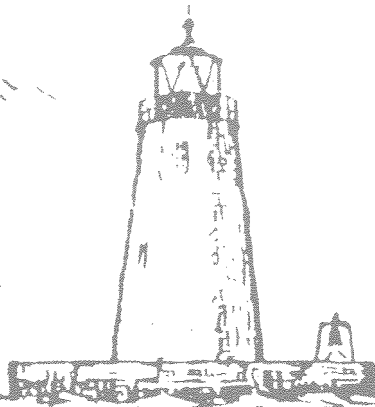


The
GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

FALL 1999



The Rose Island Lighthouse

Bill Kaufhold photo



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Copies of the *Green Light* may be purchased for \$1.00 at the following stores:

Bucci's Convenience Store – Poplar & Thames streets
Aidinoff's Liquor & Gourmet Shop – Warner Street
The Walnut Market – Third & Walnut streets

The Point Association is a group of neighbors working together to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood by getting to know each other • preserving our historic heritage • maintaining the Point's residential character • beautifying our parks, streets and piers • promoting public policies that strengthen all of Newport's neighborhoods.

The Point Association Board

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(848-2945)
Alberto Coll, *2nd Vice President*
(849-4722)
Loretta Goldrick, *Corr. Sec'y*
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Board meetings are generally scheduled for the first Monday of the month and are open to Association members. If you have a concern you would like the board to address, please call Suzanne for time, date and location of the meeting.

The President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

As you open this Fall 1999 issue of your *Green Light*, I invite you to join me in congratulating the editorial board for producing another collection of fine stories that reminisce about the Point's rich past, interesting articles that remind us about upcoming events on the Point Association calendar, informative news reports that alert us to developing issues of concern to Point welfare, and eye-catching photos that truly enhance the words they illustrate.

As you read through these stories, articles, and reports, I also invite you to join me in expressing sincere gratitude to these men and women for devoting countless hours and expending boundless energy on our behalf. Initially a simple record of Point meeting agendas and outcomes, each issue of the *Green Light* serves today, four decades later, as a rich and vital link between our common history and our present interests. The editors and staff, volunteers all, produce this well researched and carefully written record with no thought of financial remuneration. Instead, their reward comes in the genuine satisfaction of a job well done.

As you close your most recent copy of the *Green Light* and, like me, place it with all the others you have fondly stored for the pleasure of re-reading, I extend a third invitation. Come and join us! As enthusiastic amateurs, the *Green Light* staff welcomes new members who can contribute their time and talent to this labor of love. In fact, *Green Light* survival depends on this. Please read closely, on another page in this issue, the wish list outlining a genuine need for new volunteers who can assist with the tasks of organization, research, writing, proofreading, photography, design, layout, ad solicitation, bookkeeping, and circulation. Whether expert or apprentice, you will be welcomed.

The *Green Light* does not appear magically in our mailboxes four times a year. Instead, it continues to thrive in the kitchens and living rooms of people like you who also lead busy lives, are prepared to learn as they go, and find that working with others in this way is just plain fun. Please call Kay O'Brien at 847-7311 today and sign on to this all-important endeavor. As you do so, please accept a hearty thank you from many grateful readers of this tiny neighborhood beacon, which shines so brightly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne".

Point Association Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Point Association will be held on Thursday, October 14, 7:00 p.m., at St. John's Guild Hall.

As proposed by the Nominating Committee, the following slate for the Executive Committee will be voted on:

First Vice President: Mike Cullen
Recording Secretary: Betty Cares
Treasurer: Art Gudikunst

New Nominating Committee members to be voted on:

David Clark
Dave Pedrick
Toni Peters

Our speaker for the meeting will be JP Mouligne, recently returned from his successful Round the World race.

Members are reminded that they will be voting on a Board Proposal to restructure membership dues, as presented by the Treasurer at the April meeting. As Art explained, *Green Light* production expenses are paid from membership dues. However, while costs have risen during the past decade, dues have remained unchanged. To remedy this gap, the following numbers are proposed:

Individual memberships, from \$5 to \$7
Family memberships, from \$8 to \$10
Sustaining memberships, from \$15 to \$25
Patron memberships, from \$25 to \$40
Benefactor (new category) \$100

We hope to see you on October 14!

* * * *

Thank you, thank you. . .

. . .to Ann Cuvelier for once again hosting the annual new members cocktail party on August 19 at the Sanford Covell House on Washington Street. A large number of Pointers turned out to welcome new Point Association members and renew friendships with old ones.

Transitions and Kudos

New positions for Coles Mallory and Suzanne Varisco have been reported in the *Green Light*.

Another Board member, former Second Vice President Anne Bidstrup, is currently organizing an October Candidates' Debate, after which she will take a respite from Board activities and spend more time cultivating her garden. We sincerely appreciate her many past contributions and look forward to her joining in our future projects.

* * * *

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Board Members Elected at the Spring Meeting

Suzanne Varisco, new president of the Point Association, had served as recording secretary of the group since 1997. Suzanne and her husband Dominic moved here from Needham, Mass. in 1995; she grew up in Indiana. Both Variscos are employed by Salve Regina University — Suzanne as director of the Writing Center, coordinator of the Freshman English Program, and teacher of literature and composition. Both Variscos have a keen interest in the 18th century and enjoy living in the John Frye house at the corner of Second and Poplar streets.

Suzanne's vision statement is: "Like most of my neighbors on the Point, I value those priorities for which this corner of the City has long been known, and which have served as motivating examples to newer neighborhood groups throughout Newport. Namely, these are preserving the architectural integrity of our individual structures, improving the appearance of our streets and parks, and strengthening the quality of neighborhood life here through a varied social program. It is my wish to foster the continuation of this agenda through welcoming new members to the Association and encouraging the involvement of all our neighbors, both old and new, in our many activities.

