The GREEN LIGHT

Bulletin of the Point Association of Newport, Rhode Island

SPRING 2004
From the Editor

Dear Pointers,

As this issue goes to print, the Point is fast in the grip of a very cold winter, and the thought of venturing outside without multiple layers of down and Polartec seems highly remote. But the calendar assures me that crocuses should be pushing up through the chilly ground any day now, so we may hope that once again the long winter will turn to a green and gentle spring.

Spring is always a time of new beginnings, and this will certainly be true for me this year. This will be my last issue of The Green Light, as I have orders to transfer to Italy in May to be the Intelligence Officer for Sixth Fleet. My thanks to all of you who have made it such fun to live on the Point and to edit The Green Light. As you will see elsewhere in this issue, we need a new editor as well as a new layout chief, so I hope some of you reading this will decide to try something new this spring and help out on The Green Light.

In the meantime, all the best to all of you Pointers. I will think of you next year in Italy when it is snow-shovelling time in Newport!

Cheers,
Eileen
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Groundhog day was a good time to consider whether it’s wise to get out and greet the world – cold and cruel as it might be, especially this winter – or stay asleep in a warm burrow.

Our historic neighborhood has often been criticized for trying to isolate ourselves from the broader community. Issues such as noise, traffic, waterfront protection and tourist-related encroachment often put us at odds with those who advocate change and commercialism along our borders. The threats seem to come from all sides: resorts to the south, marinas to the west, malls to the north, a highway to the east. It’s hard to be an eighteenth century neighborhood in a twenty-first century world, and it’s easy to just pull up the covers and pretend all the problems will go away.

So I would like to challenge our membership to get more involved in The Point Association. This is, after all, a volunteer organization. We need a volunteer to attend city council meetings to both inform and represent our board about relevant municipal issues. We are also in immediate need of a volunteer to edit and manage The Green Light. We need help monitoring the waterfront, beautifying our parks and public spaces, planning our many social events.

We need members to reach out and communicate with other policy-setting groups. Several “past presidents” of The Point Association provide good examples. Coles Mallory is founder and leader of Newport Neighborhoods, a group that meets monthly and is comprised of the heads of all 11 neighborhood organizations in Newport. Rich Carrubba is the only neighborhood group member sitting on a RIDOT planning panel for the Pell Bridge access project. Suzanne Varisco rescued The Green Light from certain oblivion several years ago after her term as president. Keep these models in mind.

And when we get cabin fever, just remember what great cabins we have here on The Point.

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**Point Association’s Pot Luck Supper**

Harbor House ~ Use Chapel Entrance on Battery Street

Sunday  MARCH 28th  6 pm

Again This Year — A True Pot Luck — Call 849-4395 if you are coming

Beverages (Coffee, Tea & Milk) will be provided

*You may bring your own wine, beer, cider etc.*

**EVERYTHING SHOULD ARRIVE PIPING HOT WRAPPED IN NEWSPAPER & PAPER BAGS** ~ Every container and server should be labeled

In order to assure some variety and some of everything we ask the following:

If Your Last Name Begins With E-IPlease Bring: DESSERT which serves 12

If Your Last Name Begins With J-P Please Bring: A SALAD which serves 12

If Your Last Name Begins With Q-Z Please Bring: A MAIN COURSE which serves 10

If Your Last Name Begins With A-D Please Bring: A VEGETABLE which serves 12

*If you’re coming ~ Just call and leave a message on my machine at 849-4395 and tell us how many are coming & what you plan to bring ~ THANKS, Donna Maytum*
Anne As We Knew Her

It was an open and standing invitation that often began with “Come in—the gate is open.” That’s how it was at 88 Washington Street, the home of Anne Perry Reynolds. When you entered, the visit was always rich and memorable. Conversations, activities, and vistas filled the senses.

Anne in her beautiful garden.

In 1964, Charles and Anne Reynolds purchased the land at 88 Washington Street, which ultimately became the site for the reconstruction of the Tripp house from Providence.

Charles and Tom Benson, who were both on the Oldport Foundation Board, went to Providence to inspect the house. Charles bought the house for a dollar (it was going to be demolished). With the help of Tom, Anne and Charles’ son Ned, Lloyd Hyde, Terry Browning, Hardy Hall, and others, the house was dismantled and each piece numbered and transported to Newport in the fall of 1965. As winter ended, each labeled timber was carefully put into its proper place. The beehive oven was rebuilt as an exact replica of the original. An old grounded barge rested on the beach in front of where the house now stands, today hidden behind the sea-wall and covered by Anne’s gardens and lawn.

