



a view from the WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

June 2018 • Issue 34

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
Pancake Breakfasts	2
Membership Notes	3
Call for Candidates	4
Personnel Report	4
Fire & Safety Report	5
Heritage Nights	6-7
Musings from the Kitchen	8
Creamy Polenta Recipe	9
View from the Porch	10
Development Thank You	10
WPI 2016 Calendar	11
WPI Officers & Chairpersons	12

The newsletter is published with funds provided in memory of Lifetime Member, Ernest E. Emig, and Honorary Member, Harold Allen Atkinson.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wayne Koide

"Many people have a wrong idea what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose." Helen Keller

Worthy purpose. I have to honestly say that the West Point Inn, in its entirety, is a worthy purpose. I know that I am not alone in this thought.

Over seventy years ago, the West Point Inn Association was formed. Then known as "a club," concerned people and hiking clubs rallied to preserve the Inn despite the MMWDs plans to raze the structure after WWII. It is this same ethos that preserves the Inn to this day – and it takes people to make this happen.

On that note, there are two people that I would like to recognize who epitomize the spirit of the West Point Inn Association – Jennifer Barclay and Rose Sullivan, both of whom have elected to step down from their positions after many years of dedicated service to the Inn.

Everyone knows what a work party is – it is, often times, the way that many of us have been "introduced" to the Inn, its people, and its way of doing things.

Jennifer Barclay, as Work Party Chairperson, has transformed these work parties into a well-oiled machine – she amassed a long list of "regular" volunteer leaders who offer specialized skills to accomplish tasks in a most efficient manner.

Jennifer put her heart and soul into the work parties – this, I believe, is one of the reasons that they became so popular. I am reminded of a day, many years ago, when it was the work party chairman, the cook and myself who were the only ones in attendance on that Saturday – not much work got done, but there was plenty of food! How far we have come from those days.

Perhaps the most difficult job associated with our organization is that of reservations. As the Inn has become more popular and now has a web presence, the task of handling Inn bookings has become nearly a full-time job.

Rose Sullivan took on the position of Reservationist at the most challenging time – when we transitioned to an on-line booking system. She is the one who had to make sense of a system that no one else had any idea of how it worked -its quirks, shortcomings and user-unfriendliness - not to mention her having to bridge the gap between our reservations policies and the now "semi-automated" system.

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Continued from p1.

Rose did all these things in short order – add to this dealing with members and non-members in answering all of their questions about a system that none of us are familiar with and you get a sense of what it takes to do that job.

Rose, a former WPIA board member, has always put the needs of the Inn first and, as president, I will always be indebted to her for “covering my six.”

The next time you see Jennifer or Rose please thank them for their efforts – all for that worthy purpose to keep the Inn going. After years of service to the Inn, these two hard workers deserve a break! Enjoy.

Please welcome our new work party chairman, Don Keeley. Recently retired, Don comes to us with a great deal of experience in organizing large numbers of people to do a myriad of tasks. Don was one of Jennifer’s “go to” people and he has been a “regular” at nearly all of the work parties – thank you for stepping up to the plate.

Replacing Rose as reservationist is Jennifer Greene. You may also know her as one of our Innkeepers. Jennifer brings a unique perspective to the job of reservationist as she knows much more about the nuts and bolts of the Inn and how it really runs on a daily basis than most of us. Jennifer has been working closely with Rose for over a year now and she is totally “checked out” to assume this very important position.

Mid Year Report

We have many items which fall under the “work in progress” category:

1. Emig rear-door will be replaced with a window
2. Front Display case will be replaced and relocated
3. Full evaluation of our current electrical system including solar array, generators, battery packs and refrigerators
4. Evaluation of our current reservation system and policies
5. Evaluation of ADA handrail for compliance and user-friendliness
6. Fire “hardening” of Inn and associated structures

That about wraps things up – enjoy the beautiful weather and I look forward to seeing you at one of our many scheduled events this year.