"As for specific projects, I strongly endorse open discussion of discreet and optional historic walking tour signage; extension of the gas lights farther north; a continuing watch on traffic patterns and abutting entrepreneurs; and the ongoing health of our signature publication, the *Green Light*. Most of all, I would like to see all our overhead wires in Newport disappear below ground, especially on the Point. While conventional wisdom views this goal as quixotic, I invite anyone who shares it to join me in creating A Wireless Point Task Force, as a modest beginning."

Alberto Coll, 2nd vice president, is serving as an officer of the Association for the first time. He and his wife Nancy have resided for four years

at 55 Washington Street with their now 17-year-old son and 14-year-old daughter. Born and raised in Cuba, Alberto came to the United States without his family 31 years ago, at the age of 13. As a civilian, he has taught military and political strategy at the Naval War College since 1986, except for the period from 1990 to 1993 when he served the Bush Administration. "Newport is a jewel — we love it," he says. Nancy, a teacher by profession, founded Poplar School, for children 3 to 5, at Emmanuel Church.

Alberto's main concerns for the Point are: first, to solve the traffic problems; second, the impact of developments on the Point, especially that on Goat Island; and third, to encourage beautification, such as placing utility wires underground. "We all need to work together," he says, "and I look forward to that."

Loretta Goldrick is corresponding secretary of the Point Association for a second two-year term. She and her husband Tom came to Newport in 1979 from Hingham, Mass, to run The Book Bay, a rare book shop, from which they retired in 1993. That same year they bought the 1820 Elliott Boss house at 20 Second Street, now a charming bed and breakfast.

Loretta has many ideas for the Point: first, to see the gas lights extended onto more streets, with the possibility that a family might pay for one in memory of a loved one, with an appropriate plaque attached; second, to see our streets and undulating sidewalks repaired. In many cases, tree roots make the sidewalks very dangerous; and third, the use of proper fences — Loretta wishes the Historical Society and Point Association would pay particular attention to this, for a beautiful garden can be spoiled by a plastic or chain link fence.

"I look forward to serving again as your secretary," Loretta says, "for this is an interesting group in a beautiful spot."

Welcome to the New Members
of the Point Association

HUGH D. AUCHINCLOSS
ROBERT BESTOSO, JR.
ROWENA BURKE
JACKIE & SYMON COUSENS
ARNOLD FRUCHT
CHRISTINE HOFFMAN & FRANCIS FROST
DON FARIAS & SAMANTHA HINES
MR. AND MRS. GORDON KING
ANDREW MCKAY
JOHN NIMMO
DONNA O'BRIEN
JEAN-ANDRE & MARIE-CLAIRE RESZ
ANDY & MARY ROSENZWEIG
DAVID STERN
MAUREEN & PATRICK TOOHEY
JOHN TRIFERO
DAVID & ELLEN WIXTED



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Wish List for the *Green Light*

Editor: Overall responsibility for the quarterly

Photographer: Take photos at association events

Writers: For current events, association activities;
to interview and research topics for general
interest articles and pieces

Advertising: Responsible for contacting current
advertisers, seeking new ones, delivering ads to
the editor, sending invoices and delivering
payments to the editor

Circulation: Responsible for obtaining labels
from the membership chairman, picking up
finished publications from printer and delivering
to bulk mailing service or post office

Computer Layout Artist: Needs technical ability
to scan photos and art work; convert and
incorporate text to a finished layout.

For more information, or if you would be willing
to fill one or more of these positions, please call
Rowan Howard at 847-8428; or Kay O'Brien at
847-7311.

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Around the World in 132 Days



Kate and JP Mouligne celebrate his victory in the Around Alone Race

Though I had interviewed him on the phone several times while covering the race and he is my next door neighbor, I had never actually met Jean-Pierre Mouligne until I saw him at three in the morning in a bar in Charleston. I don't think JP is in the habit of frequenting bars at three in the morning, but this was a special occasion. JP had just completed the final leg of the Around Alone race, an eight-month, 27,000-mile trek through the world's oceans by himself aboard a bright red 50-foot sailboat named *Cray Valley*.

I expected him to be tired and more concerned with seeing his family and friends after a month alone at sea than talking to a reporter. In addition to that, he had a victory to celebrate. He had won his class by more than five days. However, JP took the time to say hello and to actually thank me for coming to Charleston to see him finish. He was good-humored, surprisingly chipper and obviously pleased to be home again. I would learn over the next few weeks that this is just how JP is — a friendly, ordinary guy who happens to have extraordinary dreams and the will and determination to pull those dreams off.

JP's 27,000-mile passage took 132 days, five hours, three minutes and nine seconds total, not counting stopovers in Cape Town, South Africa, Auckland, New Zealand and Punta del Este, Uruguay.

The start of the race was difficult for JP. He had already spent eight years preparing for it. The two years leading up to the race were hectic: overseeing the building of *Cray Valley*, obtaining a sponsor, sailing in various parts of the world, the media attention right before the start. When the last spectator boat had left the area, JP was by himself for the first time with more of the same to look forward to.

He soon got into the groove, though, and began to put distance between himself and his competitors. After going through the doldrums and crossing the equator for the first time, JP was solidly out in front and making good time to Capetown. Sitting down to dinner one night, JP saw the wind shifting. He placed his food aside and went on deck, clipped into a harness, to prepare to tack. Just then, a 40-knot gust of wind came from the opposite direction and knocked *Cray Valley* on her side. The next thing JP knew he was chest deep in the frigid Atlantic Ocean clinging to the boom. With the aid of the harness, JP scrambled back to the cockpit. For the next half-hour he struggled, soaking wet and cold, to put the boat right again then went down to finish his dinner. It had been scattered all over the navigation station.

JP overcame this harrowing incident to win the first leg and set a new course record for boats his size. The second leg, in the fabled Southern Ocean, proved even more to JP's liking. He sailed a nearly flawless passage to put another six days between him and his competitors. Arriving in Auckland, JP had virtually wrapped the race up.

"Then you live in the fear of losing it," JP said of his big lead. "You can't win it anymore, but you can lose it."