A graduate of Wellesley college and trained as an educator, Anne was a woman of many talents; her skills never stopped at the classroom door. Anne’s intelligence and breadth of knowledge allowed her to speak on any subject to any age. Children from ages 3 to 80 would always walk away with some new bit of information or a never considered point of view that often caused a certain level of consternation. Politics were brought into the discussions at every opportunity. Anne was a fierce fighter for the continued insurance of the quality of life for Newport residents. When she was able, Anne was always at city hall meetings and at rallies urging officials to maintain a certain level of sensibility when making important decisions and laws. A favorite image is that of Anne gardening wearing her “NO EXPANSION” baseball cap she secured at the rally to prevent the growth of gambling throughout the state.

Anne’s love of books was ever present. Probably the most haunting memory of Anne’s progressing blindness was her fear that she would no longer be able to read. This fear led to the momentous purchase of a digital imaging machine for magnification of print for books, magazines, and of course the New York Times. The machine was so large that it took up nearly half of the available space in her tiny first floor bedroom. Visitors knew how critical reading was for Anne because for the first time, Anne’s crib was removed from her bedroom to make space for the reading machine. In addition to being a family heirloom, the crib was really a craft basket where Anne kept all the materials she needed to perform experiments and crafts with grandchildren, school children, and adult children.

The most public image of Anne was her role as a gardener. Anne’s seaside garden was stunning with its drifts of plants of all kinds. Anne believed in a natural and a “planned random” approach to landscaping. It was always a mystery how her vegetable gardens were able to thrive so magnificently when they were often victims of sea spray. The asparagus patch was phenomenal and provided free food for a certain dog whose name will not be mentioned. Anne’s garden was always a favorite destination for the thousands of visitors to the Secret Garden tour. Additionally, Anne was one of the experts who made the Point Plant Sale such a great success. And who can ever forget when she was writing the gardening column for The Greenlight choice comparisons of impatiens to garden asphalt?

Anne’s affection for both wayward sailors and the ocean meant that the view to the garden and water would always be cluttered by miscellaneous dinghies, canoes, and kayaks along with the associated debris of boating. Anne always believed that her friends and acquaintances should share her beautiful place by the sea. It was such a delight for Anne when her yard was used for the Point picnic. It was her ultimate gesture to extend her yard for public pleasure. Fireworks in New
At Anne’s for the Annual Point Picnic.

port will never be the same for Anne’s friends, who always gathered on Anne’s porch and lawn to have a prime seat for viewing. It was always fun to try to guess just how many people would arrive for fireworks and to hear voices call out “Hi Anne” in the dark.

Finally, a personal tribute to Anne is from our dog Zoe, or as some might have it, Anne’s dog Zoe. Anne’s devotion to dogs was well witnessed. Dogs romped with one another and were allowed to explore all the garden beds. Anne always maintained that dogs knew just how to walk through gardens without destroying them. What was hers was theirs. One might guess that Anne’s heaven would be bright sunshine, a well tended garden, the sparkling sea and books cascading over her and her chair because of the ruckus caused by the children and dogs wanting up on her lap.

by Christine Montanaro, Phil Mosher and Zoe the dog in absentia

SPRING CLEANUP

9 a.m.~ Saturday ~ May 1
Storer Park

Join your friends and neighbors in getting Storer and Battery Parks spruced up and ready for summer

For more information, call Marcia or Coles Mallory 849-5659

Barbour

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Spring 2004 The Green Light
Welcome to TPA’s new members:
Andy LaVarre
Ted and Sally Murphy
Victoria Rommel
Jape Shattuck

New Neighbors

Commander Maureen Neville, USN, has just arrived on the Point, where she is currently assistant to Eileen MacKrell (The Green Light editor) at the Naval War College. Maureen will be promoted in April to Captain and will take over as Officer in Charge of the Naval Intelligence Detachment at the War College when Captain MacKrell leaves for Italy.

Maureen has just arrived in Newport from Japan, where she and her husband, Sandy, have been stationed for the past two years. Maureen met Sandy while she was in London, on her first tour of duty, when she was twenty-two. Sandy is still in Japan but will join her here this spring, and the two expect to be here for the next three years.

Newport is not wholly new to Commander Neville. She attended Officer Candidate School at the Newport Naval Base and was commissioned here. She is delighted to be living at 41/2 Sunshine Court temporarily, and hopes to find a permanent house on the Point when Sandy (and the rest of their household goods) arrive in April.