Aloha,
Wayne

PANCAKE BREAKFASTS

Lin Marcuse & Gordy MacDermott

Our pancake season is in full swing and got off to a strong start. Our thanks to **Scott and Lisa Halsted** for leading the May 13 Mother’s Day breakfast. They served over 800 meals even though it was one of the coldest Mother’s Days of the last several years. We are grateful to the Halsteds and their team for providing a great experience to all those who trekked up the mountain that chilly morning. We also want to thank our first-time cleanup crew leaders: **Patti Schmidt, Nancy Fox, Caroline McDowell and Creedence Perkins**. They joined up to lead the effort to return the Inn to all its glorious splendor. Patti and Nancy had so much fun that they are returning to lead the July cleanup.

Our upcoming dates and Hosts are:

June 17

Breakfast – **Mark and Antoinetta Northcross**

Cleanup – **Fran Rondeau**

July 8

Breakfast – **Fran Rondeau and Marilyn Skaff**

Cleanup – **Patti Schmidt and Nancy Fox**

August 12

Breakfast – **Jan Gauthier and Wade Hufford**

Cleanup – **Wayne and Suzie Koide**

September 9

Breakfast – **Bob Newcomer and Gail Shahan**

Cleanup – **Rose Sullivan**

October 14

Breakfast – **Pat Kavanaugh**

Cleanup – **Bonnie Jones**

The June, July and September breakfast teams are full, and the other two are filling up fast. If you are interested in working one of them, please contact us at: pancakes@westpointinn.com. We will forward your info to the hosts for the event if there is still room. If they are full, we will keep your name on a wait list. We are also still looking for people for the July to October cleanup crews. Please email us if you are interested in working one of those teams.

Finally, we want to again thank our support people for all their amazing help. Kudos to **Patti Schmidt** for handling media relations, **Alison Bricker** for maintaining the breakfast manual and **Molly Casey & Talia Friedman** for keeping stock of pancake supplies. And last, but not least, we are grateful to **Bette Tarr** for producing this year’s poster. Thanks, team!

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Gordy and Lynn MacDermott

Hello Members,

Some of our members did not renew this year, so we were able to accommodate everyone on last year's waitlist for membership. We have, however, started our waitlist for 2018.

Here are our latest new members:

Jake Riley of Corte Madera

Rosy Yeh & Graham Clayden of Half Moon Bay

Adrea Brier Mill Valley

Nancy Fox of San Rafael

Bridget Clark of San Anselmo

Michael Dotson of San Francisco

Bill Hoppin & Amy Chramosta of Mill Valley

Cathy Fogel & Bill Barclay of Berkeley

Will Sink of San Francisco

Susan Fogel of Pt. Richmond

Janet Lucas of Berkeley

The following new members shared some information about themselves:

Nancy Fox wrote: I'm an avid hiker and photographer. Part of my desire to be part of WPI is the opportunity to be there at sunrise -- breathtaking! In my former life I worked in the garment industry and spent a lot of time in China, as well as Guatemala, Thailand, Korea. I now teach Pilates and work for a bunch of local entrepreneurs doing website work, book-keeping, media, etc. I play softball on a co-ed team and like to cross-country ski. I bake sourdough bread. I've lived in Lucas Valley for more than 30 years and in Marin for more than 40. I have an adult daughter and live with my partner, Bob.

Will Sink wrote: I am very happy to announce that I am a new West Point Inn member! My name is Will Sink, and I am a seasonal firefighter and paramedic intern. I grew up in Larkspur in a big family, and now live in Cole Valley in SF. My interests and hobbies include being outdoors, exploring San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, fixing things, painting, drawing, running, playing sports, watching sports, listening to podcasts, cooking, practicing my Italian and Spanish, finding the best doughnut around, and of course, hiking Mt. Tam! I hope to add to the great camaraderie at WPI on work days, fixing things and maybe even adding some artistic flair where I can. Can't wait to get started!

Bill Hoppin has a passion for sustaining Marin's rich artistic and cultural heritage. Bill is on the board of the Throckmorton Theatre, and served on the Mill Valley Fall Arts Festival board, having served as President of the board from 2015-'16. Currently, Bill is Vice President at Atomic, a new kind of venture capital company of engineers and entrepreneurs who build and operate the next generation of great companies. Bill is a true executive management professional (sales/marketing, business development, fund raising, and general management) specializing in taking pre-sales start ups to revenue, profitability, and liquidity. He is also interested in technology aligned with millennial habits that can help create real and meaningful communities.

