

a view from the

# WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

September 2019 • Issue 39

## 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	2
Pancake Breakfasts	3
Old Timers' Appreciation Party	4
Tomato Tart Recipe	5
WPI 2019 Calendar	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

Chris Marcuse

Hello, everyone! It's been quite an eventful three months since the last newsletter. We've weathered problems with insurance and data security, while also preparing for other potential threats to the Inn. Additionally, the Board has made some policy decisions that will affect how whole inn bookings and membership dues are handled. Finally, these issues are being dealt with as we also work to maintain our aging structure.

The Buildings & Grounds Committee (Ross Asselstine & Urban Carmel) and Fire Safety Committee (Pete Martin & Scott Halsted) have been meeting as the Fire Hardening Committee (FHC). This is in response to an inspection conducted this past spring by the Marin County Fire Department and Fire Safe Marin. They made several recommendations, that we have broken down into three categories. FHC is looking at how to prevent and respond to an internal fire, a small grass fire and (hopefully something that will never happen) a major "Wine Country"-type conflagration. These actions range from something as simple as changing our notification procedures to something as involved as screening or sealing every single opening larger than 1/8". Protecting the people and buildings at the Inn is our #1 objective, but we also have to deal with the reality of finite resources. Therefore, the committee must prioritize the necessary actions. FHC will continue meeting to plan and implement these measures.

One component of protecting West Point is insurance. The Inn, like many other locations in Marin County, is considered part of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Many insurance carriers have been terminating policies for customers in WUI zones. We also received a cancellation notice earlier this year. Our treasurer, Mark Northcross, worked closely with our broker to find a replacement company. We thought we had one all lined up but, due to unforeseen circumstances, that fell through at almost the last minute. Mark and the broker worked even harder and were able to come up with another option just in time. Thus, we are covered and haven't had any lapses.

Another near crisis happened when we were notified by our reservations processor, SuperINN, that they had been the victim of a data breach. We opted to have them issue the required notices to prospective victims. Some of you may have received one of these letters. We apologize if you received multiple alerts, but one was sent out for each reservation. It is important to remember that this breach occurred completely at the SuperINN site and not via the West Point Inn portal. While it wasn't our fault, we are looking at ways to improve. To that end, we have formed a new Technology Committee. It's chair, Nate Lee, is a chief internet security officer at his day job. Nate will be holding SuperINN's feet to the fire over the breach.

Continued on p2.

Continued from p1.

The Board has made a couple of policy changes that will take effect at the beginning of next year. First, we will no longer accept credit cards for membership dues or locker fees. Many factors led to this decision, including the number of people who use cards (vs. cash, check or wampum) and the difficulty the Membership Committee has in completing the process. You can read more about the change in the Membership Notes.

The second difference was discussed in the last newsletter. For all of 2020, we won't be accepting whole Inn bookings (WIB) for Saturday nights. Our goal in doing this was two-fold. Our primary objective is to increase access to the Inn for those that work during the week. Our second target is to increase usage of the Emig cabin by the disabled community. The Board will review this action in the Fall of next year and decide whether to continue the policy.

Some of these decisions may be a bit controversial. If you would like to make your opinions known, you are always welcome at our monthly Board meetings. Better yet, why not run for the Board so that your input is always taken into consideration? If you would like to be a candidate this year, please email [elections@westpointinn.com](mailto:elections@westpointinn.com) before September 9, 2019.

Another way to be involved without running for the Board is to be the secretary at our monthly meetings. Jean Jefferies is doing an awesome job in the position, but she would like to get more involved at the committee level. In order to do this, she needs someone to assist in taking the minutes for at least half the meetings. Jean is willing to train and work with anyone willing to take on this role. If you are interested, please contact me or Jean.

Finally, I want to invite everyone to attend our Fall Members' Meeting at the Inn on Sunday, October 20, 2019. Coffee will be available at 10 AM, with the meeting starting at 11. A wonderful lunch prepared by Fran Rondeau will be served after the event. A few rooms are still available if you would like to stay over the night before. Please contact me at [tover53@gmail.com](mailto:tover53@gmail.com) if you are interested.