The third leg from Auckland to Punta del Este, which includes the rounding of Cape Horn, would prove to be the most difficult for the Around Alone fleet. By the restart in Punta, only nine of the original 16 starters would be left in the race. JP knew that the only thing preventing him from victory would be not finishing. At one point before he rounded Cape Horn, the southernmost tip of land on earth known for violent weather, JP realized how easy it could be to be prevented from finishing the race. *Cray Valley* had encountered a particularly nasty storm with 70-knot winds and waves as tall as *Cray Valley's* mast. JP took down all his sails in the hope that he could ride out the rest of the storm. The boat cruised along at speeds reaching 12 knots just under bare poles. As JP sat below decks for six long hours, he realized there was nothing more he could do to weather the storm. He could only hope that it didn't get worse because he had done as much as he could. Fortunately, the storm didn't get any worse. A very relieved JP had a relatively easy rounding of the Horn and sailed into Punta with an eight-day lead and the knowledge that the worst was behind him, at least as far as historically challenging weather conditions went.

The start of the final leg did nothing to validate this historical wisdom. The fleet was greeted by a fierce head-on squall for the first several days out of Punta. After the pounding in the Southern Ocean, the squall proved too much for one boat, Brad Van Liew's *Balance Bar*. Van Liew was in third place in JP's class, in a tight battle with Mike Garside in second. The two were separated by a mere half-day after sailing three quarters of the way around the world. But *Balance Bar's* mast was not up to the task. Van Liew's rig broke and he had to saw it off and watch it slip into the ocean. He was able to jury rig some sail, and headed back to Punta. Remarkably, he put in a new mast and finished the leg, losing the battle with Garside but retaining his third place standing.

JP didn't escape unscathed either. He had put a lighter, bigger mainsail on *Cray Valley* in anticipation of the predicted lighter winds. The mainsail began to tear early in the leg and required constant attention: fixing, patching, watching and worrying. Then JP cut his knee; the infection became so bad that JP was nearly immobilized. For several days, JP considered putting in to land to fix the main and treat his swollen knee. It would have been risky. He could have seen his lead, which was already being cut by Garside, evaporate while he sat on shore waiting.

"Here I was, Mike Garside was pulling away from me, my sail was in very bad shape. It was kind of everything at once. I think that's where I lost the leg," JP said.

Using e-mail instructions from a doctor in Boston, JP treated his knee with antibiotics and the swelling reduced. Garside, meanwhile, sailed a shorter course through the doldrums and was putting a safe margin between the two. After getting through the doldrums and two days of windless agony, what JP called the "most frustrating experience of my life," JP entered the trade winds and made it into Charleston. He finished a day and a half after Garside; good enough to claim top honors for the overall race.

"There's the mix of being sad that it's over because it's been such a big part of my life and being excited and proud at the fact that I accomplished what I wanted to do, which has always been to win the class," JP said just after finishing. "I've done that. I know it, but it's not quite clear to me yet.

"It's an amazing thing because you go from being completely in charge... When you are sailing by yourself, you have to make every decision and every decision's got a consequence, good or bad. And then you cross the line and people jump on your boat and you don't have to do anything except talk about it. You don't have to worry about it. The sudden lack of pressure where you've done it – nobody can take it away from you."

After 27,000 miles of sailing the world's roughest, loneliest seas all by himself, you'd figure JP would take a break. Not so. JP returned with his wife Kate to his Willow Street home a few days after the finish of the race and started work at RP Associates in Bristol the following Monday. *Cray Valley* followed JP up to Newport and can be seen moored off the Point. The Moulignes hope to sell *Cray Valley* to make back a little of the enormous amount of money they put into JP's quest. For now, they hope to do a little work on their newly bought house and return to something of a more normal life. At least for a little while.

—Brian Comfort

Neighborhood Watch

Watch chair, Martha Marie Grogan, has been in weekly contact with our neighborhood patrolman, Officer Marc Santiserri. Early in the summer there was an incident of an intruder walking into an unlocked house on the Point. This was during a weekday while the resident was home and the intruder made it to the second floor before he was discovered. He fled claiming he was in the wrong house. Fortunately no one was hurt.

Remember to lock all your doors even during the day! If you have any questions about the watch committee call Martha Marie Grogan at 847-4994.

* * * *

Annual Fall Cleanup

Be sure to circle Saturday, September 18, 1999, on your calendar. It's time for our Annual Neighborhood Fall Cleanup. Bring a rake and join your friends at Storer and Battery parks — we'll attack weeds and litter, plant some bulbs, and spruce up the beach.

Bagels and coffee will be waiting for you at 8:30 a.m. at Storer Park! (Rain date is September 25) Hope to see you there!

Questions? Call Glenn and Ellen Secrest at 848-2285.

* * * *

Candidates' Forum

The At-Large and Ward One candidates for City Council will be invited to attend a forum scheduled for Tuesday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m. at St. John's Guild Hall. The Swamp Association will join us in hosting this event. Questions from the audience will be welcomed.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn where each candidate stands on the various issues of importance to us all. Save the date and be an informed voter.

300th Anniversary

In August 1699, the stones for the foundation of the Friends Meeting House were laid out, and last month, to mark this anniversary, the Newport Historical Society presented their 16th annual lecture series "Family, Faith, and Testimony: the Society of Friends in Newport." The lecture series was dedicated to the memory of Esther Fisher Benson.

Pointers on the Bay

A group of 80 Point residents joined together on Wednesday, July 14th to enjoy an evening on the bay. The purpose of this Point event was to take time out from our busy Newport summer to relax and admire the beautiful area we are lucky to call home.

