



a view from the WEST POINT INN

The Newsletter for the West Point Inn Association and Friends

December 2015 • Issue 24

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

Fran Rondeau

An Inn for all seasons

As the unusually warm Fall days wane and the Inn gears up for the holidays and Winter, we can look forward to the many pleasures of the West Point Inn. We will continue to enjoy breezy afternoon picnics on the deck overlooking the myriad of sailboats on the Bay. However, I especially enjoy anticipating those cold clear nights after dinner when a brave bold guest ventures away from the toasty warmth and tantalizing smells of the kitchen out to the front porch, opens the door, and yells: "come see this!" We drop our chocolate cookie, gather on the corner of the deck and gasp—under a dark sky are fireflies twinkling over the Bay Bridge, and beyond, the lights of the city. It may be the hundredth time we have seen this sight, but we still are in awe at the beauty of it all. On Winter evenings, as the rains come and the temperatures drop, we also anticipate huddling around the fireplace grateful for the September work party volunteers who lined up assembly line style and loaded a cord of wood into the shed. Take a look at the photos in the cabinets on the front porch. This has been a good year for the West Point Inn—our numerous member events continue to be a highlight for many and work parties, like our membership, attract folks from all over. Signing up for a work party now requires entering your name and email at Workparty@westpointinn.com. Cyclists, hikers, guests from here and there continue to feel welcome and appreciate the care and attention we offer in order to preserve this small piece of history. Onward to the close of another bounteous year!

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Gordy and Lynn MacDermott

Hello Members,

As we are approaching membership renewal time, we would like to remind members of our dues policy:

- Renewal letters are sent out the first week of December.
- Dues must be postmarked by January 30.
- Members whose dues are not received by February 2nd receive a final notice, including a late fee of \$35.
- There are no other notices or reminders.
- Dues and late fees must be postmarked no later than March 2nd, after which, the member is removed from membership and would have to go through the normal application process to rejoin.

Here are our latest new members:

Pierre Terrier of San Rafael

Margot Jasie of Larkspur

Mitch & Sarah Brown of Mill Valley

Susan Baker of Oakland

Wade Hufford of Oakland

Jim & Meredith Kurpuis of San Francisco

Tyson Underwood & Vera Tyler of Mill Valley

Chris Herring & Elizabeth Snowden of Berkeley

Robyn Fischer of San Francisco

Mark & Heather Rothert of San Francisco

Bethanie Krogstad of San Francisco

Susan Fenton-Olsen of Novato

Saelon Britton of Sausalito

Susanne & Dana Shibley of San Francisco

Mark Schwarz of San Rafael

Molly Merson & Eric Goodfield of Berkeley

Andre & Rob Lewis of San Francisco

The Following new members have shared some information about themselves:

Robyn Fisher wrote: I am a mom and entrepreneur (Smitten Ice Cream), and I live in San Francisco with my husband Tobin and son Dashel. The West Point Inn is one of our favorite places – we have celebrated our birthdays there for the past several years.

Mark Schwartz wrote: I am a professional photographer. I have lived in Marin County since 1988 and have always appreciated the West Point Inn since my first visit there. Only in the last three years have I been able to spend much time hiking on the mountain, and the high point of my hikes has always been a stop at the WPI for a snack or lunch. Recently, I've been able to participate in a work party, photographing the "Old Timer's Party," and the last Pancake Breakfast of the year. It is my new mission to be a useful volunteer with my photography, general carpentry, and excellent painting skills.

Susan Fenton-Olson wrote: I'm a former teacher, born in San Jose, CA, lived in Denmark 9 years, have 2 grown children, one living in Berkeley and another settled in Denmark. I have been hiking Mt. Tam regularly for 16 years and am a member of FMT: Friends of Mt. Tam. The pancake breakfasts, work parties and sewing are some of the ways I can continue to help out to keep WPI the shining star that it is.

Mark & Heather Rothert and their four children are very excited to become members of WPIA. We love hiking and camping so really enjoy nights at the Inn, but also really appreciate the way work parties and pancake breakfasts help teach kids to work hard and value being part of a larger, multi-generational community. Mark is the President of a SMS company, and Heather is a stay-at-home mom, serving the boards of various schools and non-profits. When not out at WPI, the Rotherts can be found at the marina where they are restoring a 1960 sailboat.

Saelon Britton wrote: I'm a Physical Therapist, working primarily in home health with the geriatric population here in Marin County. I love anything water related...swimming, kayaking, diving, sailing, etc. I dabble in writing and photography also.

