

The GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Vol. XXII

January 1977

No. 1

HAPPY GROUND HOG DAY, TOO!

In today's living a new phrase has become more meaningful * a healthy and prosperous New Year to all - I am sure happiness will follow. The Bicentennial activities are behind us now and we can be proud of the representation of your Point Association in such a number of Newport programs. The Tall Ships was an unforgettable spectacle. In the welcoming and entertaining again the Point Association and its members were there to help in varying degrees. New members have joined our ranks, with a firm belief in an organization that is more than social. it is an important voice in community affairs. Christmas in Newport once more helped advertise our annual Twilight on the Point presentation: this year The Three Beggar Kings, by our dear Posey, found standing room only at the Guild Hall.

Now the New Year is upon us and our first major event is the enthusiastically awaited "Pot Luck Supper," on Sunday, January 23rd, at 4 P M, in St John's Guild Hall on Poplar Street. Again this year, we are specifically anxious for our senior members to come together for this event with its friendly conversation, its visiting of old and new friends, good food of course, and a program of interest to all. If any of our seniors need transportation - please call, ahead, and we'll arrange for your ride to and from the hall. I hope those contacted will respond generously with their dishes for this annual event - after all, the best cooks belong to the Point Association!

See you there

JOSEPH

POT LUCK SUPPER

January 23rd, at 4 P M, in St John's Guild Hall.

Dee Dee Elster says, "Do not wait to be called!" Call her after five at 847-0563, or at Arnold Art 847-2273

What is your specialty - meat casserole - salad - rolls and coffee - pie? Bring it forth with a flourish for one of the gayest Point Association meetings of the year.

TWILIGHT ON THE POINT

The wonder of the season with the caroling, the magic of good theater worked by the director Emilia Cresswell and the hard-working cast and production people made of this year's presentation of The Three Beggar Kings, for young and old, a very special thing. I shall always remember it and feel a gratitude to you all. Peter Chramiec's "Karl" was pleasing and natural; his three friends, Robert Steinhouse, John Duenzl and Mathew Kent, played their parts so well it was difficult to remember they were anyone else. Leo Sullivan once more was our piping king; Edgerton Schoenhardt lead out with the star; Kenneth Peterson, who had cast and audience smiling with his other role last year, made a most amusing third king, of course.

Whether it was our bar keeper, the good wife taking the naughty husband home, the children snowballing or hastening on errands, the pastor rejoicing with his flock or leading them in hymn, the careful housekeeper able to lend the sugar or any other, all played their parts with humor and wit. To Nathaniel Norris, Aline Sullivan, Clyde Sargent, the Rev. Henry G. Turnbull, Belle Griffith, Arthur Newell, Janet, Peter, Martha and Andrew Kent, Patty, Michael, Kathleen and Jennifer Corgan, Jan and Jeffrey Gordon a round of special applause. For we who knew you, there was a special delight and amusement in watching one and all.

There could be no play, no party, no caroling without the varied "production" work of Isabel Eccles, John Cnera, Christy Bates, Barbara Benson, Dede and Robert Elster, Angela Vars, Alberta Kazanian, Monica Harrington and Lorraine Dexter - all those chairs, Lorraine! I feared they would not be filled - but they were. It is sure Eileen Peterson remembered a hundred things for a hundred people. Thank you. Thank you, everyone, for coming and making the "tale of a child's simple faith" seem so real.

The carol sheets were my Christmas present to the Point Association. Friendly neighbors, if you still have them perhaps you will keep them and bring them next year?

Next year, we hope to have a different presentation. Has anyone any suggestions?

TREES

by
Herb Rommel

"Pity the city tree." That is the start of a fine article in the October "Horticulture."

We on the Point have a special interest in trees. Several years ago the Point Association planted many trees and they have grown to be a real asset.

The Beautification Committee has been revived and in the past two years has planted about 150 trees, using \$5,000 appropriated by the Point Association and about \$6,000 collected from residents who wanted to purchase their trees or from generous donors here on the Point and in other areas.

The article points out that " our tree population is a mortal one, just as is our human population. It depends upon constant renewal. In the forests and woodlots, this renewal usually can proceed without the intervention of man, but where man intervenes to make it more difficult for trees to grow - in his cities, along his roads, near his homes - in these locations, the only way man can continue to have trees is by maintaining an active program of tree planting."

The article concludes that "we need to politicize parks and trees the way highway advocates lobby and the construction industry wields its political arm. Tree enthusiasts should push bureaucracies and politicians as other consumers do."

In Newport we are fortunate to have a cooperative Public Works Department. They have given magnificent cooperation in the planting of the trees. This service makes your money plant 50% more trees!