Susan ("Soozy") Fogel wrote: I'm a nature lover first and foremost, likely as a result of being raised on the beaches of Southern California and over 25 years of recreational running in Sonoma County. I now live just over the bridge in Point Richmond and work for the University of California, Office of the General Counsel, in Oakland. Hiking has for the most part replaced my running addiction; and I just returned from Peru where I climbed Huayna Picchu in honor of my 60th year. Naturally, I trained on Mt. Tam and the Dipsea stairs. Other interests include reading, local outdoor summer concerts, travel and volunteer vacations. I anticipate putting my experience in housekeeping and hospitality at Esalen Institute to good use on behalf of WPI.

Cathy Fogel and Bill Barclay wrote: Bill and Cathy have been residents in the Bay Area for over 23 years and currently live in Berkeley. We are great fans of all the Bay Area has to offer in terms of natural setting, cultural vibrancy and (relatively) progressive politics. Bill has worked for over 30 years in the non-profit environmental sector on issues related to climate change, forest protection, human rights and corporate accountability. Cathy has pursued a career in energy policy and for the last decade has worked at the California Public Utilities Commission on regulatory oversight of California energy utilities and advancing state energy and climate goals. Bill grew up in "stuffy-old" New England and Cathy is from "laid back" coastal California. Go figure, but it works! Both of us are avid gardeners, cooks, hikers, bikers and explorers. Between living abroad, work and travel we have visited more than 55 countries and have plans to see more -- and explore more of California and the U.S. as well. Cathy plays the flute, occasionally picks up the guitar and loves to read non-fiction and fiction. Bill is a great handyman and loves "projects," so is looking forward to helping with those at West Point Inn. Cathy is a good organizer and has planned more than a few events in her life.

ANNUAL CALL FOR CANDIDATES

Lin & Chris Marcuse

The WPIA Board of Directors and Election Committee welcome inquiries from qualified members who might be interested in serving on the board. Here is some information:

- There are nine WPIA members on the Board of Directors.
- The term for a Director is three years.
- By-Laws require that a candidate be a member in good standing for no less than one year and who has not served on the Board for 12 months prior to taking office.
- By-laws state that the Nominating Committee consists of outgoing Board members and the President.
- By-laws state that any qualified member, other than those selected by the Nominating Committee, may run for the board by delivering a petition signed by at least 10% of voting members by September 1 (in this case, by 09/01/2018).

The election process is by mail. Candidates submit a short bio. An alphabetical list of candidates and their bios is printed in the Fall newsletter. Ballots and bios are mailed to the voting membership at least 30 days prior to the Annual Fall Meeting in October (10/28/2018) along with an addressed return envelope. Voting officially ends when the annual meeting is called to order. Votes are then tallied with results announced toward the end of the meeting. Results are kept confidential. Winners' names are announced alphabetically.

Serving on the Board of Directors is an excellent way to help the West Point Inn. Please consider sharing some of your time and talent to ensure that the Inn continues to operate for the benefit of the members and guests who appreciate the opportunity to experience our unique establishment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Wayne Koide
Gordy MacDermott
Fran Rondeau
Olene Sparks

ELECTION PROCESS COMMITTEE:

Lin & Chris Marcuse

NOTE: We welcome help from members in conducting the election. If interested, please contact us.

QUESTIONS IN GENERAL: Contact Chris or Lin

PHONE: (415) 516-4253 or e-mail: elections@westpointinn.com

PLEASE CONTACT SOMEONE ON THE BOARD OR ELECTION COMMITTEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN BECOMING A CANDIDATE FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

PERSONNEL REPORT

Lin Marcuse

I really want to thank our great team for all they do to keep the Inn looking great and running smoothly. The Innkeepers have been involved with the work parties to ensure the necessary maintenance and upkeep is performed on our 114-year old structure and its younger outbuildings. They have also been working with Board Vice President Bonnie Jones to monitor and maintain the water system that provides for both personal use and emergency fire protection for the structures. Thanks to Jennifer Barclay, David Durr, Alex Edwards, Jennifer Greene, Craig Gordon, John Slater, Karl Jurgensen, Bob Thomson and Pat Williams for their dedication and service.

I also have two transitions to report. Peter Grazier is moving out of the area after serving as an innkeeper since last year. At the same time, Rose Sullivan is stepping down as the reservationist after more than three years connecting with members and guests seeking to stay at the Inn. We thank them for their service and wish them both well. Peter is always welcome back while we're sure Rose will stay involved with the Association.