PANCAKE BREAKFASTS

Lin Johanson & Gordy MacDermott

On behalf of the Inn, the Association and the thousands of happy customers, we just wanted to give one last thanks for all the hard work put in by the pancake breakfast and clean-up crews this year. This major fundraiser for the Inn wouldn't be possible without the grit and determination of everyone who participated. Everyone who contributed is important, but we especially want to show gratitude to our team leaders.

So, thanks to **Fran Rondeau, Marilyn Skaff, Brenda Roberts, Rose Sullivan, Wayne & Suzie Adams Koide, Mark & Antoinetta Northcross, Serge Stepanov, Anna Wang, Jan Gautier, Frank Dostal, Joel Blackwell & Pat Kavanaugh.**

And, it's never too early to think about next year. Please mark your 2016 calendars for: May 8, June 19, July 10, August 14, September 11 and October 9. We will list the hosts in the next newsletter and you may contact them directly if you are interested in volunteering your time to help support the Inn. If not, you are still always welcome to come on up and enjoy a wonderful breakfast with a spectacular view.

INNKEEPERS

Lin Johanson

Just a quick update on our newest Innkeepers. **David Durr, Sandra Fish & Karl Jurgenson** are all nearing the end of their training and should be entering the rotation soon. If you haven't met them yet, be sure to introduce yourself the next time you see them at the Inn. I also want to wish Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year to them and our current crew of **Gordon Edwards, Geoff Johnson, Jim McElrath, Alan Reynolds and Pat Williams.** The Inn wouldn't look as good as it does, and our guests wouldn't have as enjoyable a time as they do, without the dedication and human touch of our incredible Innkeepers. Thanks, and keep up the good work!

POULET MARENGO*

Fran Rondeau

1 3 pound chicken cut up
1 cup flour
1 t tarragon (or 2 t fresh)
salt n pepper
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup butter (or just oil)
1 cup dry white wine
2 cups chopped canned tomatoes
1 clove garlic
8 large sliced mushrooms
parsley, chopped and added at end

Dredge chicken in flour and spices-reserve any leftover
Brown chicken well in oil
Remove chicken and make sauce
Whisk together the flour, wine, add tomatoes, garlic, and mushrooms
Cover and place in oven at 350 for 45 minutes.

Note: this works well in or out of the oven and with as many mushrooms you like.

*basic recipe from NY Times Cookbook

WORK PARTY HELP WANTED

Jennifer Barclay

Looking for 6 volunteers to take on leading 2 Work Parties each in 2016. Three people have volunteered so far, need 3 more volunteers please. (If you want to buddy-up w/a friend to lead a Work Party, that would work too.)

If you think you might be interested and want to find out more, come join me at WPI, Saturday, December 19 at 11:00 (rain or shine). I'll make lunch for us and we can sit in front of the fireplace to discuss in more detail. Email me if you're interested and so I know how many people to cook for: jbarclay1@aol.com

Remember: I'll still work with the committee chairs and IK's to pull together the list of things to do, organize the chefs, and be at each WP to support you so it will be not as overwhelming. Look forward to seeing you.



VIEW FROM THE PORCH: OLENE SPARKS TOBY

Marilyn Skaff

When asked to relate her most memorable experience at the West Point Inn, Olene Sparks-Toby said it would have to be her very first visit to the inn in the early 80's. Aileen Lafferty-Treadwell (who had been a fellow art student at Chico State) and her husband, Jim, who were also Olene's neighbors in San Rafael, invited Olene to go up to the inn with them. They were both on the WPIA Board of Directors and at that time, the board meetings were held at the inn with a dinner and party following the meeting. The Treadwells invited Olene to spend the night at the inn, but she recalls thinking that sounded a little "iffy!" She told them she would come up for the evening if she could drive in and out. Given permission to do so, she gave them a ride to Pan Toll so they could hike in. They gave her directions and the gate combination. She didn't want to arrive at the inn before her friends, so on the drive up she stopped to watch a crew filming a car commercial near Rock Springs. The crew was thrilled to be filming in such a beautiful place and invited Olene to join them in enjoying the wine, bread, and cheese they had brought. Time elapsed, it started to get dark, so Olene headed up the mountain. However, she couldn't find the gate, so she drove up to East Peak, back down to where the crew had been, back to East Peak, where she encountered an MMWD ranger, Casey May, who told her she had been reported missing and was the object of a search. He led her back to the gate and down to the inn, where the meeting had ended and the party had begun.

The search was cancelled and Olene and Casey joined in the festivities.

That night was memorable in many ways. It was the night Olene met the President of the Board, **Ed Toby**, who later became her husband. Ed was part of the Toby family who founded the West Point Inn and when he died from a brain tumor in 1991, **Carl Nolte** wrote his obituary and helped direct contributions in Ed's name to repair and redo what is now the Toby Cabin, the Inn's first accessible cabin for persons with a disability.

