

The GREEN LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

FALL 2009



The GREEN LIGHT

LIV No. 3

FALL 2009

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Meetings are generally scheduled for the first Monday of the month and are open to Association members.

Please call Isabel for time, date, and location.

Copies of *The Green Light* may be purchased for \$1.00 at Bucci's Convenience Store, Poplar at Thames.

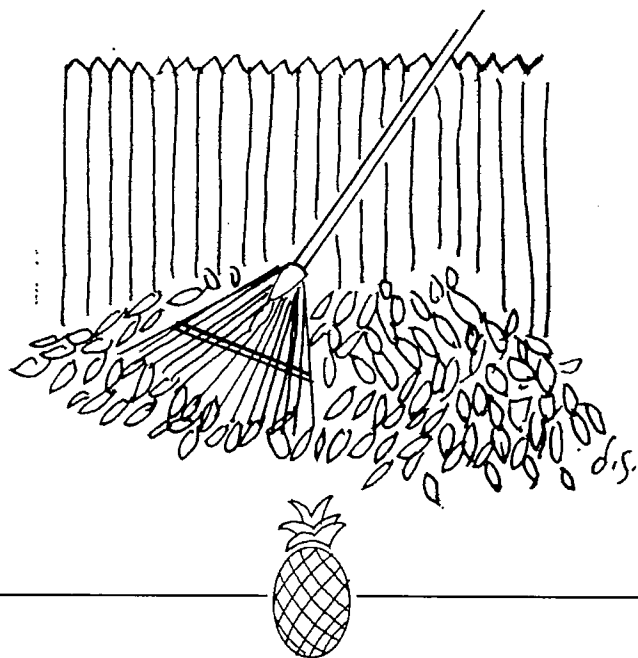


The Point Association

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:

Woodcut by Ilse Buchert Nesbitt



After a summer that appears to have begun only three weeks ago, it hardly seems possible that it is time for a new season. Yet fall is upon us, as are plans for the coming year, whether it be new officers for the Point Association or new bulbs for our parks. We hope to see you all at one or another of the activities the Point Association has scheduled for this fall: an informative presentation and challenge from the Newport Energy and Environment Commission (the Executive Committee has had a preview); the Annual Meeting at which elections will be held; and the fall planting/cleanup at the Point's parks.

Alice Clemente

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Last month I had a chance to go to the NoPo (North Point) block party on Second Street between Van Zandt and Sycamore. What a nice event! I saw people I hadn't seen in a year and lots more I didn't know. There are yearly "occasions" sponsored by the Point Association and others that have close ties with smaller communities within the Point. It is interesting to me that each event draws a different bunch of people. For instance, you don't see many Cocktail Party types at the Pot Luck Supper. There is something for everyone in our very diverse neighborhood!

How diverse? This comment from someone who lives nearby – NOT on the Point, "You can tell a lot about the diversity of a community by the dogs you see when out walking. Where I come from everybody seems to have a Golden Retriever, but here all the dogs are different." I guess that about says it all. Point people are all different, too, but we do appear to get along, for the most part. The trick seems to be bridging the gap between individual autonomy and the common good so as to strike a fair bargain for everyone when the Point is: dedicated to the individual but rooted in service to the common good; observant of the need for personal privacy in spite of close quarters; and attentive to external pressures and able sometimes to be at odds with these pressures. Long live our sociability!

It's hard work to keep a balanced perspective in the face of this kind of diversity. Nowhere is this more evident than at the monthly meetings of the Point Association Executive Committee. This October at the annual Members' Meeting, the Point Association will be electing three Executive Committee members and one Nominating Committee member, each to serve a two-year term. We are eager to have nominations for these positions. Please contact the Nominating Committee: Anne Cuvelier, Betty Cares, and Mary Serapera, or me, to learn more.



CORRECTION: *The final two paragraphs of Tom Kennedy's profile of Rita Rogers were inadvertently omitted from the summer issue of the Green Light. Since they are still relevant, we have chosen to print them here.*

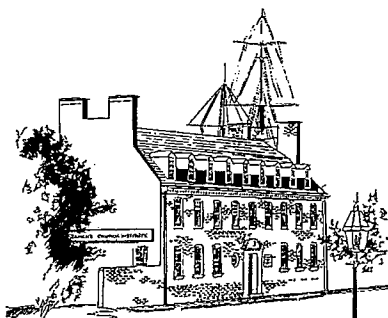
"Local venues for Rita's art are many, including single shows at the Newport Art Association, the Newport Art Museum, the Sarah Doyle Gallery at Brown University, the DeBlois Gallery, Salve Regina University, and Gallery One in Providence, among others. She is presently looking forward to a major retrospective show in the Igenfritz Gallery of the Newport Art Museum, beginning late August and running through January of 2010.

A very amusing and engaging article, entitled "Have Brush – Will Travel," appeared in the April 1991 edi-

tion of the *Green Light*. The article's author, Rita Rogers, tells about her adventures in Gran Canaria, in the Canary Islands, where she was engaged in specialized surface decoration on a 17th century house. It is a charming piece, full of the type of unpredictability and comic misadventure that seem to have marked this talented artist and writer's life more than most. A "must" read, if you can get your hands on it. Thus far, Rita has had a full and busy life in which her continuous pursuit of her craft has sustained her through both good and hard times. May she prosper!"

THE POINT AND ITS BOOKENDS – PART I: THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

By Ed Madden



The other day I was looking for a specific book in my library and came across a row of books aligned by a pair of bookends. The books covered a variety of subjects – all interesting and unique – and the bookends attractively highlighted this mini collection. Taking this metaphor probably a lot further than I should, I came up with a parallel universe of the books representing the Point (interesting and unique members) and the bookends representing the North/South boundaries of the Point (some literary license here) in the form of the War College Museum to the North and the Seamen's Church Institute to the south – both very interesting and unique in themselves. The rest of this article will explore the Seamen's Church Institute of Newport (i.e. S.C.I.) and the next edition of the *Green Light* will elaborate on the Naval War College Museum.

During World War I, Newport was home to an abundance of navy personnel and merchant seamen. Local townsfolk organized a food service for the men out of a center called the Coddington Point Hut on Coddington Point. Sounds like it might have been the embryo of the future U.S.O!

After the war, as the need expanded, the 2nd story of a local savings bank building was then secured as sleeping quarters for the needy. Under the supervision of the Episcopal Church, the Seamen's Church Institute was thus formed. Four local Protestant churches and the Commanding Officer of the naval base helped supply the managers for the S.C.I. The date was November 14, 1919. Charitable donations and endowments kept the building viable and the seamen contributed what they could afford to pay for their keep. At that time, there were 15 Seamen's Churches throughout the U.S., all serving a similar purpose.

The Reverend Roy Magoun, an Episcopalian clergyman, was appointed the first supervisor for the Institute in 1919 and served many fruitful years in that capacity.

