Long Wharf in the 1938 Hurricane
The Green Light
XLIII No. 3 FALL 1998

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Board meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at St. John’s Guild Hall and are open to Association members. If you have a concern that you would like the board to address, please call Coles prior to the meeting.
Dear Neighbors,

For forty-four years the Point Association has helped make our neighborhood a marvelous place in which to live. In the process, Point neighbors have enjoyed some good times together and made a positive difference on the Point and in the entire city.

For example, consider that last year we:
- Joined with the Parks Department to plant trees in Hunter Park and on our streets,
- Conducted the annual plant sale,
- Planted bulbs and spread bark dust around the trees in Storer Park,
- Successfully lobbied for new play equipment in Hunter Park,
- Joined with the Rose Island Foundation to hold a tag sale to raise funds,
- Enjoyed holiday cheer at the annual cookie exchange and sing-along,
- Dressed our kids in scary costumes for the Halloween parade,
- Celebrated summer at the annual cocktail party,
- Replaced the broken slate bench in Arnold Park,
- Successfully lobbied against building a cruise ship terminal near Storer Park,
- Joined with the Foundation for Newport to support water taxi terminals,
- Developed and worked with the city council to implement new regulations that reduce traffic cutting through our residential neighborhood,
- Learned about the history of Storer Park at our spring meeting,
- Placed a dedication plaque in Storer Park,
- Sponsored the Adventure Club’s annual May Day flower distribution,
- Welcomed new members with a party,
- Joined with the City Planning Department to conduct a seminar on “New Urbanism”,
- Participated in the development of a city plan for the north end of town,
- Gathered by the Bay for our annual picnic,
- Located technical noise experts to help the city staff and city council,
- Joined with the Swamp Association to hold a city council candidates forum,
- Worked hard to mitigate negative effects from new development on Goat Island,
- Joined our children for the Adventure Club’s weekly summer activities,
- Lobbied for continued use of American Shipyard as an active shipyard rather than having the property used for more time-shares or condos,
- Established an e-mail notification procedure to keep members informed,
- Helped neighbors access city services,
- Filled the Guild Hall for a pot luck supper,
- Joined with the Historical Society to conduct a workshop on historical homes,
- Began the complex process of establishing a self-guided historic walking tour,
- Published four issues of the Green Light (Newport’s premier journal), and the list goes on and on.

The Point Association is a group of neighbors working together to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood. We need your help in the year ahead. Please call any board member if you can assist us with one of our projects.

The Green Light ~ Fall 1998
Thanks to Three

For several past issues of the Green Light Beth Cullen found herself head editor and Pooh-Bah; with too much responsibility and too little time. Understandably, she felt compelled to resign from the Green Light board. We miss her and say thanks for her talent, her energy, and her bubbly laugh, and we look forward to many articles from her in the future.

Thanks also to Jason Peters, who helped us out for several issues with his computer expertise.

Ron Potvin, Curator of Special Collections at the Newport Historical Society and former Point resident, has graciously agreed to serve on our editorial board. We welcome him, his knowledge of Point history, and his enthusiasm for everything on the Point.

The Editorial Board

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, October 15th 7:00 PM
St. John’s Guild Hall, 61 Poplar Street
- Election of officers
- Presentation and discussion of proposed historical self-guided walking tour of the Point
- Refreshments and conversation

HELP!

Our parks have been beautiful all summer and enjoyed by everyone. Saturday, November 7th, is the time to show our appreciation with an hour or two of time and energy. Join the gang for clean-up and bulb planting. We’ll meet at Storer Park at 9:00 am with rakes and garden tools. Provided are fresh air, fellowship, and fun.

Adventure Club News

Summertime is for fun and lazy afternoons. The Adventure Club had both. They met in early July to begin their adventures, usually on Wednesday. The Newport Public Library Bookmobile was their first meeting place. The children browsed and checked out books as Mary and Kelly from the Bookmobile helped out. The children were reminded they could visit every Wednesday from 11:00 - 11:30 a.m. at the St. John’s parking lot. The meeting continued at Battery Park where the children made summer bracelets. They braided raffia into “Hawaiian Rope” and attached colorful beads.

Another memorable meeting was at Cardines Field to watch the Sunset League. It seemed like the “major league” for some. For others it was a place to play wiffle ball in the nearby playground. For many parents, it was a wonderful summer night to chat and to try to avoid the fly balls!

As of the time of this article, summer is still going on. A future trip is planned for an adventure to Rose Island.

Upcoming News — Mark Sunday, October 25th, on your calendars!
The annual Halloween Parade welcomes all characters, young and old. Gather at Battery Park at 4:00 p.m. for fun and games. The parade will soon follow.