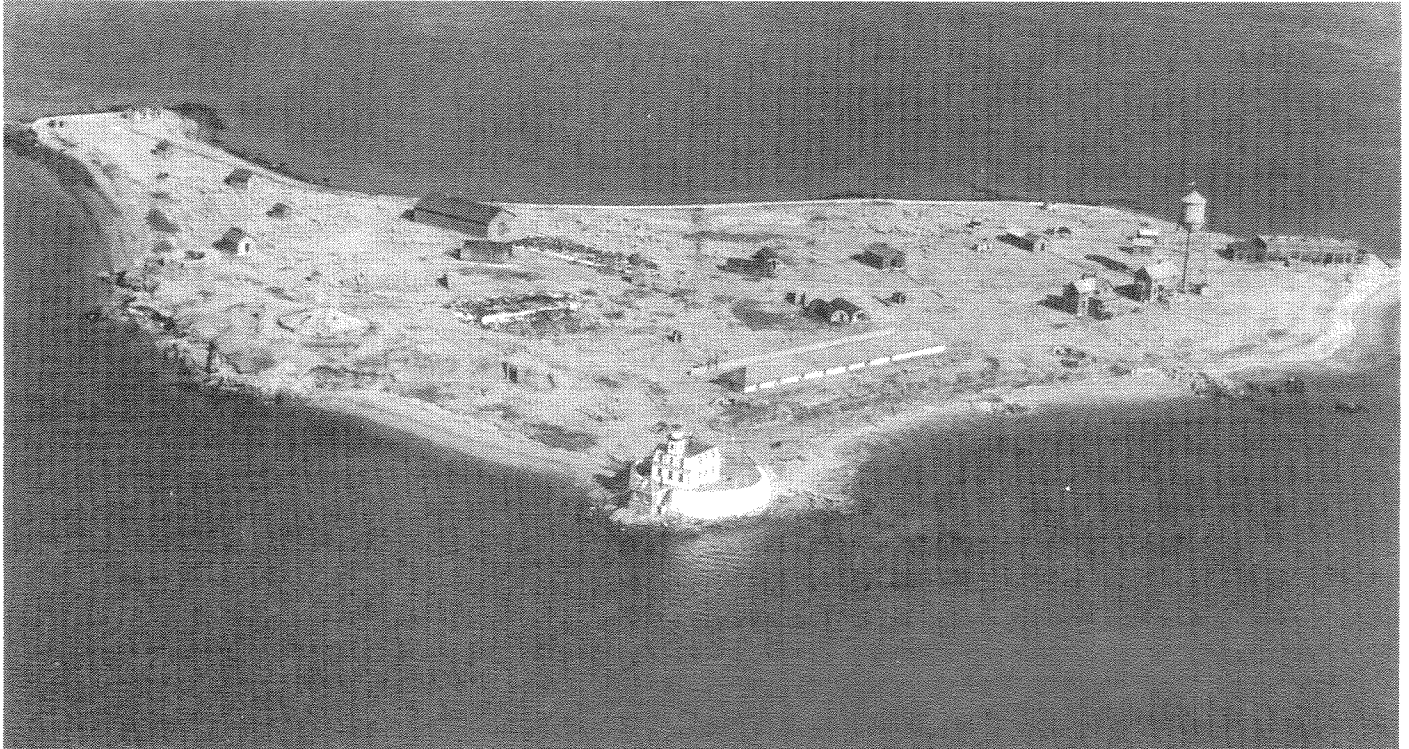
The *Aurora* sail was the idea of the Point Association's new special events chair, Bob Peck. With great enthusiasm, Bob succeeded in making the cruise a fun and relationship building time for all involved. Unfortunately, a few had to be turned away at the dock as we were limited to 75 passengers.

Through the generosity of some neighboring businesses, the outing was free of charge. *Aurora*, the 102-foot schooner with the striking red sails frequently seen in our harbor, was provided by her owner Tom Roos of IDC. A refreshing keg of locally produced beer came to us from Coddington Brewing Company. Delicious wine and hors d'oeuvres were provided by association member David Ray, owner of the Clarke Cooke House on Bannister's Wharf and the Newport Shipyard on Washington Street. Though Mr. Ray was unable to join us, his partner from Newport Shipyard, Charlie Dana, did come along with his son and impressed us with his nautical skills.

As an event arranged to give Point residents who have yet to join the association a feel for the spirit of camaraderie that our group resonates, it was a success. Many people have since joined and we look forward to the good cheer spreading and our membership base continuing to grow.

—Beth Cullen

The Sweet Success Story of Rose Island



John Hopf Photo

June 25, 1999 was a proud day in the history of Rose Island. It was the day that the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation, managers of the Rose Island Lighthouse and its surrounding 1.5 acres, purchased the entire remaining portion of the island from private hands. The purchase price was \$629,750 — a sum that would have seemed impossible to come by in 1983 when the Foundation was first started. It was, in fact, the culmination of 16 years of determination, persistence and vision on the part of the Foundation and its Executive Director, Charlotte Johnson.

The story begins at the end of World War II, when the General Services Administration (GSA) declared the island surplus. At that time, the lighthouse was still operated by the Coast Guard. The City of Newport purchased the island in 1960 for \$2,300, with the condition that it be used for the public — however, there was no organized attempt to see that this was done, and GSA reclaimed it some years later.

The story took a dramatic turn in 1969. The Newport Bridge had just been completed, and Newport was about to become a major tourist destination. Rose Island, in the middle of Newport Harbor, had again been declared surplus by its owner, the GSA. The 17-acre island with its rickety pier and crumbling stone barracks was of no interest, it seemed, to anyone but the seagulls or occasional boaters who pulled up on the beach to picnic or to swim.

Four enterprising local businessmen, however, formed a syndicate called CMTS, and bought all of Rose Island but the lighthouse and its surrounding 1.5 acres, for the sum of \$27,500.

After the bridge was built, the lighthouse was retired and the GSA offered it to the University of Rhode Island (URI) to use for scientific studies, but by 1983 the federal government had to repossess it, since URI was unable to maintain the property in the face of "unbelievable" vandalism. Once again, the lighthouse was declared surplus and was up for grabs.

Enter the Age of Development in Newport. Condos and time-shares were burgeoning all over the city. Property values were soaring. The America's Cup belonged to Newport, and Thames Street became the home of the T-shirt. Styrofoam cups and dollar bills rained down from heaven above.