Deborah and Robert Saunders

A double life could perhaps best describe what Deb and Bob Saunders have: six months in Newport and the other half year in Barrington. Until recently, they lived in Barrington, where both grew up, where Deb was a lawyer (Attorney General’s office and private practice) and Bob had a service station for the past 18 years.

Now, from spring to fall, they live in Barrington, where they own The Daily Scoop, an ice cream shop in a 1910 house that they completely renovated. The manufacturing kitchen and store is on the first floor and the apartment on the second. They make their own ice cream every day of the week, with over forty flavors, varying according to fruit season. Amazingly, the remarkable twofold best vanilla, which they use in all the ice creams, costs $340 per gallon. Fresh peaches, strawberries, and other fruits are from local sources.

Clearly they love both halves of their year. Deb said “I basically put one year’s worth of work into six months,” thus allowing the other half of the year to be devoted to whatever catches their fancy. They spend the fall through spring time in Newport in the cottage (85 1/2 Second Street) that they have charmingly updated, and which has become just as much home as Barrington.

The Daily Scoop is in Barrington, on Route 114, the County Road, and on the bike path, and of course, the lawyer for their business is Deborah.

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The Green Light Spring 2004
As The Point Changes
by Rich and Patricia Carrubba

The editor of The Green Light approached us late last year to ask that we write an article describing property ownership trends on the Point. Our two-pronged approach was to conduct a historical search of both single and multifamily property transactions for the past four years, and to conduct a written survey of property owners who had purchased a home on the Point within the past two years.

The results of our research relating to Point property transactions may be summarized in the following table:

Properties sold on the Point since 2000*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Properties Sold</th>
<th>Avg Sale Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000 + 2001</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>$277,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 + 2003</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>$475,220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statewide Multiple Listing Service

The survey was designed primarily to determine who was buying homes, the purpose of their purchase, and their reasons for choosing the Point. We were able to locate the owners of record for 43 of the 66 transactions completed over the past two years. Of the 43 questionnaires mailed, we received 19 completed surveys, or 44% of those sent - a statistically significant response rate.

With respect to our findings, we learned that 72% of the respondents were residing in another state when they purchased their property on the Point. Of the remaining purchasers, 22% were Newport residents, with half of those already living on the Point. The final 6% were living in Rhode Island but not in Newport.

Although we know that Newport is populated with military personnel, we were still surprised to learn that 21% of the respondents indicated they were on active duty with the military. Of equal interest the survey data shows that only 16% of the purchasers are retired (although we don’t know their previous occupations). Finally, the vast majority, 63%, are actively employed in civilian occupations.

Another question we asked was intended to determine the purpose of the real estate purchases made by the respondents. Over half, 53%, indicated their Point property purchase was intended to be their primary residence, while 26% reported that their Point property was a second or additional residence. The remaining 21% purchased their property only for investment purposes.

To get an idea of the demographics of the new purchasers, we asked who would be occupying the properties. Not surprisingly, 84% of the properties are to be occupied exclusively by adults (defined for the survey as age 19 years or older).

And finally, we asked why the new purchasers chose the Point over any other location for their property purchase. Rather than provide multiple choices, the survey provided blank spaces for use by the respondents. The results may be summarized as follows:

The location to the harbor and downtown Newport was the predominant reason for choosing to purchase property here. The architecture, historic homes, friendliness of the neighbors, and the charming ambiance of the neighborhood were cited repeatedly.

For many of the respondents, and especially for those who indicated they are investors or military families, their belief that property values were secure was an important consideration.

In summary, those of us who have lived on the Point for some time have noticed many changes in both our real estate market and in the number of new residents. We hope this brief article provides you a better perspective on these important changes.
Seeds, Weeds and Blooms: A Sad Seed Story
by Toni Peters

While you’re doing your spring planting this year, do you ever consider the ancestry of your seeds? Did you know that just five seed companies grow 75% of the world’s seeds? Interestingly, Burpee Seed Company is no longer one of the five, and therein hangs a tale.

In the 1980’s Burpee Seed Company was sold to Sony, Inc. Sony’s accountants reviewed the large number and variety of seeds offered by Burpee, some 1600 seeds overall, determined which were the 200 best sellers, and eliminated the rest of Burpee’s offerings. This meant that many older varieties of seeds were gone forever. The remaining 200 seed types were packaged as a unit to be sold to nurseries, who had to buy the entire package if they wanted Burpee Seeds. Not surprisingly, nurseries and plant centers stopped buying Burpee Seeds. After much turbulence and decline, Burpee is now in a “re-organization phase.”

