The Point Association
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; and promoting public policies that strengthen all of Newport's neighborhoods.

COVER: The New Van Zandt Pier. Photo by Jane Hence.
PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We had a few cold days in December, and a little snow at an inconvenient time, but as I look at the ten-day forecast for February and see every day above freezing I feel the need for some knowledgeable confirmation of an old gardener's hunch.... It's warmer now; spring is earlier. So, here is what I found on “googling” hardiness zones, USA.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the definitive hardiness zone map in 1990. That is the one you see in all the garden and seed catalogs. It has Newport in Zone 6 with coldest temperatures of zero to minus ten degrees Fahrenheit.

HOWEVER, The National Arbor Day Foundation published a map in 2006 showing the change in hardiness zones since 1990. Most regions of the country moved up one zone and some more than one. Newport is now considered zone 7 with the coldest temperatures of ten to zero degrees Fahrenheit, putting it in the same zone with Albuquerque, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, Nashville, NYC and Tulsa. Spring on the Point will be from February 15 till April 15 this year. Ah, vindication! The (last?) Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, May 10.

People on the Point often walk in the street rather than on the sidewalks. Considering our sidewalks, it is sometimes safer — a good thing, too, as we had no choice during the December snows. With so many neighbors in Florida or other warm places for the winter, not many sidewalks were shoveled. Pointers are wonderfully tolerant of the diversity of living styles in our neighborhood, with NOISE being one notable exception. We ignore peeling paint when we know people can’t always afford to keep up their houses. And, we deal with unshoveled sidewalks when we know the “part-timers” are away or the “stayers” are physically unable to move the snow. I am among the lucky residents of the Point with good neighbors who help me shovel when we have a really heavy snowfall.

The Van Zandt Pier reconstruction is complete! It looks wonderful. The accessibility ramp is a great addition and a tribute to the determination to make this a pier everyone can enjoy. Van Zandt Pier and Elm Street Pier are among the places where volunteers, including Pointers, are collecting water samples to be analyzed for coliform bacteria.

The Point Association is making preparations for a membership drive. If you would like to help with this effort, please contact me or Corresponding Secretary, Peter Tea.

Check out our web site at www.thepointassociation.org

Signatures
THE BOOK LIGHT
by Suzanne Varisco

We know that spring is just around the corner, because our calendars tell us so, even if our current weather belies that prediction. And so, in the firm belief that gentler days are coming soon, we turn to the subject of springtime reading. Once again, both titles are now in paperback.

Our fiction choice for spring is *The Master*, Colm Tóibín's biographical novel about Henry James' London years, during which his attempt to write and produce a play proved to be even less successful than the conflicting relationships in his personal life.

Chosen by the *New York Times* as one of the "Ten Best Books of 2004," *The Master* was pronounced "a marvel," by author John Updike, writing in the *New Yorker*. The *Times* reviewer called it "impressive and moving," a "lovely portrait of the artist," which is "rich in fictional truth."

For nonfiction, we have selected *Three Cups of Tea*, in which Greg Mortenson and journalist David Oliver Relin tell the story of Mortenson's rescue from a near-death mountain climbing experience by a group of northern Pakistani villagers, his desire to repay them by building a school, and the results of that effort.

*Publisher's Weekly* described this book as "captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships." According to the *Washington Post*, it is "a swashbuckling, sprawling adventure tale (despite its pinky-raising title)." While not uncritical of Mr. Relin's prose, this reviewer found that "Mr. Mortenson's mis-

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**Items of Interest**

- The Henry James Society's 2008 Conference is scheduled for July 9 - 13 at Salve Regina University. To learn more, go to http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/english/Jamesian%20Strands.htm

- Edwin Yoder's *Lions at Lamb House* (Europa 2007), also recommended, imagines the interplay between two 19th-century superstars, had Sigmund Freud ever come to visit Henry James.

Please join us to talk about these books. As always, we encourage drop-ins and urge you to bring a friend. If you have a question you'd like to ask, or a suggestion you'd like to offer, I'm available at srvarisco@aol.com and 841-5220.
Thursday, December 13, 2007, will long be remembered as "The Little Storm That Could" — a mere 8 inches, give or take, of snow that paralyzed the major hubs of Boston and Providence. Eight inches is like a hors d'oeuvre for Vermont but became a 5 course banquet for Massachusetts and Rhody. The powers that be panicked with the forecasting and let most of the school children and assorted workers out early — at approximately the same time, in the early to mid afternoon. This resulted in a glut of vehicular traffic snarling all the major roads with the unintended consequences of blocking the snowplows from even getting on the roads — in many cases to do their jobs.

My wife and I were unexpected voyeurs of this scene in Boston. We had made plans to visit the Museum of Fine Arts for the Napoleon show that afternoon and had booked into the Marriott Hotel at Copley Square about noon on Thursday. By 1:00 p.m., we caught the metro from Copley Square to the M.F.A. just as the snow was starting to fall heavily. We were no sooner inside the museum when the loud speaker announced that the museum would be closing early at 3:00 p.m. due to the anticipated fury of the approaching storm. So by 3:15 p.m. we were back out on Huntington Avenue which was thronged with students, apparently let out early from Northeastern University. The inbound platform for the metro was jammed with students and others waiting for the train — which never came! We later found out that the above ground service of the metro shut down throughout the city.