With the advent of the Great Depression, the needs of


the waterfront community increased substantially. The housing quarters and social needs of the S.C.I. outstripped the available accommodations. At this time, the two adult daughters of the former R.I. Senator George Wetmore came to the rescue. The Wetmores were long time residents of New-

port residing in the Chateau-Sur-Mer, which had been built by the Senator's father. Senator Wetmore, in his political career, had spent two terms as R.I. governor and then was the U.S. Senator from 1894 until 1914. Reading about him and his family, I couldn't help but be reminded of the parallel with our recently deceased beloved Senator Claiborne Pell. Both men and their families left their marks as very strong influences on Newport.

The Wetmore family members were great benefactors of the S.C.I., the two daughters serving on the board of managers from its inception. They felt that a fitting memorial to their parents would be a new home for the S.C.I.

An existing colonial building on Market Square was

(Continued on page 21)



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SOLOMON SOUTHWICK, 18TH-CENTURY MEDIA MAN

by Jane Marchi

One of the pleasures of living here on the Point is the opportunity it affords to wander the streets of this historic area, admiring many of the early colonial buildings and speculating about the lives of those who built (and sometimes moved) them and the times they lived in. Some bear plaques that may give us hints — like “Thomas Belcher, Pewterer,” or “William Lawton, 1758” — that can spur the imagination but tell us little more.

I live across the street from a house that bears a plaque which reads “Solomon Southwick, Home — circa 1750.” Who was Solomon Southwick? What did he do? Is there any reason to know about him? If so, what? The Newport Historical Society devoted a recent issues of *Newport History* to provide answers to these and other questions and tell us more about this former neighbor who played an important role in both the civic and political life of pre-Revolutionary Newport, and — as the soap opera slogan used to say — even beyond.

From the little we know of him, his was just the sort of

“success” story that Americans admire. Solomon was born here in Newport, into a poor Quaker family, in 1731. As a young man, he must have stood out from his peers, for he attracted the attention of a well-to-do local merchant, Henry Collins, who offered to sponsor his further education by sending him to study mathematics and philosophy at the Philadelphia College and Academy. He attended the college there from 1754 to 1757, when he graduated and returned home to Newport.

Initially, he was in the position of many of our newly fledged college graduates today, i.e., back home and looking for a way to make a living. Perhaps inspired (even helped?) by his mentor, he too opted to become a merchant, importing and selling goods and even opening a store on Thames Street in 1758, under a partnership in the name of Southwick and Clarke. But the times were not auspicious for merchants. In addition to the usual difficulties inherent in all business ventures (ships lost at sea,

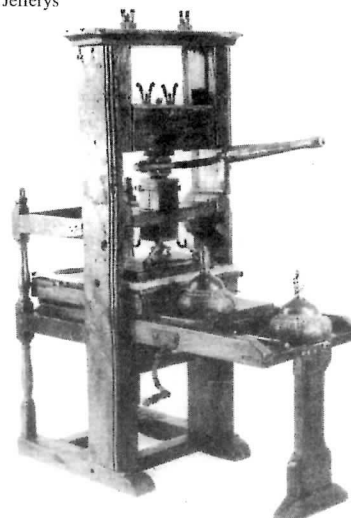
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NEWPORT HISTORY

JOURNAL OF THE NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Vol. 77 FALL 2008 Number 259

Solomon Southwick

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OUR ENVIRONMENT — WATER CONSERVATION

by Ed Madden

I'm sure we were all thrilled to receive the recent notice from the Water department that our bills will be going up — for water usage and sewer disposal. The sewage bill increases as our water usage increases. We can either roll over and play dead accepting this passively or we can become proactive and do what we can to change things in our favor.

An easy first step is to throw out all the old shower heads — even those expensive fancy ones with the multiple choice options for varying spray patterns and volume controls. Replace them with a water-saver shower head without the bells and whistles. The manufacturers suggest a 40% saving in energy. It's a do-it-yourself project with a trusty pair of pliers as your aide-de-camp.

The easy second step is to put a timer on the shelf (or built in to your head) as you turn on the shower and set it for 3 minutes. I maintain no one needs more than 3 minutes to cleanse their body. I might lengthen this to 5 minutes in some special cases but even those cases, once they have adapted to 5 minutes, should be able to close in on 3. The most important thing is to do away with the mind set that more (i.e. water) is better. It isn't! It is thoughtless and harmful to our planet. If you don't care about yourself, think of your children and the future generations. There may well come a time when there won't be enough water to drink and raise our crops, if conservation measures aren't taken.

The management of waste disposal in the home, business and recreational areas has been sadly neglected over the years. I would like to go back to the old campers' mantra regarding human waste: "If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down."

According to the plumbing industry, the average flush toilet uses 1.6 gallons of water per flush and the average male urinal uses 1 gallon per flush. Modern plumbing technology has now devised a dual flush mechanism for the toilet — 2 separate plungers on top of the tank — one gives a 0.8 gallon flush for liquid or light waste and the other gives a 1.6 gallon flush for bulk or solid waste. I have seen one of these in use and it is a splendid idea. I expect, however, that there will be a rather long learning curve to get universal compliance. The savings for a family of four with this dual flush technology is estimated to be in the neighborhood of 24,000 gallons of water per year.

There is also a waterless urinal that uses a chemical cleaner in place of the 1 gallon of water per flush. It is estimated that up to 40,000 gallons of water per urinal per year could be saved in a high usage area (i.e. think about 60,000 football fans at N.E. Patriots Stadium on a hot Sunday afternoon with about 20,000 male fans up at the beer counter!)

With all this brilliant technology, I don't expect people to be calling their favorite plumber any time soon. However, I will give you a reasonable suggestion to at least jump start the program. In the Madden household, we still have all our original plumbing with the exception of recently installed water saver shower heads. We don't have any immediate plans to go hi tech but the idea is intriguing and I expect we will get there some day. But for now, we have adopted the camper's motto. If it's brown, we flush it down. Otherwise, the mellow yellow prevails with one flush in the morning and one flush at night. Every other day, Lestoil or 20 Mule Team Borax is applied after a flush and this controls any odor problem.

So, for 2 adults what used to be approximately 12 flushes per 24 hours (i.e. 20 gallons of water) is now 2 flushes per 24 hours (i.e. 3.2 gallons of water). DO THE MATH!



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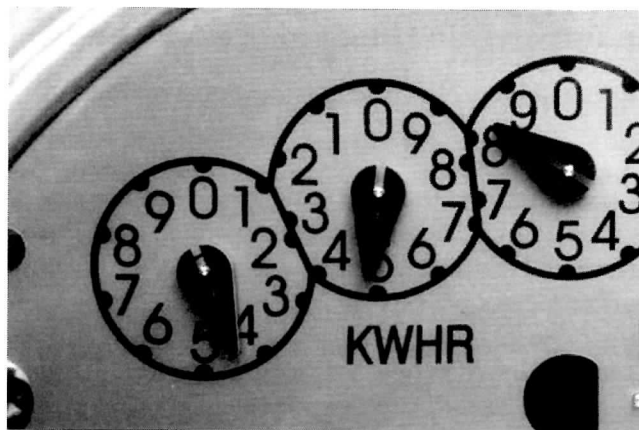
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POINT ASSOCIATION MEMBERS INVITED TO KICK OFF NEIGHBORHOOD ENERGY CHALLENGE

by Beth Milham,
Co-Chair, Newport Energy & Environment Commission

Members of the Point Association have an exciting opportunity to help launch a great project! The Newport Energy & Environment Commission is sponsoring a friendly Neighborhood Energy Challenge throughout the City of Newport this fall, and we'd like to kick off the program in the Point neighborhood.