Now comes the good part. In the 1980’s Suzanne Ashworth, of Decorah, Iowa, was left a magnificent legacy by her father of seeds which he had saved from extinction over the years. His plea was that she and her husband would “prove these out” – plant them and save the seeds — and offer them to the public. Word of mouth publicity led to numerous donations from other dedicated ‘Seed Savers,’ and with volunteer help The Seed Savers Exchange was formed. The Department of Agriculture became interested in their project and offered its support. Recently, the Ashworths received a Macarthur Grant to help save seeds from extinction. The Seed Savers Exchange is now able to add heirloom flowers to their seed inventory. She joins a host of other seed savers fighting to save seeds from extinction. Close to home, our own Sturbridge Village is growing vegetables and herbs used by the Colonists. As the old saying goes, all the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today!

Hats off to you Deborah Ashworth!

It’s a Small Point After All

My name is Deb Saunders. My husband Bob and I live at 85 1/2 Second Street. You know . . . the contemporary bungalow that sits askew. Bob and I love learning who lives where on the Point, who lived there before them, where they came from, and where they’ve gone. Whenever we have questions about a certain house, we need only cross Second Street and ask our neighbor Kay O’Brien, who has graciously answered our countless questions (thanks Kay!)

I guess I should expect to meet people with some tie to the Point.
all, this is Newport. But a chance meeting with someone who lives thousands of miles away, who isn't just familiar with our historical neighborhood, but has a close tie to my own house?

In December while my mother and I were visiting relatives in Germany, we traveled to the town of Talheim to visit my mother's friend Christa Weiss. During our visit, Christa's brother stopped by, a strikingly handsome man in his 60's named Guido Wenz. Guido spoke English with me, and when I asked how he came to speak English so well, he explained that as a young man he had moved to America, become a citizen, and worked for IBM, but later moved back to Germany. Over coffee and cake we talked about many different things.

I told Guido that Bob and I had recently purchased a house in Newport. Guido commented that he had joined the Navy after moving to the States and was familiar with Newport. He spoke fondly of attending dances in Newport and meeting the friendly locals; in fact that was where he had met his best friend Paul. I told Guido our house was near the Navy base on Second Street. He remarked on the coincidence and said that his friend Paul had lived on Second Street too, 85 1/2 Second Street. He thought I might know the house because it sits crooked on the lot.

When I told Guido that we live in Paul's house, I saw tears in his eyes. He told me about the many weekends he spent in our house with his friend Paul and Paul's wife Bea, both of whom have since died. Guido told me all about Bea and Paul, why the house sits crooked on the lot, and about the loss of his best American friend. When I left that day, he gave me a warm embrace and thanked me for buying the house of his beloved friends Bea and Paul. Our conversation left me rather stunned. I couldn't believe that I had come to know details about the history of my house, not by crossing Second Street, but the Atlantic. Had I not asked Guido about his English, I would never have heard of our connection to the same crooked little bungalow on the Point. The coincidence still leaves me speechless; in fact I can't help but wonder if our meeting was more than just a fluke. Oh, and I forgot . . . Guido, “you're welcome.”

Street Tree Planting Program

Would you like to enhance the beauty of your property with the addition of a tree along the street? The City of Newport is offering to provide and install 1 3/4 inch trees approximately 8-12 feet tall for the wholesale price of $55 on the city right of way. The city will also plant a tree on private property setback up to 20' from a public right of way, provided it will beautify the street. For an additional $10 residents can also purchase a 20 gallon drip irrigation bag.

The following trees are available for this city program: four types of maples, green ash, London planetree, Kwanzan cherry, Thundercloud plum, pin oak, and linden. These tree are bare root and are planted in early spring. Residents interested in this program should contact Scott Wheeler, Newport’s Tree and Parks Supervisor at 848-6496 to get an application. He will be happy to answer any questions or to schedule a site visit. Because there is a limited number of trees available, applications will be accepted on a first come basis.

The Point Association believes this program is an excellent way to beautify our neighborhood. Therefore, we have agreed to sponsor $20 toward the purchase of each street tree. In order to be reimbursed, Point residents will need to submit a copy of their receipt from the city or a cancelled check to our treasurer, Mike Simmons, 112 Second Street.

