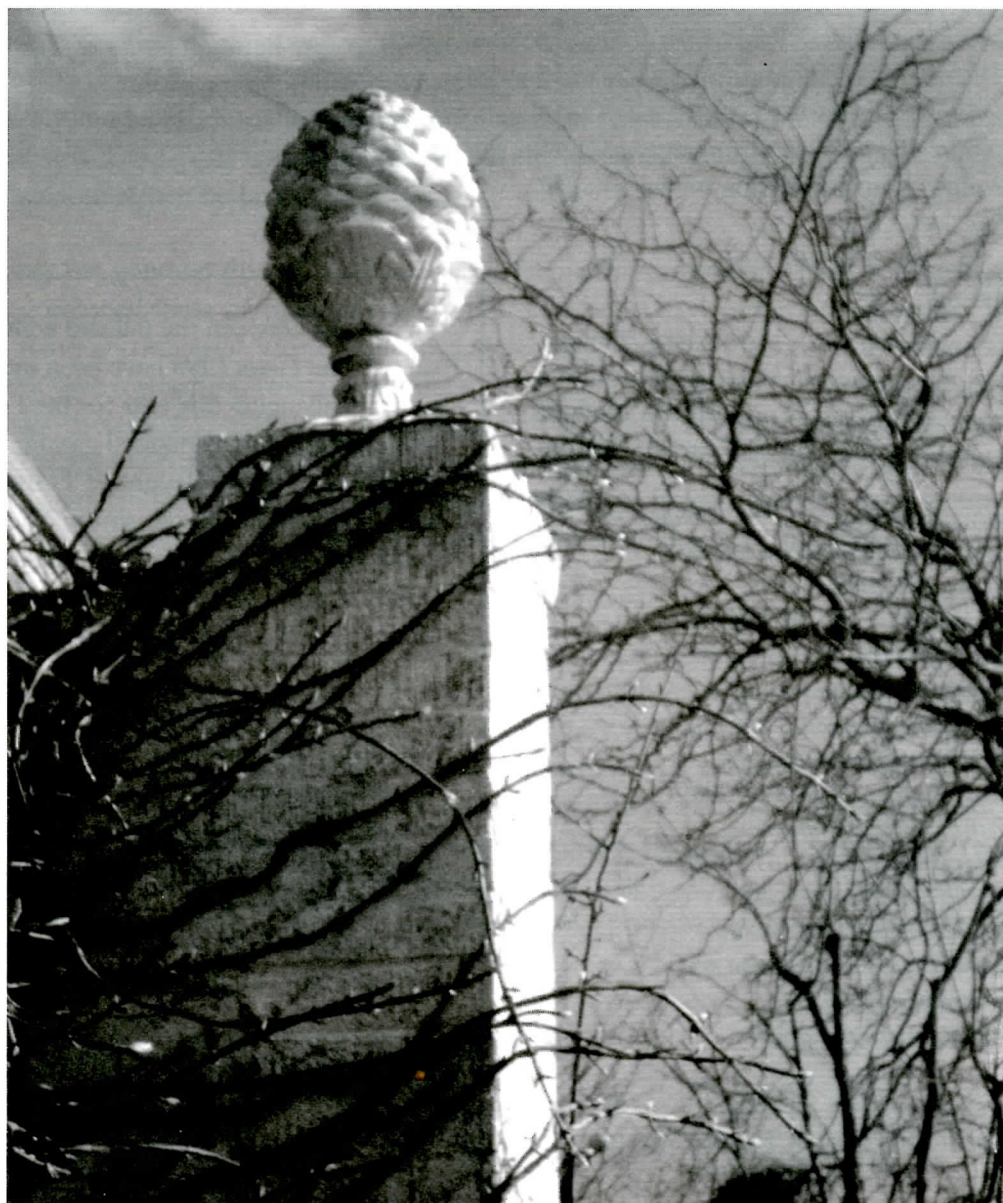


The GREEN LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

WINTER 2012-13



The GREEN LIGHT

LVI No. 4

WINTER 2012-13

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



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:

Photo by Jane Hence

Visit our website: www.thepointassociation.org

There you will be able to:

- update your contact information
- pay your dues
- stay up to date between issues of *The Green Light*
- learn about upcoming events
- contact committee chairs
- view Point photos

And so much more....