This will be a friendly competition to entice us all to save energy and money. Participants will accumulate points by completing energy-saving actions from a comprehensive list of choices. These will include modifying habits, such as keeping the thermostat lower in the winter and air conditioning higher in the summer, and installing equipment, ranging from Compact Florescent Light Bulbs (CFLs) to a more efficient heating system. Many of the actions are easy to accomplish and free or very low cost.



You start receiving points as soon as you sign up! And you add more points by referring others who sign up. (All Newport residents are eligible, whether homeowners or renters.) Obtaining a free home energy audit through National Grid will garner additional points. You'll even receive credit for things you've done before the challenge began. The points awarded closely parallel the pounds of carbon saved, and help reduce the "carbon footprint" of our homes and the city. For those living in historic homes, there's a lot you can do that doesn't affect the appearance and historic value of your home.

The challenge will be a twelve-month project, with periodic events, recognition and rewards for progress, updates with information on Energy Star rebates, tax credits, incentives and economic assistance, special offers on energy saving products, and tips on how to save even more energy.

If you're interested, or if you're just looking for more information, feel free to contact me (Beth Milham) at 847-7637, or at bpmilham@yahoo.com.

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PAINT IN 18TH CENTURY NEWPORT

by Robert Foley, Newport Restoration Foundation

The last time I wrote about paint in the 18th century it was a basic over view. This time around more detail concerning Newport and how/where some of the pigments came about.

It is important to recall that paint of the 18th century and early nineteenth century was made from three basic ingredients – linseed oil as the vehicle, pigments as the colorants and turpentine as a dryer. These ingredients combined create what we call oil paint. It was used primarily for the exterior of buildings and assuredly in Newport for the painting of ships. Oil was also used on interiors, but not exclusively since water and milk base paints were used on interiors where oil's resistance to weather was not needed.

Paint was purchased in component parts and was mixed on the job and used by the day because it would 'skin over' and deteriorate in terms of usefulness rather rapidly. I'm sure most of us have disposed of oil paint that has gone solid in the can; the 18th century paint achieved solidity much quicker particularly without tight sealing mechanisms. The re-sealable can we take so much for granted didn't exist and wouldn't until the time of the Civil War – 1864.

Where were the paint shops in 18th century Newport? NRF has done considerable research over the last five to ten years mainly in the collection of *Newport Mercury* newspapers at the Historical Society.

We found some thirty different names mentioned editorially and more commonly in advertisements that dealt with the components of the paint trade from 1758 – the earliest editions available – to 1819.

Many of the names were repeated in different forms over the years. For instance, John Cahoone ads of 1794 became John Cahoone & Sons in 1799. There were four different Tweedys, alone and in combinations, advertising paint materials from 1764 to 1773.

An interesting side note is that John Cahoone and Stephen Yates built a double house (a somewhat common type of building in 18th century Newport) in 1763 on Green Street. Cahoone was a painter and also ran a paint shop that was frequently advertised. Yates was

Painter's Colours.

James Taylor & Co.

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To their large and general Assortment of
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Spanish Brown,	Best Drop Lake,
Spanish White,	Reeves's Patent Colours in
Verdigrase,	Boxes,
Vermillion,	Camell's Hair-Pencils as-
Prussian Blue, fine,	sorted,
N ^o 1,	Also, a few Boxes of vege-
Naples Yellow;	table French Rouge.

An Assortment, as usual, of best SPICES, viz. –
Cassia, Mace, &c.
True Cinnamon, Fresh Fish Florence Oil, per
Cloves, Case, or smaller Quantity.
Nutmegs,

Newport, July 5, 1796.

listed as a painter. Deed research of the area shows that Cahoone owned property from the Green Street house to Thames Street property. This may have been the location of his shop. His ads reference the location being across from 'the Golden Eagle sign'. This was probably a very effective way of giving directions at the time, but now 215 years on, that Golden Eagle sign and business are long gone and no street numbers were mentioned in the ads. Yet it stands to reason – until further research proves differently – that Cahoone had a tight compound of home and shop in the Green and Thames Street area.

There were at least some thirty shops dealing in the materials of the paint trade from 1758 to 1819; what were they selling? Many of the ads in the *Mercury* list pigments, brushes, oils, gold leaf, and a myriad of other items and services. What isn't clear is which ones were specific to house and ship painting and which elements were primarily for artist and sign makers. Obviously gold or silver leaf was not meant for exterior house surfaces, but less clear are some of the pigments offered. Today whatever pigments or colorants are added to your gallon of

(Continued on page 17)

MURIEL QUINN: A WOMAN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Mary Jane Rodman



When our alert editor, Alice, caught a glimpse of Muriel Quinn amongst the throng of Solemn Evensong at St. John's on July 5th, she asked if I would be willing to interview her for the *Green Light*. Delighted for an opportunity to become better acquainted with one of our Point's *summer* neighbors, I quickly agreed – only to realize (upon engag-

ing Muriel in purposeful conversation) that I should have bounced that buoyant ball right back into Alice's court: these two sublimely versatile educators would have kept it flying far higher than I could even begin to contemplate! (Oh, well, Alice – you'll just have to read between my lines and imagine all the additional academic delicacies you'd have elicited from the gracious subject of that interview!)

In any event, it seems that our very British neighbor's considerable accomplishments began right at the beginning when her mother – widowed when Muriel was only seven – sacrificially managed to keep her in a school that was well equipped and committed to nurturing talent among its young constituents.

The Hulme Grammar School for girls in Oldham, near Manchester, recognizing Muriel's musical and linguistic gifts, nourished both; and from that very firm foundation, she was quite literally launched into an academic career spanning two continents and encompassing a host of tangential interests.

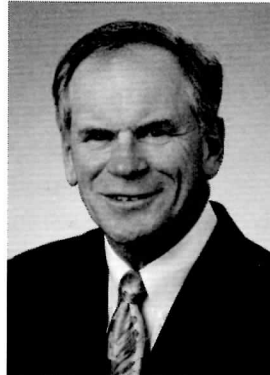
The U.K.'s educational system, while it certainly produces many of the world's brightest and best, did leave a bit to be desired in terms of accessibility. For example, in the 1950s, only 3% of the population attended university: 2% = men; 1% = women. Until the mid 20th century, few children had guaranteed access to higher education. With the introduction of the Butler Act in 1944, mandating that any child in the U.K. who demonstrated ability *must* be offered free opportunity to receive the finest education available in the U.K., the door was opened for Muriel to pursue the studies that later qualified her for entrance to university. All of her teachers in

the early years of her schooling were women, and few had been allowed to be married while teaching. One was a Scotswoman from Edinburgh who, recognizing Muriel's multi-lingual gifts, taught her both French and German and then paid for her (at age 16) to study at the Benedictine Convent, Bayeux, in Normandy (famous for its tapestries).