Notice anything missing?
That
Was Then . . .
Hunter House
by Melissa Fanny

The Point's historic treasure known as Hunter House was built during Newport's 18th century Golden Age, when the city was one of British North America's five great colonial seaports. The north half of the original house was built around 1748 by Jonathan Nichols, Jr., a prosperous merchant, ship owner, and colonial deputy. In his day, the house was tall and narrow with one central chimney, and the south wall of the northeast parlor was originally the outside wall. The front door was on the water side, where Mr. Nichols had built Newport's longest wharf and a warehouse and store complex.

After Nichols' death in 1756, the property was sold to Colonel Joseph Wanton, Jr., deputy governor of the colony, who added the central hall, the south section, and a second chimney and also embellished the interiors, creating a proper Georgian mansion. After the Declaration of Independence was issued, Colonel Wanton, a Tory, was seized by the patriots and placed under guard until the British occupied Newport. When the British departed, Wanton fled with them to New York, where he died in 1780.

After the Revolution, the house went through a series of owners and began to deteriorate. In 1786 the state sold it for a fraction of the price Wanton had paid for it thirty years earlier. Then, in 1805, it was purchased by the Hon. William Hunter, Jr. (1774 - 1849)—state legislator, U.S. senator, and Minister to Brazil from 1834 to 1844. During those ten years, it was leased as a boarding house through the Hunters' son Thomas. Prior to their return in 1844, Thomas wrote that roughly $400 was needed to refurbish the house—repairs having been kept at a minimum during the tenants' residence. Dr. Hunter rented other quarters until the house was repaired.

In 1851, two years after William Hunter's death, Mrs. Hunter leased the house for $100 a month until it was sold to the Bay State Steamboat Corporation for $10,000 in 1863. Owned successively by Bay State, Narragansett, and Old Colony Steamboat Companies, it was run as a boarding house for passengers. In the early 1870s, the house was rented to Dr. Milton Mayer for use as a convalescent home, and it continued to function as a boarding house and convalescent home under a series of owners for two decades.

During this period, there were several structural changes. Both entrances of the house were widened and a porch was added to the rear of the building, forcing the removal of two windows. The original street-side door was discarded and the water-side door was removed. In 1876, renowned architect Charles Follen McKim, who had extensively remodeled the house's interiors for the Robinson-Storer family, installed the door at the nearby Dennis house (now St. John's Rectory), owned by Benjamin Robinson Smith. When restoration of the Hunter House commenced, the door was returned and is now one of the most famous doorways in Newport. Eventually, Hunter House was immortalized as the brooding setting of Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Malbone: an Oldport Romance (1867).

In 1881 Dr. Horatio Robinson Storer of Boston, Palm Beach, and Newport purchased the house and named it Shore Haven. Dr. Storer's daughter Agnes noted in her article "The Wanton Hunter House" (1936) that
the Metropolitan Museum of Art approached her father in hope of securing the northeast parlor paneling,

but Dr. Storer refused, “as he greatly hoped that, eventually, the Wanton-Hunter House, with its unique historic and architectural interest, might be preserved as a period house.” He also had other plans for his house.

In Champion of Women and the Unborn: Horatio Robinson Storer M.D., Frederick N. Dyer mentions that Dr. Storer wished the house to become a women’s hospital. In an 1895 diary entry, his daughter, Agnes, recounts being asked to inquire if her brother Dr. Malcolm Storer would be the head doctor. Malcolm was not interested, however, and so the house remained as it was. The Newport Historical Society’s vertical files contain a document titled Newport Journal, dated June 2, 1916:

Now, as perhaps never before, is felt in Newport the need of a suitable place where persons who can no longer stay in the over-crowded women’s hospital, but who still need a few weeks of rest and proper care to complete a recovery, may go to receive it. Dr. H. R. Storer… and Miss Agnes C. Storer… have been thinking about this need for quite a while… both Dr. and the late Mrs. Storer took great interest in hospital work for those who needed it and were not rich enough to pay the high cost such things often entail; and Dr. and Miss Storer, having some of the finest in this beautiful City by the Sea have decided to cease using a portion of it as an investment and devote it to a convalescent home in memory of Mrs. Storer... the home is to open June 1 and is for women only. There is hope to make it self-supporting. A few patients will be received at rates usually charged in such high-class institutions, but those of moderate means will be received also, as it is the primary object to care for them. 15 is the current limit. The home will be in the immediate charge of Miss Alice G. Bergin, R.N. and Miss Mary Latchford, R.N. Patients likely to disturb the rest and quiet of the home will not be received, or as is stated in the cards sent to local physicians: “mental, infectious or habit cases will not be accepted.”

