**Dear Pointers,**

It is with some regret that I write this letter. This will be my last issue of *The Green Light*, as Martha, Cora, and I are moving back to be near our families in Ohio when I finish my Navy career in July. I must admit that I never expected to find myself in the seat as editor when I attended my first Point Association meeting nearly three years ago. I was interested in helping out, and things just snowballed from there! But that's what comes from saying to yourself, “I can do that one small thing,” and raising your hand.

For many, including me, that first step is the hardest. But, as with many things in life, you start off with small steps, and then realize that you actually can do more. Yet one still might ask, “Why should I raise my hand to volunteer for that one small thing, when they're going to keep asking me to do more and more?” Why, indeed? Because that's what volunteering is all about. Some people can do the big things; some only the small things. If all you can do is that one small thing, that's OK. Someone has to do it! And every contribution helps. That's what makes *The Point Association* work, and that's what makes *The Green Light* work. I couldn't have done it by myself, and certainly didn't. And I don't have space here to individually thank all of you who helped, but you know who you are. (Thank you!) And for the rest of our readers out there, how about taking a chance, and raising your hand for that one small thing?——

*Alan*
PRESIDENT’S LETTER

One of the advantages to contributing to a quarterly publication is that it reminds you that there are seasons. Summer brings more than sunshine to Pointers; it also brings an influx of tourists and other temporary migrants. Most of us have mixed feelings as the solstice approaches. The anticipation of warm weather, flowers, boating on the bay is tempered by traffic, noise and humidity.

This issue of The Green Light is bursting with articles relating to the neighborhood’s past and present. Of particular interest are Liz Mathinos’ article about our waterfront and Louisa Boatwright’s column about goings on at city council meetings. The theme in both of these stories is that the city’s infrastructure is crumbling. Here we are on the “Riviera of New England” and most of the Point’s docks and seawalls are falling down from lack of maintenance and the city’s beaches are regularly closed during the summer because of sewage overflow. As the photo on page 6 shows, The Elm Street pier is closed indefinitely because of a sidewalk collapse that the city doesn’t seem to have the ability to repair. Battery Park and the Van Zandt Ave pier are also victims of decay. It’s ironic that these structures were built by our predecessors decades ago, in a city that prides itself on its restoration skills, and yet our generation can’t manage rudimentary repair or timely replacement to our basic structures.

Most Point residents feel frustrated when faced with such visible signs of neglect. What recourse does the average citizen have to display dissatisfaction to public officials? Participation in the biannual election is one method. Once elected, officials can be directly contacted and influenced to bring pressure on departmental managers responsible for the construction and maintenance of city property. However, the current decrepit condition of the city’s infrastructure is a symptom of a problem with roots far longer than the political lifetime of the average elected official. Citizens need to become knowledgeable about the budget development process long before the perfunctory budget “workshops” that city officials hold each year. The budget is more than an accounting tool; it’s a philosophical statement detailing the city’s priorities. The details should be derived from a strategic plan, but that’s where politics muck things up. Groups with a vested interest in an increasing share of the budget make their cases heard loud and clear to city officials. The strategic vision gets blurred and the net result is the perennial “fiscal crisis” that officials blame when walls collapse and streets crumble. What is the purpose of a municipal government if it can’t provide the most basic services to its citizens in a cost-effective and disciplined manner?

The city council recently appointed a citizens’ advisory committee composed of leaders of neighborhood groups. I will be representing the Point neighborhood at the committee’s monthly meetings. The meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7 PM and are open to the public. If you can’t make the meetings you can still make your views about city plans and operations known to me, preferably by email ( ). We can then discuss your issues at the committee meetings and advise the council so that they can develop a long-term plan to maintain and improve the city’s infrastructure.