The afternoon was actually quite pleasant — not too cold with not much wind and a soft snow that wasn’t slippery. So we decided to walk back to Copley Square along Huntington Avenue — about a mile or so. As we walked, we were witness to the birth of a major gridlock on the outbound lanes of the throughway. Cars pouring out of downtown Boston came to a grinding halt right in front of our eyes. Taxis, school buses and trucks added to the cacophony of angry horns blended with the tunes of Christmas coming from the storefronts. Adventurous souls pulled off onto the side streets, thinking to make an easy escape, only to grind to a halt within a few feet. The saddest sights of all were the few snowplows we saw, loaded to the gunnels, stuck plumb in the middle of this mess with nowhere to go and no room to maneuver. By the time we arrived at the hotel, literally nothing was moving. Apparently many cars were simply abandoned or ran out of gas. I wonder about the state of mind of the taxi patrons — did the meters keep ticking away? Also, all those school buses chock full of students with no toilet facilities?? And who said they didn’t want to join the snowbirds for their annual winter migration south?

N.B. An item in the newspaper a few days later reported that more than 680 Boston schoolchildren were left stranded at their bus stop pick up the following morning when 70 of "Boston's finest" bus drivers skipped work, calling in sick or taking a personal leave day. GO FIGURE!!
76 THIRD STREET
by Jane G. Marchi

One of the more salient characteristics of the Point area is that it reveals a wide diversification of architectural styles, as well as histories. Who knows what led to a given façade? Or what story it could tell?

One of these "typical" Point houses is my own at 76 Third Street. Located on the corner of Third and Battery Street, it looks like many another Point house, with a narrow front porch and white picket fence along the street. Who would guess that family lore credits its origins to Fort Adams, where, in a one-story cottage incarnation, it served as officer's quarters up to and through the Civil War? In the wake of that war, Fort Adams underwent one of its 19th-century renovations to update and improve its facilities. In the process these cottages were sold off, whereupon this one was bought by Pitt Southwick, who had it floated across the Bay to the Blue Rocks and towed to its present location. All that history can tell us is that there was no "structure" on this site in 1859; but one appeared in 1870.

At this point, my great-grandfather, Albert Gardner Groff, enters the picture. Born in Newport in 1834 as part of a large family, he was apprenticed to a ship's carpenter to learn the trade, while just a teenager. This may have been to one of his brothers, three of whom were connected with the boat-building business. When the Civil War broke out, Albert went to New York to offer his services at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Thus, when he was later drafted, the Navy opted that he serve by continuing on at the yard. He married during the war, returned to Newport in 1865, and went to work as a carpenter for the Old Colony Railroad.

However, Albert and his wife (Sarah Hazard Allen) were starting a family and needed a house. This they found at 76 Third Street, most probably rented from Pitt Southwick, and where my grandfather, Albert Gardner Groff Jr., was born in 1871. My grandfather often talked about attending his first school at 71 Third Street, located diagonally across the street just south of Sunshine Court.

This original house consisted of a long rectangle, situated with the rear side flush with Battery Street to the north, so that the front of the house could face its yard on the south. Inside, the floor plan was a simple one: a long, narrow "front room," or parlor, that ran width-Continued on Page 18
HELENA STURTEVANT: AQUIDNECK ISLAND VIEWS
by Kay O'Brien

In 1996, the Newport Art Museum showed 62 paintings from the collection of Helena Sturtevant and there's a connection to the very successful Secret Garden Tour. The latter is sponsored by the Benefactors of the Arts, and provides the opportunity each June for Newporters and visitors to experience the special gardens of the Point.

Monies from the tour are devoted to supporting programs in the arts for Aquidneck Island schoolchildren. So in 1996, all the fifth-grade classes visited the Newport Art Museum to see the exhibit of Helena Sturtevant, who devoted so much of her life to Newport children's art education.

In the Spring 1996 issue of the Green Light, Anne Reynolds reported on the exhibit:

“Miss Sturtevant studied at home in Middletown with a tutor and remained there except for training in Paris. The body of her work dwells on fields and farms, seascapes, and the town and country buildings of Newport and the island that made her personal landscape.

Fifth graders on the island have studied the history of Newport and they are now invited by the Benefactors of the Arts to come to the museum with their teachers. They enjoy naming the buildings and locating them on a large floor map and then drawing the buildings themselves.

When she died in 1946, Rabbi Jules Lipshole of Touro Synagogue wrote a long letter to the Newport Daily News recalling “an amiable individual, a warm-hearted personality saturated with dynamic humanitarianism and a pious love for her friends of every creed, color and faith. Her memory will be a recollection of useful and meritorious existence.” Now fifty years later this beloved woman, by the legacy of her painting, enriches anew the lives of children and grandchildren of the people she loved so much.”

Herb Rommel was asked to photograph the Helena Sturtevant collection, and the color prints of the paintings, like the Hunter House featured here, are in the Point Association Archives.

These original paintings belong to the city and are permanently hung at City Hall. They might brighten your spirits when paying your taxes.

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In the last issue of the *Green Light*, I talked about the marvelous intellectual opportunity that Salve Regina University presents to the "island locals". The focus then was on the Circle of Scholars. Today the equally impressive subject is the Pell Center and what it offers as an Alzheimer's suppressant.

