicken and vegetables in the baking sheet (or you can transfer everything to a platter if you want to be fancy about it). Scatter the herbs over the yogurt, drizzle some olive oil and lemon juice over the top, and serve.

ANNUAL COOKIE & HOLIDAY PARTY A SUCCESS

'Twas a dark and stormy night.....

Yes, and despite the weather 34 guests made it up to this year's party on Saturday, December 7. Alison Bricker organized the pre festivities with a wonderful group of young future bakers who decorated sugar cookies and enjoyed hot chocolate. Hostesses Patti Schmidt and Nancy Fox decorated the member's lounge and created a lovely setting for the evening. Chef Megan Agosto provided us with a divine butternut squash soup, followed by a buffet dinner, and not

one but two mouthwatering desserts. Bonnie Jones and Fran Rondeau prepared hors d'oeuvres, and John Nash and fellow guitarist Brad Sanzenbacher provided us music both before and after dinner.

A special thank you goes to David Durr for purchasing and delivering our tree and innkeeper Karl Jurgenson for responding to our many demands all evening and also changing the chef's tire!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Chili Round-up at the WPI
Sunday, March 15th
12:00 - 4:00pm

Tickets go on sale January 2nd, 2020!



3rd Annual Crab Feed
Sunday, February 9th
12:00 - 4:00pm

Tickets go on sale January 2nd, 2020!

2019 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

December

- 7 Cookie Party
- 7 Member's Holiday Party++
- 9 Board & Committee Chairs Christmas party
- 31 New Year's Eve Party
Host: Olene Sparks-Toby

2020 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Our 2020 calendar is currently being finalized. Below are a few noteworthy dates that have been finalized. Stay tuned for a full calendar of events to come in the next newsletter. In the meantime, you can always check the calendar online at:

www.westpointinn.com/wpi-calendar

January

- 13 Board Meeting
- 18 Work Party

February

- 9 Crab Feed Fundraiser
- 10 Board Meeting
- 15 Work Party

March

- 9 Board Meeting
- 15 Chili Roundup
- 21 Work Party

April

- 13 Board Meeting
- 18 Work Party
- 19 Spring Member's Meeting
- 24 Heritage Night Cocktails and Dancing
- 25 Heritage Night Dinner and Historical Talk

May

- 10 Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast
- 11 Board Meeting
- 16 Work Party

June

- 6 Old Timers'
- 8 Board Meeting
- 21 Pancake Breakfast
- ** No Work Party in June

July

- 12 Pancake Breakfast
- 13 Board Meeting
- 18 Work Party

August

- 9 Pancake Breakfast
- 10 Board Meeting
- 15 Work Party

September

- 13 Pancake Breakfast
- 14 Board Meeting
- 19 Work Party

October

- 11 Pancake Breakfast
- 12 Board Meeting
- 17 Work Party
- 17 Fall Members Meeting

November

- 9 Board Meeting
- 21 Work Party

December

- 5 Cookie Party
- 5 Members Holiday Party
- 31 New Years Eve Party

* Location at MMWD Boardroom
220 Nellen Drive, Corte Madera
MEETINGS START AT 7PM

++ Walk-out nights

WEST POINT INN OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

PRESIDENT

Chris Marcuse
415.516.4253, tover53@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Bonnie Jones
415.868.0974, bmjones4123@sbcglobal.net

TREASURER/PARLIAMENTARIAN

Mark Northcross
415.380.9746, mark@nhainc.net

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Johanna Sistik
510.237.9882, johanna.sistik@gmail.com

SECRETARY

Jean Jefferies
415.254.9464, jefferies4@sbcglobal.net

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Wayne Koide
415.847.2865, yuzuru3632@gmail.com

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Urban Carmel
415.548.3111, urbancarmel@gmail.com
Ross Asselstine
415.730.4530, ross.asselstine@comcast.net

DEVELOPMENT

Olene Sparks-Toby, Suzie Koide
and Patricia Schmidt
development@westpointinn.com

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Lin Marcuse & Gordy MacDermott
415.516.4253
pancakes@westpointinn.com

MT. TAM LIAISON

Olene Sparks-Toby
510.236.8293, olenes@aol.com

COMMUNICATION

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

GARDEN

Kathleen Kopp
707.328.9009, katkopp@gmail.com

FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE

Pete Martin
415.499.8028, petemartin@comcast.net

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
Jennifer Barclay
jbarclay1@aol.com

INN HISTORIAN

Fred Runner
415.302.7677, onesoundfred@mac.com

MEMBERSHIP

Gordy & Lynn Mac Dermott
415.785.4223, membership@westpointinn.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Alison Bricker
415.596.3922, editor@westpointinn.com

EVENTS

Gail Shahan
415.250.9223, 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

WAYS AND MEANS

Robert Newcomer
415.847.2572
rjnewcomer@comcast.net

WORK PARTY

Don Keeley
510.388.0765
workparty@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

BOOKKEEPER

Marta Gomez
bookkeeper@westpointinn.com

INN RESERVATIONS

Jennifer Greene
reservations@westpointinn.com

WEST POINT INN PHONE/

INNKEEPERS
David Durr
Pat Williams
Jennifer Greene
Craig Gordon
Karl Jurgenson
John Slater
Jim Barry
Bob Thomson
415.388.9955
innkeepers@westpointinn.com

HOUSEKEEPER

Jennifer Barclay
510.759.4669

BOARD MEMBERS

Bonnie Jones
Don Keeley
Wayne Koide
Chris Marcuse
Bob Newcomer
Mark Northcross
Jim Parton
Patti Schmidt
Johanna Sistik

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