—Beth Lloyd
May 30th — Plant Sale

The run of unusually good weather continued this year for the annual plant sale. Anne Reynolds and Sue Bowen did a tremendous job in preparing for and organizing the sale itself. Anne and Sue with Ilse Nesbitt on the day of the sale provided invaluable help with recommendations on plant selection, care, and placement. Special thanks go to Anita McAndrews and Shawn for the gracious use of their lovely garden.

Acknowledgements in making this year’s sale a success also go to: Nancy Espersen, David and Melanie Aguiar, Kay O’Brien, Joan Stickley, Bill Reardon and Dr. Bruce Howe. A heartfelt “thank you” to the many area nurseries for their generous support of our plant sale. Last, but not least, appreciation for the support of the many Pointers who were kind enough to contribute flowers and plants from Point gardens.

May 30th — Tag Sale

The Point Association and Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation combined Tag Sale was so large that the Pine Street driveway couldn’t contain all the “treasures.” Opening the Battery Street convent grounds and the chapel provided an incentive for customers to view as they browsed.

June 19th-21st — Secret Garden Tour

Thanks to cooperating weather hundreds of visitors converged on the Point for the annual Secret Garden Tour. Volunteering was, as usual, a wonderful way to hear the comments and compliments and enjoy all the gardens.

June 25th — Picnic

Rainy, foggy June weather opened a window of opportunity this day for families and friends to picnic and visit at Anne Reynolds’ spectacular waterfront spot. A cake, along with greetings and good byes, marked our former council person Laurie Shaw’s departure from the Point. As she moves to Connecticut, we add our thanks for her time and talent spent on behalf of our First Ward.

July 25th — St. John’s Fair

A busy and beautiful day in the churchyard of St. John’s for their annual summer fair.

August 5th-9th

What a treat to hear more choral music at another Celebration of British Cathedral Music at the Church of St. John the Evangelist. This choir came from Truro Cathedral in Cornwall — a church founded by Celtic missionary saints in the 5th and 6th centuries.

August 20th — Member Cocktail Party

It was another perfect summer evening with over one hundred guests enjoying the beautiful views and the breathtaking sunset from the porch at Villa Marina. Many thanks to Anne Cuvelier for once again opening her home and for everyone who helped to make the event a success.

Membership News

Nancy Espersen, Chairman

Welcome to Our New Members!
Mr. and Mrs. George Antone
George and Alice Camillo
Richard and Patricia Carrubba
Isabel Griffith
Ethel Kelley
Audrey Ring Kelly
Barbara Ring Lalli
Karl Lyon, Sr.
William H. Murphy
Kay Russell
Rebecca Fullerton Taniguchi
Julie Fennell and Patrick Sweeney

July 24th-August 9th — Endeavour

A visit of the replica of HM Bark Endeavour in which Capt. Cook and crew sailed around the world in 1768-71 on their famous voyage of discovery. Endeavour’s arrival on the 24th was announced by gunfire as she sailed by Battery Park and around Goat Island.
Point Puzzle Properly Pieced

It has come full circle. The uncanny circumstances surrounding the photograph “The Girls of Summer,” subject of much reporting and scrutiny over the past year, have finally been resolved.

For those who don’t remember last fall’s Green Light cover story, here’s a brief recap. The puzzle began with the Green Light staff choosing a photograph for the cover — a 1920’s snapshot of eight girls sitting pertly on the Covell’s sea wall. Having a crisp late summer reminiscent quality, it was perfect for a September issue. Sarah Plumb gave the photo to Kay O’Brien; Sarah had had a copy for years but did not remember how she came by it. Just days after the board met to finalize the issue and prepare it for printing, the August issue of Yankee magazine hit the stands, and lo and behold — the very same photo appeared in Yankee! We were excited and baffled — the chances of a national magazine choosing to publish the very same picture as our humble hometown Green Light were extraordinary.

What path had this Point photograph taken to reach Dublin, New Hampshire? I contacted Yankee via the Internet and later spoke to the managing editor on the phone, but no good answers emerged. Tim Clark at Yankee suggested that I write to “Dear Yankee” for some help. So I did. My letter appeared in their January 1998 issue. From that letter of inquiry came fruitful reports.

Starting in late December (the ink on Yankee’s January issue, sent early to subscribers, must have still been wet) the replies began to arrive. All correspondence had some tie to this Point photograph — some closer than others! George Camillo of Rochester, NY, wrote of how the picture brought back memories of his childhood on the Point. Intrigued to hear that the Point had a bulletin he asked for a subscription (he is now a member of the Point Association). He also had questions about people in the photo, which Sarah Plumb answered in a letter. A few days later Crawford Hayes wrote from Lakewood, Colorado. His sister, Dorothy Hayes, was pictured in the photo. It too brought back fond memories; Dorothy had taught him to swim that summer of 1925. Mr. Crawford was the first to correct my error (in my haste to get a response to Yankee, I failed to check a few facts). King Covell, the photographer, was Betty’s brother, not father. This point was brought to my attention several times.