Any Point resident who would like a tree planted along his sidewalk and who will care for it (meaning 10 gallons of water a week during droughts and no salt in the winter) should contact the Beautification chairman, Mr. James Douglas, LaSalle Place, and an effort will be made to get it in the spring.

We don't pity the trees: we plant them.

COLONY HOUSE

Every Christmas now, old times claim the Colony House. It never looks more natural and beautiful and gracious than when the candles are lit and great doors open to fine ladies, officers and other splendid gentlemen. With a strain of music, one half expects to see Washington and his staff, the gay French officers, entering to yet another Great Dinner. On such an evening, the Colony House indeed dominates the Parade, as it ever did.

This building belongs to the Point section in a special way for it was the growing demands of the thriving seaport that caused the town fathers to ask Richard Munday to make a design for a "new" Colony House (the old one was part destroyed, part towed away for another use, just as we have been moving round our houses in lively fashion ever since).

In his fine book The Architects of the American Colonies, Barre Publishers, John Fitzhugh Millar says, "The greatest achievement of Munday's designs is the Colony House in Newport." An excellent brief description follows. Downing and Scully devote many valuable pages to it in The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, Harvard University Press, bidding us know, too, that Richard Munday was not alone in creating superb designs. "The same Colony House papers that establish him as Newport's first-named architect supply the names and trades of the other men who worked on that building." A tradition of master craftsmanship shows in paneling, ironwork, pineapple -- all. Richard Munday styled himself "Innkeeper and House Carpenter" There was no such profession as architect. We owe him Trinity Church, the Sabbatarian Chapel and many another.

The Colony House is the second oldest capitol building in the United States: construction was completed in 1742, which unfortunate

ately Munday did not live to see. From the balcony the death of King George II was announced, and the accession of George III. Newport heard from there of the repeal of the Stamp Act and when the time came the thunder and lightning of the Declaration of Independence. Over the years, the fruition of so many fine hopes centered around the Colony House!

Ruth Myers had a wonderful hope, too. It brought into remembrance the hopes of all ages - Christmas - Newport. Seeing this charming, little lady tripping about where history was made there at the Colony House we are especially grateful to Ruth Myers for Christmas in Newport.

SHIP CHANDLERY BUSINESS

Details of this trade, which flourished in Newport as well as in all coastal cities, are vividly described in a letter (1861) from the youthful William K. Covell to his father. Covell, the son, had left Newport and found a job in the ship's chandlery business in Wilmington, North Carolina. Many years later he returned to this area to open a store on Thames Street in his own name specializing in home furnishings.

..... "The owners, as you know, spend most of the year up north, and I have practically to run the business. I am now nineteen, and from \$50,000 to \$75,000 worth of trade passes every year through my hands. I have to decide which of the captains who put in here are to be trusted for bills of goods. As this is often their last port of call before heading straight for Havana or South America, I have to be able to supply their vessels with anything needed in the way of supplies or repairs. The docks in New York are so crowded that the captains often discharge cargo, make returns to the owners, take on a new load, and then stop here at Wilmington for the last supplies. Perhaps I have not told you how we prepare, for example, the butter. We make a brine strong enough to float a potato, which is poured over the top of the butter in a keg. The whole is sealed, and will then keep sweet as far as into the Pacific, going by way of Magellan or around the Horn. Your ship's boats, Father, sell well. The captains here find them unusually strong and seaworthy, and reasonable in price. They arrive in good condition, packed in nests as you sent these last ones, on the deck of the brig sailing from Newport. As this store is on Water Street, directly on the water, I can often sell your boats from the brig directly into an outfitting vessel without taking them into the warehouse at all."

..... All this was being done in Wilmington, North Carolina, for fifty dollars a year in gold. Later, this business, which he then owned, was confiscated by the Confederacy. The following list does not show all his heavy losses in sums owed by ship owners and concerns, but it does show items typical of a ship's chandlery business at that time:

11 coils of hemp rope weighing 1965 pounds, 8 coils Russia Boat rope, weight 836 lbs, 2 coils Rattin, weight 66 lbs, 2 coils roundling weight 112 lbs. There were also 138 mast hoops, ranging in size from 30 inches to 7 inches, 197 blocks of varying sizes and kinds. Each block had a certain use, and was used with a certain kind and size of rope, and in an exact position in connection with the rigging of the vessel. There were over a hundred paint brushes, thousands of charts, anchors, brass screws, knives, spices for cook's stores, lanterns, cutlery, pumps, thimbles (for sewing or mending sails), paint, carpenter's tools. The list ended,

8 gallons Tar Oil, 3 Japan Varnish, 60 oars, 7 charts, 1 iron Safe, 2 pairs Scales, 1 Letter press, 5 chairs, 2 desks, 2 bundles bill heads.

from "The Two Williams" by Elizabeth Greene Covell (1954)

ZONING

by Herbert Rommel

As a member of the "Board of Review" (the Zoning Board), for the past several years, under three different chairmen, I have made some observations and come to some conclusions which may be of help to the residents of the Point.

