

The GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

THE GREEN LIGHT

April 1973

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APRIL MEETING

The April meeting of the Point Association of Newport will be at 8 p.m. on April 26th at St. John's Guild Hall on Poplar St. This is B.O.P. night. No, it is not a musical concert in the modern manner - it is recognition night for those privileged to be BORN on the POINT. (The Point now includes Washington St. to Marlborough, to Farewell, up to the Naval Hospital. Confused?)

We shall have an evening of reminiscences, where CDR Kingsley will talk with several Boppers, who will recall the goings-on all over the Point. Doubtless many in the audience will remember stories also. If there isn't time that night for all of them, you are invited to submit them to the Green Light. All Hummers, Pointers, Newporters, and History Buffs welcome. This great idea was thought up by our President, Clyde Sargent.

In case you don't want to know the editor, you needn't.

Pointedly, Esther Bates.

THE POT LUCK SUPPER

The Pot-Luck Supper, run by Dede Elster with her usual Savoir Faire, was extremely successful. The main dish of chicken appeared in any number of delicious variations, and the pies, too, lived up to the Point cooks' reputation. Two hundred people plus came, and all had a marvellous time. Everyone took their pans home!

MARCH BOARD MEETING

The Treasurer, Mr. Kazanjian, reported the March balance in the checking account is \$3468.68, and he was authorized to transfer \$100 of that to the savings account.

A delegation of Junior Pointers brought to the meeting the question of a need for a facility to take care of the 14 - 17 year olds. This matter is being taken into consideration by the Board.

The President suggested that items for the agenda for General Meetings should be presented to the Recording Secretary ahead of time.

Beverly Kingsley
846-2567

STREET FAIR

Mr. Fullerton, the Chairman of the Street Fair on Willow St. on Aug. 18th, is naming committee heads, which include Mrs. Rommel, Mrs. Elster, Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. Eccles, and Mrs. Kazanjian to begin with. The committee decided not to hire a

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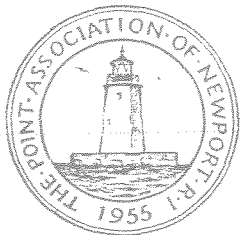
LINTON INTERIORS

Mel Linton, A.I.D.

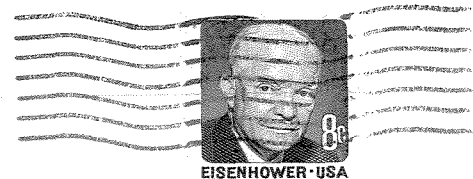
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THE GREEN LIGHT
THE POINT ASSOCIATION
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RD 1 & Mrs. Henry L. Eccles
101 Washington St.
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caterer this year, but have the catering done by the Point Association. The publicity committee is: Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Weaver, and Mrs. Sullivan. The treasurer is Bob Elster.

THE PLANT SALE

The Plant Sale will come in May as usual this year, but we cannot yet tell when the apple blossoms will be at their best. So, watch for an ad in the paper telling the day. It will be in the Eccles' driveway, Washington and Pine St. on Saturday morning, so start your seedlings now.

STORER PARK

Treasurer's Report

Approximately \$22,000 has been collected for Storer Park, with cash gifts of \$16,200; the balance came from the Street Fair, the cookbooks, etc. There is \$4,000 in the Storer Park account; all bills are paid except the contractors' to be paid when the work is completed.

John Kazanjian

Chairman of the Storer Park Committee

Now that spring has come and the grass has begun to grow, we can all get a better idea of what Storer Park eventually will be.

Some of our members have wondered why the Point Association should spend all this money on the park, and then give it to the city. The reasons for this are simple.

If the Association were to hold and maintain the park as private property it would have to pay both taxes and maintenance. But just as important the Association would have to assume responsibility for public order in the park. The Newport Police do not have jurisdiction over what goes on on private property. This latter is just too much for the Association to undertake.

As the grass takes hold and matures, and when the basket ball standards are erected, we can expect the youngsters to play and enjoy the park. Later when our plans are complete, and additional money raised, benches and tables will complete the park, and make it available for full use by young and old. May they all enjoy it.

Adm. Henry E. Eccles

STORER PARK

Long a dream of Miss Agnes Storer, Storer Park is at last a reality. On this land stood five houses facing Washington St. with lovely yards that ran back to an embankment that sloped to the shore; also, an alleyway that ran from the street to the shore.