She was admitted to Royal Holloway College for Women, founded in the late 19th century (along with Westfield and Bedford Colleges) as the first in the U.K. to confer degrees upon women. Upon completing her own degree in French and Latin in 1959, she accepted a 1 to 3 year contract teaching French and English in the Loire valley: *lectrice d'anglais* at Tours (part of the University of Poitiers). While there, after one year of teaching, she decided to take a very long shot at applying for Post Graduate work at Cambridge University. One of 3,000 applicants from which 300 were selected for an interview for a total of 7 places, Muriel was thrilled to be contacted for an interview which took place with a woman in an Oxford railway station. It was conducted in French. When she received word a short time later that indeed she had been accepted as one of the seven, her horizons knew no bounds. She spent the year 1960-61 at Hughes Hall, Cambridge (the first postgraduate college for women at Cambridge), earning her postgraduate certificate in Education, French and Latin in 1961.

By now it seemed time to return to her roots and replenish the soil from which she had been so richly nourished. Accepting a call to teach French and Latin at Hulme, Muriel was soon asked to teach German also to prepare students for the General Certificate of Education in German. She spent the summer in Germany studying the language intensively and continued to perfect her own German two nights a week in Manchester during the course of the academic year in addition

(Continued on page 16)






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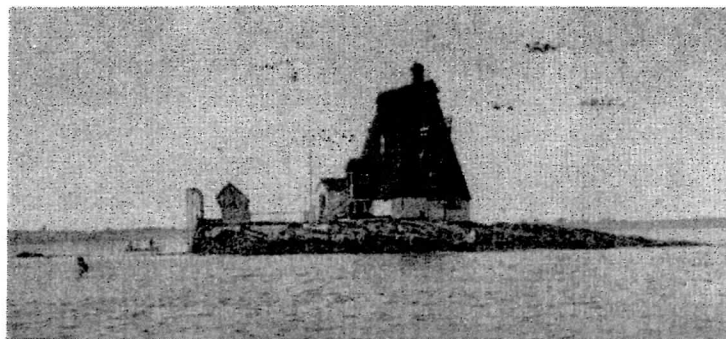
DIDJA EVER HEAR OF GULL ISLAND?

(from Louise Sherman's Scrapbook)

by Jane G. Marchi

Gull Island? I hear you ask. If you think of yourself as an old-timer, you will say "of course I know about Gull Island, don't you?" On the other hand, if you are a relative newcomer (let's say, here less than 30-40 years), the reference may be new to you. What is it? Where is it?

Gull Island is the name given to that tiny spot of land that sits in Narragansett Bay just offshore from the Naval Base and north of the Pell Bridge as you head west. It is a tiny insignificant landmark today, but once it served a valuable purpose in warning ships that were getting too close to shore. In fact, the October 1985 issue of the *Green Light* reported "that before there was a light on Gull Rock, the Fall River Line used to hire a Newport man to go out to Gull Rock and blow a horn to help guide the steamers on their passage up the Bay."



In 1887, the Gull Rock Light Station was constructed under the aegis of the Coast Guard and manned by a keeper. The building itself was quite picturesque with a high-pitched roof (like a witch's hat, according to one observer) which initially served as the site of the light itself, though the latter was later removed to sit atop a 45-foot steel tower. The station was rebuilt in 1928.

For many years Gull Rock Lighthouse served as a major landmark to Pointers, particularly in the days when Washington Street extended, uninterrupted, all the way to the Naval Base, and it was possible to look out upon it and imagine it as a perfect refuge from the demands of daily life.

The building remained in use up to September 1960, when the crews that manned the light were removed and automatic lights installed. The following summer, the Coast Guard, feeling the cost of upkeep and repair had become too great, authorized the Newport Demolition Company to destroy the building by burning it to the ground. When they spotted the flames, many Newporters called the police, the Fire Department and the Coast Guard to report the blaze, only to be told that it was being demolished legally – much to their dismay.

All that was left was an unattended light and fog bell, powered by a submarine cable. When the Pell Bridge opened at the end of the decade, even that was no longer needed since the deck of the bridge was too low to permit boats to pass beneath it at that eastern end. Finally, a Coast Guard helicopter was dispatched to lift off the 600-pound, 3-foot-high light, which was all that was left on the island, bringing to an end the life of this familiar friend. At least we still have the Green Light on Goat Island to inspire us.

(Source: *Newport Daily News* 12 July 1961, in LS Scrapbook, plus stories from *Green Lights* of October 1985 and Spring 1995).

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ZAMBRACCA and OFFICINA

by Jane Hencce

Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938) had several rooms in his house, in addition to the usual sitting room, library, kitchen, et cetera. The poet-soldier, idiosyncratic architect-student led a rich life of the mind and word. One of these rooms, he called *ZAMBRACCA*, which is Provençal for "room". Another he designated as his *OFFICINA*, meaning workshop.

The Point has a variety of fascinating houses and no shortage of people who do interesting things. It seemed to me that to write about spaces in houses, where what people do is done, might prove an illuminating, if very short, journey, into places not always seen by most visitors.



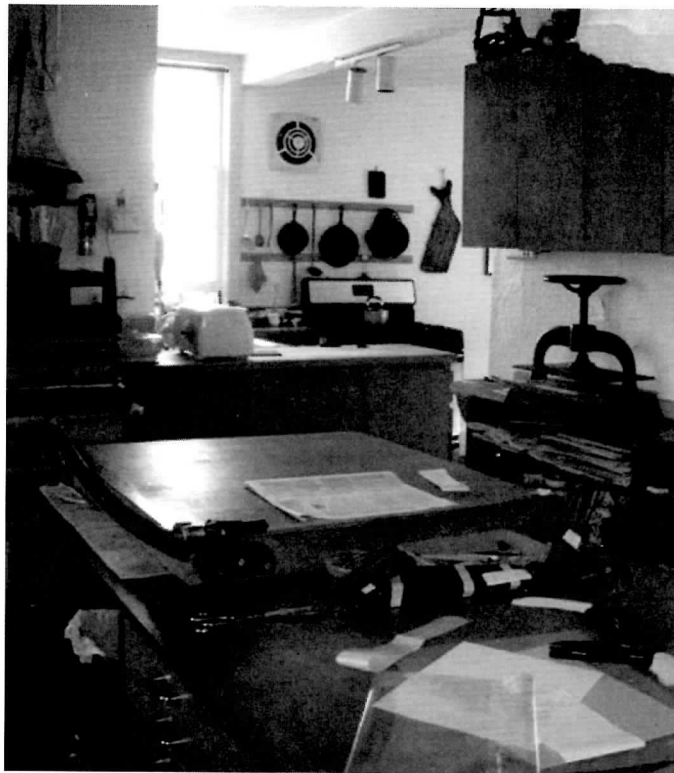
This kitchen has the only computer in the 1700s house and serves as the heart and heartbeat of the busy lives of Bart and Lisa Dunbar, their daughter and twin sons. Lisa has her office in the Walker building, where she oversees Newport's farmers' market and property management of the building. Bart's office is of course at Bowen's Wharf where he oversees that wonderful place.