It was also at this time that concerned citizens in Newport became aware that there would have to be some organization in place to keep the unprecedented development in check. Neighborhood watchdog groups — the oldest of which was The Point Association, founded in 1955 — began to band together. Organizations such as Save The Bay, Friends of the Waterfront and the City's Waterfront Commission and Historic District Commission came into their own. By 1983, "Super Group" had been established as an umbrella organization for 13 concerned groups dedicated to the monitoring of Newport's waterfront and historic district development. The coordinator of Super Group was Curtis W. Bunting, a retired Navy Captain. The Point Association sent two delegates to Super Group on a regular basis.

In September of 1983, CMTS unveiled a proposal that many Newporters found shocking. The whole east face of Rose Island and 60 acres of public waterway adjacent to it was to be the site of an 850-boat marina enclosed by two enormous breakwaters, requiring the dredging of some 150,000 cubic yards of mud and rock from the seabed. The material was to be dumped on top of the island, raising it by some 16-20 feet. It would be by far the largest marina in Rhode Island, doubling the capacity for boats in Newport Harbor.

It was a wake-up call for the City of Newport. And at City Hall, some very concerned citizens decided to do something about it.

There were major concerns: What effect would this development have on the normal traffic of boaters in the Bay? On the marine life? On water quality? How would the developers deal with utilities such as sewage? Of paramount importance to The Point was the availability of parking, because where would all these marina patrons drop off their cars, on their way to Rose Island? On our already saturated narrow streets?

And what of the historic ruins on Rose

Island? Were they to be covered in dredged up silt? What about the nesting birds, and the never-to-be reclaimed open space? What, indeed, was the City of Newport about to lose?

Letters flew back and forth to the newspapers, and at City Hall a lot of telling questions were being asked. This would not be an issue that would receive an easy rubber stamp of approval.

Obviously, CMTS would have many hurdles to clear. Permits would have to be granted not only by the City of Newport, but by the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Environmental Management, the Coastal Resources Management Council, and even the state Historic Preservation Commission.

Tom Benson, who grew up on Washington Street (and was a founder of Newport's Museum of Yachting), and Charlotte Johnson led the way. Curt Bunting of Super Group and Councilman Tom Kelly soon joined in. Interest and concern in the community began to grow.

The following letter appeared in the Newport *Daily News* on February 10, 1984:

To the Editor:

You might have heard that plans have been made to build a "boat-stop" marina on Rose Island. I have grown up calling it "our" island. If commercial terms come about the island, it could, or probably will cause as much as an estimated 850 boats to crowd the bay between Newport and Jamestown.

Of course, this would greatly increase the amount of pollution in the bay, causing fish to leave, and discouraging the swimmers from piers and beaches in both Jamestown and Newport. This pollution would be caused by things like ocean-draining toilets, baths and sailors throwing garbage overboard, although motors would be the main source of water pollution.

I've been sailing out to the island in hopes of excitement since I was 8 years old. It has always been a peaceful suburb on the uninhabited island where I could relax and unwind. I wish everybody could have the pleasure of visiting the island. Having the

fish scared off by noise and pollution would wreck the popular fishing spot at the root of the Goat Island Causeway. Tourists come from miles away to see the view from the waterfront of Newport. This marina could make tourists stop and think whether the view was worth the trip.

A hotel is recently under construction on Long Wharf. Will they ever stop?

As I look back, I realize how many happy memories I have the opportunity to look back on. This marina could mean the difference between you and your posterity's future citizenship in Newport, and commercial madness.

Christopher S. Barker, 12

It was perhaps coincidental that now GSA, once again, declared the lighthouse property surplus (having repossessed it from URI). This time, the City would not pass it up. Benson, Bunting, Johnson and Kelly spearheaded the effort to have the City apply for title to the Rose Island light. Conditions had to be met: GSA stipulated that the property had to be used for historic monument purposes, for public education and enjoyment, and there had to be solid plans to finance restoration and maintenance of the lighthouse buildings.

Bunting assured the council that members of a newly formed Rose Island Lighthouse Preservation Committee would find the money,

volunteers and enthusiasm within the community to do the job. The committee soon became The Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation, Inc., which thereafter asked for, and received, tax-exempt, non-profit status. Its incorporators were Tom Benson, Curt Bunting, Charlotte Johnson, Wells "Red" French and City Finance Director Gary Esposito.

The city was persuaded: in March 1984, it applied for the lighthouse to be given to the City of Newport, and after some delays (the lighthouse had to be nominated and determined eligible for its place on the National Register of Historic Places) the City became the owner of the Rose Island Light. The work could now begin!

Meanwhile, opposition to the proposed development on the rest of Rose Island was organizing. Prominent was a group of only 10 people, calling itself "Citizens to Protect Rose Island." President was Betsy deLeiris. By December of 1984, Charlotte Johnson was at its head. The group had already raised several thousand dollars to fight the development, and soon began a determined campaign to educate the public as to its dangers.

One heretofore neglected aspect was the rich history of fortifications remaining on the island. Charlotte even traveled to France and England to search the archives for old maps and information on the forts. She confirmed that Fort Hamilton, built between 1798 - 1800, incorporated earlier fortifications placed there before and during the Revolution; that British, French and Americans



Time out from renovation work



Local school children on a field trip to Rose Island

had used it to defend Newport Harbor; that it was uniquely important as an historical example of defenses from colonial times to World War II. Hardly the place to dump dredged up spoils!

Daniel Snyder, Executive Director of Newport Historical Society, spoke to the Council about the fort's historical significance. "Would you build condominiums on Valley Forge?" he asked them.

In 1984, Newport's Planning Board recommended to the City Council that all of Rose Island be placed in the Historic District, which would, of course, shape any proposed development. But the Council at that time would only consider including the actual lighthouse property. Snorted Councilman Al Angel, "The taxpayers of the city of Newport can't afford a luxury such as this. It's a mess and it should be torn down."

Citizens to Protect Rose Island worked with redoubled energy to make the public aware of the issues raised by the proposed development.