Jack Maytum, President
The Point Association sends a special “Thank You” to the following members:

**Patrons**
Robert & Christina Agnew  
Bryan & Fran Babcock  
George & Kristina Baer  
Stephen & Merry Preston Barker  
Paul & Sharon Barton  
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Bauer  
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Susan & Charles Sofia  
Thomas Sturtevant  
Don Jody Sutherland  
Peter & Carol Tea  
Robert & Karen Thompson  
Robert & Barbara Vanderhoof  
Suzanne & Dominic Varisco  
Jane MacLeod Walsh  
Court & Jane Wilson  
Paul & Joyce Zimmerman

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**
by Rich and Patricia Carrubba

**Welcome to New Members!**
Paul & Jennifer Butler  
Hinda Perdreaux  
Peter & Carol Tea  
Deborah Mulcare  
Marilyn Miller  
Rita Tobin  
Nick & Becky Reynolds  
Patricia Glazzard  

Anyone interested in joining the Point Association should contact Rich or Patricia at 847-5815
WANTED: A FEW GOOD MEN OR WOMEN

A NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Point Association’s current Nominating Committee, all members of which are new to the task, is looking for a few good men or women who might be interested in the following positions with the Point Association: Treasurer, First Vice-President, and Recording Secretary. These three appointments would begin in late fall and last for two years.

Are there, among the readership of The Green Light, some who may be interested in passing along names of friends or neighbors, or their own name, as suggestions to fill any of the three positions listed above?

The Point Association board meets in Harbor House the first Monday of the month.

A call to one of us on the Nominating Committee—to discuss in general, or a specific possibility—would be very welcome. We would be pleased and grateful for ideas or volunteers. Please call any one of the following:

Mary Jane Rodman - 846 9199
Jeff Marshall - 847 9979
Jane Hence - 847 3767

BORN ON THE POINT

by Bill Hall, History and Archives

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

Certificates were prepared this spring for newborn Shayne Helen Sweeney, as well as for Justin Culkeen Crowley and Ethan Duenisch Crowley, adult children of Carolyn Crowley of New York and Newport.

Anyone interested in information or an application may contact Bill Hall at 846-4159.
WATERFRONT NOTES
by Liz Mathinos

ELM STREET PIER CLOSED!

Because of severe winter erosion to the seawall and sidewalk resulting in damage undermining the entrance to Elm Street Pier, the area has been fenced off, and the pier will be closed until necessary repairs are done, another costly repair for the city in this time of fiscal crisis. The city is working with the Preservation Society to find a way to repair the seawall and walkway. Access to Elm Street Pier may be in jeopardy this summer if it cannot be repaired.

BATTERY PARK SEAWALL

The seawall at the base of Battery Park continues to deteriorate, though slowly. While there is no imminent danger of collapse, money to repair the wall and prevent the park from falling into the harbor has not been found.

CLAIM AGAINST CITY ABOUT WASHINGTON STREET EXTENSION

On the May 11, 2005, City Council docket, the Reagans and Moys, abutters of the Washington Street Extension, filed a claim against the city, asking for an estimated 6600 square feet of this city street and unspecified damages. Joe DeAngelis of the Tillinghast Licht law firm of Providence is their attorney.

The question is—if the City Council never formally voted to abandon this street and did not go through the required process per RI General Statutes, how can this claim have merit? It was the abutters who requested the abandonment in a letter to the City Council, dated December 6, 2001, which was denied.

Keep posted. And let all City Councilors know how you stand on this attempt to take a city street.
The damaged sidewalk and seawall behind Hunter House, adjacent to the Elm Street pier.

The seawall and sidewalk behind the Hunter House are falling in and very dangerous. The City initiated a repair to this site, but the heavy equipment being used for the repair did further damage. Although a priority, the repairs depend on the weather and resources. No additional seawall or pier repairs are expected at this time because of the City's current financial constraints. [Editor's Note: See the Waterfront Notes for related information.]

Pointers enjoyed good food and excellent company at the spring Potluck Supper (above) on April 3 at Harbor House and at the New Member Cocktail Party (below) on May 15 at the Firehouse Theater. Special thanks to Jack and Donna Maytum for their support for these two annual events.
THANK YOU, SARAH
by Isabel Griffith

I couldn’t believe it when the “For Sale” sign appeared in front of one of the Point’s most charming houses. Sarah is moving? The Gills are leaving? Oh horrors! This can’t be happening! Sarah is always there—at Point Board meetings, at every Point event, with camera in hand, snapping pictures and writing down names. And, in response to, “Can you take care of that?” her answer is always, “Yes, sure, I’ll put it in my book.”