The house is listed in the 1916 and 1917 Newport City directories as Shore Haven Convalescent Home. It is unclear why its duration was so brief, but in 1917 it was donated to St. Joseph’s Church as a home for the nuns.

In the early 1940s, when the nuns decided to move closer to the church, Hunter House’s future was again uncertain. The Metropolitan Museum again offered to remove the paneling and other architectural details. At this time, a group of concerned Newport citizens led by Mr. and Mrs. George Henry Warren decided that the city had lost enough of its 18th century heritage. As a result, the Preservation Society of Newport County was founded in 1945, and the entire house was rescued. Today, the Preservation Society is currently building an endowment for this historic treasure to preserve it for generations to come.

Sources
Architectural Heritage of Newport Notebooks – Washington Street.
Newport Historical Society.
Newport History Vertical File – Hunter House.
Newport Historical Society.
List Academy Concert January 25th

A Concert Santa’s Visit and The Cookie Swap

Liz Mathinos’s grandson Alex Waugh fills Santa Claus in on his wish list at the party following the Christmas concert; Oliver Gill has a chat with Santa. Maya Bardorf samples a cookie at the Point Christmas party. Santa with one of his elves. Victoria Boatwright gets a gift from Santa Claus.

Ellen “Dashi” Walter and violist Madeleine Merrill List Academy teachers Gianna Sullivan and Hillary Hartlaub Tess Fletcher warms up Pointer Jane Hence and her grandchildren enjoy the concert. Photos courtesy of Sandrie Matuschka.

Swanhurst Chorale delighted the audience at the Christmas concert at Harbor House.

Winter scenes around the neighborhood . . .
FAVORITE RECIPES

Hearty Hamburger Barley Soup

Recipe contributed by Elizabeth Bishop of 81 Third Street. In 1991 Liz experienced the thrill of crossing the bridge and realizing Newport was to be her new home as her husband Robert’s position of Computer Scientist with NUWC moved them from Florida to New England. They joined us on The Point in 1998 and recently became members of the Point Association.

The pretty green Victorian on Third Street is home to Bob, Liz, their two children, Sammy and Katie, and Liz’s mom, Rose DiDonato. Sammy, 5, attends kindergarten at Coggeshall School. He loves trains and was one of the first in line for Thomas the Train rides on our own favorite railroad. As Katie enjoys 6th grade at Cluny, she participates in Drama Club and stays active with swimming, skateboarding and ice skating.

Liz would not have called herself a gardener until she tackled her yard on The Point and found that indeed her thumb was very green. She has won several Newport In Bloom awards and looks forward to a great spring. In addition to gardening and the children, Liz has been involved for eight years making dreams come true as the Catering Administrator for Oceancliff Resort. While Liz is gardening, you might find Bob enjoying a day of golf in Exeter.

Liz thinks you will enjoy the following family favorite recipe.

2 lbs. lean ground round
1 1/2 cups potatoes, cubed
7 cups of water
2 tbsp. light soy sauce
1 cup celery, diced
1/2 cup pearl barley
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 cup carrots, sliced
2 6oz. cans tomato juice
Tabasco to taste
1 green pepper, diced
1/2 tsp. paprika
1 medium onion, chopped
1 16oz. can tomatoes, chopped
salt & pepper to taste
1/2 lb. fresh green beans, cut in 3rds
1 bay leaf
1/2 cup celery greens, chopped
1/2 tsp. thyme

Serves 6-8

Brown ground beef in 1 tsp. oil. Add all ingredients except carrots and potatoes. Simmer for 1 hour. Add carrots, simmer for 30 minutes, and then add potatoes. Simmer until all vegetables are tender. Serve with crusty baguettes.
An Immigrant’s Tale: Babette in the Quaker Tom Robinson House
by Liz Mathinos

With the issue of immigration so much in the news these days, sometimes it's good to get a gentle reminder that we are a nation of immigrants. This is a story about a seventeen-year-old from a tiny village, Rossdorf A/Forst, in Bavaria and how she came to have a connection to Quaker Tom Robinson's house on Washington Street. Most of us know the story of this house in colonial times, but this is about a later time, in the 1920s, when a Quaker lady, Esther Morton Smith, continued the Quaker tradition of service on an international scale and also, on a more personal level, in her kindness to a young immigrant.