The next letter came from Salem, Massachusetts. Mrs. Doucette said that a girl in the photo was the spitting image of her daughter Judith. After first seeing the photo in the August issue, she wrote to Yankee for more details, Yankee wrote back with regrets; they did not have any background on the picture. In her letter to me she said, “Imagine my surprise to find the photo (reprinted) in the January issue with your letter.” Her mystery was solved. It wasn’t Judy, but rather Bernice Harvey. As her daughter is today only 49, it seems implausible that Mrs. Doucette could have believed that
this 1920’s scene could have included her daughter — it was taken twenty-five years before Judith was born. I was further convinced of the magic in this special image.

The responses continued into the New Year. I heard from Paul Guevin, Jr. of Westerville, Ohio, who moved to the Point in 1935. Mr. Guevin recalled swimming at Van Zandt Pier (he remembered it being destroyed during the ’38 hurricane and subsequently rebuilt) as well as the Torpedo Station, where his father was employed. In late January a letter came from Marian Anthony Wood of Lyndonville, Vermont. Mrs. Wood’s note was the most troubling of the lot. It seems that my second error was a big one — as she succinctly pointed out. My letter to Yankee gave the names of all the girls on the wall and added that the only surviving “girls” were Sarah Plumb and Betty Covell Ramsey. I was mistaken. Mrs. Wood was indeed at the party and in the picture, only her name is Marion, not Elizabeth, and she is very much alive at age 88! She wrote to Yankee as well, to make certain the record was set straight.”

The same day that Mrs. Wood’s letter arrived, the mystery of the picture took another twist. A letter from Cazenovia, NY, came stating how thrilled the writer was to see his aunt, Elizabeth Anthony, in Yankee magazine. He went on to tell the story of her life — a very interesting one indeed. Elizabeth had graduated from Brown University and taught college biology for 50 years, living her last years in Vermont and Block Island. I didn’t have the heart to write back and tell Mr. Anthony that I was wrong, it wasn’t his aunt but rather Marion Anthony — perhaps there’s some familial tie — hence the resemblance. This photo links many tales.

Perhaps the most heartfelt reaction to the photograph came from Mrs. Marion Bennet of Seabrook Beach, NH. It is worth reprinting because it is so dear. “As I read my Yankee Magazine I saw the picture of ‘The Girls of Summer’... I was so excited as Sarah Bark- er Plumb could have been my twin sister. Our faces were alike, she had her hair parted on both sides and she had a big grosgrain bow, so did I. She had a white sailor suit with a black knot bow tie, black stockings and black and tan shoes and so did I. I was born in Andover, MA, on 11/7/11, so I know it was not I, but I could not stop looking at the picture. I am now 86 years. My husband and I moved around a lot as he was in the typewriter business (her note was perfectly typed on paper embossed with sea shells) and in many movings I lost my photo books so I have no picture of myself as a young girl. I shall keep this picture forever. I was hesitant about sending this note but it would not leave my mind. Now my mind can rest.”

So many yarns creating a rich weave, but still no answer to my question, how did Yankee get the photograph? In March the explanation arrived. Back in 1967, Yankee published an article on the Sanford-Covell Villa Marina. The author of the article was Fay Darling and the photographic reproduction contributions came from her husband Paul Darling. Mr. Darling wrote and solved the mystery. In 1966 the Darlings visited with King Covell and borrowed many of his original glass plates to use in the article about his house. He made three sets of prints, giving one complete set to Yankee. Yankee’s collection must not be properly indexed, since none of the current staff knew of the photo’s origin. Mr. Darling has written to me many times over the last few months - he truly loves our neighborhood. He says he has taken more photos in Newport than any other location. Obviously, this man has good taste! At last, one more Point puzzle solved!

—Beth Cullen

P.S. Guess who came to the cocktail party? Paul Darling himself, with camera.
100 Years — Blizzard

On November 27, 1898, a memorable and destructive snowstorm caused Newport to stand still. The combined forces of wind and snow totally isolated the community. Telephone and telegraph lines went down, roads and railroad tracks were impassable. Trees were destroyed, boats were cast adrift, and many lost. The 80-foot-tall hose tower at the Marlborough Street fire station was blown down and the resulting debris sealed the fire alarm wagon inside.

Fortunately no large fires broke out, as the horses could not have pulled the fire equipment through the streets. It was reported that some horses refused to move at all, and one dropped dead in Washington Square.

How does this disaster, which none of us can remember, compare with our recollections of the Great Blizzard of 1978?

80 Years — Armistice Day

The first Armistice Day was just 60 years ago. When Josephus Daniels, who was Secretary of the Navy during the First World War, decided that women should enter the Services, three of us Point girls (at that time) joined the Navy — Marion Bailey (Mrs. Sam Dawley), Gladys Carr (Mrs. Peter Bolhouse) and myself.

The war was finally over.