FIRE & SAFETY REPORT

Pete Martin

As you are reading this, a professional crew of 5-men & a chipper (the same crew that Watershed Maintenance Supervisor, Carl Sanders uses for his fuel reduction projects) will have completed five full days of work expanding our defensible space toward the goal of a 200-foot radius from any point around the building complex. Add to this, the work that our vegetation management/brush cutting volunteers accomplish in 10 or 11 work parties over a year's time and we are closing in on our goal. We hope to have reached it by next summer.

Last August, the WPI board authorized adding a second week of work by the professional crew. This past year, Suszi Koide, Chair of the Development Committee, raised over \$9,500, to be used for fire safety work. Unfortunately, due to some scheduling problems we were not able to utilize the professional crew for the second week nor utilize the funds that Suzie raised. Those resources and with the Board's continuing support we should complete the defensible space and move on to the "Maintenance Mode." Our volunteers will continue their work by trimming new growth, trimming the grass as needed between plants throughout the zones. They will patrol the grounds in a 300-foot radius, pulling all volunteer Douglas fir seedlings and saplings. We will still need the professional crew & there for 2 or 3-days annually to cut the large area of grass to the septic system leach field that is west of the picnic tables.

May 1, 2018 Marin Independent Journal Article Summarized: "After a devastating fire season last year, the Marin County Fire Department is not wasting any time as the dry season approaches. The Sonoma County fires and others around the state last year have prompted Marin County Fire to double the size of its seasonal employees to 84. Instead of one training session there will be two to handle the added personnel, the chief said. "We want to be proactive and we are getting ready earlier," Marin County Fire Department, Chief, Jason Weber said. "Last year was busy and fire season never really ended." Fire

season typically ends on Halloween, but Marin County kept additional crews on until January, Weber said. "With the extended drought we had and the changing climate, we have to take that proactive approach," the chief said. "It could heat up fast and grasses could dry out rapidly at any time." Fire season will officially start May 17. Mount Tam remains a major concern, Weber said. "There hasn't been a major fire on Mount Tam since 1929 and the fuel load has increased significantly," he noted. The department is working with the Marin Municipal Water District, state parks and the National Park Service to manage the fire danger on the mountain. Local firefighters and land managers have worried about Mount Tam and the number of homes that are built along its slopes. In July 1929, a blaze destroyed 117 homes as it burned more than 2,500 acres on Mount Tam."

A tabletop exercise that Marin County first-responders train on shows that in worst-case conditions, the mountain could be burning from one side to another in 90 minutes, officials have noted.

Chief Weber urges residents (think WPI members & Inn-keepers) to view the FiresafeMarin.org and Alert Marin <http://nixle.com/marin-county-sheriffs-office/websites> in preparation for the fire season news & notifications.

Red Flag Warnings. It is estimated that the number of Red Flag Warnings in Marin will increase to 17+/- this fire season. No guests are permitted to stay at the Inn during the time that the warning is in effect. That also means loss of important revenue that helps to balance our budget.

Red Flag Warning is a term used by fire-weather forecasters to call attention to limited weather conditions of particular importance that may result in extreme burning conditions. It is issued when it is an on-going event or the fire weather forecaster has a high degree of confidence that Red Flag criteria will occur within 24 hours of issuance. Red Flag criteria occurs when the following forecast weather parameters are forecasted to be met:

- 1) a sustained wind average 15 mph or greater
- 2) relative humidity less than or equal to 25 percent and
- 3) a temperature of greater than 75 degrees F.

In some states, dry lightning and unstable air are criteria. A Fire Weather Watch may be issued prior to the Red Flag Warning.

Sign up for FSM Newsletters, Red Flag Warnings & more at: FiresafeMarin.org

Check out the Remote Fire Detection Cameras: <http://www.firesafemarin.org/remote-fire-detection-cameras>

A MOMENT IN HISTORY

2018 HERITAGE NIGHT

Fred Runner

On two sunny days, May 18 and 19, West Point Inn welcomed over 100 people to celebrate the centenary of the Inn's Honeymoon Cabin, built in 1918 by Dr. Washington Dodge, a prominent San Francisco politician. The unexpected part of the story is: In 1912, Dr. Dodge survived the RMS Titanic. At Heritage Night we talked a lot about the Titanic.