The weeks between the fall and winter issues of the *Green Light* have been inordinately challenging this year for the Point, with the threat of expanded gambling to the north and the very real onslaught of Hurricane Sandy's wind and water from the south. The neighborhood has survived them both and now the holiday season is upon us with the promise, at least, of a more tranquil and enjoyable time.

In this issue, you will find memories of a holiday just past (Halloween), of storms on the Point, the one just experienced and another, more horrific one many years ago. There is also a moment of hope, however, in the story of a fragile butterfly that will surely resonate with those among us who have witnessed the amazing monarchs swarming off our coast on their migration to winter homes.

May this winter be a good one for them and for us.

Alice

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Tempestuous times on the Point! As I write, the northeast winds of winter storm Athena are howling through our trees, in an attempt to outdo her sister, super storm Sandy's recent visit to our coastline. Let's hope that all these weather events are not a foreshadowing of what is to come as the winter months progress! Election Day brought turbulence, too, as a rigorous campaign to abate the hope of expanded casino gambling at Newport Grand was successful. Proof that if a small, determined group of patriots work hard for a worthy common cause, they will prevail, despite the pots of money backing the opposition. Ward One will also see a change in leadership, as our diligent fellow Pointer, Charlie Duncan, will relinquish his seat on Newport's City Council to newly elected Marco Camacho.

A happy tone was set by Hugo DeAscentis who favored us with an impromptu piano performance as all assembled in the Guild Hall for our well-attended Annual Membership Meeting on 18 October. Much was covered as we caught-up on Board business; greeted two beautiful new Born on the Point babies; discussed the casino referendum and took an informal poll which resulted in a "no dice" vote; welcomed Joan Rauch as the Board's new corresponding secretary; and thanked Jack Maytum and Shelley Kraman for their many years of service. The meeting wrapped with a slide presentation summarizing the results of the survey conducted over the summer. Big thanks to Linda Narbey for pulling all the data together in such a colorful and creative way. If you missed the meeting, you can view the presentation by using this web address: <http://bit.ly/TPA2012AA>.

With all that has gone on this fall, one consistent theme shines through. Point residents gain so much from our combined sense of pride in community. Our parks have never looked better. We now have two very active and engaged Vice Presidents, Laurie Shaw and Jane Hence. Our website allows you to update your own contact information, pay dues on line, and stay abreast of events and happenings...and look at Point pictures if you are away and feeling a bit homesick. Another new and exciting way to keep connected is the social media tool called "The Point-Nextdoor". This network, which is not specific to only Point Association members but available to all 690 households within the Point boundaries, offers an easy way to stay in touch and make our neighborhood safer, healthier, and more fun! And... isn't that why we love living on the Point so much?

If all this activity was not enough here in our often tranquil and cozy quarters — hang on — we had a fire, some flooding, a few forced entries to homes and cars, too. Oh yes, and we made it through Halloween's goblins on our streets! One could certainly become weary with all this current day activity, but all that is necessary to put things in perspective is to take a leisurely walk down one of our splendid venerable streets and take comfort in the fact that this is not the only time that so much tumult has occurred here. Remember...the Point survived revolution, foreign invasion, ravages of slavery, plundering of pirates, community redevelopment, and even the building of a bridge! If these old streets and houses could talk...what wise words would they offer? Stay vigilant, take pride in knowing and helping your neighbor, and carry on!

Hope to see you at one of the upcoming December events.
Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season!



AN EARLY CHRISTMAS ON THE POINT

by Hugo J. DeAscentis

Born on the Point ~ October 28, 1926

The beautiful holiday of Christmas is rapidly approaching and for me it brings back pleasant Point memories of my childhood living at 26 & 1/2 Second Street. My school days were spent at the Potter, Calendar, and Mumford Schools. The Point was a humble, family neighborhood, though rich with family, friends, customs and heritage.