Thank you and we hope to see you up at the Inn soon!

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES

### Gordy and Lynn MacDermott

Hello Members,

Just as a reminder, we will be mailing out renewal letters the last week of December and as in previous years if dues have not been received by Jan.31 a late letter is sent out and a \$35.00 late fee is added. Because Membership is a volunteer position please help us out and send in your dues on time.

One important note: After serious consideration, the Board recently decided to make a change to the way the Association handles payment for annual dues and locker fees. Starting in 2020 credit cards will no longer be accepted, only cash, checks and wampum. Several factors went into this decision. First, not that many people pay by credit card. Second, the Association loses out on a percentage of the charge because we don't include a convenience fee. Third, out of the people that did use a credit card, a high percentage left out key information. Some wrote the card number wrong, while others left off their name, expiration date or security code. It took until June to resolve all the issues, which is very time-consuming for the Membership Committee. Last, as you will read elsewhere in the newsletter, our reservation processor (who also handled all credit card transactions) recently had a data breach. While no system is 100% secure, we hope this change will keep your financial information safe. We thank you for your understanding.

## INNKEEPERS REPORT

### Lin Johanson & Fran Rondeau

**We want to thank our great Innkeeper team for their endless energy, enthusiasm, good humor and excellent work. They have been busy keeping the Inn safe and in tip-top shape, while also tending to guests and visitors from all over the world. They are the ones who have the most interaction with the general public and they always do it with a smile. We are always appreciative of their dedication and contributions to the Inn.**

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST REPORT

Gordy MacDermott & Lin Marcuse

We are two-thirds of the way through our pancake season, and it's going great! The July crew served a hearty 560 customers while August had over 400 visitors. These are both respectable numbers for the months when attendance can vary greatly due to vacations and other events around the Bay Area.

Most of the crews are full, but we are still looking for a few volunteers for the October breakfast and cleanup crews. If you are available October 13, please write us at [pancakes@westpointinn.com](mailto:pancakes@westpointinn.com). We will forward your contact info to the host(s) for that event. You will be rewarded with meals, camaraderie and a free Saturday (breakfast) or Sunday (cleanup) night stay at the Inn in exchange for your service. Thank you for your efforts.

And, if you can't volunteer, please at least try to make it to the Inn for pancakes with a beautiful view before the season ends!



When the next morning began, the sprightly volunteers were up and ready to go. Marlene and Cathy coached new volunteer Joyce on how to get "Topper" pumping out steaming coffee for the incoming alpinists, while Gordy supported new volunteers with his institutional knowledge and do-whatever-it-takes attitude.

There was an excellent array of volunteers that included both new members and non-members including Merika visiting from Finland (butter pats and syrup); a stellar serving crew of two Kaylas, a Kyla, a Liora, a Holly, and a Ginger; Michael as the sanitation engineer; and Gideon (batter mixer and pancake flipper). A few new jobs were added to optimize service delivery and make for a better guest experience including line control, ticket runner, and a pancake runner from the outside grill to plating station.

In the end, guests travelled from far and wide to eat fluffy pancakes and syrup with sides of orange juice and cantaloupe, while delighting in the selections from the classic rock canon played by musicians John and Julian. Of the 408 guests, the lion's share of pancakes was purchased by a 25-person group from Vallejo who hiked in to celebrate a birthday. And best of all, Jan and Wade ran such a smooth ship that nobody had to wait more than 5 minutes for the delivery of their order.

## AUGUST PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Sean McCormick

August 11, 2019 marked another successful pancake breakfast and fundraiser at the West Point Inn, or the "Jewel in the Crown," as it is affectionately known to some. And even competing with the annual Golden Gate Park music festival, Outside Lands, we still managed to feed 408 hungry hikers. "It was a really good crew this year. Everyone was really helpful. Having 28 people made it such a nice day because everyone got breaks and relief if they needed it," said Jan Gauthier, the co-host of the breakfast.