In the kitchen, Chef Fran Rondeau and a small army of helpers (Bonnie Jones, Leah Durr, Rosy Yeh and Graham Clayden) chopped, sautéed and assembled hors d'oeuvres, dinner and dessert. Master Baker (and innkeeper) David Durr baked artisan sour dough loaves for everyone.

That weekend the Inn was transformed by WPIA member Angela Wildman. She spent weeks researching and then borrowing from friends and scouring the Inn for pieces that would create a Titanic-era Edwardian motif at both the Inn and in Dr. Dodge's Honeymoon Cabin. Angela redressed the cabin interior in the deep red of the White Star Lines, the company that owned Titanic. Angela's sumptuous makeover allowed us, for the first time ever, to offer "B and B"-style overnights in the Honeymoon Cabin, auction them off on eBay and raise some extra money for the Inn. (René Rondeau hosted the eBay pages.)

Our special guest was internationally renowned Titanic historian Ken Marschall. Ken has been down on the crumbling wreck six times, helped James Cameron rebuild the Titanic for the famed movie and produced dozens of meticulously researched paintings of the Titanic in its short lifetime.

Ken also knew Titanic survivors. One of them, young Ruth Becker, shared lifeboat 13 with Dr. Dodge. During Ken's seven-year friendship with Ruth, they rediscovered the details of things she'd not thought of in seventy-five years, like: "You could still smell the fresh paint," a line James Cameron borrowed for his film.

The presentation featured a short seventeen-minute show on Dodge's adventure aboard the Titanic, a look at how the Titanic became part of the American mythos and a conversation with Marschall about his work and his close friendship with Ruth. We heard about moments only friends share and their Titanic discoveries. The rarest part was, 106-years after the Titanic went down, we all had a personal connection with a survivor named Ruth Becker.



This was Ken Marschall's third visit to the West Point Inn, traveling all the way from southern California all three times. His first two trips in 1995 and 2003, were for free; a very long journey and huge favor to Heritage Night and the Inn. This time he was paid. The Merri Martori Fund for Literature and the Performing Arts, provided a generous grant to cover his honoraria. The grant was given in the name of the firemen of the Titanic who heroically stoked the furnaces in the flooding bowels of the ship and kept the boilers, generators and lights glowing so as many people as possible could safely board lifeboats before the lights went out.

Thanks also to Alan Zimmerman, who designed the beautiful Heritage Night program and souvenir menu, Jan Gauthier who managed Eventbrite reservations and also to Michael Kleeman who shot video of our talk on Friday night.

We brought in over \$4,600 in dinner ticket sales; auction items earned over \$300. Overnight rooms took our net total to over \$5,000.

Finally, I'll pass the Heritage Night reins to someone else for next year.

In March I began running a project to bring the only surviving steam engine of Mt. Tamalpais' scenic railway back to Marin. The needs of that project, fundraising, planning, restoration of a rusting 97-year old steam engine, transport and eventually a shelter that will protect the locomotive from weather and vandals, requires a lot of time. Like the West Point Inn, this is the only example of a lost culture and we need to take care of it. The Friends of No. 9 are managing this project and we'd appreciate your help. www.FriendsofNo9.com

WEST POINT INN TRANSFORMED FOR HERITAGE NIGHT



December 2012 - Fred Runner photo

A leaking roof required repair of the water damage. That inspired extensive wood work, removing the ancient shellac finish, revealing rich golden wood beneath and matching it all. That effort, lead by Master Craftsman David Durr and Buildings and Grounds chair Brenda Roberts was finished in 2012.



May 18 & 19, 2018 - Fred Runner photo

Heritage Night 2018 celebrated the centennial of the Honeymoon Cabin, built in 1918 by Dr. Washington Dodge. WPIA member Angela Wildman redressed the cabin in White Star Lines colors creating an Edwardian era look and cozy "B and B" atmosphere. For Heritage weekend, overnights in the cabin was auctioned on eBay to raise some extra money for the Inn. (White Star owned the Titanic. Dr. Dodge survived the tragedy in lifeboat 13, April 15, 1912.)



