



Newsletter Volume 33, July 2022

Western Winter Blast (WWB) Retrospective

How good was it to be back together for a WWB? Thanks to all of our members, volunteers and Chairs for making this event a huge success. A special thanks to our Event Chair, Richard Haase, and Co-Chair, Joe Wright. We had over 610 attendees engaged over 5 beautiful days in Lake Havasu, AZ building, shooting, learning, sharing and socializing. Exactly what our club is about. There are a number of videos memorializing the event on Youtube and Facebook you can check out.

On the last day of the event, the board gave Mike Garrett a Lifetime Achievement award for his extensive contributions to the Club!

Let's Do It!

That's right, our annual Do It event is just around the corner. We had around 150 attendees last year and look forward to an amazing event this year.

Registration is now open on our website:

Westernpyro.org under the events tab for members.

Please consider early registration as this helps us to better plan for the event.

Location: Hawthorne, NV

Dates: September 20 - 25

- Tuesday is set up (with possibility of early manufacturing and some shooting upon approval of Manufacturing and Safety Chairs)
- Wednesday through Saturday are manufacturing, open shooting is 6pm
- Saturday night is the member showcase
- Sunday is clean up



Host Hotel: The Travelodge associated with the El Capitan Casino:
<https://elcapcasino.com/accommodations/>. Our discount rate is \$50/night + tax. We have 80 rooms blocked from September 19-26th. Call the hotel directly at 775-945-3321 or 800-922-2311 and say you are with the WPA, to receive the discount. You will NOT receive the discount, if you make your reservation online. If reservations are not being made in a timely manner, our block will be reduced. In the past, the hotel has been completely sold out on the weekend, so make your reservations early!

Registration: On site at The Bug's RV from 8am until 9pm Wednesday - Saturday.

Despite inflation, the board has voted to keep the registration fee the same as last year at \$100. The Board also voted (after much discussion) to raise the clean up deposit to \$50 from \$20. Note that this is a deposit you can earn back when you help clean up OR if you don't care about the money, you can donate your share to the club.

Why raise the deposit? In a nutshell, the town of Hawthorne generously provides the space for this event. They have been gracious over the years and actively shared their appreciation for the business we bring into town as well as our nightly displays. There are only two thematic concerns. We can be a little too noisy and we're a little too messy. We can address the mess quite easily with more active participation in clean-up.

Last year there were roughly 20 people who helped clean up - less than 15% of attendees. Unlike WWB, there's no temporary labor available at Do It. We are 100% responsible for our own mess, and need your help! Again, it's a deposit, you earn it back when you help clean up on Sunday as per the WPA clean up policy at events..

Finally, we have some key volunteer changes this year. Edy Young volunteered for Mess (note that this is a different mess than the one above, this means food!) and AfterGlow Chair and Mike Garrett volunteered to organize the Member Showcase. Edy is looking for additional volunteer crew support. If you are interested, please contact her at candyedy@gmail.com.

Many thanks to Gina and Victor Papini who have chaired Mess and AfterGlow for years as well as Dean Gonzalez who organized the Showcase for the last two; these will be hard shoes to fill!

Our 2022 Staff:

Mess & Afterglows	Edy Young
Site	Danny Dutra
Safety & Regulatory	Greg Danduran
Manufacturing	Bill Ryan
Security	Richard Haase
Electrical	Steve Humphrey
Communications	Bill McGregor
Volunteers	Lonny Ross

Association Priorities - The Road Ahead

The Board has completed its annual strategic planning and is focused on three priorities this year:

- **Modernizing Financials** - Significant work has taken place over the last couple of years to clean up Association finances and modernize our processes and technology. We now have transparency into our financials and the ability to forecast. Additionally, we are in a good cash position coming out of Western Winter Blast. This is a BIG DEAL! Repeat BIG DEAL!! Shout out to our Treasurer, Tamara Struminger and Kevin Mather, President, who have dug into this with a passion.
- **Progressing Permanent Manufacturing** - We continue to make progress on establishing WAPM as our permanent manufacturing subsidiary. We are currently working on the Directors & Officers insurance coverage, and getting final clearance on the Incorporation documents from the Club attorney. While this is happening, we also continue to look for possible locations to stand-up a club manufacturing site. We continue to meet monthly on the last Thursday of the month, at 6 PM PT (holiday schedules may shift). Everyone is welcome to join and participate. This is the meeting link - it will always be the same: Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/qwn-spmk-sqm>
- **Automating the Member Experience** - Our current website is dated and many of our processes are manual and time consuming for the volunteers who help run the association. In retrospect, they worked and have served us well, but times are changing and we have to as well. We need to enable members to self-serve and, at the same time, we have the opportunity to modernize the experience. Our goal is to have the new Website in place prior to WWB 2023. Board members Heather Dicks, VP of Communications (that's me) and Dennis Miele, Secretary, are working on this with members John Noonan and Steve Yoss.