Your interests will be in one of two opposing areas: when you want to do something which you normally cannot do, or when you fight someone who wants to do something he cannot ordinarily do.

For instance, as a matter of right you may convert your home into a two-family dwelling. You do not need permission of the Zoning Board

But suppose you want to convert a two-family dwelling into a three family apartment house (It doesn't matter whether or not you occupy one of the apartments). In addition to complying with all requirements of the Fire Chief, the Building Inspector and the building codes, you would have to get the approval of the Zoning Board. This requires the payment of a fee, the filing of an application, advertizing a hearing and, finally, on the fourth Monday of the month, a hearing before the Board of Review.

The Board of Review is composed of five members and two alternates elected by the Council. It is necessary that five members (or alternates) hear each case. An affirmative vote of 5-0 or 4-1 is required to approve the application. Two or more negative votes disapprove the application.

When the hearing is advertised, certified notices are sent to all abutters. They, or anyone else, may testify at the hearing. They may be represented by counsel and they may call witnesses. The applicant or his attorney usually testifies (on rare occasions I have seen an application approved with testimony by no one). Testimony is under oath, and the decision of the Board of Review may be appealed to the Courts.

Hearings are formal, but strict rules of evidence are not applied. The Board desires to get all the facts, to hear all relevant testimony. Petitions and letters to the Board are noted, but in my opinion do not carry much weight. Many times, neighbors are seeking more information about the requested change. They may question the applicant or his witnesses. The Board is empowered to make any appropriate conditions to its approval, but if such conditions are not part of the Board's decision, the promises and assurances given in testimony are of no consequence - if appeals are not taken, a record of the testimony is not even saved.

The law is somewhat complicated, particularly as to the distinction between exceptions and variances, and the burden of proof required in each. In an important case I would advise the employment of an attorney, although I have seen an individual win a complicated case against a well represented applicant. Minor requests, such as to build a garage a few feet closer to a party line than normally permitted, are not usually supported by a lawyer's services, particularly where there is no opposition. On the other hand, I have seen an applicant "blow it," where an attorney would have easily introduced the necessary evidence. And I have seen attorneys "blow it."

I have spent some time on this question of whether or not to engage an attorney because it is quite expensive. It is a matter of how deeply you feel. I have seen an important neighborhood tragedy approved when an appeal and an attorney would almost surely have gotten it overruled.

I would recommend that the Point Association have a representative at each Board of Review meeting to develop a feel for the procedure and to report to the officers. I recommend the Point Association engage an attorney for all cases in which they have any interest.

Finally, two members of the Zoning Board, Messrs. Thomas and Paduano, have been elected to the General Assembly and will have to resign their membership. This will create two vacancies (which could be as members or alternates, depending on the Council: the alternates do not move up automatically). I hope that one or more residents of the Point will be moved to apply to the Council for appointment. You can be of great service to your city.

ANN HUOT, our Membership Chairman, is trying to keep careful listings. She must of necessity keep them not only for the current year but for the years just before. If you have any question, will you please call Mrs. Huot at 849-3522. One of the things that may happen: you may indeed have paid your current dues at the October meeting, yet according to her records be in arrears for another year and so receive a "notice." Call her and she will be happy to straighten it out. I myself find I can go to the October meeting without bringing any money and yet thereafter feel I must have paid since I was there!

WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS! WE ARE SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU WITH US!

- Dr. Robert Arrick
- Mrs. Mary E. Bento
- Mr. and Mrs. Philip Burnett
- Mr. Wesley Cagle
- Col. Charles Canham
- Lt. Col. and Mrs. Michael Corgan
- Mrs. Ernest B. Dane
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- Mrs. James A. Kennedy
- Mrs. M.S. Muldoon
- Mrs. Bernice Mason
- Mrs. Harry Nauvier
- Miss Caroline Oxx
- John Paduano
- Mr. and Mrs. Ole Retlev
- M Ann Reynolds
- Mr. Alexander Russell
- Mrs. T.L. Sears
- Mr. and Mrs. Norman Taylor
- Mr. William Vareika
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