He is involved with the Historical Society, the Redwood Library, and spearheads the Oliver Hazard Perry Tall Ship of Newport project. Money has been raised and has built the hull already, and continuing efforts are under way to gather enough funds to complete the vessel, which will be a sail train-

ing ship and will ply the east coast waters, teaching such things as marine science. Lisa is also one of the "lunch ladies" at St. Michael's School; and the Newport Tree Society, which is dedicated to preserving public and private trees is dear to her heart.

Thus, this efficiently and beautifully designed and functioning space serves well all who live here, and is witness to much work and creativity, including that most important thing, nightly homework.



In the building where the Third and Elm Press dwells and Ilse Buchert Nesbitt lives, office and workshop and printing and creating all share space with the more usual household rooms, such as kitchen and hall. The picture above shows the "paperwork" area and is at one end of the kitchen dominating that space. Here are found Ilse's handmade papers, her framing materials, and banks of storage and notes on bulletin boards. The shallow drawers contain the wonderful papers she uses, those made by herself over the years and other papers gathered elsewhere, sorted by size, type, colour.



(Continued on page 12)



The desk is in one end of the living room, surrounded by lengthy bookshelves, holding both reference volumes and literature, providing a peaceful place for thinking, research and correspondence.



The last picture is familiar to most people on the Point who pass by the corner at Third and Elm. This is where Ilse can be seen, when the top of the Dutch door is open, as it often is, working at one of the great presses, or assembling a beautiful book. On this corner sits truly a house of many chambers.

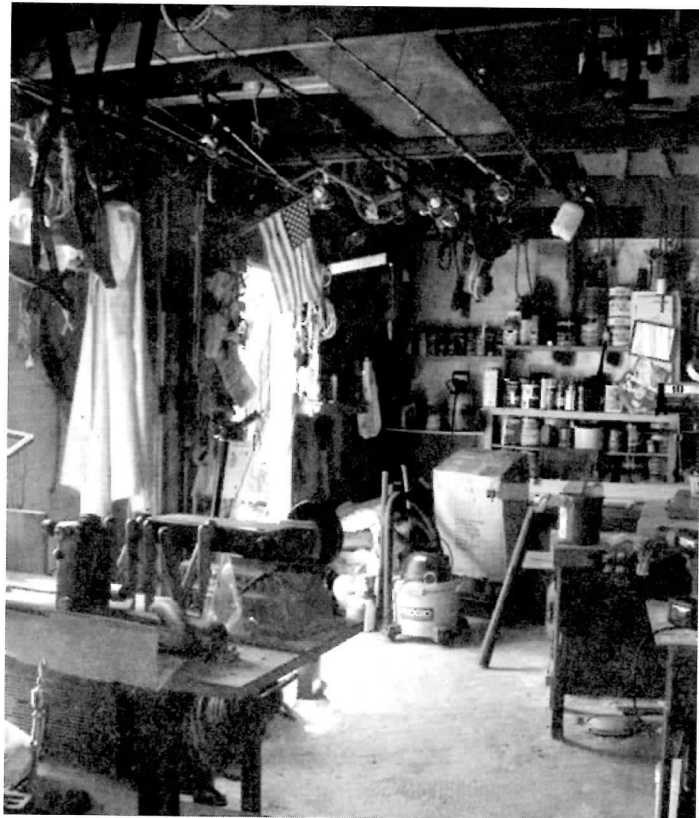
This long, calm and efficient white counter office (surmounted by a colourful and crowded collection of pictures of friends, children, grandchildren and places) is in a hall leading to a sitting room on one side and a porch on the other. Both Martha and Johan deWeerd, when they are here in Newport, are often found sitting together here, at their computers.



They share their time between the Netherlands (Amsterdam), Penang, Malaysia, and the Point. Johan manages his business, Actiforce International, which has a factory in Penang, where the elegantly simple stainless steel or aluminum adjustable height table is made and marketed all over the world. Their two sons (one son lives in Penang and the other in Arizona) and four grandchildren gather in all three locations. When everyone is in Newport, a second and third computer also arrive and find a place in a small adjoining office where lines of communication with the Far East and the West allow these many far-flung lives and livelihoods to be continued uninterrupted.



A glimpse through a window shows the garden of flowers and tomatoes and squash; and a veritable playground of swings, a wading pool, and other magical things appear when the grandchildren come in August. When everyone else leaves to go home, Martha returns to managing it all.



This is the ultimate *OFFICINA*, items arranged in organized profusion, belonging to a Chrysler-certified master technician and marine mechanic, a US Navy and Marine corps-certified aircraft mechanic, a welder, a retired lobsterman, and a prodigious reader of books, fiction, non-fiction, history and political. All these identities belong to Jim Baillarger, who is also a great lender of recommended books to friends and neighbors.



In his office on the second floor he has seven computers, one or two of which were assembled by Jim and each used for a specific purpose. He has two antiques: a 1982 Amica, the kind used by many movie makers, and a Commodore Plus 4, dating around 1979.

If I may return to D'Annunzio again for a moment, I would like to tell you that he had a boat, christened *MAS*, abbreviation for "memento audere semper" which translates to "remember always to dare". It seems that the people who occupy these spaces within their houses are people who do indeed do this with great success and panache.



I hope you have enjoyed this little trip into these thoughts and doings of some of our neighbors as much as I have. I write this in my own deep rose-coloured, slant roofed room under the attic, which is filled with my computer, my drafting/drawing board, my photograph files and prints, my grandchildren's drawings and my sketches and New Orleans Christmas tree, existing in organizational disarray.

Photos by Jane Hence.



The Third & Elm Press

Ilse Buchert Nesbitt
29 Elm Street, Newport
346-0228

EXCERPTS FROM POINT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS – JUNE TO AUGUST, 2009

The Point Association has been looking into replacing the water fountain in Battery Park. The Memorial Fund created in honor of Roxy Ernsberger may be used for this purpose.

Charlie Duncan provided funds for a new sign for Storer Park.

Peter Martin was helpful in discussing the installation of a safety barrier behind Sycamore Street with RIDOT.

At the June meeting, there was an extensive discussion supporting the hiring of a “Historic Planner”. The name needs to be changed to “Historic District Commission Facilitator” and the aim should be to assist citizens in coordinating with the Historic District Commission. A motion passed to inform the city that the Point Association will contribute in cooperation with other groups (including Ochre Point, Hill and Castle Hill associations) to pay a portion of the salary of the person who is hired to serve as the facilitator.

On behalf of the Newport Neighborhood Energy Challenge, Beth Milham presented a plan at the August meeting for a contest to embrace energy conservation in residential buildings. She will organize a presentation to the broader Point community in the near future.

The Annual Meeting of the Point Association was tentatively scheduled for October 22. The program will include the election of new officers for the following positions: 1st Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary.