One spectacular event was the announced plan to encircle the entire island with bed sheets sewn together and raised by human "fence posts." This received national attention.

Those of us who went out there that day will never forget it! The scene was well described in a photograph published in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* of July 9, 1985. The caption read: "Protesters hold up a 3,500-foot cloth wall on Rose Island, R.I., to protest proposed condominiums and a marina that they say would

damage the island habitat. About 100 people traveled Saturday to the island in Narragansett Bay to hold up the sewn-together bed sheets. Said Charlotte Johnson, head of the group, "You wrap things up that are precious, and Rose Island is precious."

Ten days later, restoration of the lighthouse began. Volunteers boarded up the windows, and the building was sprayed to rid it of pigeon fungus. Cleanup squads and contractors, architects and preservationists, gardeners and just plain lighthouse lovers, all offered assistance. Citizens to Protect Rose Island ran fundraisers, and the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation organized drives for membership. Soon, the lighthouse was offered for sale! That is, one could buy a shingle, a brick, a door, 50 square feet of roof, even the tower! A new window would run you a tax-deductible \$500!

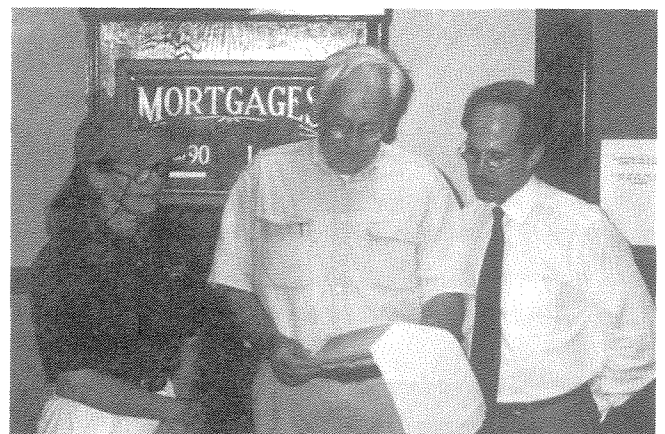
The rest, of course, is history. The whole country seemed now to be in love with lighthouses. Articles were written, money donated, work volunteered and timbers, as well as consciousness, raised.

The lighthouse building was lovingly restored to the period of 1912, when lighthouse keepers had lived and raised their families there. Work was completed in 1991, and the foundation was besieged with applications from people who wanted to live at the Rose Island Lighthouse once again! Some did so, over the next few years.

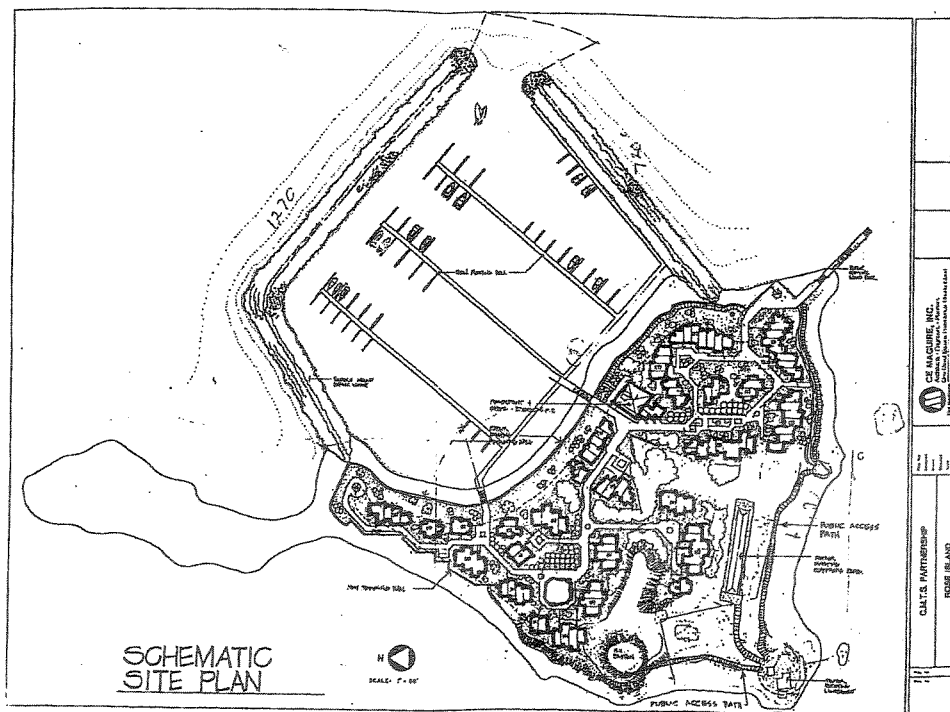
The official opening took place on July 17, 1992, and on August 7, 1993, after years of back-



Protestors hold a 3500-foot cloth wall on Rose Island in 1985



Charlotte Johnson reviews Rose Island deed



Site plan for proposed condominiums on Rose Island

breaking work and fund-raising effort, the light itself was at last re-lit in a joyous ceremony attended by a huge crowd of well-wishers.

Sadly, Curtis Bunting passed away a month later.

And what happened to the developers? Well, that, too, is history.

Opposition to their plans was made manifest not only at the City Council level, but in the proliferation of permits which they were asked to seek, and which were systematically denied them. CMTS asked for fewer slips; cluster condominiums, and finally, a "New England Village" on the island. But it was not to be, and eventually the would-be developers put their property up for sale.

Supporters of RILF continued to work to have Rose Island included in a State Bond issue for the purchase of open space. As a result, the State negotiated a purchase price of \$1.1 million — however, the contract expired in 1992 with no sale consummated.

Undaunted, the foundation's efforts continued. Grants were applied for and won. Money was raised, and membership in the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation was dramatically increased.

Executive Director Charlotte Johnson and her hard-working board initiated many educational programs for schoolchildren. Rose Island became a place where conservation and ecology could be studied and where the environment was respected.