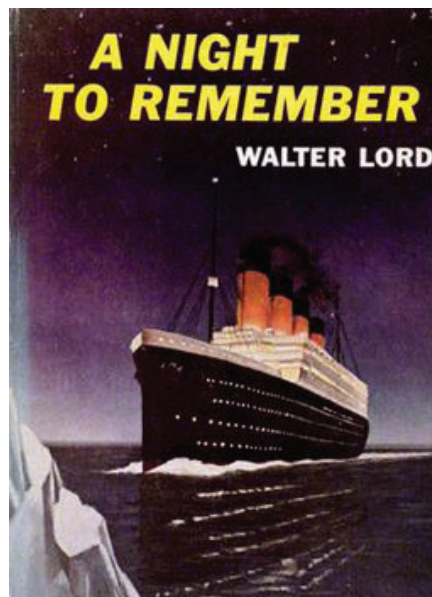
May 19, 2018 - Fred Runner photo

Special guest, acclaimed Titanic historian Ken Marshall, signed prints of his Titanic paintings that were auctioned Saturday night. The winners were Jeff Ricker (right) and Marjory Amsden (left.) Marjory is a member of the Nicol clan, descendants of Dr. Dodge. Ken Marshall generously donated the winnings to the West Point Inn.



2018 - Jan Gauthier photo

Portraits of two who survived the Titanic: Dr. Washington Dodge and young twelve-year-old Ruth Becker. Both were passengers aboard lifeboat 13.



Heritage Night was "A Night to Remember". (Cover art of Walter Lord's 1955 first edition, the book the cemented the Titanic as part of American myths.)



May 18, 2018 - Jan Gauthier photo

WPIA member Rosy Yeh and Graham Clayden prepare hors d'oeuvres in the pantry.



October 2012 - Fred Runner photo

Exploring water damage in the Honeymoon Cabin, stenciled shipping labels were discovered on the back of wooden battens that covered gaps between the ceiling panels proving beyond any doubt that Dr. Dodge built the cabin.



May 18 & 19, 2018 - Jan Gauthier photo

Heritage Night kitchen crew: (L to R) David Durr, Leah Durr, Chef Fran Rondeau, Bonnie Jones, Graham Clayden and Rosy Yeh.



PERSONAL MUSINGS FROM THE KITCHEN

Fran Rondeau

If the kitchen is the heart and soul of a home, the West Point Inn kitchen is the heart and soul of every person who spends an evening on the mountain. Thinking about food and planning dishes which complement each other visually and aesthetically is my passion. Winter squashes and apples, April asparagus and apricots, May snap peas and strawberries inspire me with a myriad of possible dishes to share with family and friends. I try to imagine foods that marry well and are pleasing to the eye as well as to the tongue.

So, when Fred asked me to create a menu to reflect his theme for Heritage Night I jumped right in. Fred Runner's first Heritage Night took place in the Spring of 1995, long before I became a member and volunteer at the West Point Inn. Each presentation and dinner is carefully orchestrated so that the history and food are in harmony. Many years have been Centennial Celebrations. In 2012 The Titanic, 2013 the Mountain Play, 2015 The San Francisco World's fair and in 2017 The National Parks. They are the product of a seemingly bottomless source of knowledge about the history and culture of the Mountain, always entertaining, informative, and educational.

In 2014 "Teddy Roosevelt appetizers" highlighted the Inn as a Wild West outpost. In 2016 "John Muir bitter greens" and "Teddy Roosevelt apple pie" reflected the theme of the National Parks. In 2012, 2015, and 2018 we focused on events around the Titanic. Referencing authentic materials provided "Filet Mignon Lili" as served in the first class dining room the night before the Titanic sank. "President Taft Roast Beef" was inspired by reading copies of menus sent to Fred by a private collector.

Fred has succeeded in introducing the Inn to various locally and nationally respected figures. The benefit has been mutual as we have enjoyed special guests such as author and historian Laura Ackley, local writer Elizabeth Ptak, head ranger Mia Monroe, and writer and historical artist Ken Marschall.

This year 2018 was different in one way. For the first time we have an archive of beautiful photos of the Edwardian décor complete with ferns, abundant bouquets of fruits and flowers, and lighted crystal globes in the member's lounge, in the parlor, and in the honeymoon cabin. We also have a video of Fred's 17 minute film and a recording of the entire 2018 presentation. Credit for these go to Angela Wildman and Michael Kleeman respectively.