It was a lovely day, warm and sunny so that a suit felt comfortable. There were no radios or TV's in 1918, but the news of the signing of the Armistice traveled like wildfire, and by half past seven that morning Washington Square and Thames Street were crowded with people both young and old. It was wildly exciting. The younger ones, shouting and yelling, formed the long line of a snake dance, and weaved in and out of every public building that was open in the vicinity, including the Perry House and the Police Station.

We hadn't bothered to have breakfast at home; so we had pancakes, sausage and coffee at a little lunchroom called the Alpha, located on Thames Street where the Blue Moon used to be.

No one wanted to go to work, but the day had not yet been officially declared a holiday, so, unwillingly, I left the gaiety and went to the Material Section, right next to the Armory, where all the fellows were eagerly looking forward to their return to civilian life.

It seemed, however, that the early report of the Armistice was fake.

Then, shortly after 11 a.m., the church bells began to ring and the guns at the Naval Training Station boomed to herald the welcome news. The truce was signed. Lt. Treadwell, our commanding officer, sent word to all that, although the day had been declared a holiday, we were all expected to march. That meant the Yeomen F., too. We were to take our places in line on Washington Square, at 1 p.m.

I hurried home, gave my black oxfords an extra polish, pressed my uniform, put on a clean white blouse and a new black neckerchief. After lunch I put on my jacket, gray suede gloves and navy blue velour sailor style hat; and walked to the Square to join my comrades.

The buildings on the Square and on Thames Street had been hastily decorated with flags and bunting; and crowds of people were beginning to line the sidewalks. There was a lovely feeling of optimism in the air. The War was over! Our boys, those who hadn't given their lives, would soon be home.

We closed ranks. The Navy band began to play, and we started marching left, right, left, right — looking down at our feet to see if we were in step. All of us girls were a bit nervous, this being our first parade. But we
were doing fine — until the music suddenly became faster and we had to do a double-quick step, somewhere along Bellevue Avenue. This was something we hadn’t anticipated and it sure was humiliating to have to step aside and let the Material Section boys pass us. However, by the time we got onto this quick step, the band slowed down a little and we continued at a more comfortable pace, marching in that two mile long parade.

Like all things, it finally came to a halt, back at Washington Square, where various men in public office were to speak. The only one I can remember was Clark Burdick, who was Mayor at the time.

Standing first on one foot and then the other, I listened for a while, then, being tired from the long march, I walked through Duke Street and to my Grandfather Bacheller’s house on Willow Street. “Gramp,” I said when I reached there, “I’m weary from all that marching.” Opening a door of the sideboard, he took out a bottle of champagne. “I’ve had this for twenty-five years,” he said, “waiting for the right occasion to use it, and I think this is the right occasion.” So Gramp and I drank a toast to the end of World War I.

There was nothing doing in Newport that night, so we drove to Fall River in one of the girl’s father’s Oberland car. There was nothing doing there either. We had a club sandwich and a cup of coffee and headed back to Newport. We got stuck on Turkey Hill in Portsmouth, had to get out and push the car up the hill, singing ourselves hoarse with “Over There,” “Liberty Bell” and “We don’t want the bacon. All we want is a piece of the Rhine.”

(Mrs.) Gladys Bacheller Booth
Yeoman 1st Class, U.S.N.
Green Light, October 1978

60 Years — Hurricane

Excerpts from a letter written by Elizabeth B. Covell to her daughter, Betty Ramsey, September 1938. Mrs. Covell’s house, 72 Washington Street, now owned by her granddaughter, Anne Ramsey Cuvelier, is familiar to us as Sanford-Covell Villa Marina. Her son William King Covell taught ancient and medieval history at Rogers High School. Her other son, Robert, was married to Virginia, our talented former editor. The letter was originally printed in the Green Light of August, 1988.

Dear Betty,

I am writing to you by hand because King has been too busy over the weekend and after school to do any typing.

On Tuesday, the day before the storm, we had a very heavy rain here. Wednesday, the 21st, was a warm and heavy-feeling day with the wind still blowing strongly from the northeast. We did not realize here, sheltered as we are from an easterly wind, how severe a storm it was.

About three o’clock I noticed a large, black steamship approaching the Torpedo Station. Thinking she was under her own power, I wasn’t disturbed. She lay along side of the breakwater. Soon after this, the wind shifted from southeast to southwest and she slowly passed to the north and out of sight. Not until the next day did I realize that she had snapped her twelve six-mile mooring cables as if they had been twine, and was drifting, a helpless menace, across the ends of our waterfront street.

By three-fifteen King had returned from the High School. With the shift of the wind, the harbor was getting rougher. One by one the sail and motor boats were being swamped and were sinking. Then the piers began to break up. Even then I did not worry about our place. The Whittington (Robert’s boat) had a double mooring. For three winters past, the pile driver had been at work here, replacing worn piles on the pier. The foundation of the house was solid brick walls ten feet high and a foot thick.

