

The
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THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION

Thursday, April 26th at 8 o'clock

St. John's Guild Hall, Poplar Street

An open meeting for everyone interested.

SPEAKER -- Mr. William Leys, the Executive Director of the Newport Redevelopment Agency. He will report on the progress of the redevelopment plans, with special reference to their effect on the Point. He welcomes questions.

This is a subject vital to all on the Point. Bring your friends, and have your questions ready.

Edith Ballinger Price is moving to Virginia this fall, and after the business meeting, we are going to have a celebration for her; as a matter of fact, April 26th is the Seagull's birthday.

Quarterly Membership Meeting of The Point Association, January 25, 1962

The quarterly general membership meeting of the Point Association of Newport was held on January 25, 1962, at St. John's guild hall, with Mr. Harrington presiding. Nearly one hundred members were present.

The reports of the secretary and treasurer were read and approved; the treasurer's report shows a balance on hand of \$2,988.86. Mrs. Watson, the Chairman of Publicity, spoke briefly of her work, which she says speaks for itself.

The membership dues are coming in very slowly, in spite of many telephone calls. Mrs. Bates reported for the Green Light a circulation of 296, thirty-eight from out of town. The expenses, for paper and printing for the whole year, and mimeographing and postage for the January issue, were \$56.82.

Mr. Harrington said that the present executive board feels that it has too few members to reflect the feeling of the general membership on the important and controversial matter of spending the money raised by the Association. The board would like a special committee appointed from the floor at a quarterly meeting to discuss this. It would be a standing committee, the Advisory Committee, and would report to the board, and the general membership. Seven members were then named: Richard Weiss, M. Joseph Sullivan, King Covell, Ade de Bethune, Mrs. William MacLeod, Mrs. Harold Arnold, and Mrs. Walter Curry. See the special report on their preliminary work later in this issue.

The reports on the redevelopment agency, the Beautification Committee, and the Afternoon on the Point on July 21st, are all discussed separately.

Mr. Sullivan mentioned the dangerous condition of the sea wall at Battery Park, and it was voted that a letter describing it be sent to the City Manager. Mrs. Benson asked whether the quarterly meetings are open to the general public; it was voted to open them.

Mrs. Benson then introduced her son, John, and his wife, Ruth, who described most entertainingly their winter in Rome, where John had been sent by the Rhode Island School of Design, in their European Honor Program. He gave a vivid description

of the beauty of Rome -- the fountains everywhere, the light and color, the mixture of old and new in buildings, the fashion models and peasants, and the crazy traffic. Ruth described the difficulties of housekeeping and shopping most entertainingly, and altogether we felt ready to leave for Rome at once.

The meeting adjourned, and refreshments were served.

Executive Board Meetings

The January, February, and March board meetings have discussed several important matters, and for clarity they are reported separately.

Redevelopment Agency Plans

The plans of the Newport Redevelopment Agency are beginning to show progress, and there will be a full report in the July Green Light, after our April meeting, when Mr. Leys, the Executive Director, will speak. A letter concerning the proposed new site of the Jamestown ferry and the access to the redevelopments was sent to Mayor Hambly and Mr. Leys, and Mr. Leys will discuss these matters, which are of such importance to the Point, at the April meeting.

Afternoon on the Point
July 21, 1962

The plans for the Afternoon on the Point, under the general chairmanship of Mrs. Henry Eccles, are coming along well, and the July Green Light will have the full details. Seven houses will be open, and each will have some special attractions. The committee would appreciate the loan of any silhouettes, samplers, or old toys. Mrs. George Wilbour has donated a beautiful hooked rug; chances on this will be available at the April meeting.

The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee, appointed at the January general membership meeting, held a meeting, and appointed Richard Weiss chairman. He reported to the executive board that they have many ideas, including several to raise money as well as spend it, and they all feel there should be a major long term project. He welcomes suggestions, and hopes some of the Green Light readers will have ideas. Write them to:

Mr. Richard Weiss
42 Walnut Street.

Here are some suggestions made from time to time.

1. Buy an old house and repair it. (This does not mean an expensive restoration job.)
2. Buy a vacant lot or two to clean up and plant.
3. A revolving fund to loan money to worthy people for repairs to their houses. This project was tabled at the October general meeting, but it can be revived at any time.
4. Some scholarship aids to deserving Point children for further education.
5. Buy the former Burt Little shop on Poplar Street, built as a men's reading room, for the headquarters of the Point Association.
6. Make a park of the old nursery on the south side of Van Zandt Avenue by the railroad track.

For ways of raising money the committee suggested:

1. A square dance series for adults.
2. Instruction in swimming and boating for children.

3. Classes in sewing and handwork with a professional instructor. (Fifty years or so ago, the Misses Wilbur had such classes at the St. John's Guild Hall, with a sale of their efforts every summer.

These are just a few of the ideas, and the committee will have a more definite report at the April meeting.

Point Beautification

Mr. Joseph Sullivan, our new chairman of beautification, has many ideas. Be sure to read about the Point garden contest in the special flyer which this year will include a window box contest for adults, as well as the children's garden contest. Mr. Sullivan will plant the flower tubs in Battery Park, and move them to the street side, where spray will not hurt the flowers. He is also planting the store window boxes earlier this year, and filling them with plants that bloom freely all summer. The maple trees planted two years ago are taking hold well, and with the earlier plantings show a great improvement in the vistas down the streets. Next we must all try to clean up the whole area, so that by the Afternoon on the Point on July 21st, we can all be proud of our neat appearance. Seeds will be distributed at the April quarterly meeting.