Ed Brown, author of the Tassajara Bread Book and former head cook at the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center said: "making your love, transforming your spirit, good heart, and able hands into food is a great undertaking one that will nourish you in the doing in the offering, in the eating".

How lucky are those of us members and non-members who have been nourished and enriched by these 23 years of History Nights at the West Point Inn.

FRED'S FAMILY RECIPE FOR UNSINKABLE MOLLIE BROWNIES

From "Keep It Simple" by Marian Burrows

4 cups sugar
2 cups unbleached flour
1 2/3 cups unsweetened cocoa
2 teaspoons salt
1 1/4 cups butter

(This mixture will create roughly 2 1/2 of the brownie recipe below.)

Put sugar, flour, cocoa, and salt in a large bowl and mix until ingredients are evenly distributed. Cut in butter with pastry blender (best), two knives or fingertips until mixture resembles cornmeal. Store in airtight container in cool dry place. Keeps 4 to 6 months. (But it never lasts that long.)

To make brownies: Beat 2 eggs with 1 teaspoon vanilla in a mixing bowl and blend well. Measure 2 1/2 generous cups of Brownie Mix, but do not pack down. With a spoon beat mix into eggs until batter is smooth. (Optional: Stir in 1/2 to 3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts.) Grease and flour 8" x 8" x 2" baking pan. (Or double the order and use 8" x 16" x 2" pan.) Spoon in batter and spread evenly. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven about 25 minutes, until a knife inserted in center comes out clean. DO NOT OVER BAKE. Cool in pan and cut into squares.

Note: Try ginger whipped cream as a topping. Get a fresh ginger root juiced at store. One oz. per 8 oz of whip cream. 1/4 teaspoon sugar. Vanilla to taste. (1/4 teaspoon?) Let stand in fridge. Ginger taste develops over time.

CREAMY POLENTA WITH MUSHROOMS RECIPE - NYT COOKING

Nancy Urban

Please note, I made a few changes to the Times' version of the recipe, as suggested by the reviews/notes (the recipe below is the unaltered original).

Mushrooms:

Lower the amount of butter used in the mushrooms (I used the equivalent of 2 T butter);

Double the amount of mushroom stuff, that is, for 4-6 people make twice the amount below.

Polenta:

Reduce the amount of polenta to 1 c per 6 people.

Cook in 1:5 polenta to liquid, with $\frac{1}{4}$ of that liquid milk. Add butter and cheese at end of cooking.

Bon appetit!

-Nancy Urban

CREAMY POLENTA WITH MUSHROOMS

<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1016084-creamy-polenta-with-mushrooms>

INGREDIENTS

For 4-6 servings:

FOR THE POLENTA

2 cups minus 3 tablespoons whole milk
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups polenta or cornmeal
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, or to taste
1 tablespoon grated Parmesan, or to taste

FOR THE MUSHROOMS

$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce dried porcini mushrooms
5 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into pats, divided
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
8 ounces fresh mushrooms, wild or cultivated, sliced thin
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon heavy cream
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper



Step 1

For the polenta, bring 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water and the milk to a high simmer in a medium-size heavy saucepan set over medium-high heat. Add salt. Pour the cornmeal slowly into the liquid, stirring with a wire whisk to prevent clumping. Continue stirring as the mixture thickens, 2 to 3 minutes.

Step 2

Turn heat to low. Cook for approximately 40 to 45 minutes, stirring every 5 to 10 minutes. If the polenta becomes quite thick, thin it with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, stir well and continue cooking. Add up to 1 cup more water as necessary, to keep the polenta soft enough to stir.

Step 3

Add the butter to pot, and stir well. Add the Parmesan, if using. Taste for seasoning. Set the covered saucepan in a pot of barely simmering water, and keep warm for up to an hour or so.

Step 4

Meanwhile, put the dried mushrooms in a small bowl, and cover with about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup boiling water. Allow to steep for 20 minutes. Remove the mushrooms, and pat dry, then chop roughly. Reserve the mushroom stock.

Step 5

Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a saute pan set over high heat until it has melted. Add the garlic and cook until it starts to sizzle, about 30 seconds. Do not let the garlic brown.