Salve Regina University was chartered by the State of R.I. in 1934, under the sponsorship of the Sisters of Mercy. From an initial class of 58 students, the University has grown in leaps and bounds to embrace associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees and a PhD in Humanities, with 2500 men and women students from 37 states and 17 countries.

The Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy was established at Salve Regina University by an Act of the U.S. Congress in 1996 to honor Senator Claiborne Pell upon his retirement from a distinguished 36 year career as U.S. Senator from R.I. Prominent among Senator Pell's many achievements during his tenure was an unwavering commitment to:

- A global, future-oriented vision focused on the complex problems of an interdependent world
- Public service in the public interest
- Helping people through practical solutions to everyday problems, i.e., the Pell grants
- Furthering the values of peace, freedom and human dignity.

The Pell Center set about espousing these commitments by applying multilateral solutions to international problems, examining the influences and consequences of globalization, responding to security and conflict resolutions, enhancing environmental protection and supporting the arts, humanities and education.

Since 2004, the Executive Director, Dr. Peter Liotta - a truly Renaissance man - has been at the helm, driving the Pell Center as it integrates locally within the University’s faculty and student population, as well as internationally, to create a world center for free and honest debate about America’s role in the world.

The above is the preamble to the gist of this article. Besides all the high powered intellectual education taking place a the University, the Pell Center presents a series of public lectures on some of the most pressing issues at the local, national and global levels. All lectures are free and open to the public. The talks are held at the completely renovated Young Building on Bellevue Avenue, acquired by the University in 1997. This also is the location of the courses for the Circle of Scholars.

My wife and I have attended many of these lectures over the past several years. All have been outstanding but often times, by their very core curriculum, depressing and worrisome. It ain't all milk and honey in the world out there, Bunky! But it sure beats game shows, sitcoms, and Imus. Tempus Fugit.
IS IT DINNER YET??
by Kit Weiss

If you are an everyday cook like myself, you have tricks that
taste great but don’t take any effort. So you have all been
with me long enough to know I have some of those tricks.

Company’s coming?? No problem. Go to the store. Buy:
Lobster-Seafood dip in the meat end of S&S. It comes
in a plastic container similar to the small ones at the deli.
In fact buy two. Next get spinach-artichoke dip, this time
at least four packages. I buy mine at BJ’s and I always
have it in the freezer (just in case). Your third purchase
is two cans of crescent rolls. Oh yes, don’t forget the
beautiful roasting chicken. Or better yet Roch-Cornish
hens. Do buy one large one for every two people. Why
would I mention that? Because we were once served
Cornish hen — one for the whole table. “White or dark
meat?” I vowed I loved the drum stick but trust me, one
Cornish hen drum stick tends to look decidedly like a
tooth pick on the plate. But I digress. On with dinner.

OK you have one hour until dinner. You have more
time than that?? How? I never seem to be that organized.
Tip for that crunch time thing: set the table the night
before. Really dolly the table up. That way IF you are
running late on dinner night, the guests will never know
when they see the pretty table.

We are back to the kitchen now. Let’s get the Cornish
hens started. Cut each in half. Place right side up in a
lasagna pan. Pour a little olive oil on top of each and
sprinkle with Cajun spice (You did make up a batch
last month didn’t you?) Bake for one hour at 400°

Put the two lobster dips in a sauce pan and add as much
cream as you wish to turn that dip into soup. I even
bought a small container of lobster meat once and
added medium-small chunks to the soup. Oh no, ex-
cuse me! It is now “Lobster Bisque”!

Next put the spinach dip in a serving dish (yes frozen)
and make it at medium until it defrosts. I am trusting
you used a cover and you know how many boxes of
dip you are defrosting so you check on it. Its new name
is “Creamed Artichoke Florentine.”

Now the thing that takes the most time. Carefully un-
roll the crescent rolls, place several thin slices of cheese
(you decide) on and roll the whole rectangle back up.
Carefully cut slices off the end. As soon as the hens
come out of the oven, pop the roll slices in for what-
ever time the box says.

Well, that’s it. If you decide on rice, why not make it
wild rice. I know I wouldn’t — can’t stand the stuff.
But it does look nice on the plate — under the roasted
hen. Good luck. Kit
THE REVEREND GARDNER THURSTON
(1721-1802)
by Tom Kennedy

Gardner Thurston's long and eventful life began in the colonial era and allowed him to experience the growth and progress of this new country, including the successful conclusion of the American Revolution, the adoption of the United States Constitution and, near the end, the election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency in 1801. He was born in Newport on the 14th of November 1721, the son of Edward and Elizabeth Thurston. He was trained as a cooper and continued to work at that trade until he became pastor of the Second Baptist Church on Farewell Street in 1759.

Already as a youth Gardner displayed a serious and introspective nature, quite evident in a letter he wrote to the ministers of the Second Baptist Church before his baptism in 1741, as reported by his nephew, Joshua Bradley, in his "Memoirs of Rev. Gardner Thurston."

Dear beloved Fathers in Christ: - Through the wonderful mercy of God, I am brought to see myself in a lost condition, and his word and my conscience testify that in such a state of nature, I am a child of wrath...