Other Board Matters

- **Financial Update**
 - For the first time in several years club financials are closed and ready for tax preparation ahead of the deadline! Our fiscal year runs April 1 - March 31st. For the year just ended the WPA had a net income of \$39,819! Our Treasurer Tamara is cleaning up a few details to hand things off to the CPA to file taxes. We will post the financials to the Members Only section of the website once finalized with the CPA.
- **Elections:**
 - Kevin Mather was elected for another term as President
 - Tamara Struminger was elected to a full term as Treasurer
 - Heather Dicks was elected VP of Communications (Tackett Austin did not run for another term - Thank you for your service Tackett and helping HD transition)
- **Board Meetings:** Did you know you can attend the regular board meetings as a non-voting participant? Send requests to attend meetings to

bod-meeting@westernpyro.org Requests to attend are acknowledged on a first come, first serve basis, and on availability. Google just changed our GSuite plan, so space for additional attendees may not be an issue.

By the Numbers

- 617 active members
- 207 new members over the last year
- 142 attendees at Do It 2021
- 614 attendees at WinterBlast 2022

Passing the Baton

It is with heavy hearts we share club members who are ready to step back from significant roles.

It would literally be impossible not to know **John Noonan**. He processes club membership and event attendance. He chairs WinterBlast onsite registration and answers WPA membership emails. He has made significant contributions to developing and running our website. In a nutshell, he is literally the face of the WPA. In the same way that John has extended us all a warm welcome, we thank him for everything he's done for us.

If you do Do It, you know **The Bug**. John Dicks has agreed to chair Do It one more year. (Phew, cause we need a transition year; Tackett Austin will be doing knowledge transfer at our upcoming Do It event.) John has been chairing our dustier, buggier (those of you who go to both know what we're talking about) manufacturing focused event for 5 years. In true *renaissance man* style, he's also worn other hats over the years and was most recently our WinterBlast RV Chair. With deep gratitude, we thank The Bug for switch hitting over the years.

Member Spotlight - Greg Dandurand

Member since: 2002

What made you join the WPA in the first place? I had some friends coming down from Michigan to go to WWB, so I joined and came to Lake Havasu. I was already in pyro and a member of the PGI and MPAG.

Why have you stayed? The fireworks of course, but I have met some really great people. I like to joke that they are the best friends I see twice a year. I am an odd duck. I have never been comfortable in my own skin. However, I am accepted by everyone in WPA. There are quite a few people I talk with away from the events throughout the year. I wish I could take everyone up on all the cool offers of events and shows I have been invited to in California, but I don't have unlimited vacation and money.

What's your passion - build, shoot or both? Both, but I don't get to build as much as I'd like. I know it is a dorky thing to say, but I am kind of a logistics guy. I like to use ideas I have at events, a trial run, before I use them at my day job.

If pyro is what you do in your spare time, what do you do in your real time? I'm the Master of all Time, Space and Dimension. Just kidding, I work as an inspector at an airplane parts overhaul facility. I take it very seriously. We all fly and I make sure nothing leaves the building that isn't up to snuff.

And in Greg's own words . . . Don't try this at home...

I hope you all had a good Fourth and came through with all your fingers, both of your eyes and most of your hearing. I've been losing my hearing over the years; tried calling the tinnitus hotline, but the phone keeps ringing and ringing and ringing...

I lost my big 4th show (6 people) to a competitor, but I picked up 3 smaller shows back-to-back-to-back on July 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Using 3 people each night let my crew get out to light some fuses.

It gets hot in Arizona. Luckily, it wasn't much over 105 degrees. The monsoon hadn't really developed, so we had no chance of rain. There was a slight breeze each night, but I was still standing there, marinating in my own juices (I hope you're not eating when you read this). By the show on the 4th, I was a little burned out, figuratively and literally. My patience was running thin and I was easily provoked. I had set up, shot the show and cleaned up on the 3rd. The show on the 4th was in the same spot, but I couldn't leave all the equipment out from the night before as it is an active golf course during the day.

I know you all can relate, caution tape and barricades mean nothing to the general public, they think they can go anywhere they want. I was on a cart path at a golf course the last two nights. Security physically barricaded the path on both sides. I was working with my crew on the 4th when these two golf carts came rolling up (man and woman in each one). They had moved the barricades to drive through. I told them to leave and asked why they were moving the barricades. "We have to get back to the hotel lobby," snorted one of the guys. Now mind you they are on a golf course in the middle of Phoenix, not lost in the Serengeti in danger of being trampled by wildebeests. There was a longer route to get back to civilization. Resisting the urge to fling my hammer at them (I'm not allowed to carry a Taser), as they rolled by I loudly said "That's ok Karen; your sense of entitlement means the rules don't apply to you." The first cart kept rolling, but the second one stopped and the guy started to get out. Oh well I thought, this is how it ends, beaten to death by a 3 wood on a cart path. However, his wife grabbed him and he got back on the cart and left.

The only problem is the incident emboldened me. I will now use that phrase as a standard response at any show I do where the public cross the tape. If you decide to do this, you can drop the "Karen". It is not PC, I am trying to be a better person and there are actually some great humans with the name Karen.

I don't recommend this to anyone. I don't want to hear about getting clubbed by a five iron on the fairway, whacked by a baseball bat (or in a warped case of animal cruelty, the flying kind) on the ball field or the unlikely event of being knocked out by a nine pound candy cane at a Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Know your limits, read the room, don't push the envelope. But it will make you feel better.

Stay safe and see you at Do-It

Greg

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