The Gills moved to Newport via Singapore and Connecticut largely because of their friends, Maureen and Patrick Toohey. The two families moved back to the states together, having met in Singapore. As Sarah explains, “Our children were in kindergarten together; we reconnected in Rhode Island.” Sarah and Tony fell in love with Newport after one visit and bought the first and only house they saw in 1998. Their friendship with the Tooheys continues as they are neighbors on the Point.

Sarah was quickly swept up into Point affairs, first recruited to The Green Light by Suzanne Varisco. As Coordinator of Events for the Point Association, Sarah has made herself invaluable as a Board member and all-round cheerleader for volunteers. “You can’t just sit back; everybody should do something.” Sarah advocates being an example to your child. “We need more people to get involved; there are lots of small jobs that don’t take a lot of time.” She has the impression that people’s attitudes about volunteering and neighborhood responsibilities are not what they used to be. “Everyone should go to at least one Point Association Board meeting. You learn lots about the island; things said in passing keep you in the loop.”

And so the move is on. The Gills will be living in the exotic Middletown Community of Easton’s Point. We will miss Sarah’s enthusiasm, her irreverent sense of humor, her “can-do” attitude, and her devotion the Point. Thank you, Sarah, and keep in touch!

Editor’s Note: Point Association Board meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the library of Harbor House on Washington Street. From the parking lot, come to the entrance with the ramp and push the button for Library. Someone will let you in. Like to become a volunteer? Check the events listed in each issue of The Green Light or get in touch with any Board member.
THE 225th ANNIVERSARY OF ROCHEAMBEAU’S LANDING

by Deb Mulcare

Landing of the troops in Newport on the 11th of July 1780.”

This year marks the 225th anniversary of the arrival of 5,000 French troops in the City of Newport. They were led by General Joseph-Charles Rochambeau and had been sent to aid the young continental states in their war against the British. The French forces arrived in Newport on July 11, 1780, and soon thereafter were blockaded in Newport Harbor by the British. General Washington wanted to plan an immediate attack upon New York, but Rochambeau felt more troops were needed and so sent his son, Vicomte Rochambeau, to France to petition for more men. The remaining French spent the winter in Newport forming many friendships. Rochambeau made his headquarters in the Vernon Mansion on Mary Street while the commander of the French fleet, Admiral de Ternay, made his headquarters in the Hunter House on Washington Street.

General Washington came to Newport on March 6, 1781, in a second effort to persuade the French to attack New York. By June 1781, Rochambeau had agreed, and moved his troops to the shores of the Hudson River for training with the Continental troops. From there they marched to the Battle of Yorktown, where the French proved themselves to be the deciding factor in the victory over the British. The strategy of the campaign was Rochambeau’s, and the French Navy and Army outnumbered the Continental force almost four to one. Although Rochambeau was considered the architect of this victory, he cited Washington as the Commander-in-Chief and the victor.

I refer the interested reader to the Fall 2003-Spring 2004 Journal of The Newport Historical Society, which provides much detail about the French experience in Newport. Many anniversaries of the French stay in Newport have been celebrated over the years. This year, a reenactment of Rochambeau’s encampment at Fort Adams will be on July 9-10. Activities will include skirmishes, drills, demonstrations, and tactical exercises.

(Both images are from a 1955 souvenir program, with captions as they originally appeared, and noted as “Courtesy of State Trust Company.”)
A CENTENNIAL FOR NINA LYNETTE HOME
by Marcia Mallory

The year 2005 is one of anniversaries. The Point Association is celebrating its 50th birthday while the Nina Lynette Home is turning 100. Several events this summer will honor the occasion at the Nina Lynette Home, including a Victorian garden party and an open house.

The home was founded in 1905 by a group of Newport citizens, including Mrs. W. Watts Sherman, Mrs. George Peabody Wetmore, Mr. and Mrs. Lorillard Spencer, and the King’s Daughters (an ecumenical philanthropic guild). The house at 87 Washington Street was purchased in 1906 for $8,000 with gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Spencer and the estates of Abby Spooner and Emma Goff. The home is named after Nina and Lynette, two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer. They died at a young age in an accident when the family was traveling in France.