Pointed Questions

Was there a Hawthorne Street on the Point?

Yes. Van Zandt Avenue, which at that time ran from the harbor to Third Street, was called Hawthorne Street. It was renamed in honor of Governor Charles C. Van Zandt of Newport, who was Governor of Rhode Island from 1877 to 1880.

Reminiscences

There are a few stores on the Point which were not mentioned in the Green Light.

One was the candy shop of John C. Schock of 25 Elm Street. He made all his candy and ice cream, and sold the Daily News and postage stamps. Johnny Pringley, the blind man who used to sell peanuts on the street from a basket he carried on his arm, used to get the stamps at the Post Office for him. There was a bell on the door that would ring when opened to enter.

Who remembers Bucky Spencer's variety store on Bridge Street, that had a bell on the door too -- and Phillip Frank's paint shop across the street. And Mr. Caswell's watch repairing and jewelry store on Third Street next to Carr's grocery store on the corner of Bridge Street.

Who remembers the man with the little push cart who used to sharpen scissors and knives and repaired umbrellas; he had a little seat attached to sit on. The man who used to sell meat from a wagon -- housewives would stand with platters or plates waiting for him to cut and trim the meat; I think his name was Coffey. And the man who used to sell fish from a two wheel push cart. He used to blow a horn and sing out the different kinds he sold. His name was Johnny Smith. And the man who used to go around on a wagon hollering any rags, bones, or bottles today -- he used to buy them.

Who remembers the huckleberry man who used to carry two pails, one on each arm, and go from door to door selling them. He would scoop the berries out with a big sea clam shell into a quart measure.

We don't see them any more. I can recall them all, as I am an old Pointer, born on Elm Street eighty years ago. Mr. Schock was my father.

Mrs. Robert Wolfenden, Sr.

After Mr. Schock moved his shop to Thames Street, he used to bring ice cream every Sunday morning to the Misses Wilbur's boarding house on Washington Street, and stop at the city pier on the way home to get lobsters -- thirteen for one dollar.

Maude

Henry Tripp used to drive a one-horse bus named Maude from the Liberty Tree at the head of Poplar Street down Thames Street. It was kept on a Tripp lot on LaSalle Place, and the horse had a stable behind the Tripp house on Bridge Street (now called the Claggett House). The bus had long seats along the sides, and a rope to pull that opened the door in the rear where the steps were. The driver sat behind a glass partition, and riders dropped their money down a glass tube to him. The seats were upholstered, and there was a rug on the floor. The windows had glass in winter, and black oilcloth in summer that could be rolled up or down. On Sundays, Maude picked up Pointers and took them to church -- the Misses Green, Mr. Covell, the Swinburnes, the Crandalls, the Misses Ellery, Miss Young, and Yuba Dennis, and brought them home again. Maude also met the boats, and took tourists on the six mile Cottage Drive to Ochre Point, or the ten mile Ocean Drive. First a horse named Murphy pulled Maude, and then Charlie. Maude was finally sold to a man in Jamestown, who drove her between the two ferries.



The Wissahickon.

In the mid-nineteenth century many wealthy families from the big cities came to Newport to enjoy its fabulous climate. Among the pioneers of this movement was Robert L. Maitland. He was enchanted with the open expanse fronting Newport harbor north of Battery Street. On March 6, 1852, Maitland purchased this land from Charles Hunter, and built (on the grounds of the present Naval Hospital property) a mansion, which in its day was truly elegant and spacious. It rose three stories high with a mansard roof and a house type cupola rising one and a half stories higher. Beautiful lawns, gardens, trees and fruit orchards stretched out from the mansion to Battery Street and from Third Street to the harbor. A graceful drive circled from Third Street to the entrance. On the day of purchase, Robert Maitland sold two lots at Washington, Battery, and Second Streets to John Auchincloss, who built a mansion where the Corpus Christi Carmelites, the former Cenacle, now stands.

In 1865 the artist, John P. Newell, who was well known for other scenes of Newport, captured a panoramic view from atop the Maitland mansion. A copy of this picture now at the Newport Historical Society catches a view of amazing scope including Island and Common Cemeteries, Long Lane and part of Farewell Street, and along the shore line, Fort Greene and Washington Street to Long Wharf with spires of Newport churches rising in the distance. On February 21, 1870, the property was sold to Daniel T. Swinburne, who inherited his love of the sea from his seafaring ancestors the Arnolds and the Tews. His home became a gathering place of literary and naval greats of that day. During the Civil War his son William Swinburne entered the U. S. Naval Academy, then located in Newport, and was one of the few officers who served in our Navy during both the Civil War and World War I. He rose to the rank of Admiral.

In 1909 the Heirs of Daniel T. Swinburne and Heirs of Alfred Smith sold the property north of Cypress Street to the U. S. of America for the sum of \$21,700.60 to erect the Naval Hospital thereon. The great house was moved to the corner of 21 Bayside Avenue and Sycamore Street by Thomas Preece, the second generation of that famous family. What a gigantic moving operation that was! It then became a glorified boarding house, known to this day by old time Pointers as the Wissahickon. Many stage actors and actresses stayed there, when they played at Newport theatres. It is now an apartment house, owned since October 2, 1941, by Samuel Gillson. Its size and Victorian style still attracts attention and interest, a venerable relic that has known better days.