But this was no ordinary storm. The water rose higher and higher. The air was dense with flying spume and rain, so that we hardly knew when boat after boat
keeled over and sank. Boys and men were struggling with boats, calling to each other to get back to land, as first one then another pier wavered, rippled throughout its entire length like a wave tossed serpent. The piers broke up not by planks, but in sections, drifting off northward each to endanger the next pier. The flagpole, bent and bent, and finally snapped off, I suppose, but I wasn’t there to see it, for other crises were at hand.

Since the previous Sunday Anna, our cook, had been ill with grippe. Her friend, Elsie, had been here helping me, and looking out for Anna. You will remember that Anna and George have the basement apartment. By four o’clock the wind and the high tide had built up such a sea that waves three feet high were coming in. The house is 75 feet from the seawall, the wall is built up three feet above the level of the lawn, and the top of the wall is twenty-five feet above low water. But there were waves rolling across the lawn in an unbelievable way, skiffs and broken timbers drifted towards the house, advancing and retreating. Then Elsie called, “What shall we do about Anna? The waves are coming right into the house.” How could they? But they were.

The two wood panels at either side of the back door had been broken in by the water, and the whole of Newport Harbor was at our door. “Get her up to the guest room. One bed is made up. Put her right to bed.” Next, Elsie’s husband and Anna’s husband were coming up the back stairs with Anna’s bedroom furniture, radios, sewing machine, arms full of clothing. “Put it in the little dining room. Take the meat and vegetables off the coal range, and put them to cook on the little pantry gas stove. George, dump the fire in the range for fear of an explosion.” George did it; twenty minutes later the water, with mud, sand, and seaweed filled the entire basement almost three feet deep: men and boys in hip rubber boots could just get through with the last of Anna’s furniture. Where was her cat? No time to think now. Where was her puppy? Up in the guest room with her and put in the bathtub for safekeeping.

Meanwhile boats and timbers were bumping against the house walls, against the piazza supports, against the high board fence, which disappeared like matchwood. “All at once, and nothing first, just as bubbles do when they burst.”

The wharf or driftways were filling higher and higher; the rowboats had to be shifted two or three times towards higher land. Then they were needed to rescue people from houses two blocks away, where the water was eight feet deep in the streets.

We moved large couches and tables against the French windows, lest they blow in, as they were doing in other parts of the town. The entire basement quarters were drenched and full of sand and mud, although the water drained off as soon as the tide went down.

Elsie slept on a mattress on the guest room floor to be near Anna: the two husbands slept on a mattress on the library floor. Late at night, by candlelight, the rest of us dared to go to bed.
The shining sun of Thursday looked out on a scene of desolation. Every pier was gone, public and private, ten of them. Every sea wall down north of ours, which stood intact. Great caves ate into the lawns; shed, boathouses, piers, lawns, gone, every one, for half a mile. Schooners were up on private grounds, twenty feet above the now quiet waters of the harbor.

Trees, shrubbery, flowerbeds, were brown as if from a killing frost, but this was barely noticed, so much was waiting to be done. At once the boats on the harbor bottom must be rescued, if possible. Everyone helped everyone else. One by one, through the following week the boats were dragged ashore. Day after day the harbor front was searched for pier timbers, lawn furniture. Great trees were cut away from streets and private grounds where they lay in amazing confusion.

It was impossible to get men to clean out the basement. We were fortunate that Anna & Elsie's husbands were willing to help after their regular days' work. Fifty hours each of them worked that next week. All day long the first day they flushed the rooms out with the hose, for the city water system was working. Then, after things dried out somewhat, every room had to be scrubbed down, wainscoting and floors, with disinfectant soap, and left to dry. Fires were rekindled, motors of equipment sent to be dismantled, freed of sand, oiled, and reassembled. Electricity was available again in a few days, and within a week we had telephone service once more.

I shall not attempt to describe the general havoc: I've sent you the papers, and we'll send photographs later. Forlorn as everything is, we are alive, the houses are intact, our sea wall stood up, and we'll get the repairs done and the bills paid sometime and somehow.

From your discouraged but not hopeless:

—E.B.C.

The Line Storm

(A line storm or equinoctial storm is a storm of violent winds and rain occurring at or near the time of an equinox.)

A line storm was predicted for September 21, 1938, so no one was surprised when rain slashed down and tree limbs swayed in the strong wind. We were used to September line storms. At Long Wharf, Ernest Mathinos (father of Point resident, Liz) boarded the Tara; a 38-foot cruiser that he captained for my Dad, James T. O'Connell, to make sure everything was in place and tied down.

Ernest's brother George kept his fishing boat alongside the Tara. As the wind and tide rose, waves began to swamp small boats or crash them into the sea wall. Ernest started the engine of the Tara, and, still tied to the wharf, headed her into the wind to keep her from hitting the sea wall. George Mathinos boarded his fishing boat and did the same.