Before becoming the Nina Lynette Home, the house had been used as a residential school for boys. Dr. Child, the rector of Zion Episcopal Church (formerly located in the building that is now the Jane Pickens Theater), purchased the land in 1854. As mentioned in The Newport Daily News on June 26, 1879, “St. John’s House has become an institution in Newport and is known far and wide as an admirable training school for boys. They are received into Dr. Child’s family and have his personal care constantly. They are not only educated but are cultured also.”

After the school closed, the building was used as a private residence before the Nina Lynette Home purchased it in 1906. According to the records of the home, “in 1906 the estate on the corner of Washington and Cherry Street was purchased and the house upon it put through repair and furnished for occupancy, but owing to the lack of funds, it was not opened to inmates until 1909, beginning with three gradually increasing to 13”.

Yes, the original residents were called “inmates.” The original home was established as a sort of “poor house” to care for elderly who were in need. In the days before Social Security, there was a need for many such homes. According to the 1937 by-laws, the Nina Lynette Home was open to respectable aged persons of either sex who were without means of support. They needed to be 65 or older and have lived in Newport County for 20 years. There was an admission fee of $500 (perhaps for the truly destitute, this fee was raised through charity). Persons entering the home were required to deposit all their other money at the Saving Bank of Newport, and the interest was to be paid to the inmates for their own use. Records show that “Residents who have money and, in the judgment of the House committee, can afford to do so shall buy their own bus tickets from the Matron at a reduced rate.”

People who were admitted to the home were assured of total care. Records from 1956 indicate a matron, a practical nurse, a part-time cook, and a part-time maid cared for the residents. A doctor on the staff looked after the residents as needed. If hospitalization or nursing home care was required, the Nina Lynette Home paid for these expenses. The home also paid for funeral expenses, and a headstone in Island Cemetery displays the names of some of the residents who were buried there. In reading old minutes of the board meetings, one finds the topics discussed included which residents needed new clothes, new teeth, dresser scarves, or treatment for an ingrown toenail.

Once Social Security became available, the home had to decide whether the residents should be able to keep these funds or turn the money over to the Nina Lynette Home. In 1958, it was decided that such monies be-
longed to the home. Fortunately, Social Security also eliminated much of the extreme poverty among the elderly, and the Nina Lynette Home changed its method of operation. Starting in 1961, some residents began paying a certain amount for room and board and were able to keep their own savings; the home gradually switched over completely to this method of operation.

As it celebrates its 100th birthday, the Nina Lynette Home continues in the spirit of the original founders, but with many updates and improvements. The third floor is now an apartment for the director, Julie Truver, and her husband Vinnie. All rooms have private baths, and some of the accommodations include suites. The current capacity is for seven or eight residents, both men and woman. With its Victorian charm, family style meals, and the friendly staff, the Nina Lynette Home provides a true home to those fortunate enough to be living there.
ADIEU TO MADAME AUBOIS
by Jane MacLeod Walsh

One of our cherished long-time Point residents died on February 7, 2005, at age 92. Although she was born in France and spent her early years there, Suzanne Welte Aubois had lived on Washington Street since 1949 when she arrived in Newport as a young widow with her three young children, Jean Francois, Marie, and Vincent. She had been active in the French Resistance during World War II and was happy to settle in our peaceful neighborhood.

Madame Aubois was a teacher par excellence. She started me off on a lifetime interest in and love of all things French when I started taking private French lessons from her as a child of 8 or 9. We would sit at a big round table upstairs in the Hunter House, where she and her family were living while the house was first undergoing restoration before it was opened to the public by the fledgling Preservation Society. She was such a good teacher and her love of her native country and its culture was so infectious that this pupil went on to major in French in college and become a French teacher herself. I imagine that Suzanne inspired untold numbers of her students to follow similar paths, as she gave private and group lessons for many years and also taught at the Portsmouth Priory (as it was called then), Elmhurst Academy, and Vernon Court Junior College. Her French classes were always fun. She had a keen wit but was a good disciplinarian as well, and she knew how to keep obstreperous teenagers in line with just one withering look that told you she really meant business.