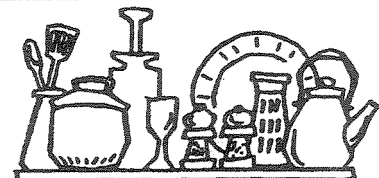
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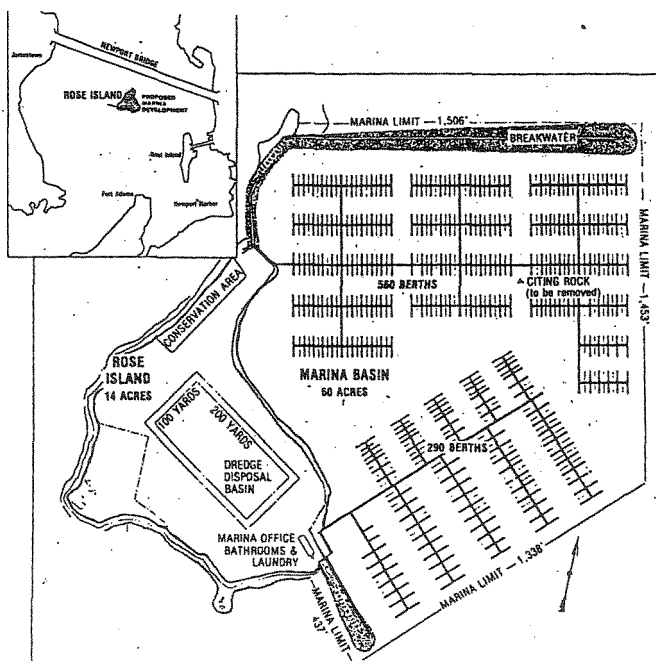
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A proposed 850-boat marina for Rose Island would have been the largest in Rhode Island.

The historical remains of two centuries of fortifications could be contemplated, and birds and seals alike were given sanctuary.

Paid lighthouse keepers gave way to paying lighthouse keepers. Now, one can pay to stay in the lighthouse for a night, or a week — complete with the daily chores! It has also become a destination for Elderhostel service projects. The Foundation has remained true to its word.

Finally, in 1998, Newport City Council voted to include all of Rose Island in its Historic District. At last, the time was right for Rose Island to be protected in its entirety, and arrangements were made for the long sought purchase. The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) bought a conservation easement for \$500,000. The balance was provided by the Aletta Morris McBean Foundation and the Prince Charitable Trusts.

Now Rose Island can be enjoyed as open space — for future generations to learn, to pass on to their children, forever. The dream of a dedicated few stands as a lasting monument to the power of persistence, and we all owe them our heartfelt thanks.

—Brenda Gordon

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Sought "Rest Cure" on the Point

Among the many distinguished visitors to the Point was Colonel Washington Roebling and his wife Emily. During the summer of 1882 they stayed in a Point cottage.

His father, John Augustus Roebling, was famous among bridge builders as the first to successfully build a suspension bridge. He undertook to build the first bridge spanning New York City's East River, considered folly by many. His son, a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, was his assistant. A horrible accident led to the senior Roebling's untimely death, and Colonel Roebling was given his job and made chairman of the board in his father's place.

In his fanatic race to finish the building of the famous Brooklyn Bridge, young Roebling forsook all precautions related to health and safety, with the result that he suffered seizures and a long illness due to "caissons disease." This affliction, brought on by too rapid ascent from the deep work areas around the bridge piers, is similar to the "bends," and was due to the failure to decompress when entering and returning from the work area.

His illness, characterized by severe pain and loss of sight, included contorted facial muscles and extreme shaking, and caused him to withdraw from public view, seeing only his wife and son.

Gossip spread that he was unable and unfit to complete the project, and he was under heavy pressure to resign from his post, which he refused to do.

It was decided that a rest in the quiet Washington Street Meyer Cottage (now Stella Maris) might speed his recovery. His doctors recommended ocean air combined with leisure and privacy as his key to recovery. Mrs. Roebling had seen all these possibilities when she saw the spacious porch and the upstairs front bedroom from which he could enjoy all the prescribed elements in addition to beautiful sunsets and the ever-changing patterns from activities on the Bay. An added advantage for the invalid was the trip to Newport on the Fall River Line; his wheel chair could be easily brought on at New York and off at the Newport landing and then make the short trip up Washington Street.

They were not left completely alone here, however. Seth Low, then mayor of New York

and the leading figure in pressing for Roebling's resignation, pursued him to his summer haven. Low made the trip from New York and walked up Washington Street to demand Roebling resign. He refused and so Low walked back down Washington Street, onto the boat, and went back to New York.

Washington Roebling saw the job of building the Brooklyn Bridge to its triumphant conclusion. Should his spirit ever return to his temporary Newport home, what a pleasant surprise he would have to see a beautiful suspension bridge right at his doorstep — one worthy of being a Roebling design.

—Suzy Sturmak

from a story originally written by Virginia Covell

The logo for Crystal Spring features the words "Crystal" and "Spring" in a stylized, cursive font. The "C" in "Crystal" is large and loops around the "S" in "Spring". A small star is positioned above the "i" in "Spring".

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New Neighbor on Bridge Street -- Artist, Chef and Gardener

Cottage and Garden, 9C Bridge Street, is such a pretty shop. It makes one want to buy. . . and buy. Do I really *need* two, or maybe four, of those French bistro chairs? They are antiques, painted a bright red. They would fit on my back porch, just match my kitchen door. . .

But wait a minute, instead of red chairs, how about almost the same thing, different bistro maybe, in sky blue? Or that stone garden urn? If I could fill it with sea shells, make a table of it the way Eleanor Gobis, proprietor, has done. . . And that piece of wrought iron, shaped like a bar of music? Made for my garden! There's a tiny iron frog, but he's not for sale.

Cottage and Garden suggests such intriguing interiors and exteriors not only because Ms. Gobis has a Masters in Fine Arts (she is an artist versed in a myriad of trades). She is a certified chef and a gardener par excellence. Her shop is full of topiaries. She plans on showing orchids.