The fall park planting/cleanup date is still to be determined.

The use of the Point Association email distribution list was discussed and the following motion was unanimously approved: “The Point Association email distribution list will only be used for direct Point Association activities, no outside commercial use. Under approval from the President, the list can also be used to make members aware of other community meetings/presentations/activities.”

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ROBERT LENOX MAITLAND (1818-1870)

by Tom Kennedy

Robert L. Maitland was a prosperous and respected New York City merchant, who built an imposing Victorian mansion on a large and beautiful estate running north along Narragansett Bay from Battery Street, and extending inland to Third Street: land that Mr. Maitland purchased from Charles Hunter in 1852. The mansion and its history are well documented and described in articles found in past issues of the *Green Light* (April 1962, p.5 [anon.] and April 1989 by Virginia Covell), and in a book written by Eileen Nimmo, entitled *"The Point" of Newport, R.I.* The mansion stood approximately where the old Newport Naval Hospital stands now. Mary Currie Maitland, Robert's wife, sold the house and land in 1870, shortly after her husband's death, and subsequent owners sold the land to the United States Government for its current use, and the immense house was moved to the corner of Bayside and Sycamore Streets, where it served as a hotel and boarding house until, a faded remnant of a past age, it was razed to make way for the Newport Bridge.

The Maitlands were Scottish, pious Presbyterians, and private people who shunned publicity. Robert Maitland, the father of Robert L. and the founder of the family fortune, was a native of Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, and came to America toward the end of the 18th century. He settled first in Norfolk, Virginia, married Susanna Harrison, and had several children, most of whom appear to have died in infancy. Susanna, herself apparently of weak constitution, died young in 1812 and Robert moved to New York City to continue his life. There he befriended Robert Lenox, whose roots go back to the same village in Scotland, and who was amassing a fortune though business dealings and real estate purchases. Robert Maitland chose as his second wife, Eliza Sproat Lenox, the eldest daughter of Robert Lenox. They married in 1814 and returned for a time to Scotland, where Robert L. was born in Edinburgh on April 1, 1818. When young Robert L. was around seven years old, the family moved back to New York and he received his education from tutors at home until he entered Princeton College in 1835, from where he graduated in good standing. After working for relatives on the Lenox side of the family for a while, Robert established his own firm, Robert L. Maitland & Co., in 1841. The firm seems to have specialized in tobacco importation and the cotton trade.

Eliza's father, Robert, died in 1839 and left a consider-



Moving the Maitland House to Bayside and Sycamore'

able fortune to his children. He had seven daughters and one son, James, a reclusive fellow, who never married and was to become one of New York City's great benefactors. The Lenox Hill section of Manhattan on the Upper East Side was known as the "Lenox farm" in Robert's day. James studied law but never practiced. He devoted himself to book and art collecting. Eventually he built the Lenox Library on 5th Avenue, between 70th and 71st Streets, opposite Central Park (now the site of the Frick collection). The Lenox holdings, renowned especially for rare bibles, incunabula, Americana and Shakespeariana, were consolidated with the collections of Astor and Tilden to form the basis for the great New York Public Library in 1895. James Lenox also contributed land and money to found and support the Presbyterian Hospital and Union Theological Seminary in New York. Lenox Avenue, now Malcolm X. Boulevard, was named after him.

Robert L. Maitland, the owner of the Newport property, was successful in business and active in downtown merchants' organizations. He was a director of the Merchants' National Bank of N.Y., an elder of the Fifth Avenue First Presbyterian Church (corner of 5th Avenue and 12th Street), and a founder of the Downtown Association, a social club for merchants. He remained active in his own firm until shortly before his death in 1870. His two sons, Robert L., Jr. and Alexander, took over the firm after their father's death.

Alexander settled in Princeton, N.J. He married the daughter of the President of Princeton University, Rev. James McCosh, in 1881 and became a notable philanthropist. He was on the Board of the Princeton Theo-

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 9)

to fulfilling her other academic duties. This intensive study resulted in *all* of her students passing the examination, thereby earning Muriel a "bonus year" to follow pursuits of her own choosing. While in Germany, she had met an American woman who encouraged and inspired her to "discover America"...So began her introduction to the U.S.

With the purchase of a Chevy Corvair and appropriate camping equipment, enabling her to explore the length and breadth of the continental U.S., she completed her 1964-65 "year abroad" having logged some 13,500 miles on a still functioning odometer – and quite by chance, established a foot-hold on this side of the Atlantic.

After returning to England to fulfill her teaching commitment at Hulme, Muriel found herself experiencing "Ttchy Feet". A quandary indeed – what to do?! – when suddenly she received a letter from the academic dean of a new college being built in the Catskills (he had heard of her brief state-side sojourn) offering her a job at this new college. She wrote back declining the offer! A second letter soon followed from the Dean of Sullivan County Community College offering her a three-year contract with a higher position and more money to design a lab for the Language Department. This was an offer she couldn't refuse, so back to the U.S. she came, this time for the long haul – and over the years she became engaged in so many facets of academia, we would need a special edition of the *Green Light* to credit even a sampling.

What is important to note, however, is her twenty-two year marriage to John Francis Joseph Quinn, a man who shared her love of music, theater, literature, and travel, and who totally filled her heart until his death some sixteen years ago. (A photo taken at their wedding shows not only an elegantly handsome young couple, but one for whom love was must assuredly the essence.)

The other significant people in Muriel's life are her American "Mum and Dad", Helen and Guy Weeden, who in the mid 1960s became her surrogate parents, providing all that was necessary for her to feel and *be* at home in this new land. Earlier this summer, Muriel visited Helen Weeden, the oldest surviving retired teacher in New York, who at age 107 continues to write poetry while still living in her own home!

At this point in time, Muriel has become thoroughly integrated, maintaining her beautiful British heritage while embracing all that is fittingly American. As she divides her time between Florida's west coast and New England's east coast, both Sarasota and Newport are fortunate to share a welcome piece of her. (That is, when she's not trekking back to Cambridge to participate in the university's 800th anniversary or celebrating her 70th birthday aboard the Queen Elizabeth during its 4 month Silver Jubilee Cruise.)

Needless to say, those of us who have enjoyed the pleasure of knowing Muriel over the past several seasons rejoice in her return each summer to her wonderful condo across the driftway from Hunter House. We hope that her view of the harbor in general and of the Green Light in particular will remain bright in her mind's eye while she is away and will always beckon her back to our shore when the "snowbirds" fly North, as they are faithfully compelled – come spring – to do!

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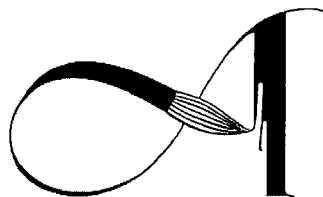
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(Continued from page 8)

base are manufactured and are standardized. Their cost is built into the paint can price. One costs about the same as another. In the 18th century, pigments varied considerably in price depending on the materials and process to produce a useable pigment.