First, the Wilbur House stood south of the Hunter House, a big white house, it had a picket fence, a wide gate opened to let the horses into the barn in the rear. In the frontyard were lilacs and snow ball trees; in the center of the yard stood an immense cherry tree. The front door opened into a wide hall that extended through to the back porch - also a wide stairway. The family of Mr. Edward Dunn of Washington St. lived here, also the Axiotes family of Second St. and a family named Tarpey who moved West.

The next house was a two tenement house with a store attached. Mr. & Mrs. James Lawton & family, parents of James I. Lawton of Third St., lived here and Mrs. Gladys Hicks of Washington St. lived downstairs. Upstairs lived Mr. & Mrs. Crowell and family. Later, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Hussey and family lived here, and their son, Peter, became a Catholic priest, the Rev. Peter Hussey. In the store attached with a few rooms in the rear, lived Mrs. Margaret Clancy, with her two children Harry

and Annie. She was affectionately called Maggie Clancy, a friend to everyone in time of sickness and death. She was a milliner and dressmaker and ran the candy shop where every kid in the neighborhood went to buy two bundles of wood and an old fashion for five cents (this was kindling wood and a piece of chocolate cream candy). She was also employed as a seamstress by the Old Colony and made the pretty lamp shades for the New York boats.

Next came the alleyway, or Sam Young's wharf, which led to the shore, our playground.

The next house had four apartments and was occupied by many families. I remember Mrs. Williams lived upstairs with her sons Dan and Jack, also Francis (Buck) Donohue of 3rd St. lived with his parents downstairs; there were also many Greek families.

The fourth house had a front door on Washington St. but the entrance was the side door in the yard, that led into an immense hallway dividing the house. At the end of the hall, the stairway led up to another big hall. Here lived the Francis family. Their front room was on Washington St. and many a tune was banged out on their piano after school. Many families lived in this house including the James, Nasser, Mazza and the Drogas family when they arrived from Greece. Manuel Drogas is still a familiar figure in his rowboat.

On the corner of Briggs Wharf was another big house where Grandmother Devlin ran a boarding house. Upstairs lived Mr. and Mrs. William Devlin and their large family, downstairs lived Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Devlin (parents of Mrs. Chester Thomas) with their family, and Grandmother Devlin, who ran the boarding house for the men who worked at the Old Colony. Later, Mrs. William Sisson and family lived here, and a Mr. & Mrs. Cook--before my time, Mrs. Ann Johnson. The front hall had side panels and a gorgeous staircase, and at the rear of the hall was a door leading into a secret staircase. In the long dining room was a huge fireplace with a high mantle.

In the rear of every house were lovely gardens, hen houses, wood sheds and the outdoor water closets. Mrs. Williams had big blue morning glories that ran to the second floor - also, tall sun flowers. Mr. Francis had a machine shop in his shed. The Devlins had a big cherry tree and a pear tree, and Mr. Sisson a vegetable garden.

Our playground was the shore, where there was always a rowboat, property of one of the Greek families, and you learned to row. You gathered driftwood to take home, you went wading and caught crabs, or built a raft, and you learned to swim. To be a good swimmer, you had to swim either from Briggs Wharf or Elm St. Pier to the Light House - and watch out for the Jamestown Ferry. Sometimes the swimmer was accompanied by someone rowing across. In the afternoon the older people would sit on the shore with sewing or darning, and watch the younger ones.

Where the causeway to Goat Island begins, was a row of fish houses owned by Mart Gladding and Fletcher Lawton--both lived on Marsh St. It was always interesting to watch the men clean and pack the fish in barrels with salt and ice, and covered with burlap and topped for shipping; also to watch the men dry and mend their nets. The New York boats were also tied up at Briggs wharf for repairs and paint jobs. In the winter, the harbor was frozen over with thick ice, and the kids would have a grand time jumping from cake to cake.

The houses were all heated with coal stoves and if the winter was severe, the water pipes would freeze and would have to be thawed out. The Greek fishermen made their lobster pots in the attic during the winter months, and would tar the ropes. So between the thawing of pipes, the tarring of ropes, and drafts, there were fires. It was said that this was the reason the Old Colony decided to tear down these houses, which was a big loss as this changed the neighborhood completely.

The war came, and the land was turned over to the government and filled in. A retaining wall was built on the reef that extended out. The north ferry landing was built for the ferry that ran across to the Torpedo Station with the war workers (including myself). A high link fence was erected and marines with guns were stationed here, and you showed your pass to get in. What used to be homes, shore, playground and friends were all gone.