After two years at the Hunter House, Suzanne and her family moved into the rambling stucco house at 86 Washington Street, where my French lessons continued. Her daughter Marie was just about my age, and we had become fast friends. I always loved visiting the family there, with enticing French cooking odors emanating from Suzanne’s kitchen. She was such a good raconteur that visits with her were always filled with jollity and laughter, even in her later years when she became quite frail. She took great delight then in reminding people about silly things they’d done at various stages in their lives, and always encouraged her visitors, “Parlez en français!”

We will miss this warm and charming spirit, a courageously independent woman who contributed so much to her community and inspired generations of students with her great wit, intelligence, and enthusiasm.

THE SECRET GARDEN TOUR
Join the Fun! It’s a hard job, but everybody’s welcome to try their hand at it – you sit in the shade at the garden gate for 2-3 hours and greet people who come to visit the Point’s lovely gardens. Skills required: a big smile and a friendly disposition. A fancy hat helps add to the mood, it seems. In return, you will receive a free ticket to the tour, as well as a few bonuses. One of the sponsors of The Secret Garden Tour this year is the White Horse Tavern – they’ve cooked up a voucher for a 2-for-1 luncheon offer that volunteers will be able to enjoy any time in 2005. To sign up for a shift, contact Myra Duvally at 847-0514. Bring a friend along. Helping hands would be useful too, at the Strawberry Social, as house sitters for the open houses, and as assistants at the ticket desk at the start of each day.

June 17th (Friday) Noon to 5 PM
June 18th (Saturday) 10 AM to 5 PM
June 19th (Sunday) Noon to 5 PM

Tickets are $20 in advance, $25 at the gate and are valid for all 3 days. There is also a group rate of $18 for parties of 15 or more.

Tel: 401-847-5681  Fax: 401-848-4508

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GARDENING ON THE POINT
by Joan Simmons and Marcia Mallory

Ready to plant some annuals, but tired of the same old thing? Have you seen too many petunias and geraniums? Yes, there are some new choices. Sometimes it is hard to break out from the “tried and true,” but the adventurous have many options. If you haven’t noticed, container gardening has become quite popular, and for those on the Point with small yards, it is a great option.

One trend this year is the use of foliage plants, rather than just flowers. Coleus now comes in many distinctive shades and markings. If your container will be in sun, there are now several coleus varieties developed for sun. Just ask! Other foliage plants, such as sweet potato vine, licorice, and plectranthus are beautiful when seen in hanging window boxes or other containers. Tall grasses are also impressive when used as the focal point in a container.

As for flowering annuals, many other options exist beyond the “usual.” Some species that are good for use in a sunny location are lantana, penta, angelonia, and bacopa. In fact, a new impatiens variety, “Spellbound”, will grow in either sun or shade. It comes in eight colors and can trail two feet or more. Other possibilities for sun are dentata (a trailer in dark red), scaveola (a trailer that does well by the ocean), million bells (tiny petunia-like flowers that trail), and diascia (heat and drought tolerant masses of small flowers in many different colors). All of the above are carefree and require no deadheading.

If you are looking for flowers for the shade, the “old standby,” impatiens, now comes in many exciting new colors. The variety “Fusion” comes in five colors, including bright yellow and apricot. Other possibilities are New Guinea impatiens, begonias, lamium (a trailer), and fuchias.

Vegetables will also add color and texture to containers. A few possibilities include trailing cherry tomatoes, colored Swiss chard, climbing beans, kales, and colorful lettuces.

Happy Gardening!
What is “art” as opposed to “craft”? “Skill” or “work”? When the labor at hand has grace, style, originality, passion, longevity, and a limited number of creators, that transformation to “art” occurs. Just as with needlework and quilting, stone carving has passed that line of common labor to artistic endeavor. In the words of James Wermuth in his *Newport Daily News* column “Preservation Matters,” “Newport is a sanctuary for creative minds... unusually large number of cabinetmakers, silversmiths and upholsterers... architects, engravers, painters and writers....” He likes to think Newport resounds with this spirit of creativity because of the founding premise of religious tolerance. Maybe, though I think it has more to do with Newport’s location, its beauty, the sea air, and the fact that Newport was a thriving center of commerce and wealth during the early 18th century. The John Stevens Shop at 29 Thames Street exemplifies Newport’s special spirit of creativity.