After several hours, the strength of the storm continuing to increase, Ernest screamed over to George, "We've got to take them out." George yelled back, "No, no!" With that, Ernest took an axe and chopped the taut rope that held George to the wharf. "Now, go!" he yelled. Then he took the axe to the line that held back the Tara and headed down the harbor. He wasn't far out past the City Wharf (now the site of the Newport Yacht Club) when he realized that the Tara, having been running for hours, was almost out of gas. Ernest turned her east and guided her up onto an alley off Thames St. where she was found on her side, safe and sound, when the waters receded that night. George rode out the storm in the harbor. I think those may have been the only two boats saved of all that had been tied up at Long Wharf. Others were battered and sunk or were washed up onto Long Wharf, badly damaged.

—Eileen O'Reilly
On Wednesday, September 5, 1973, at the Annual Point Association picnic, Clyde Sargent, President of the Point Association, formally presented Storer Park to the City of Newport. Thus the efforts of many years have come to a successful culmination. We are especially indebted to the Newport Restoration Foundation and the Preservation Society for supporting our idea of creating the Park, for without their assurances of financial assistance, it is unlikely we could have undertaken so great a project.

(From a report written by Henry Eccles)

Today, pride in Storer Park has taken on a new dimension since Ron Potvin’s fascinating historic overview printed in the Summer Green Light. The photograph above shows the houses on what is now the park, across-the-street neighbors of Carrie Ericson (see Green Light, Spring, 1998). The house at the far left stood at the causeway corner, the one at the far right, the “Lantern House”, stood next to Hunter House.

Photo courtesy of Newport Historical Society

Rhumbline Restaurant

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The Walker Building On Bridge Street

If you have traveled down Bridge Street between America’s Cup Avenue and Thames Street of late, you have probably noticed that the numerous car bodies at the building’s exterior are gone for good, replaced, temporarily, by construction vehicles, dumpster, Portajohn and much renovation activity. The auto garage building at 9-11 Bridge, former home of the City Auto Body business, has been undergoing improvements, inside and out, for re-use of both floors of the commercial building structure.

The history of the two-story concrete block building dates back to 1947. Built by Walker himself, it functioned as the Bridge Street locus of black businessman Louis Walker’s taxi service. Walker was the son of Lindsay R. Walker, one of Newport’s 19th century entrepreneurs, who moved to Newport from Culpeper, Virginia. **

As Louis Walker’s City Taxi Garage, the building remained in the family until son Louis Walker sold it to Joseph Alves to continue the operation of the auto body repair business known as City Auto Body. Not too long after Lisa Lewis and Bart Dunbar renovated the Caleb Claggett house (at 22 Bridge St.) and moved into their new home in the neighborhood, they entered into negotiations with Joe Alves to purchase the concrete block building. Lewis and Dunbar set to work on the design modifications and re-use of the building during the spring and summer of 1997. Their efforts included discussions with Bridge Street neighbors about their proposed re-use of the building as well as visits to Newport’s Zoning Board and Historic District Commission for approval of their plans.

The renovation project was undertaken with the idea that Lewis could have nearby office space from which to operate both her design business and the Aquidneck Growers’ Market, which she co-founded. But, more importantly, the intent of the renovations is to ensure commercial activity and use in the building more in keeping with the residential and historic nature of the street and neighborhood (not unlike former artisan and craftsmen residents Claggett, Townsend and Goddard).

The building renovations have taken shape and will soon be completed. Tenanting for the building is currently underway and it is hoped that other design-related businesses, both office and retail, will join Lewis in the newly renovated spaces.

Lisa Lewis

**(African Americans in Newport, An Introduction to the Heritage of African-Americans in Newport, RI 1700-1945 by the RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and the RI Black Heritage Society)
Noise

This summer has not offered a vacation for Point residents seeking shelter from noise issues. The issues are varied; the good news is that the City Staff and Council Members are keen to hear suggestions. They'd like to hear from you.

Point residents remain concerned about the amount of noise the new facility on Goat Island, IDC’s Newport Regatta Club, will pump into the neighborhood with amplified music, and the volume of late night traffic which will cross the Causeway into the Point when Club functions let out.

The City Council in June granted initial approval for an indoor and outdoor entertainment license to IDC Clambakes, Inc., but required that IDC return to the Council once the building is completed and a certificate of occupancy has been granted. At that time the council will discuss what restrictions should be imposed on the license. Last November the Council granted IDC Clambakes an indoor entertainment license with the condition that doors and windows be closed at all times — conditions that will not help control noise during outdoor events.

In July, the Council refused a request for the transfer of a liquor license pending an end of August zoning hearing.