Knowing my own weakness and inability to deliver myself, I find that I cannot do anything pleasing to God of myself; I cannot come to that true and saving faith in Jesus Christ; with which the remission of sins is connected; neither can I make satisfaction for the least of my transgressions; therefore, O Sirs! I desire to depend wholly and alone upon the free grace of God, in Jesus Christ, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption...

I think it my indispensable duty, dear sirs, to come to you for guidance in the things of God, while the blessed Jesus is calling, and before the season is over and the harvest ended; wherefore I beg an interest in your prayers, that God would be pleased to deliver me from all hardness of heart, and implant in me a living principle of faith, that I might be brought savingly to know the only one true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

Thus, Rev. Fathers, I close, and remain your unworthy child,

GARDNER THURSTON
(Bradley, 297-298)

When the time came for Gardner's examination as a candidate for baptism, he couldn't bring himself to enter the church, so he retreated across the street to the cemetery and sat on a rock until he felt confident enough to retrace his steps and be received into the church by the pastor, Rev. Nicholas Eyres.

Gardner was licensed to preach in 1748, and became the assistant to Rev. Eyres. Upon Eyres' death in 1759, Gardner was ordained pastor of the Farewell Street church, where he presided until shortly before his death in August of 1802. Upon becoming pastor, he gave up his business, which was lucrative, and devoted himself entirely to the care of his flock and church. (Bradley, 301)

In March of 1757, Abigail Dyre, Gardner's aunt, left him a house and property encompassing what is now Arnold Park, at the intersection of Cross and Thames Streets. Gardner's church was just a short distance from the house, at the corner of North Baptist Street and Farewell. Both buildings are now gone. Gardner married Martha Sanford in May of 1760, whom he was to outlive by 18 years. (Point Association Bulletin, 36)

Gardner's family was apparently involved in the slave trade, but his attitude and involvement in this doleful aspect of Newport's economy and social life appear to have been rather benign. It was said that he would make barrels and buckets for milk and water, but he refused to use his craft for the manufacture of any kind of cask to be used in the New England rum trade. (Point Association Bulletin, 36) Gardner's name is mentioned in connection with two slaves. Cato Thurston, a dock worker, was described as a "worthy member of the Baptist church, who died 'in the faith' while under the care of the Rev. Gardner Thurston." ("Strangers", 4) Also, a former African slave by the name of Newport "Neptune" Thurston, who lived on Walnut Street and was a

Continued on Page 15
It's an exciting time for the Point Association and, most especially, its signature publication, the Green Light. Many of our readers are aware, I'm sure, that last year, 2007, was the 50th anniversary of the Green Light's birth, when a few neighbors gathered to create a one-page monthly bulletin that would convey the minutes of Point Association meetings to its members.

Within no time, that modest enterprise grew to include historic stories, feature articles, artwork, and advertisements (not to mention the minutes). And on its front page appeared the green banner heading designed by Point artist Edith Ballinger Price, which proudly displayed our logo, the green light.

Although that banner heading is still in use, today's newsletter is the result of a series of significant changes during its 50-year history: a 20-page publication containing reports of Point Association activities, relevant news of Newport and Rhode Island initiatives, feature articles, guest columns, calendars of coming events, photographs, graphic arts, and advertising.

One thing hasn't changed. Today, as in 1957, the Green Light is still produced by an editorial, writing and research, artistic, graphic arts, and circulation staff of volunteers. Its only costs are professional printing and bulk mailing.

When the Green Light staff considered this golden anniversary, it seemed like a very good time to collect some of our readers' favorite articles over the years and link them with new stories about landmark events on the Point, particularly those important milestones in the lives of Pointers, our Association, and our Green Light.

For more than a year, many people have been hard at work—digging through our own historical archives, meeting to talk about what we've found and what we still need, writing and rewriting, creating a design, and putting it all together. The final product is due to go to press soon, and our book will be available sometime this summer.

In addition to our writers and editors and designers, our fundraising committee chaired by Tom Goldrick has also been hard at work. To date, many neighbors have dug down and contributed generously to this project, for a total thus far of $7,000. An amazing accomplishment, but not quite enough to get the job done.

Very soon, everyone will receive a letter outlining our work, presenting our need for additional funding, and asking for a donation to help us underwrite the total cost of producing the book. If you have already given, we thank you. If not, please know that every little bit is helpful.
I recently sat with Jim Baillargeron in an old five-car garage which has long stood at the back of the yard behind his house at 27 Elm Street. Workshop is Jim’s word for this building and certainly it is that, but this workshop is of a rare kind, reminding me more of a library, with its walls of continuous floor-to-ceiling shelves, which stop occasionally to let the light in. Instead of books, there are jars, pots, cans, small wooden boxes, little neat piles of stuff, all in beautiful order providing a kaleidoscope of colour and shape. Various machines and large and small tools cover much of the floor and two chairs lounge around the old cast iron wood stove. The fire is going. We sit here, warm and comfortable on a cold and rainy day, and discuss this and that and other things. There is much to learn about Jim’s life which has rambled all over the place.

He was born in Tooele, Utah, one of six children (one older sister and four younger brothers) of Dutch, American Indian and German heritage. His father, who was in the American army, and his mother, in the Canadian army, met during World War II. As a child, Jim lived for several years on the Snake River, Idaho Falls and later in Pocatello, Idaho. In back of the Idaho Falls house stood a mountain of a height high enough to allow Jim and any handy companions to hike up on hot summer days to play in the snow on the north side.