My mother, Barbara, or Babette as she was called in 1923 when she immigrated to the United States as a seventeen-year-old, was one of the many Europeans who dreamed of a better life in America. Sponsored by a cousin in Philadelphia, Babette entered the United States through Ellis Island and began her life in the comfortable surroundings of Germantown, where people spoke her native language. Not knowing a word of English, Babette was advised by her cousin to laugh when others laughed at a social event, and with this very good advice, she certainly would seem pleasant and jolly, and as if she understood far more than she did! Babette was fortunate to find work as a maid with Esther Morton Smith and accompanied her to Newport for the summer months, arriving as a “greenhorn” at Quaker Tom Robinson’s house. Her younger sister, Gunda, followed her to the U.S. two years later and they were reunited during the summer in Newport.

During the years that my mother worked for her, Esther Smith was in her 60s and actively involved with peace work in the Quaker’s American Friends Service Committee, giving generously of time and money. When the Quakers wished to strengthen the Friends Meeting, Esther Smith traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, and Babette traveled with her. Trips to Prague, Czechoslovakia; Vienna, Austria; and Budapest, Hungary, followed. During her time in Switzerland, Babette made many friends, hiked the Alps, learned French and English, and expanded her knowledge of the world and her understanding of different people. Babette loved her time traveling and loved the summers in Newport.

Esther Smith was noted for her “at homes” — opportunities for anyone to come for talks, readings, and music. The costume party photo on p.19 illustrates one of these happy times with Miss Smith in Indian feathers, and Babette in front, kneeling.

Then as now, people promenaded up and down Washington Street in the evenings. On a park bench at Battery Park recently, John Fucile reminisced how he would stop to talk to the two sisters, as they leaned out the Dutch door.
A handsome young man whom Babette noticed was a Greek boatbuilder, apprenticed to his father, John Mathinos, who hauled and launched boats from the Poplar Street driftway. In 1928, Babette left service to Miss Smith to marry my father and learned her fourth language, Greek. Years later in 1930, my parents bought land from Miss Smith in the block between Battery Street and Van Zandt Avenue where the bungalow my father built still stands.

Throughout her life, my mother welcomed many immigrants who arrived in our community, giving them a helping hand, just as Miss Smith had given her so many years earlier.

If you know anything about the well in the picture, and how the water was used, please let us know!

The Michael Moulton House c.1711

For reservations contact: Sarah Gill at
The Michael Moulton House
30 Second Street, Newport,
Rhode Island 02840
Telephone 401-847-2189
E-mail s.j.gill@worldnet.att.net

Nina Lynette

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Rich & Patricia Carrubba

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Prudential
First Annual Kids Fest in Newport!

Newport is the place for kids to be during the April school vacation week, when the city plays host to the first annual Newport Kids Fest. The Kids Fest, a nine day festival offering lots of activities in art, sports, theater, history and much more will take place throughout Newport County, April 9-18, 2004. The event is coordinated by Newport for Kids and Families, a local organization headed by Pointer Louisa Boatwright that promotes kid and family-friendly activities in and around the Newport area.

Some of the highlighted events of the festival are the Opening Night EXPO Friday April 9th at the Newport Hyatt Regency Hotel, a 5K Fun Run/Walk hosted by the Newport County Children’s Museum and an Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Fort Adams State Trust. A Maritime Fair will be held both the first and the last weekend of the festival at the Museum of Yachting next to Fort Adams. The Maritime Fair will highlight the importance of the maritime industries on Rhode Island’s economy. Families will find activities, demonstrations and displays such as nautical knot tying, instruction in navigation, weather, boat safety and lobster races. Join in the 5K Fun Run and then stay for food, entertainment and fun.

Other activities during the nine day festival will be seal watches on Narragansett Bay, a Day of Magic, tea parties, children’s theater, special children’s tours, book readings and signings, and a kids filmmaker showing of Flying Popcorn! Displayed down the main street of Newport, on Broadway will be 70 children’s banners called the Living City an exhibition by Project One and City Year.

For further info or to obtain a Newport Kids Fest Passport, see the website at newportforkidsandfamilies.com.

A Point Plant Sale Plea

The Point Plant Sale is on Saturday, May 22 at 8:30am. Last year we sold out. So we NEED more plants! Starting in April, plants or garden gear contributions may be deposited in the parking spaces next to 22 Walnut Street. Or, we will come help you dig the plants you wish to contribute right from your own garden. We have plenty of pots and soil. We also pick up contributions. Please help us out this year. To contribute plants or volunteer for the sale, call Isabel at 849-6444.

