

Vol 3-45^F

May '59

The GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN of the POINT ASSOCIATION

MAY 1959

CLEAN-UP WEEK JUNE 1-6

The city-wide Clean-Up Week will take place JUNE 1 - 6 and it is the hope of the Point Association that through our combined efforts the Point will not only be made clean, but KEPT clean thereafter.

Now is the time to clean ATTICS, CELLARS and YARDS. City trucks will collect all material placed at the curb, on the day when collection of non-combustible material is usually made. For most of the Point, this will be MONDAY, June First.

The Point Association is distributing circulars to every house on the Point, and posters will be put in neighborhood stores. Mrs. Geo. D. Weaver, jr. is in charge of this.

Mr. Raymond Garcia, Director of Public Works, requests that all cars be removed from the Point streets on the day of collection, so that the city sweeper, following the trucks, may do a good job.

The Televoice Information Service is prepared to give information on the clean-up, and the City Yard may be called during working hours.

Televoice VI 6-3144
City Yard VI 6-9600

A meeting in the Council Chamber at City Hall was called by Acting City Manager George A. Bisson on May 13, at which all local organizations were represented. For the Point Association, Miss Edith Price spoke at some length, outlining the Association's plans, and also making

some suggestions for measures that might be taken to improve existing conditions.

Mr. Bisson took a firm stand on the present lax attitude toward existing ordinances, and promised strict enforcement.

Mr. Maher, refuse contractor, emphasized the importance of paper trash being wrapped or put in bags, so that loose papers can not blow about as cans are emptied. This is the most common source of litter.

The Fire Chief urged thorough clearing out of cellars and attics as a fire prevention measure.

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The Editor's POINT OF VIEW:

. . . As for Clean-up. . . we can do no better than repeat St. Augustine's words: IF EVERY MAN SWEEP IN FRONT OF HIS OWN DOOR, THE WHOLE STREET IS MADE CLEAN. But what of our neighbor, who doesn't? We say that the cleanliness of the street is the responsibility of the City, of our neighbor, of the refuse collector, of the passer-by. Let us begin with our own property. And then -- we cannot enter our neighbor's yard, but we can tidy his sidewalk and gutter. If our example makes him angry, or ashamed, no matter - we shall have improved our own immediate surroundings.

How hard and how ignominiously are we prepared to work for the Clean-up we so much desire?

THE QUARTERLY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING was held on the evening of April 30 at St. John's Guild Hall, with a large attendance. Thirteen new members joined the Association.

With the 1st Vice-President, Mr. Geo. D. Weaver jr. in the chair, the minutes of the January meeting were read by Mrs. Harold Watson, Recording Sec'y; and Mr. R.S. Weiss, the Treasurer, reported a balance of \$2025.26, of which \$1911.69 is in the savings account.

Mr. W.H. Fullerton, Chairman of the Beautification & Improvement Committee, reported that the date of the city Clean-up Week had not yet been announced. He stated that plans for a combined flower show and bake sale are being discussed, with proceeds to be set aside for the expenses of The Green Light. He announced that flower seeds would be distributed at the end of the meeting to those who wished them. A grass fire near the Fleet Landing fence, he said, has damaged some of the roses put there last summer by his committee. He also announced a plan of neighborhood garden teas to be held from time to time.

Miss Edith B. Price reported for the Bulletin, stating a total circulation of 700 for the three months since the last quarterly meeting. She brought out the fact that it costs 50¢ of every membership dollar to get out The Green Light, the postage being the major expense.

Dr. David Nemtsov, Chairman of the Protection Committee, reported eight valid complaints investigated and worked upon. He stated that the Board of Health lacks power to enforce many existing ordinances on problems of dogs, rats, etc. He will have a meeting with Mr. Maher, contractor for refuse disposal. He also reminded the membership of the approaching city Clean-up Week.

The new Planning Committee was announced, and Mr. Robert J. Kerr II introduced as its chairman. Mr. Kerr reported that the City could acquire suitable and appropriate lighting fixtures which are presently available, but that the City would have

to be approached on the matter. Mr. Kerr's announcement that the Preservation Society had just been awarded the Avalon grant of some \$13,500 for its comprehensive study was roundly applauded.

It was announced that the Point Association's articles of incorporation are shortly to be restored.

On a unanimous vote, the fiscal year of the Point Association was established as extending from annual meeting to annual meeting. (October)

On the item of the spending of Oldport money, over and above the amount already allocated for trees, Mrs. G.D. Weaver moved that the first project undertaken be the cleaning up of the Point. After some discussion, a hand vote was taken and the motion was approved 17 to 14. A large number of persons refrained from voting. How the clean-up was to be effected brought suggestions of the cooperation of Boy and Girl Scouts, Boys' Club, paid help, etc. but no definite plan was adopted.

Public Relations: 400 postcard invitations were sent out to residents of the Point, inviting them to this meeting. It was encouraging to see a number of new faces.

Speaker: After the business meeting, Mr. Martin P. Guldmond, horticulturist, spoke informally and answered many specific problems relating to gardens.

Refreshments were in charge of Mrs. Wm. F. Kitts and Mrs. Ivy O'Neill.

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SMALL DEEDS DONE ARE GREATER THAN GREAT DEEDS PLANNED . .

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WRAP UP YOUR PAPER TRASH AS WELL AS YOUR GARBAGE !

(Paid Ad.)

MAY BOARD MEETING: The Executive Committee met at 16 Battery St. on May 7, with the 2nd Vice-President, Mrs. Richard S. Weiss presiding.

The Beautification Committee reported its meeting of May 6. A tentative date of August 8 has been set for a Flower Show, bake sale and tea. Plans are incomplete as yet.