John Stevens moved his family to Newport in 1705 when he was 55. He was a stone mason and made his living building foundations, fireplace chimneys, hearths, and tombstones. His initial efforts were indeed humble. In fact, we are able to trace his progress when walking through the Common Burying Ground to see that he refined his skill and became an accomplished stone carver.

Fortunately, the Shop was owned and operated by members of the Stevens family from 1705 to 1927. Four old account books have been preserved and tell a fascinating history of the shop from 1727-1794. (See Newport Historical Society *Bulletin*, October 1963, for a complete account by Esther Fischer Benson.) Originally paid in cloth (silk as well as calico), thread, molasses, rum, lime, nails, and livestock as well as pounds and shillings, the account books trace both the work produced and the lifestyle of the Stevens family. Slaves and Native Americans were employed in the shop.

John the second had his own style. His carving is very sure, strong, and probably quick. His cherubs are distinctive, his borders repeat on hundreds of stones, and lowercase letters appear in the inscriptions. His flat ledgerstones (6’ by 3’ slabs) are where his creativity flourishes, and many prominent members of the city commissioned these works of art, which were covered with neat lowercase letters to make an attractive overall pattern on the surface and often contained coats of arms. After John the first died at the age of 89, John the second built the business into a thriving enterprise. He invested in real estate and rented properties. His payments were often in beef, candlesticks, coffee, tea, veal, and chocolate. He was 43 years old when he married. His third child, John the third, began cutting stones in his teens and signed every stone he cut “John Stevens Jun’r.” A conscious artist, his work is quite different, much less traditional and displays a vein of whimsical humor.

By this time, the Revolution had gained momentum.
John the third felt it intensely and allied himself with the Revolutionaries although there is no evidence he was a soldier. The English were in Newport when his father died in 1778. At 25, John the third was shouldering responsibility for the shop, his mother, and his extended family. Gravestones were the principal activity. He married in 1784 and his youngest son, Philip, took over running the shop. Newport was in a serious depression by this time and the account books show payment in cords of wood, fish of all kinds, and no meat at all. Philip had four sons, three of whom were involved in the declining business at varying times.

Creativity returned in the 20th century when John H Benson purchased the shop and all the tools in it from a brother-in-law of the last Stevens in 1927. Benson had studied in New York City for five years at the National Academy of Art and Design and the Art Student’s League and had always been fascinated with the early headstones he had seen in Newport’s cemeteries. He had a particular fondness for lettering, especially the classic form of the ancients. So began a 30-year involvement.

J. H. Benson taught himself the traditional methods of stone carvers, using a wooden mallet to delicately hammer a chisel into slate. He became a Professor of Design and Calligraphy at RISD. Despite a passion for sculpture, his son John “Fud” Benson took over the shop at a young age when his father died. At 23, Fud was asked to carve the inscription in the John F Kennedy Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. In the late 1990s, he completed another memorial, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington.

Fud’s son, Nick Benson, just completed the engraving on the World War II Memorial, the only 20th century event commemorated on the center axis of the National Mall in Washington, DC. As Brian Comfort explains in Newport This Week, “Although it seems very symmetrical and geometrically perfect, the beauty of the letters, Nick said, was in their tiny imperfections and the way they work best as a perfect whole, rather than a collection of individual, imperfect letters...Regardless of the leaps and bounds technology is taking, it’s never going to stack up to the human element....You don’t want machines doing that work if you want something that has life. The method is the end product.” The lettering is painted free-hand with a brush upon the stone, giving it a rhythm and motion that is then continued with the chisel. The revered “Johns Stevens Shop aesthetic,” with its classical leanings, is the broad umbrella under which creativity occurs with tools that have been in constant use for three hundred years by skilled artists with a reverence for the materials and tradition they keep alive and develop for future generations. This aesthetic is what makes stone carving an art.