Olene grew up in Oklahoma on a farm where they grew everything they ate. She graduated from a small high school in a class of 13 students. From there she came west and attended Foothill College and then Chico State University, where she earned a B.A., Secondary Teaching Credential, and Masters in Art & Painting. She had a long career teaching art in high schools in San Francisco and Marin. She was named Art Teacher of the Year in Marin during the 70's and was President of the California Art Education Association, Northern California.

One of Olene's passions is traveling. She has lived and worked in Mexico, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Manhattan. Her travels have also taken her to Europe, New Zealand, South and Central America. Her favorite activity is hiking which she has done in many of these countries and continues to do regularly in the Bay Area. This fall, Olene traveled with new WPIA member, Pierre Terrier, to France and Spain. While they were in Paris, Olene met up with a college girlfriend with whom she hitch-hiked around Europe for six months in the late 60's.

No matter how far Olene travels, the West Point Inn remains central to her life. She has worked on the newsletter, been Board secretary, Vice-President and President of the Board, and is currently a member of the Board, part of the fundraising committee, and is liaison to the Mt. Tamalpais Organizations. She received a Rusty Spike Award in 2002 and the Wall of Fame Award in 2005. She has hosted the New Year's Eve party at the Inn for many years. Among her favorite times at the Inn are those nights when there is a full moon. She also fondly remembers the first time she hiked down from the Inn to Pan Toll in the dark, how the temperature could change each time you take a turn on the fire road. In her words, "I'm so glad I finally found the road leading down to the West Point Inn. I've been using it for over 35 years."

Join Us For The NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Welcome the New Year from the deck of the West Point Inn.

Be safe and snug when 2016 rolls in!



Enjoy a wonderful evening of:

6pm: Drinks & hors d'oeuvres around the fireplace

Hors d'oeuvres by Bonnie Jones & Michael Satris

9pm: Supper by lamplight. *Chefs: Fran Rondeau & Marilyn Skaff*

12 midnight: Fireworks & City lights on the deck

Morning after 9am: New Year's Day Breakfast. *Chefs: Mary Ann & Malcolm Dunlap*

COST: \$75-members. \$100-guest of member.
(Includes:lodging, food, drink, party favors, decor)
ATTIRE: Festive casual.

RESERVATIONS & LODGING:
Will be handled by host:Olene Sparks
(510) 236-8293 or olenes@aol.com

NOTE: Do NOT call the reservation line. Payment by check only. No credit card pmt. First come, first choice, based on confirmation and receipt of check, payable to West Point Inn Assn.

UPON CONFIRMATION SEND CHECK TO:

Olene Sparks
441 Western Drive
Point Richmond, CA 94801
INCLUDE:(please print): Names, phone #, email address

QUESTIONS or TO VOLUNTEER: Olene Sparks (510) 236-8293, olenes@aol.com

2015 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

December

- 5 Cookie Party/ Member's Holiday Party++
Hosts: Alison Bricker/Brenda Roberts
Chef: Fran Rondeau
- 14 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

HERITAGE NIGHT: 4/8 & 4/9 A CLOSE CALL AT WEST POINT Fred Runner

One hundred years ago, in 1915, the West Point Inn was dark, empty and abandoned. The railroad that built the Inn no longer needed it. Stagecoach service had ended. The horses and the stage no longer came. And the Inn and a few cabins were cold and lifeless.

The West Point Inn had been a glowing place of hospitality in the middle of nowhere, a place of refuge in bad weather or to grab a cup of coffee if the stage was late.

In the summer of 1915, the stagecoach service was abandoned. The railroad no longer had use for the West Point Inn and it was closed.

Why is the Inn still here?

April 8, 1916, was the turning point. Exactly 100 years later, Heritage Night celebrates the reopening of an abandoned Inn with a warm dinner, a glass of wine and a look at those early days, the people and their world.

Heritage Night is April 8 + 9, 2016. It's the same show each night. Reservations are essential.



West Point Inn, c 1914

A simple Inn with a much smaller porch. Note how the railroad tracks encircle the building. The stone pillars and steps are still in use today. Cabin 1 is visible at right.

A reservation includes dinner, wine and the show for \$30 per person. Chef Fran Rondeau will be in the kitchen. This is a fundraiser for the old Inn. Reservations will open later in December. Some rooms will be available to spend the night. Information will be on our website.

A group will hike back to Pan Toll following the Heritage Night presentation about 9 PM. It will be a dark night so please bring a flashlight.

Heritage Night Schedule (both nights): West Point Inn open all day.

Appetizers: 5:00 pm

Dinner: 6:00 pm

Show: 7:30 pm

Hikers Depart: 9 pm

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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