By now you have likely heard its distinctive propeller whine. A Westport, Connecticut, entrepreneur has begun operating an unusual looking “flying boat” — called a FlareCraft L-325 - from the dock space vacated by the Coast Guard cutter Point Turner. Operating in the bay at speeds of 75-100 mph and at wave top levels, the craft raises significant noise and safety concerns, which we have raised with the city. The city’s Waterfront Commission has recommended that the City Council grant a temporary 30-day business license. The business is expected to conclude at the end of the tourist season but could return next year. Your reaction to the boat’s operation would be helpful.

We have used e-mail over this summer to send bulletins concerning fast breaking news concerning Goat Island, Rose Island, and the flying boat. Feedback on this fast and inexpensive communication method has been enthusiastic. We have e-mail addresses for 50 Point Association members. If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please send an e-mail note to bethmik@ibm.net.

— Mike Cullen

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**Indian Summer**

While other areas of the Eastern Seaboard can boast of their beautiful Springs, New England, most especially Newport, has wonderful, lingering Falls. Warmed by the Gulf Stream and Narragansett Bay we enjoy clement weather for gardening and for sailing through Thanksgiving... Perennials deadheaded, roses fed for the last time in August and annuals cut back all burst forth into a lovely new show as cooler weather approaches.

Start looking at potted plants you plan to bring in for the Winter. Put them up on a table and cut them back. They grew well this Summer and are usually too large for their previous indoor location. Winter sunshine will not sustain large growth. Start spraying with Safer Soap or other household insecticides and clean that "lovely" moss off the sides of pots and saucers. Fungus gnats are not a welcome addition to any household.

Most of all, enjoy the season

—Toni Peters

**Battery Park**

This postcard, featuring full dressed destroyers nestled at one of the big drum shaped buoys off the Point, shows Battery Park in the old days, when nineteen benches lined up along the waterfront. The challenge for Point children was to jump from bench to bench without falling. Recently we've been reporting new benches given by families to honor loved ones. Plaques on the two most recent read:

"In loving memory of Elizabeth B. Sant"

"George and Eleanor Weaver"

Thank you from all who enjoy.

The picture above, provided by the Seamen's Church Institute of Newport, will be included in their 1999 Newport Harbor Calendar. For more information call Patience Connerton at 847-4260.
It was Ade Bethune who coined the phrase, Park Bench Philosophers, naming the Newport old-timers who frequented, as long as I can remember, the wooden bench, sheltered from the North wind, up against the wall of Ade's garage. Eleanor, Bob, Louise, Joe, Jack, Ed and others would sit there, reminiscing, arguing, discussing the absurdities of life in Newport.

Over the years, names and personalities changed. Since all were historians with long memories for the details of a story, it was a privilege and delight to hear their tales of yore or lucid commentary on the latest faux pas of City Hall. In years gone by, Bob Jackson would regale us with his tall tale about how Father Murphy had him hijacked into the Merchant Marine. Or if Doris Duke's name was mentioned, Louise Sherman would reflect on aspects of her voluminous scrapbook of newspaper clippings of infamous Newport murders and alleged crimes. All were master storytellers.

Through the years, the Park Bench Philosophers came and went. Many were retired municipal employees from City Hall or the Water Department or men who had started careers at the Torpedo Station or Navy Base. Over the years, some had careers that carried them far away from Newport, seasoning their perspective on things. When they returned, they renewed acquaintances and regaled us with new experiences on this bench in Battery Park.

Cooled by the summer sea breezes while enjoying a brilliant sunset or sheltering in the lee of Ade's garage, absorbing the thin rays of winter sun, these Newporters lived through the seasons on this park bench in this waterfront park, enjoying good lives.

Even now, on any hot, humid summer day, after the light of evening fades and the sun has set, when the mosquitoes begin to drone, one by one the Park Bench Philosophers head for home, leaving a spirit of camaraderie for another day.

—Liz Mathinos
Voice Your Opinion

Point residents are encouraged to call or write City Council member George Perry, Mayor David Gordon, and/or City Manager Michael Mallinoff to voice their opinions about the traffic calming changes put into effect on a test basis by the Council last Spring.

The test phase is set to expire on October 1, when the Council will reevaluate the changes and determine whether to keep them in place, modify them in some fashion, or kill them. The opinions of Point residents will weigh heavily in the Council's decisions.

The most controversial changes were the establishment of Washington Street as one way south between Bridge Street and the Causeway, and the no left turns off America's Cup Avenue onto Poplar and Elm streets between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Many residents interviewed by the Green Light feel those changes have substantially reduced the volume and speed of traffic on neighborhood streets, but that more police enforcement is required to stop drivers from disregarding the posted traffic signs.

Another change instituted by the Council was the elimination of a right turn lane from Washington Street onto the Causeway. A traffic barrier has been in place there for several months. If this change is made permanent, the Association's Board will work with the City to replace the barrier with a curbstone and attractive landscaping.