On a recent visit to the John Stevens Shop, the door was open to the morning sun in the back courtyard. Nick was working on a very large piece. With the rhythmic tink, tink, tink of the chisel on stone from his associate Paul Russo in the background, Nick reminisced about growing up on the Point in the 1960s when small shops were scattered throughout. His great admiration and love for his grandparents were apparent, as well as his enthusiasm for the art he carries on. J. H. held Feasts throughout the year honoring the solstices. Nick, to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the John Stevens Shop, is planning a Feast of St John to commemorate the Summer Solstice. In the tradition of his Grandfather, of course!

Bibliography:
As I settled into the comfortable sofa in Kay O’Brien’s living room, with a notepad on my lap, intending to ask about the life of this very visible, interesting, and cherished figure on the Point, my plans immediately went astray.

Very much in character, Kay remarked, in her quiet, measured, and very firm voice, that she would like to begin by first discussing her views on the Point Association and the Point.

Kay, thinking aloud, referred to the original goal when the Association was formed—to be a method of welcoming all who live here, to address relevant issues as they come up, and to create a sense of neighborhood. These goals, the Point, and the Association are subjects we all know are still dear to her heart and also, I soon discovered, a source of concern for her. Kay feels that right now, the Point Association is undergoing a bit of a crisis because those who live here are not as involved as they have been in the recent past. She wonders aloud if it is due to the fast pace of the world, if people are too busy, or if perhaps the image of the Point Association is not an accurate one. Clearly these things have been on her mind for some time. Are the planned activities perhaps not appealing enough, or various enough?

As our discussion ranged in one direction and another, again and again the wish and need for input, suggestions, a small beginning of an idea or perhaps one long held, clearly became a most important needed piece of this puzzle. Certainly any thoughts passed along would be most welcome.

We both agree that the August cocktail party is always a great success, providing a comfortable and beautiful place—the Villa Marina—to see old friends, old and new neighbors, and to meet some of those new to the Point. This is a perfect opportunity to ask someone we do not know well to come along with us; we question how many do this. We wonder if the spirit of this occasion could be repeated in different forms. Kay vividly remembers the Willow Street “street fair” when the street was closed to traffic and all kinds of old-fashioned attractions were displayed; when one could bring the family and spend a good part of the day or just a short time looking, buying, and having picnics. Perhaps block parties could be a welcome revival, a little twist on the old tradition.

Kay remembers that there used to be block captains, who were in charge of knowing when someone moved into and out of their neighborhood. There used to be informal “walks around the Point” from time to time—easy gatherings of interested people listening to someone describing, for instance, who lived in that lovely old house, who used to have a most wonderful garden, who lived there and did that very interesting thing for a living, or who has a wonderful collection of something. Many among us have this knowledge and would doubtless be delighted to share it.

There also used to be gatherings in someone’s living room to hear “oral histories.” Kay and I both recognize that some of these stories and histories will be forever lost unless in some way or another, they are passed along for others to remember.

Kay and her husband bought the house where she still lives in 1980, which is when Kay first volunteered to work on The Green Light. She has done so ever since, despite the fact that five years ago she officially retired. This was charmingly commemorated in an article in The Green Light, written by Loretta Goldrick.

Kay’s house is a welcoming, fascinating one, filled with bits and pieces that have a history and a story to go along. This is also a good description of Kay herself. Her furniture and rugs and paintings and other treasures have been gathered from friends and relatives, from far places and near. Some are old and some less old, but all are cherished by Kay and fit together as
comfortably as the thoughts in her head. Kay is a great walker-about and in the process she meets people she knows and those she soon will. We also agree that sitting on a front porch, if one is lucky enough to have one, accomplishes the same bit of magic.

(To be continued)

P.S. Please call or write to The Green Light editor, the Point Association board, Kay, or whomever you would like, but please, one way or another, let us know your thoughts on how to increase involvement in the Point Association. It will be most appreciated and certainly welcome.