When Jim was twelve, his father was offered a government job with choices in several states; Rhode Island was one of them. His father chose Newport because his sister, Rita, lived at 15 Poplar Street.

Jim’s parents and their six children moved to 45 Third Street and from this house, Jim went to grade school and then to Thompson for sixth, seventh and eighth.

He worked at several jobs after leaving school: a moving company, landscaping and a demolition company. At sixteen, he became a sweep-up man and short order cook where his minimum wage job pay included a hamburger with no cheese or tomato (a frugal owner). Jim had a friend whose father, caretaker at the Breakers, provided a novel place to play and explore after hours. I suspect Jim has always abided by the adage “all work and no play makes Jim a dull boy”. He lived in the Third Street house until 1964 when he joined the Marine Corps. Jim served in Viet Nam from 1967 to 1969 as crew chief on a medivac helicopter, and flew 355 missions. He finished his tour at the Marine Corps Air Base in New River, North Carolina.

When Jim was in Viet Nam, his younger brother Cary was killed in a car accident while serving in the Navy, stationed in Hawaii. The marines gave Jim leave to go home to be with his family. During these days he married his wife, Connie, who is from Minnesota and whom he met in California. They bought their current house on Elm Street in June, 1970, behind which is the abovementioned building, in which we sat the other day. Jim mentioned this coincidence: at age fourteen, he rented from the then-owner, for $8 a month, one of the bays in his current garage, where he established a small business: fixing his own

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and others’ cars. In those days, one could obtain a driver’s license at age fifteen which allowed him to buy his first car, a 1949 Ford, at a cost of ten dollars.

When again a civilian, Jim worked at the local Chrysler dealership as a mechanic and became a certified master technician. Eventually he purchased his own independent taxi plate. With a partner he eventually acquired a radio license which allowed him to establish dispatch service, thus becoming so competitive that another company tried to steal their fares by monitoring their radio. This problem was addressed with fine creativity by painting all their own cabs lime green to assure their customers were not picked up by the competition. After years of this, Jim left his taxi endeavors, as he was “becoming too fat, drinking too much coffee and smoking too many cigarettes”.

Thus begins another Baillargeron business: fixing antique furniture. Jim is able to make anew any wooden parts damaged or missing, then repair, refinish, and sell the restored pieces. During our conversation, he mentioned in an off-handed way that there is little he cannot build or fix or remodel, including computers (of which he has five) and he quoted, in passing, a man he admires perhaps more than any other, Ben Franklin: “...the advantage of the autodidact is that there are no terminus points in his education to make him think he knows something.”

Next on Jim’s agenda was to buy a quahog rake and a boat, a venture which involved getting up before first light and being on the water for three or four hours every day, handling the 40 foot long bull rake. Remarkably tiring, I would think. After three years, he quit quahoging and established a wintertime firewood business as well as starting a property maintenance service, leaving the summers free of dealing with the long rake.

Jim is presently in the lobster business with his oldest son and has been since 1995. No one needs to be told that when they purchased an old lobstering boat, in poor shape and without a wheelhouse and other necessities, Jim fashioned and installed everything that was required.

He and his son used to have five hundred lobster pots; now the laws permit 300 only. They also fish gill nets for bait and fin fish for market. They go out together before dawn, hauling their boat, which is kept at his house, down to the foot of Elm for launching, and spend four to six hours of every morning from April through December out on the water, usually selling their catch to Aquidneck Lobster on Bowen’s Wharf.

Jim and Connie’s five children, ranging in age from 21 to 39, all have wonderful names (James, known as Little Jim, Jennifer, Moriah, Sarah and Jesse) and all live in Newport or Middletown, which is just what one would expect with this close family. Their only grandchild, three-year-old Amelia Rose, can often be found visiting 27 Elm, where she has not one, but two, rooms that she calls her own.

As I listened to Jim’s story, it gradually became clear to me that he has been blessed with much and perhaps more than many of us, with life-changing, far from ordinary experiences, by dint of knowing numerous and widely-varying kinds of people hither and yon and in between and keeping them in his life. Although he did not say so, I imagine that he has done the same kind of generous things for others. It seems to me that this is a very nice description of a man who clearly has been happy with his choices in life and who made the most of opportunities presented and found his own when needed.
WATERFRONT NEWS
by Liz Mathinos

At either end of Washington Street, new construction is the news on the waterfront. Reagan Construction has finished restoring the seawall at the Mary Ferrazzoli pocket park at Washington Street and Long Wharf. Scott Wheeler, Trees and Park Supervisor for the City, discussed the landscaping with Friends of the Waterfront, and plans are being finalized. Friends of the Waterfront gave $5,000 towards development of the park and donated $1,250, money from a grant, towards a park bench. Future plans include an historic marker, which will detail the significance of Gravelly Point, the site of Washington’s Landing, Fall River Line, and other landmarks in the viewing area. Friends of the Waterfront plans a dedication of the park when completed.

At the other end of Washington Street, Atlantic Marine has worked through the bitter days of winter, to restore Van Zandt Pier to its former glory with the addition of thick sections of deck and restoration of a solid base. A ramp has been added for handicap access, which will be welcomed by the many elders in the neighborhood who use walkers or wheelchairs.