Mr. Robert Kerr II, whose Planning Committee will consist of the chairmen of the other standing committees, reported that he had been in conversation with Mr. Christopher Tunnard of the projected survey of the city, and stated that the Point is one of the particular areas to be considered. The planning study will begin June 15, to be completed in September. Poor streets, lighting and traffic will be included among the other aspects of the survey.

Mr. John L. Murphy of "Petunia Cottage", 36 Second St. has accepted the chairmanship of the Tree Committee and was duly appointed. All expressed gratitude for Mr. Murphy's acceptance of this important post.

There was discussion of the need for a budget, and the Treasurer was directed to prepare a recommended budget for Board approval.

Dr. David Nemtsov reported that the Protection Committee is working with various City departments on nuisance problems.

It was voted to recommend to the City Council that a \$1.00 fine similar to a parking ticket be issued to persons seen littering the street rather than to raise the already high penalty, which is difficult to enforce. Also that the city trash cans on streets and parks be marked prohibiting the disposal of garbage.

Plans for cooperation in City Clean-up Week were made (see first page) and it was voted that Mrs. Weiss be authorized to spend at her discretion, funds from the Oldport Day account sufficient to achieve the desired results.

It was voted that a letter be sent to Mr. Dennis F. Shea, Councilman for the First Ward, asking the specific terms of Contract L; the date

of start and finish of work on the Washington St. sewer; why work was begun on Wellington Ave. though it was previously stated that Washington St. would receive priority; how much money is allocated for the Point job - and asking for a reply before publication date of the May Bulletin. As we go to press, Mr. Shea has been contacted by telephone, and states that the work will be completed this summer, and that funds are available. His letter is being prepared, and we shall report it in the June issue.

Meanwhile, patching of the seawall is going forward, and the leak in the sewer is temporarily diminished.

APPLE-BLOSSOM COFFEE BREAK:

On the morning of May 21, there was a very pleasant gathering in the garden of Rear Admiral and Mrs. Henry E. Eccles. About 60 people enjoyed the balmy weather under apple trees in full bloom, and admired the charming garden. Mrs. Eccles was assisted by Mrs. Couch, Mrs. Tuckerman and Mrs. Edgar Manuel. A silver donation brought in \$30 for expenses of the Green Light, and an anonymous friend promises to match this amount. A replica of the lighthouse itself and a pretty silver confection of shells and seaweed received the contributions. It is hoped to have a number of these neighborhood get-togethers.

LAST MINUTE EXTRA !!!

In connection with the Clean-Up, the Rev. Alan P. Maynard kindly offers the services of boys from his Youth Group to assist elderly persons or women alone in placing bulky objects out for collection. Call Televoice, VI 6-3144

NOTHING WILL EVER BE
ATTEMPTED IF ALL POSSIBLE
OBJECTIONS MUST FIRST BE
OVERCOME

++ THE LIBERTY TREE ++

The merry month of May, the time of Rhode Island's own declaration of independence just two months ahead of the other twelve colonies, would seem an appropriate moment to pay homage to the Liberty Tree. The fernleaf beech, now burgeoning with young leaves where it stands at the junction of Thames, Farewell and Poplar Streets, is the fourth to bear the title and honor since William Read deeded "a certain large buttonwood tree" and the small triangle of land upon which it grew, to William Ellery and four other Trustees on April 14, 1766. Mr. Ellery lived just across the way (alas, that our city should ever have allowed the house of a signer of the Declaration of Independence to be torn down) - and it seems likely that the Sons of Liberty had met in resolute zeal and anger beneath the tree before Mr. Read gave it to posterity.

Each year on the 18th of March, the anniversary of the repeal of the Stamp Act, bells were rung, cannon fired, a flag hoisted on the Liberty Mast near Elisha Clarke's house on the Point -- and the Liberty Tree was illuminated by 365 lanterns, one for each day of the year. As each lantern had place for three candles, over a thousand lights must have gleamed from the sturdy branches. Although the motion-picture of "Johnny Tremain" is considerably Disneyfied, the scene of the lighting of Boston's Liberty Tree does give a fanciful hint of what this effect might have been.

During the British occupation of Newport, the buttonwood tree was destroyed -- but by 1783, when freedom had been won, a group of young hotheads decided that a Tree of Liberty should again flourish. After a gathering in Thomas Stevens' shop, April 23, these dozen young men repaired to George Irish's farm (now the site of the Boulevard Nurseries) under cover of darkness, brought a tree in town upon their shoulders and planted it without permission in the sacred triangle. Their unauthorized act was evidently forgiven, for their names were later inscribed by Nichols the silversmith upon a copper plaque which was affixed to the tree, where it remained at the time of the Homecoming of the Sons and Daughters of Newport in 1859, just 100 years ago. By then the tree was bare and dying, and the oak which replaced it did not thrive. So in 1897 a thrifty young beech was planted, and till 1920 stood within a small enclosure of six granite posts at the apex of the sidewalk. Increasingly interfering with the growing traffic, it was moved on May 7, 1920 to its present position in the plot which few persons know is called "Ellery Park". "Read Park" might be a better title, for it includes at least some of the land deeded in perpetuity by the old patriot "that the tree stand as a Monument of the Spirited and Noble Opposition made to the Stamp Act in the year One Thousand seven hundred and Sixty-five."

Old animosity is forgotten, and we of the Western World are now welded in a larger contest for freedom. No plaque now marks the Liberty Tree; boys clamber in its branches and tear its feathery foliage. But every Newporter should know its location and its history, and see -- at least in imagination -- a thousand lights glowing between its branches, and hear an echo of the drumbeat of the Sons of Liberty, dedicated to a vision which grew into the United States of America, and the wider hope for a Free World.

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