THANKS, NEIGHBORS
Rebuilding Together on The Point

On Friday, April 29th and Saturday, April 30th the Ambassador Committee of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce, along with over 20 other volunteers, cleaned, painted and planted at Mini Young's House on Gladding Court. The project was part of Rebuilding Together 2005, a national project that takes place on the last Saturday of April every year. The committee would like to thank everyone on both Gladd and Sunshine Courts for your patience while they were working as well as your willingness to lend water, electricity and your driveways!!!
FAVORITE RECIPES  by Kit Weiss

Scones with English Clotted Cream - Yes, you can make your own clotted cream!

Forget all that talk about spring’s arrival and your mind turning to flights of fancy. This spring took its own sweet time, but now that it is here, let’s get earnest about being outdoors. This is the time to invite all the other cooped up citizens out into the yard and get serious about tea. What is tea if it isn’t the best (and by the way – simplest)?

SCONES
Cut 1/3 cup butter into 3 cups flour, 1/2 cup sugar, and 2 Tbsp. baking powder until it forms pea size bits. In another bowl, mix together 1 cup cream, 2 eggs, and 1/3 cup white raisins.

Mix everything together. DON’T OVER MIX. It must be moist enough to really hold together. Roll it out good and thick. Cut out with any nice size can – or if you really are a cook, go ahead and use that round cookie cutter you have at the back of the drawer. Place in a pan that allows them to touch. If they don’t, they will spread out all over the place. Now for the important bit: Let it rest for 45 minutes. Bake at 325° for 20 – 25 minutes. Makes about 12.

ENGLISH CLOTTED CREAM
This is actually a Devonshire Cream recipe taught to the Devonshire people by the pixies. Hey, I’m not making this stuff up! This must be made the day before (or two or three). Then when you serve your scones, be sure to put the jam on first and the cream on top.

Mix 1 1/2 cups whipping cream with 1 1/2 quarts milk and put in a wide shallow pan. Leave in a cool place (not the refrigerator) for several hours so the cream can rise. I simply leave it on the stove. Cook on the lowest heat for about an hour. The cream will become a rich golden color. Carefully remove from heat, cover and place in a cool place overnight. Don’t use a lipped cookie sheet. I tried that and carrying it to the basement to cool overnight was a disaster. In the morning, use a slotted spoon to skim off the cream. Store in a covered container in the refrigerator. The leftover milk can be used for cooking. (What? I can’t imagine.) This cream is so yummy and so rich I think I will go make some. If you make it several days ahead, it firms up quite nicely.

You know that famous closing, “Bon Appetit”? Well I’ll just close with, “Good Luck.”
Nostalgic Moment from our Scrapbook

WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU CELEBRATION

Fifty years ago, in early July 1955, Newport celebrated the 175th anniversary of General Rochambeau’s arrival with a variety of events. The City was host to the French battleship Jean Bart, a wreath-laying was held, and the ship’s officers and men were feted at a series of parties and receptions. A parade was held, ending at the Old Colony House. The French Ambassador, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Governor gave several addresses, and also lunched at the Hunter House. Also on the Point were strolling musicians, and a colonial costume promenade along Washington Street, which ended with a judging contest at the Hunter House. Finally, four Washington Street “Old Point” homes—the Warren House, Robinson House, Dennis House, and Finch House—were open to tours for a single day on Sunday, July 10th. Do any of our readers recall attending these events?
SAVE THE DATE
Point Association events

Point Picnic  Wednesday  June 22  6 p.m.
Join your neighbors at the home of Lyn & Peggy Comfort at 62 Washington St.

Members’ Cocktail Party  Thursday  August 25  6-8 p.m.
Enjoy this late-summer gathering at The Sanford-Covell Villa Marina, 72 Washington St.

Other great events

Secret Garden Tour of the Point  Friday-Sunday  June 17-19  Hours vary
Explore some ten private gardens and—new this year!—tour selected homes. Enjoy a Strawberry Social! Call 847-0514 for information or to volunteer for this annual fundraiser.

St John’s Summer Fair  Saturday  July 30  10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Attractions include a silent auction; baked goods, food, and gourmet items; white elephant tables; children’s games and face painting; and used books, crafts, and plants for sale. Call 848-2561 for information or to volunteer for this popular family event.

THE GREEN LIGHT
The Point Association
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