However, it did not take long after completion, for young skateboarders and bicycle riders to discover the ramp, and neighbors are very concerned about misuse of this handicap access. Please talk to your children about respecting the rights of our handicapped citizens and to take care of our new Van Zandt Pier.

CLEAN OCEAN ACCESS
by Joan Simmons

Clean Ocean Access is a volunteer group formed by a group of surfing and water sport enthusiasts to promote clean water. Their goal is to establish baseline data for water quality at the popular swimming areas in the harbor and along the shoreline and monitor the water quality throughout the year. This will help to provide public awareness of any potential health problems that may or may not exist. These areas are not tested by the Department of Health because they are not recognized as designated swimming areas. NOTE: Clean Ocean Access met with Thompson School 6th grade and 85% of the student body had swum at Van Zandt pier during the summer of 2006.

The City of Newport has agreed to fund the weekly testing at seven locations for 2008. The first test was performed January 4th. The testing date will vary each week with the goal of testing the water during or immediately after a rain event. In parts of Newport the sewers and storm drains are connected. During heavy rain the pumping stations can’t handle the volume of water, and discharges of water mixed with untreated sewage occur in the harbor and at Eastons Beach.

Clean Ocean Access has seven testing sites. Each location will have a sampler and observer. Sampling methodology and procedures are to be uniformly followed. The sampler fills the bottle and the observer fills out the form. Water temperature, wind direction, vegetation and wildlife are just an example of the variables taken into consideration. Samples are taken at specific times and are delivered to a drop off location. A volunteer takes the samples to the Department of Health facility in Providence for testing.

Dave McLaughlin is the head of this dedicated group. For more information or to get involved, go to their website: www.members.cox.net/cleanoceanaccess
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cooper by trade “may have learned the craft from Baptist minister Gardner Thurston, a cooper and a member of the slave-trading Thurston family.” (“Strangers”, 6) Details of the lives of these slaves and their relationship to Gardner are, unfortunately, unknown to me.

An episode of interest to posterity took place in 1764 and Gardner was involved. In 1762, the Philadelphia Baptist Association appointed Rev. James Manning, a recent graduate at Princeton, N.J., to visit Rhode Island, including Newport, for the purpose of raising support for the founding of a college. Mr. Manning eventually took up residence in Warren, where a number of Baptists resided, in order to establish himself in the area and to provide a base from which to launch the school. On the 15th of November 1764 Mr. Manning became the first pastor of the Baptist church in Warren. “The exercises were conducted by the Rev. Messrs. John Gano of New York, Gardner Thurston of Newport, and Ebenezer Hinds of Middleborough. The sermon was delivered by Mr. Gano. (According to the Early History of Brown University, page 48, the sermon was actually delivered by Mr. Thurston.) In September of 1765 Mr. Manning was elected President of the college and continued to exercise his collegiate and pastoral duties for more than five years in that town.” (Jackson, 71) Rhode Island College was moved to Providence in 1770, later to be named Brown University after its most generous benefactor, Nicholas Brown.

Although psalms and other biblical texts provided the words for most public singing in the Baptist churches of America before the Revolution, the singing of hymns was the subject of some controversy. Apparently, the Second Baptist Church of Newport had remained songless until 1764, when efforts were made to introduce singing. Then, in 1765, the church records note: A church meeting was held, at which twenty-seven brethren attended eighteen gave it as their mind to sing praise to God every public meeting day. Five gave it as their mind to sing at fifth day meetings, and two gave their voice against it at any time. So we concluded to sing praise to God on all days of public worship, and to sing such psalms or hymns as the minister shall direct. (Music, 3)

In 1766 a hymnal referred to as the Newport Collection was issued by the publisher of the Newport Mercury. “Publishing the Newport Collection ... almost certainly links it with the decision of the Second Baptist Church to begin singing. It may very well be that the pastor, Gardner Thurston, had a part in putting the book together, since the repertory of the Congregation was under his direction.” (Music, 3) “Thus, the Newport Collection can truly be called the first hymnal compiled by Baptists in America.” (Music, 5)

The British occupation of Newport during the Revolution brought ruinous conditions to Newport's churches, with the exception of Trinity Church. The Second Baptist Church had its pews removed and was used as a barracks for housing British soldiers. The wood from the pews served as firewood to keep the troops warm in cold weather. Most clergymen left Newport. Gardner Thurston, however, was “the only clergyman who remained in town.” (Greene, 46) After the British evacuation, Gardner held services in Trinity Church, whose pastor had fled with the British. He continued to use Trinity for several years until his own church could be repaired.

Another momentous event in the history of Rhode Island and the fledgling United States took place in Rev. Thurston's church. “In this historic building the

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2008 SPRING

The Green Light

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WALKING ON THE POINT
by Kay O'Brien

Winter is a perfect time to study our tree silhouettes. After hearing Scott’s concern about replacing some of our canopy and seeing his picture of beautiful local landscapes, I’m ready to learn. He discussed what to plant, where to plant and even how to plant on our private property.

