

The GREEN LIGHT

BULLETIN of the POINT ASSOCIATION

NEWPORT

JANUARY 1960

RHODE ISLAND

QUARTERLY MEETING

OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28th

8:00 P.M. SHARP

ST. JOHN'S GUILD HALL

SPEAKER: Francis G. Dwyer, Chairman Turnpike & Bridge Authority

SUBJECT: The Newport-Jamestown Bridge

Refreshments

JANUARY BOARD MEETING:

Members of the Executive Committee met at 42 Walnut St. on January 5. In the absence of a quorum, discussion was general, and another meeting was planned later in the month.

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$2435.70, of which \$1908.32 is in the Savings Account.

Mrs. Harold Watson read the report of the Christmas-on-the Point committee: Committee: Mrs. Jean Aubeis, Mrs. Charles Barker, Miss Anna Groff. Judges: Mrs. Randal Dees, Mrs. Edward Jarnaszewski and, (replacing Mr. William Nielsen, who was unable to serve,) Miss Nancy Hay.

As usual, the judges had a difficult time deciding among the many attractive decorations. The following prizes were awarded:

(1) Most appropriate to the season:

Mr. & Mrs. Reginald Bryer, at 24 Van Zandt Ave., where peppermint striped porch posts, giant candles, and a warm, cosy glow from every window made a very pleasing effect.

(2) Most original:

The judges were unable to find any outstanding originality, so

re-named the classification "best for natural simplicity". The award went to Judge and Mrs. Walter Curry of 127 Washington St., where a beautiful wreath and garlands of green studded with red berries set off the doorway.

(3) Most effect with least expenditure:

This went to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. F. Kitts, 83½ Second Street, whose red door was ornamented with a simple spray of evergreen and a large multi-pointed gold star.

The tree (?) in Battery Park was wired and lighted through the kindness of Mr. W. Harry Groff, who deplored the condition of the poor old evergreen. After dark, however, the lighting glorified the sad tree, and the Washington Street Carollers, under the direction of Mr. W. King Covell, began their singing there.

Vincent Aubeis and Billy Fitzpatrick attended to the turning on and off of the lights, and it was through no fault of theirs that the tree was sometimes on or off at the wrong times. Gremlins also could reach the switch !

Mrs. Watson suggested that next year a committee for Christmas on the Point be named early in the fall to come up with new ideas and detailed plans. Suggestions were made regarding a daylight competition for decorated doorways, and indoor displays of creches or interesting collections of figures brought out at Christmas-time.

Miss Price reported that she and Dr. David Nemptzow had made a detailed survey of repairs needed on all sidewalks. This report, together with a listing of other needs affecting the Point (trees, street signs, lighting, street repairs, etc.) will be prepared and submitted before the City budget is drawn up.

Letters have been written to the Newport Electric Corporation and the Jamestown Ferry Division regarding the smoke nuisance.

There was some discussion of Oldport Day or a similar event for the coming summer, with suggestions of open houses and/or gardens, with individual owners responsible for localized activities, such as small indoor exhibits.

The date for the General Membership Meeting was tentatively set for the last Thursday in January. As a speaker, the possibility of securing a representative of the Bridge Authority or of Raytheon was discussed.

Miss Price reported a circulation of 370 for the December GREEN LIGHT, with 40 copies going out-of-town to 11 states and Nova Scotia. The Christmas number was a very fancy one, involving a great many extra processes done by hand on each copy.

The pros and cons of bulk rate postage are still under consideration.

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"We always have time enough if we but use it aright."

LAST APPEAL !!!

At the moment, we appear to have 415 members - but if 36 of them do not indicate whether they still wish to be counted as such and receive the Bulletin, we have only 379. We were pretty proud when we went over the 400 mark - PLEASE don't let us down and cause us to fall below it! We hope that the 36 have just forgotten to notify us, or have mislaid the two reminders they received. The Treasurer is R.S. Weiss, 42 Walnut Street !

It is hoped that a large attendance will be on hand at the Quarterly Meeting to hear Mr. "Jerry" Dwyer. The possible - even probable - construction of a bridge between Newport and Jamestown will vitally affect the whole community -- and the fact that the east end of the proposed bridge may be located at Sycamore or Cypress Street has a particularly strong impact on us of the Point. Some of us may view with mixed feelings the chosen location.

Owing to the heavy snow, we missed the spectacle of the fire set by the Navy on Rose Island.

What about Rose Island? Perhaps Pointers may have some suggestions for the City Fathers as to its uses.

THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW:

We were much interested in the article on the Definition of the Historic House which we quote on the following page. But we do feel that the specific definitions outlined by Mr. Montgomery may not completely fit the Newport problem, where quantity is of the essence. Newport is unique in still presenting the structure of a Colonial CITY, and all our 18th century buildings are needed if that structure is to be maintained -- not merely isolated fine examples.

THE HISTORIC HOUSE - A Definition

(Excerpts from an article by Charles F. Montgomery, Director of The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, from the September 1959 issue of Museum News, published by the American Ass'n of Museums, Washington. Quoted here by kind permission of the Author and the Publishers.)

". . . For want of a better name, all old houses open to the public have come to be known in recent years as historic houses. This is a useful term, but one that requires some clarification. Is a house historic merely because it has existed long enough to be considered old? Or is it historic in the sense of being notable for some dramatic event that occurred in it? Or is it historic in the sense that it throws dependable light on some phase of past history?

"One might begin by pointing out how difficult it is to disassociate a house from its furnishings. Fundamental in the consideration of any kind of house is the ingrained idea that a house is a home, a place to live in. Hence, when we walk through the doors of a house, modern or historic, we automatically expect to see there the objects that people have lived with in that spot; for an old house, obviously, this will include the objects that people lived with in the past.

"In other words, because of our concept of the word house, we are conditioned to believe that an historic house is an historic document of an earlier way of life, not only in terms of the structure, but also in terms of its furnishings. We might establish, then, . . . that an historic house should be a house whose structure and furnishings constitute an historically accurate document; that is, the furniture, pictures, and objects should be related to and consistent with the architecture, life, and status of the house, the people who have lived in it, and the community of which it is a part.

"It is evident, however, that there are various ways in which a house can be an historic document. It might be useful to distinguish four categories: The biographical house, the house which is a shrine to a moment in history, the era house, the area house,

"Illustrative of the biographical house. . . is 'Sagamore Hill', Theodore Roosevelt's home on Long Island. . . The original furnishings remain; they are as highly individual as the great man who lived with them, and they reveal traits of personality of the owner, events of his life, and the stamp of the age that produced them. . .

"The moment shrine is a house in which someone of great importance was born or died, or in which some great event in history occurred. . .

"The era house is symbolic of significant aspects or aura of an era. 'The Breakers' at Newport illustrates the late-nineteenth-century idea of the summer palace of the wealthy. . .

"The over-all story to be conveyed by the area house is an account of the architecture, furnishings, and way of life of a particular region."

[In Newport, the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard and the Hunter might be cited as examples of the area house. Ed:]

"One other use of the old house must be identified. This is a related, but different, category. . . For example, a memorial to an author might utilize his home as the setting for displays. . . which memorialize his life, but which never actually were in his house or possession. . .

"The restorers of the historic house must be faithful in their adherence to historical fact. Consistency with goals and fidelity to fact are the rules which must guide the installation of any historic house. When a restoration is faithfully carried out according to these principles, then the house becomes an historic document which will stand forever as truth."

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