The festivities began the previous evening, when we celebrated Jan's birthday who was regaled with a take on "Happy Birthday" by the volunteers, that even included an operatic flourish worthy of Carnegie Hall. The inn and crew were overseen by the experienced and knowledgeable Pat Williams who monitored the celebration and kept everything running smoothly for volunteers and visitors to the West Point Inn.

## OLD TIMERS' APPRECIATION PARTY

Marilyn Skaff

Each year, on the first weekend in June, the Old Timers Appreciation Party is held to honor our long-time members (20+ years). This is an opportunity for those members to meet up with old friends, reminisce, and enjoy an evening at our wonderful inn. It is also a chance for newer members to get to meet and hear stories from the people who helped build and support WPIA. Music was supplied throughout the afternoon and evening by our own bluegrass band, The Usual Suspects, which includes George Martin, Lynn Ludlow, Margo Freistadt, and Steve Rubenstein. A wonderful meal was prepared by Fran Rondeau, with fresh bread baked by David Durr, who was also innkeeper. After cocktails were enjoyed, dinner was served out on the porch in beautiful weather. After dinner, our Master of Ceremonies, Carl Nolte, elicited stories from many of the old timers. We heard tales of interesting innkeepers, Tink the Inn cat, and fundraising efforts. Olene Sparks Toby also shared her tale of her first visit to the inn when she got distracted by a movie crew that was working on the mountain. When she didn't show up at the inn, a search was implemented, much to her surprise.

I want to thank all of the volunteers who helped make this evening so special – those who helped in the kitchen, served the meals, and did dishes, in the usual spirit of the inn. Thanks to Olene who took reservations and served as bartender along with Pierre. Bonnie and Mike provided delicious hors d'oeuvres, even though they were unable to attend. Thank you to Jennifer Barclay and Jorge Archila for taking photos.





## SUMMER TOMATO TART

**Fran Rondeau**

Those lovely tomatoes have finally reached their peak and here is a simple recipe that enhances their sweetness and can be served hot or cold. Attention: this recipe allows for a lot of flexibility as it comes from several different recipes which I adapted. Most recipes call for cooking the tomatoes at 225 for 3 hours but I am impatient so I did not. Quantities are not precise but I assure you it will be tasty.

### Ingrédients

1-2 pounds early girl or Roma tomatoes  
 3-5 whole cloves garlic unpeeled  
 2-3 large heirloom or summer ripe tomatoes  
 One pie crust cooked  
 1-2 cups Fresh natural ricotta  
 Olive oil, fresh grated Parmesan, and salt

1. Cut tomatoes into quarters, toss with 1/4 cup olive oil, garlic cloves, a little salt, and 1/2 t of oregano and slow bake at 325 for 2 hours, crank up the oven to 375 and bake another 15-20 minutes until the tomatoes are bright red and shiny with caramelized juices.
2. Make and bake your favorite pie crust and season flour with 1 t salt.
3. Lightly whip 1-2 cups of ricotta with a pinch of salt and pepper and spread on the bottom of your cooked tart shell.
4. Pull the peel off of at least half of the cooked tomatoes and spread over ricotta.
5. Finally place thin slices of the large tomatoes overlapping on top of the tart, sprinkle with droplets of oil and a 1/4 cup of Parmesan, and bake at 350 for 15 minutes.

Note: if you have fresh thyme or basil or tarragon chop very finely and sprinkle on top.

## 2019 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

### September

- 8 Pancake Breakfast  
*Hosts: Bob Newcomer & Gail Shahan*
- 9 Board Meeting\*\*
- 21 Work Party

### October

- 13 Final Pancake Breakfast
- 14 Board Meeting\*\*
- 19 Work Party
- 20 Fall Meeting & Member's barbecue

### November

- 11 Board Meeting\*\*
- 16 Work Party

### 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*

\* 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 Sistek  
510.237.9882, johanna.sistek@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

### 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

### BOARD MEMBERS

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

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

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**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**

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**[EDITOR@WESTPOINTINN.COM](mailto:EDITOR@WESTPOINTINN.COM)**