Step 6

Add the fresh and reconstituted mushrooms and thyme to the pan, and saute 3 to 4 minutes, turning until browned. Add about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the mushroom stock to deglaze the surface, using a wooden spoon to scrape at the browned bits. Allow the stock to reduce by half, then turn the heat to medium-low and add the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter, whisking to combine, followed by the soy sauce, cream and olive oil. Allow mixture to cook until it thickens a little, then remove from heat. Taste for seasoning, adding black pepper, if desired.

Step 7

Put the polenta in a warmed bowl, then top with mushrooms and the sauce. Serve immediately.



VIEW FROM THE PORCH: JACQUIE PHELAN

Marilyn Skaff



Jacquie Phelan's first visit to the West Point Inn, in 1981, occurred during a moonlight bike ride on Mount Tamalpais. The bike group sneaked around the Inn because there was a rumor that the Innkeeper threatened bikers with a shotgun after dark. Years later, she joined the WPIA so she and her husband, Charlie Cunningham, could get married on a unique

date. To fulfill requirements for membership, at one of the work parties, she clearly recalls being the only "Augean volunteer" willing to get filthy cleaning out the old copper-lined garbage hut which is now one of the storage sheds. She and Charlie tied the knot on Monday, 8/8/88, and everyone arrived by bike. Innkeeper Daniel Meyerowitz agreed to be on hand on his day off, and has remained a life-long friend. Jacquie feels she "sort of married the Inn, too". In the 80's and 90's, Jacquie hosted gatherings of women called "WOMBATS (Women's Mtn Bike & Tea Society) FAT TIRE Finishing School" where she shared her biking skills, good food, and wisdom over the weekend. In those years, she had Sunday afternoon through Tuesday morning all to herself, the Inn was closed then and Daniel permitted her to 'house sit' which meant take two hour baths every day.

Jacquie was born in San Francisco in 1955, but grew up in Rhode Island, Kansas and Southern California, the eldest of six children – "the designated, irritable baby-sitter." She fled to Vermont for college, and moved to San Francisco because it is such a thrilling, progressive city. As nanny and a vet tech, she lived on the super-cheap, getting around on a Raleigh 5-speed. She fell into mountain bike racing, moved

to Marin and raced as a pro for fourteen years, supporting herself with camps, swap meets and magazine columns ("life in the fat lane"). She is currently working on a memoir and is an "obsessive" fan-letter writer to her favorite authors.

Jacquie still loves sitting on the deck, watching planes coming in and seeing the lights on cars crossing the Richmond Bridge. The musical nights at the Inn, with George Martin, Lynn Ludlow, and Margo Freistadt inspired her to take up the banjo at age 40, when bike racing stopped being fun and easy. Room 1 is her favorite room, where she can sleep with her head on the window-sill. To her, the Inn is "a character in a play, with personality traits" and "a beloved mother."

THANK YOU TO THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Pete Martin

Thank you **Suzie Koide** and the Fund Development Committee for raising over \$9,500 for Fire Safety at the Inn. You are awesome! A significant portion of the money will be put to good use as we near completion of our 200-foot defensible space radius around the building complex next spring. Defensible space serves to slow or even stop the spread of wildfire and protect buildings from catching fire – either from direct flame contact or radiant heat. Defensible space is also important to help protect firefighters when they are defending our building complex.

2018 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

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

++ Walk-out nights

June

- 2 Old Timers Appreciation Party
Host: Marilyn Skaff
- 11 Board Meeting**
- 16 Work Party
- 17 Father's Day Pancake Breakfast
Hosts: Mark and Antonietta Northcross

July

- 8 Pancake Breakfast
Hosts: Fran Rondeau and Marilyn Skaff
- 9 Board Meeting**
- 21 Work Party

August

- 12 Pancake Breakfast
Hosts: Jan Gauthier and Wade Hufford
- 13 Board Meeting**
- 18 Work Party

September

- 9 Pancake Breakfast
Hosts: Bob Newcomer & Gail Shahan
- 10 Board Meeting**
- 15 Work Party

October

- 8 Board Meeting**
- 14 Final Pancake Breakfast
Host: Pat Kavanagh
- 20 Work Party
- 28 Fall Meeting & Member's barbecue

November

- 12 Board Meeting**
- 17 Work Party

December

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

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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