Ms. Gobis prefers French and Italian architectural pieces. These must be genuine antiques. They must catch the eye and the imagination. Newport's mansions, she says, have provided her with many wonderful treasures.

Cottage and Garden has been open since May. It stands in a sunny space, part of a charmingly renovated (would you believe?) garage on Bridge Street. Not an antique shop, Ms. Gobis insists. Here is no jumble of objects. Tables, lamps, the paintings on the walls (two of these are early 1900s by a Newport artist, Joanne Wilder) each has its own special place. The shop is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 to 5; Sundays: 12 - 5.

—Anita McAndrews

Ed. note: Renovations to the building reported on in Fall 1998 Green Light

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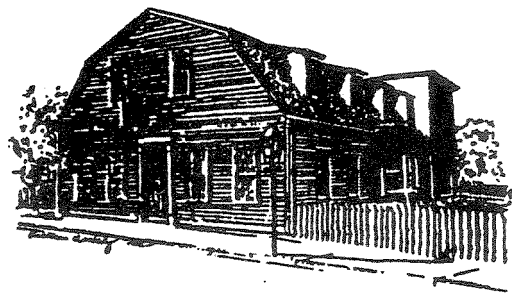
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Meet the First Ward Candidates for City Council

Rick O'Neill — 11 Garfield Street; 847-5202;
Rick4First@aol.com

I am a candidate for the First Ward seat on the City Council because I care deeply about the quality of life in our neighborhoods. My wife, Barbara, and I have lived on Garfield Street for over 20 years and have raised our two sons here. As one who believes in community service, I am past president of Coggeshall School PTO and a former Little League coach. I am past chairman of the Beach Commission, chairman of VINE (Volunteers in Newport Education), and president of Rogers High School Boosters Club. When called into service by my city, I have always pitched in to help make Newport a better city for us all.

The First Ward faces many challenges in the next few years. If properly done, the reconnection of Connell Highway will help ease cut-through traffic through the Point. We need to be ever vigilant in monitoring noise and traffic in our residential neighborhoods. Because the First Ward contains large undeveloped parcels, the North End Plan promises to bring much activity and change to our neighborhood. We need to monitor closely how these changes will impact our quality of life.

As the First Ward faces tremendous growth and change in the next few years, I have the experience and the record of community service to act as your voice on the City Council.

George Perry — 102 Third Street

George is the incumbent First Ward Councilman. His education includes a Bachelor's Degree from Boston College and a Masters' from Dartmouth. After graduating from OCS he served as an officer on a destroyer based in Newport.

George spent many years in marketing, and currently owns and manages a small bed and breakfast.

George has been very active in local affairs for the past eight years. He was one of the founders of CANN (Citizens Against Noise and Nuisance in Newport); he has been an active member of Friends of the Waterfront and is a member of the Point Association, the Newport Historical Society and the Rose Island Foundation.

George's achievements on the Council generally relate to quality of life. He spearheaded traffic calming measures on the Point; he led the fight to make Rose Island part of the Historic zone; and, he spearheaded the effort to find alternative sites to Old Fort Road for the dog park.

George promises to continue to be sensitive to the needs of the neighborhoods.

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Endeavoring for HMB ENDEAVOUR

As if we didn't have enough summer excitement with music festivals, coaching exhibitions and hordes of visitors combing our streets for a snapshot of American history, the Australians came to dive off our neighborhood's coastline in search of *HMB ENDEAVOUR*!

Why all the commotion? What is so important that the Australian National Maritime Museum would send three of their top marine archeologists to Newport for a month? Only that the shipwreck lying twenty feet below the water just off the Cypress Street Pier next to the old Navy Hospital could very well be Australia's equivalent of the *Mayflower*. Paul Hundley, Sue Bassett, and Kieran Hosty, the Australian scientific dive team, are in search of clues to prove *HMB ENDEAVOUR* is in fact the wreck at the bottom of Narragansett Bay.

Newport's Dr. D.K. Abbass started all the hoopla when she discovered historical documentation last January in the London Public Records Office that proves the *ENDEAVOUR* was renamed *LORD SANDWICH* and was used by the British during the Revolutionary War as a transport and prison ship. *LORD SANDWICH* was one of the 12 British ships scuttled just off the Point's shoreline to blockade the approaching French fleet coming to assist the American forces in their fight to regain occupation of Newport and to win their freedom from England.

The Australian dive team will be here through mid-September. Perhaps they, along with the many American volunteer divers working with Dr. Abbass' non-profit group RIMAP (Rhode Island Marine Archeology Project)*, will successfully prove that the timbers below our bay are of the same English white oak used to construct *ENDEAVOUR*. They also may find that pieces of the wooden structure are from Australia, since the *ENDEAVOUR* was repaired there after hitting the Great Barrier Reef while exploring the coastline down under.

Once again the city-by-the-sea will be in the international spotlight. Just another chapter in the extraordinary history of our shady little seaside Point neighborhood.

—Beth Cullen

* See Summer 1999 issue of *Green Light*, p. 17

The Drought...

Just in case you didn't notice — we are DRY. Those of you who planted new shrubs and/or trees this year need to be especially diligent about watering slowly and deeply. Best is a dribble for an hour or two.

If you are planting anything this fall, water the container plant thoroughly before planting. Then fill the hole with water and let it drain before planting, back filling and watering again. Water will then be at the roots where you want it. Do not fertilize at this time. Your garden is stressed enough. Most lawns are not dead — just dormant. They will come back green. It *will* rain. Over seeding is recommended for fall.

Those of you with shady gardens still need to water. I recently dug holes for some five gallon containers. The soil was still dry and powdery two feet down. That is dry!

—Toni Peters

Fall Calendar

Saturday, September 18 - Fall Cleanup - 8:30 a.m. at Storer Park - rain date September 25

Thursday, October 14 - Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - St. John's Guild Hall

Tuesday, October 19 - Candidates' Night - 7:00 p.m. - St. John's Guild Hall

Tuesday, November 2 - Election Day - Be sure to vote!

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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.

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