In 1980, when we purchased our 50’ x 100’ corner lot, there were fourteen trees on the property. We had them pruned and cabled as they became threatening. Now they are gone. Fortunately, I have charming silhouettes nearby to enjoy but also have Scott’s list of choices for a smaller replacement in a proper spot. I’ll plant it following directions from the Newport Tree Steward checklist. When I’m out walking, I’ll be happy to talk trees.

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The Green Light
SPRING 2008
famous debate took place about the adoption of the Federal Constitution. In Arnold’s *History of Rhode Island* (Vol.2, page 562) it is recorded that inasmuch as the State House was not large enough, they adjourned to the Second Baptist Church, where the debate continued for three days. At 5 P.M. Saturday, May 29, 1790, the final vote was taken. Thirty-four voted to adopt the Constitution, thirty-two voted against the adoption. A majority of two saved the people of Rhode Island from anarchy, and the State from dismemberment.” (310 Years of Christian Service, 11)

Gardner Thurston was certainly an earnest and diligent clergyman and pastor, but also “a man with agreeable and winning manners.” (Cyclopedia, 123) “He mingled with great ease and familiarity in the social circle, and had the faculty of making all around him feel perfectly at home; but he never did anything or said anything that was of even questionable propriety. He never forgot, in any circumstances, his high calling as a minister of Christ. He was a person of remarkably benevolent disposition, and was always rendered happy by seeing others so.” (Cyclopedia, 123) Despite the esteem in which he was held, we are left an anecdote, which indicates that not everyone was pleased with Gardner’s preaching. “It has been said that Gardner Thurston, a diligent cooper, could make a barrel for a dollar and it was worth it; he could preach a sermon for nothing and it was worth it.” (310 Years of Christian Service, 18) One daughter survived Gardner upon his death, which occurred August 23, 1802. “Upon the 25th of August the ministers of every denomination in the town, and some from adjacent towns, and a large multitude attended his funeral, when the Rev. Stephen Gano, of Providence, delivered a suitable discourse.” (Bradley, 306) Gardner Thurston was buried in the Old Common Burying Ground on Farewell Street.

The photograph of the Thurston house (undated) is from the collection of the Newport Historical Society. The property was converted into a store and was demolished in 1947 to make room for a new commercial building, which was subsequently razed. The location is now Arnold Park, at the intersection of Thames and Cross Streets.
wise from front to back on the east (Third Street) side, with a counterpart on the west that served as kitchen and pantry. Between the two was a smaller rectangle subdivided into a south-facing “sitting room,” which also functioned as a hall connecting the front door, front room and kitchen, and a duplicate to the north that was further subdivided into two small bedrooms. Outside was a well, located just inside the gate that leads to what is now the driveway, and somewhere in the back there was an outhouse. A back porch, accessed via the kitchen, allowed for delivery and storage of ice for an icebox, and, at a later date, supported a grape arbor – complete with grapes. An early photo (from turn of the last century) shows fruit trees in the yard. This writer can still remember two pear trees and an apple tree in the 1930s, although the grape arbor was no longer in existence. The trees ultimately fell victim to the Hurricane of 1938.

This was the house in which my grandfather grew up. Though other children were born to the family, none lived beyond the age of five, so the family remained where they were. In 1873, Albert Groff Sr. changed careers by purchasing a grocery store located at 89-93 Bridge Street, which proved to be quite profitable. However, as the 1880s advanced, changes were taking place. In 1886, his mother, Sara Easton Bacheller, died. In 1889, Albert Sr. was finally able to buy the house outright from Pitt Southwick, only to have his wife, my great-grandmother, die the following year in 1890. His own mortality began to weigh. He began to buy other properties in the neighborhood for rental income and as a hedge against old age, in a time when there was no social security.

In 1896, Albert Gardner Groff Jr. married my grandmother, Sarah Rockett from Hingham (MA), and the young couple moved down to the corner of Battery Street at 85 Second Street, where my father, Albert Gardner Groff III, was born in 1898. Three years later he was joined by a sister, Sarah Rockett Groff.

In 1903, Albert Sr. decided to retire from his grocery business, leaving it in the hands of his son. To occupy his time, however, and being of a gregarious character, he built a small shop in part of the yard facing Third Street, where he dispensed newspapers and a few groceries as a convenience to the neighbors, before the advent of automobiles. There were many such small enterprises scattered throughout the Point and this one far outlasted its founder. However, this second career was of short duration because Albert Groff Sr. died in 1905.

It was his death that precipitated the transformation of the original house into the quasi-Victorian “Newport cottage” that one sees today. Albert Jr. had grown up in that house and wanted to move back “home” but it was much too small to accommodate the needs of a growing family (another daughter, Anna, was born in 1906). The solution was to add a second story, complete with three bedrooms plus an upstairs (and indoor) bathroom, as well as a front porch. The former first floor plan remained largely the same, with the exception of removing the wall between the tiny downstairs bedrooms and converting the enlarged area into a dining room. The shop was to remain in place for many years until the building succumbed to old age, whereupon the space it occupied became offstreet parking for the family.

Every Point house has a story to tell, demonstrating, once more, that sometimes what you see reveals only part of its history. You can’t always tell a book by its cover.
BORN ON THE POINT
by Bill Hall
The Born on the Point program recognizes newborns and others who were Point residents at the time of birth.

The next round of Born on the Point certificates will be readied for the April 2008 membership meeting. Applications must be submitted by March 25. Anyone interested in information or an application may contact Bill Hall at 846-4159.