Our research quantified the number of times particular pigments appeared in advertisements over the period of 1760 to 1819; many appear just one time and at the other end are Spanish Brown, red lead and white lead which appear in nearly every ad for the period. Red and white lead affected the color of paints, but was primarily used as additive to fortify the mix.

Spanish Brown is the ubiquitous color of colonial America and England as well. It was cheap, probably the cheapest available – dirt cheap because it is dirt. Robert Dossie in the 1758 London edition of his book *Handmaid to the Arts* comments on Spanish Brown thusly, “It was probably, from its name, originally derived from abroad and was then most likely of a finer kind; but what is now used is produced of our own country, being dug up in several parts of England.”

It did not take the colonists long to follow the London paint merchants lead by digging local dirt with iron oxide content and calling it Spanish Brown. Spanish Brown turned out in a variety of colors from burnt orange through reds and into browns. The exact shades didn't seem to matter; cost did. It was used as primer or first coat in the terms of the times. It was used on out buildings and barns as well as houses.

The pigment was made by grinding the earth into a very fine powdered consistency that would then be added to the linseed oil and turpentine – the content of the dirt and the amount used ultimately determined the color.

Made pigments were another ugly noxious story; take

the manufacture of white lead. Lead sheets were rolled loosely and inserted into tall clay pots. Horse urine then filled the pots. Cow manure was packed around the pots and the wood frame containing the mixture was covered to contain and concentrate the resulting vapors. In due time – days – the cover was removed, the lead sheets removed and unrolled revealing white flakes or “rust” as it was termed. This material was scraped off by some poor soul and then again ground into a powdered form. Similar processes were in place for verdigris or green which used copper in place of lead in a similar procedure and several others of the ‘made’ pigments as opposed to the earth pigment or natural occurring materials that simply needed grinding.

It is easy to see that paint colors of the 18th century were: (1) local in many ways and (2) very inconsistent. In the 1960s, 70s and earlier, paint was scraped down to the first layer, then wiped with a wet finger across it to heighten the color – and that was your original color. This was the period when ‘colonial’ was flat finishes and primarily earthy colors. What was not known or understood fully was that these paint layers had undergone years of change involving time, light and chemical changes, prompted in some cases by successive layers of paint, and the color seen was not necessarily the color applied 200 years earlier.

Today the “true” colors of the past are determined through a very technical process of paint analysis using very sophisticated and powerful microscopes to determine the number of layers, in many case the type of materials used in the paints all leading ultimately to THE color or at least the color as we best know today or until science and technology make another leap in the chase to come up with the exact color this house was painted in 1746.

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(Continued from page 15)

logical Seminary and established a scholarship in New Testament studies there. He was also an original member of the Board of Trustees of the New York Public Library, where he served until his death. He was manager of the Presbyterian Hospital of N.Y., an elder of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, and trustee and treasurer of the Lenox Library until 1895. He played an important role in the consolidation to form the N.Y. Public Library.

Robert L. Maitland, Jr., like his brother, married a clergyman's daughter, Ellen M. Taylor. Rev. Taylor both gave the bride away and performed the ceremony in N.Y.C. on April 9, 1890. In addition to being a businessman, Robert was an ornithologist and a pillar of the Presbyterian church. He died in New Rochelle, N.Y. in March of 1920.

Both Robert and Alexander spent at least a part of their youth at their father's estate in Newport, with its orchards and gardens. Their grandmother, Eliza Sproat Maitland, died in 1864 at the Newport estate, at age 80. She was buried, as was her son, from the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. It seems clear that the Maitland family took little part in the social whirl of Newport society, but rather enjoyed the seclusion of their estate and the comfort of their commodious house. An eyewitness account of the approach to the estate gives us a hint of its remoteness: "...Washington Street ended abruptly in a white fence. And beyond this fence, was the imposing Maitland house, shaded by handsome trees." (Morris, 5)

Maitland Court first appears in the Newport City Directory of 1878-79 as "Martland Court" and the following year, corrected, as it now stands. I came across a singular entry in a chronology of Gould Island, which, perhaps, is the beginning of another story, possibly related to the above. "1859-71: The island is summer home for the Maitland family of New York."

(Snyder, 2).

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(Continued from page 5)

increased competition, even devaluation of the currency, etc.), there began to be pressures that had their origins in events, and decisions, far away.

What were some of these pressures? Well, in 1759 it seemed as though the so-called French and Indian wars were coming to an end, when General Wolfe fought to a successful conclusion in Canada, even as new settlers continued to advance westward into territory that Indians sought to defend. And British troops were still needed to protect the one and pacify the other. Back in London, the Parliament began to look for ways to help pay for these military efforts, make the colonies more self-sustaining, and perhaps add to the treasury of the mother country. What better way than to increase taxes, impose duties on imported goods, and, when colonists retaliated by boycotting British goods, upping the ante even more, increasing the taxable list to include such essentials as tea, lead and paper?

Thus, just as Solomon Southwick was trying to establish himself as an up-and-coming merchant, the British were dreaming up ways to put the screws on precisely that portion of the colonial economy in which he was engaged. It was a difficult time for all those engaged in the import of goods and selling of wares, and many went bankrupt, even Henry Collins, his benefactor. Southwick himself was only able to hang on in business until 1767, when both he and his partner had to petition for help under the Act for Insolvent Debtors. As you might imagine, this experience had a profound effect upon the man, radicalizing his political views – he became a vigorous proponent of independence – and forcing him to look for other employment. Opportunity came in 1768 when the *Newport Mercury* came up for sale, including both printing press and office.

This paper had been founded a decade earlier, in 1758, by James Franklin, a nephew of Benjamin Franklin, in partnership with his mother Anne Smith Franklin. The family had brought the printing press itself down to Newport from Boston. However when James died in 1762, his mother needed a new partner in order to keep the paper going; her new partner was one Samuel Hall. When Anne also died the following year (1763), Hall found himself carrying on alone until, in 1768, he decided to move to Salem. It was at this point that Southwick took over the paper and press, gaining not only a lucrative career but also an outlet for his political views.

What did a printer do? In this era of super-communication, it is hard to fathom the crucial role that a printer might, and often did, play in the life of the town. Prior to the Revolution, Newport was both a bustling town and port with an independent civic life of its own AND the seat of colonial government where the Rhode Island Assembly met in the Colony House. The local printer, also a publisher, connected these different aspects of civil society not just to one another but to the wider world as well.

Aside from editing and printing the local newspaper, the *Newport Mercury*, Southwick was also the official government printer, responsible for printing the Colony laws and proclamations, even election proxies and tickets. He served as a stationer and bookseller, frequently reprinting books sent down from Boston. He also printed almanacs, songs, verses, sermons and religious tracts, book-length histories and literature. Among these was Church's "History of King Philip's War," edited by the Reverend Ezra Stiles and illustrated by Paul Revere. He published weekly listings of the ships and travelers coming and going, reported the substance of debates that took place in the House of Lords over legislation important to the colonists (like the

(Continued on page 20)

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References gladly made available.

(Continued from page 19)

Townshend Acts, authorizer of the notorious tax on tea, among other items), plus accounts of the meetings of the various local clubs, societies, and school activities. He also printed the census of 1774.