The Green Light Spring 2004
WATERFRONT REPORT
by Liz Mathinos

PLAYGROUND AT STORER PARK?

In January, Mr. Staats, owner of the Newport Gulls and President of Friends of Cardines Field, wrote a letter to the editor of the Newport Daily News about how Cardines history must be preserved. So it was quite surprising to learn that the Sports Advisory Commission has proposed moving the playground equipment from next to Cardines Field to Storer Park so as to facilitate the Gulls’ expansion plans, which call for moving the dugout to where the playground now is and adding a second concession stand.

This very popular playground at Bridge and America’s Cup was recently refurbished and is accessible to the handicapped. It would obviously be quite costly to move the equipment to Storer Park. And of course moving the dugout closer to residential Bridge Street would change the character of the neighborhood entirely – as well as the character of Cardines Field. As for the second concession stand, why not improve the quality of the existing concession stand and have one that was very well run?

While Agnes Storer originally donated the land for Storer Park for mothers and children, and a playground would be in keeping with her intent, a playground for small children next to the open seawall would certainly raise safety concerns in any parent’s mind. Please express your opinion to the City Council.

DREDGING AT NEWPORT SHIPYARD

In January, with little public notice, the Army Corps approved dredging at Newport Shipyard. Concerns about the lead and arsenic levels in the sediment were raised, and safeguards were being taken to contain the area with a sedimentation screen. The process was expedited because of a deadline to put the contaminated sediment in one of the cells on the Providence River before it was sealed January 31. With public fishing from the Causeway and swimming from Elm Street Pier so close by, a follow-up testing by the Department of Environmental Management in May would assure the public that the water is safe for summer recreational activities.
HELP WANTED

The Green Light needs your help! Our editor, Eileen MacKrell, is transferring to Italy in May, and Donna Maytum is fast nearing the end of her term as layout chief. We need to fill both of these positions right away or there won’t be a Green Light summer issue!

Both positions require basic computer skills, reasonable literacy, enough math to count to 20, and the ability to devote a few hours to The Green Light every three months. In other words, most of you reading this could easily handle the work. Plus, you get to work with the talented and fun Green Light staff, which is far and away the best part of the job.

If you’re interested in taking on either position, please get in touch with Eileen at 619-0203 or Donna at 849-4395.

Born on the Point

The Born on the Point program recognizes newborns and others who were Point residents at the time of their birth.

The next round of “Born on the Point” certificates will be presented at the April 29th meeting. Anyone interested in information or applications may contact Bill Hall at 846-4159.

Applications must be returned by March 31st.
Nostalgic Moment from Our Scrapbook

One of Esther Smith's costume parties at the Quaker Tom Robinson house. Miss Smith is in Indian feathers, and Babette is kneeling in the front row. See story p.14.

The Point Association Membership Form

Please make check payable to The Point Association and mail with form to PO Box 451 Newport, RI 02840. A subscription to the Green Light is included with all memberships.

___ Individual $10     ___ Family $15     ___ Subscriber $25     ___ Patron $40

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Phone: ________________________ Fax: ___________________________ Email: _______________________

Mailing Address: __________________________________________________

Second Address (if applicable): ______________________________________

Committees and Activities

Your participation is welcome. Please check the categories of interest to you.

☐ Beautification  ☐ Harbor Watch  ☐ Green Light  ☐ Plant Sale  ☐ Membership
☐ Program/Event Planning  ☐ History and Archives  ☐ Children’s Activities
☐ Publications/Communications/Web  ☐ Neighborhood Watch  ☐ Underground Wires

Spring 2004 The Green Light
SAVE THE DATE

Potluck Supper  Sunday  March 28 6:00 p.m.
Watch your mailbox for the fliers! Bring a dish and come enjoy a potluck supper with your neighbors.

Spring Meeting of the Point Association  Thursday  April 29 7:00 p.m.

Point Spring Cleanup  Saturday  May 1 9:00 a.m.
Meet in Storer Park to help spruce up Storer and Battery Parks.

New Members’ Cocktail Party  Sunday  May 2 6:00 p.m.
Firehouse Theater ~ 4 Equality Park Place

Point Plant Sale  Saturday  May 22 8:30 a.m.

THE GREEN LIGHT
The Point Association
P.O. Box 491
Newport, RI 02840