Several stop signs installed at the request of the Association — at the Washington Street/Causeway intersection, the Bridge/Second Street intersection, and at Washington and Van Zandt — are not likely to be affected by any traffic calming review initiated by the Council.

The Green Light board has lost another loyal member. Kit Hammett, on the staff from 1982 until just a few years ago, left us on August twenty-eighth. She loved the Point Association and especially the Green Light. We loved her too.
Waterfront News

The proposal to construct intermodal water taxi and ferry facilities at Perrotti Park and Fort Adams received its official kickoff on June 15 at a press conference led by federal, state and local officials.

Sen. John H. Chafee, Gov. Lincoln Almond, Mayor David Gordon, Newport City Manager Michael D. Mallinoff, and William D. Anker, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), announced confirmation of the multi-million-dollar project before an audience of nearly 100 citizens, members of community groups associated with the project, and media reporters.

Senator Chafee was specifically honored by the Governor, Mayor and Mr. Anker for his work to secure federal funding, an initiative he commenced back in 1991.

American Shipyard Sold

New England Boatworks of Portsmouth, RI is the lead investor for a group that has purchased the American Shipyard property. The good news for the Point is that they say they are committed to it being a shipyard and keeping jobs on the waterfront. We welcome our new neighbors and wish them every success.

Joshua Slocum Anniversary

A replica of Joshua Slocum’s sailing vessel *Spray* led a parade of boats through Newport Harbor on June 27, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Slocum’s arrival in Newport on June 27, 1898, following his three-year solo voyage around the world. He was the first to accomplish that feat.

NEWPORT WATER TAXI

The drawings above show the profile and interior arrangement of the water taxis which will carry 20-to-30 passengers on short runs around Newport Harbor, with numerous stops. Plans call for four water taxis. Each water taxi is 32 feet long, and equipped with a blunt bow with push knees and doors to facilitate quick loading and unloading of passengers, including wheelchair access. A side loading door is also provided, on the port side aft of the helm station. Maximum maneuverability is provided by twin inboard diesels and twin rudders.

Fall Calendar

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<th>October 15 — 7:00 pm</th>
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<th>November 7 — 9:00 am</th>
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<td>Point Association</td>
<td>Halloween Parade</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. John’s Guild Hall</td>
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<td>(raindate — November 14)</td>
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Around the Ward
A Note from Your First Ward Councilman

Good things have been happening on the Point in recent months. Rose Island zoning has been changed to Historic District (as of this writing the second vote on this has not been taken). This designation will help keep any future development within scale and should serve to protect the island’s character.

The American Shipyard has been sold to a local consortium including New England Boatworks and a number of local entrepreneurs. The group intends to continue using the shipyard as a commercial marine facility, focusing on repairing large luxury yachts. Trade and government vessels will now be maintained and repaired at the sister site at Quonset Point. Let’s welcome the new owners. With all the new activity at the end of Washington Street, we should now look to cleaning and improving the state pier. I welcome your views on the best use of this state facility.

The North End plan which includes commercial, residential and highway transportation elements is being developed with the city planning department’s direction and the active collaboration of neighborhood groups, the Foundation of Newport, and the Newport County Chamber of Commerce. Part of the plan calls for the straight through re-connection of Connell Highway. All of the Point Association traffic committee’s hard work to better manage our streets seems to be spurring additional attention to mitigate cut-through traffic in the Point neighborhood and other residential streets in our north end.

I’m proud to represent a Ward full of so many enterprising people. An active, interested body of citizens is a necessity in making Newport a better place to live. I’d like to hear your thoughts and solicit your personal involvement. You may reach me at 848-5598 or you can send e-mail to George.Perry@ibm.net.

George Perry

The Point Association Membership Form

Name: ----------------------------------------------------------------- Phone: ____________________________

Mailing address:-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Fax:--------------------------------------------—E-mail (if applicable)---------------------------------------

Committees & Activities

☐ Adventure Club ☐ History & Archives ☐ Plant Sale ☐ Publicity
☐ Beautification ☐ Membership ☐ Potluck Supper ☐ Waterfront
☐ Green Light ☐ Noise Abatement ☐ Programs ☐ Fund Raising

Please check the categories that you would like to learn more about

Dues Structure

Individual: $7.00 Family: $10.00 Sustaining: $15.00 Patron: $25.00

Please make check payable to The Point Association. Note if new membership or renewal. The membership year runs from October 1 through September 30. A subscription to The Green Light is included with all memberships.

Clip and mail to the Point Association, P. O. Box 491, Newport, RI 02840
SARA Retires

By 5:30 in the morning on August 7th, lone fishermen were surrounded by spectators crowding the waterfront as the inactive aircraft carrier Saratoga was towed into the bay on its way to Pier One in Middletown. Soon to follow will be the carrier Forrestal and the battleship Iowa, all coming from the closed Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

U.S. Navy photo

Reminder
Annual Dues due
October 1, 1998