These constituted the bread-and-butter news that served the local residents and helped them to function as a civic community. But Southwick went further and used his position as editor of the newspaper to give voice to the complaints and aspirations of his fellow townsmen. An early advocate of independence, he placed the motto: "Undaunted by TYRANTS, — We'll DIE or be FREE" prominently on the masthead of his paper. He also published books and pamphlets that supported the cause of American independence and (he was raised in a Quaker family) opposed slavery. In line with these political positions, he printed extracts of debates in the Continental Congress, the *Rules and Regulations* of the army, the annual Boston massacre orations.

As publisher and disseminator of the news of rising anti-British sentiments and actions, both public and private, Southwick held a prominent place in Newport. In 1775 he reported on the actions of the Minute Men in Massachusetts, the convening of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia to petition for more self-rule and redress of grievances. When George III refused to accept the petition, the colonies were declared to be "in a state of rebellion." As the political situation worsened, Southwick went on to publish Thomas Paine's inflammatory *Common Sense* (January 1776), then the Acts and Laws of the Rhode Island Assembly that repudiated allegiance to the king (May 1776), and, finally, the Declaration of Independence (13 July 1776). When Newport, already suffering from the blockade, began to anticipate possible invasion, Solomon felt it

prudent to look to his future. First, the blockade had led to a shortage of paper, which forced him gradually to reduce the *Mercury* in size until, toward the end of 1776, it was down to a single sheet. Then he began to move important items from his office and, when British occupation appeared imminent, "removed his press and types to the rear of an old building on Broad Street, known as the Kilburn House, where they were buried in the garden." His last issue was printed on 2 December 1776, just a week before the British army entered Newport. Now a marked man, he just narrowly escaped capture by the British, as reported in the dramatic account of one Isaiah Thomas:

As soon as a part of the army had landed, detachments of both horse and foot were sent into all parts of town to arrest the patriots, who were endeavoring to effect an escape. Southwick, his wife, with a child in her arms, and some other persons, had got on board of an open boat, and were just putting off from the shore into a very rough sea, when a party of soldiers who were in pursuit of them came in sight ... Southwick and his friends (had) time to get a few rods from the shore before the party arrived at the spot they had just quitted. The boat was yet within reach of that shot. The soldiers fired at them but without effect. The passengers fortunately received no injury and were soon wafted to a place of safety.

Solomon Southwick and his family lived in exile from Newport for almost four years, first in Rehoboth, then Attleboro, and finally (1779) in Providence, where he went into partnership with Bennett Wheeler to give Providence a second newspaper. This was a venture not welcomed by John Carter, owner of the long-established *Providence Gazette*, a competition that led to considerable acrimony at the time. However, it was always his aim

(Continued on page 22)

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(Continued from page 4)

rebuilt, as a result of their financial generosity, into a Georgian Revival style building — 3 stories tall with 10 bedrooms, a kitchen, laundry, dining and meeting rooms. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. It is the only original structure remaining on Market Square and is one of the few along the Newport waterfront still being used for its original purpose, i.e., care of the community. Above the fireplace in the lobby carved into the wood is the following inscription:

“Seamen’s Church Institute of Newport, Rhode Island — in loving memory of George Peabody Wetmore and Edith Malvina Keteltas, his wife. Erected by their daughters Edith and Maude Wetmore — 1930.”

On the 2nd floor is the Henry H. Anderson Jr. Library for mariners — a warm, welcoming place to relax and read, with well-stocked shelves strong in marine themes. The Chapel of the Sea is a delightfully non-denominational nook for personal worship and relaxation. The walls are adorned with frescoes of saints associated with the sea and scenes of Christ’s ministry among fishermen.

The whole front page of the *Newport News* on January 25, 1930 was devoted to the dedication of the new S.C.I. and has been preserved as a wall hanging. The feature articles were entitled:

1. A model for all ports in the world
2. Greater facilities in new quarters
3. Replete with great services for seamen
4. Right man in the right place
(reference to Rev. Roy Magoun)
5. Fitting memorial to Senator Wetmore
6. Wetmores always held in high esteem.

The S.C.I. today is a lively, vibrant community open to the public. There are human services programs, donating meals, clothing and affordable housing for men and women. Annually 50 to 60 residents stay an average of 60 days with 33% of the rent subsidized. Public service programs include showers, laundry and restroom facilities, telephone and internet access. A delightful Aloha café serves breakfast and lunch daily at reasonable prices. It is estimated that 25,000 visitors come through the doors of the S.C.I. annually with over 300 meetings a year held for organizations, businesses and the Naval War College. The deed for the S.C.I. specifies that the building shall not be used for commercial purposes. If


the S.C.I. ceases to function there, the building must be passed on to another non profit agency or torn down for open space.

There are frequent lectures and musical events throughout the year to which the public is invited. Two very interesting events which my wife, Dorothy, and I attended recently were by Prentice Stout showing his fascinating photographs of a voyage to Antarctica and a talk on “Modern Piracy in the World Today” by Robert Macomber, an international maritime writer and historian

A fitting closure to this “southern bookend” for the Point is a short poem on the wall of the S.C.I.

Within the bosom of a New World port
Beats a heart in pulse with waves
A place where souls call home
A place where souls are saved.
by Joe Geraci

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(Continued from page 20)

to return to Newport when it was safe to do so and, in 1780, he finally achieved this goal. Solomon Southwick lived on until 1797, ultimately holding a number of public positions, gradually returning to publishing books and even, by 1785, publishing the *Mercury* again, this time in partnership with Henry Barber, a man who had originally learned the trade from Southwick. But for a man now in his fifties, the postwar years, and economy, were not easy ones, marked by bouts of ill health, debt (he was unable to collect on monies owed him by the government), and the general postwar recession. When he died, he was living in his nephew's house, then located at 22 Washington Street and subsequently moved to its present site at 77 Third Street. There is much more to be learned of the man, his life and times by referring to the Fall 2008 issue of *Newport History: Journal of the Newport Historical Society* (Vol. 77, No. 259) and its feature article entitled "Solomon Southwick, Patriotic Printer of Revolutionary Rhode Island," by Dr. C. Deirdre Phelps, who shares common ancestry with her subject.

All of the foregoing is only to emphasize how important the role of printer could be in the daily life of an 18th century town in New England. The printer served as the glue that bound the citizens to one another, gave voice to their aspirations, and played an influential role in their political life. We should be proud that one of these unsung heroes once lived among us and helped make possible the life we live today.

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Source: RI Statewide MLS- as of July 31, 2009

This Information is deemed reliable but is not guaranteed

*Summer Cocktail Party . . .
Thanks to Anne Cuvelier
for hosting this great
Point Tradition!*

Photos by Jane Hence.



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

To join our e-mail list and be notified of events by e-mail rather than postcard send a note to
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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

SAVE THE DATES

Annual Members Meeting — Thursday, October 22, 7:00 p.m., Harbor House

Fall bulb planting — Saturday, October 24. (Rain date October 31.)