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STATE REP OFFICE HOURS
State Representative Steve Coaty has weekly constituent “office hours” at the Newport Public Library, every Monday evening, 5:30-7:00 p.m. in the library’s meeting room.

SECRET GARDENS WANTED
Have you ever wondered how to get your garden included in the 25th Anniversary June Garden Tours on the Point???

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See article on Helana Sturtevant pg 7

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The committee will review pictures & descriptions and give you a call by May 1
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In Memoriam – Father R. Michael Tuck
by Mary Jane Rodman

Father R. Michael Tuck, recently serving as Priest in Charge at Zabriskie Memorial Church of St. John, the Evangelist, on Washington Street died at home in his sleep on 15 January 2008.

Before coming to Newport last April, he served as Rector of parishes in Texas and Pennsylvania, having received his bachelor’s degree in Philosophy from North Texas State University and master’s in Philosophy from Purdue University.

Remembered well for his conversational style of preaching, which translated complex theological doctrine into relevant and understandable truth, Father Tuck was with us for much too short a time. However, the gifts of laughter, love and healing he brought to us were shared with a generosity of spirit which we – his parishioners – continue to cherish. During the few months that he and his wife of 41 years, Mary Patricia Rogers, were resident here – the Rectory, the Guild Hall and even (on occasion) the sanctuary were often home to any of their four children, five grandchildren and an amazing assortment of four-legged furry friends (most particularly to Susannah, the calico cat whose frequent participation at Mass was welcomed by all except the attending acolytes!)

We remain grateful for the Tuck family coming to be amongst us, however briefly, hopeful that the work this kind man initiated will be multiplied in the months ahead.

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The Green Light
SPRING 2008
THE BIG SNOW
by Kay O'Brien

Reminders of the storm will probably still be with us even as this goes to press – but the calendar tells us that robins and crocuses cannot be too far away. Indeed, Mrs. Wm. E. Burke had a number of yellow crocuses in full bloom under her window at 107 Washington Street on February 20. Let us hope they knew how to take care of themselves under a snowdrift.

The Point presents a particularly difficult snow-removal problem. With practically no garages, cars must park on the streets, and with houses built close together and right on the sidewalk line, there is nowhere to put the snow when and if walks are shoveled.

It was good to see that many Pointers did clear their sidewalks. Many did not. There again – an ordinance that is never enforced, and which, if it were, might work real hardship on elderly people, unable to do their own shoveling and perhaps in circumstances where hiring labor might be out of the question.

However, we noted a good many spots where such conditions did not apply, but where no attempt had been made to clear even a footpath. The worst hazard, it would seem, was where sidewalks of BOTH sides of a street were impassable, and schoolchildren and older folk were forced to walk in the middle of the street, at the mercy of skidding cars and splattered ice and slush.

What you have just read was an excerpt from the March 1960 issue of the Green Light. Any surprise that it could apply to 2007? Let’s finish this winter with more effort in keeping our sidewalks cleared of snow, and with approaching spring, dog “poop”!

A column in the January 31, 2008 Newport Daily News lamented that the city was running out of “doggy bags”. Anyone wishing to make a donation to extend the Mitt-Mutt supply may send a check to the City of Newport, c/o The Public Services Department, 280 Spring Street, Newport, RI 02840.
NEWPORT'S UNIQUE TREES
by Kay O'Brien

In January, Scott Wheeler, Trees and Parks Supervisor, gave a lecture at the Pell Center on the history and future of Newport’s unique trees. He described how so many rare and exotic trees were planted on the grounds of the wealthy mansion owners in the 1800s and how these trees became an important part of Newport’s landscape.

In light of growing concern about the future of these trees, a Tree Society was formed in 1989. This evolved into the Tree Commission, with an ordinance, the Newport Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance, which created the job of tree supervisor. Mr. Wheeler calls the trees planted on public land, a “community forest”.

After the presentation, attendees were encouraged to order trees to plant in their yards. Purchase of a tree to be dedicated to an individual is another way to add to the beauty of Newport’s community forest, with many trees in the Point parks, sponsored by groups like the Point Association.

Newport is fortunate to have a dedicated person like Scott Wheeler, and his efforts to preserve and protect our unique trees are appreciated by all.
OUR NOSTALGIC MOMENT

View from the corner of Third and Cypress a Newport Daily News photograph courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.

The Point Association Membership Form

Please make check payable to The Point Association and mail with form to PO Box 491, Newport, RI 02840. A subscription to The Green Light is included with all memberships.

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

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2008 SPRING

The Green Light
SAVE THE DATES

WINTER PARTY — Tuesday, March 4, 6:00 p.m., Location Long Wharf

POTLUCK DINNER — Sunday, March 9, 6:00 p.m., Harbor House

MEMBERS' MEETING — Thursday, April 17, 7:00 p.m., Harbor House

SPRING CLEANUP — Saturday, April 19, 9:00 a.m., Storer Park

PLANT SALE — Saturday, May 10, 8:30-11:30, 22 Walnut Street

Point Readers

*Three Cups of Tea*, Wednesday, April 16, 2:00, 13 Bayside Avenue

*The Master*, Wednesday, May 7, 2:00, 123 Washington Street

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