My father was a Navy veteran, who played the coronet in the Navy Band, in addition to his duties as a military tailor. After his time in the Navy, he opened his own tailoring business on Spring Street.

Though both my parents were born in Italy, my father, as a proud member of the United States armed forces,

followed American traditions; however, Christmas was kept as an Italian type holiday. There was open house in most Italian homes. On Christmas Eve we gathered to enjoy the old-world custom of the Feast of Seven Fishes.

I am number seven of eight sons, so my mother could not leave the kitchen to buy toys, and my father could not afford to close his shop to purchase presents. Our first Christmas tree was a surprise, for no one mentioned where it came from though some in the family



say one of my older brothers "found" it on the Point and brought it home much to the delight of us younger boys.

There was always plenty to eat and drink, and being all together made this lack of gifts unnoticeable.

A NEW SCREENING FOR THE POINT'S LARRY KRAMAN

Pointer Larry Kraman's film "David Amram: The First 100 Years", which we saw in preview at the Jane Pickens theater in 2011, was scheduled for its world debut on November 11, 2012 at Symphony Space in Manhattan. The event was a fundraiser for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater Foundation which was conceived in 1966 by folk music legend Pete Seeger in an effort to clean up the Hudson River.

A concert planned to follow the film included not only Pete Seeger but Cuban saxophonist Paquito Rivera, Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary), Tom Paxton, singer-songwriter John Sebastian, New Orleans blues and gospel singer Henry Butler, blues-man Guy Davis, Josh White, Jr., David Amram and youth musicians from Clearwater's Power of Song programs.

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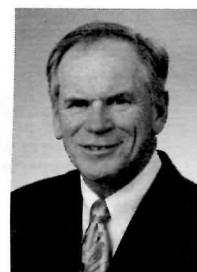
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CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE

by Tom Kennedy

On Wednesday, December 21st of last year, I drove through blustery, rainy weather south to Mantoloking Shores, N.J., where I was to be housed in my nephew's large, comfortable summer home on Barnegat Bay. Behind the imposing house are a large pool and a dock, the scene of boating, swimming, relaxation and much partying during the summer months. During the winter the house is usually empty, but my nephew opens it to family members and friends at Christmas to use as a base for the annual family gathering on Christmas Eve afternoon. This year about 70 relatives and friends celebrated with much cheer at the reunion in the Hilton Hotel at Short Hills.

My eldest nephew, a Californian, my niece, a Manhattanite, and I were the only inhabitants of the great house until Christmas Eve, when another nephew, his wife, and four children would join us. On Christmas day, together, we would prepare a festive dinner for 15 at the shore house. The holiday celebrations in New Jersey are always lively and hectic. I return to Rhode Island cheerful, but slightly stunned and in need of a good rest.

On the day after my arrival with the sun shining and the air warm, I pulled up in the driveway and opened the garage door to enter the house with my bundles from the A&P. As I walked past the car, I spotted what looked like a monarch butterfly just inches from my front tire. Bending down to convince myself that my senses were not deceiving me, I reached out my hand and the butterfly fluttered over to a nearby hedge. I shook my head and proceeded to go about my business. Later, I shared the discovery with my nephew and niece, who helped keep an eye on the creature during this balmy Christmas holiday. That night it rained in torrents and blew a gale. As I was turning in for the night I inadvertently thought again of the butterfly and was saddened as I thought of its likely fate in such stormy weather. Dawn brought clear skies and a temperate breeze. Emerging from the garage I looked immediately for the butterfly – and I found him still on the hedge! He hadn't moved from his spot. I decided to take a closer look, and to my astonishment, I spotted a tiny round sticker on one of his front wings. The writing on the sticker was too small to read, but I assumed that this monarch was being tracked by someone. Suddenly I

felt responsible for this beautiful creature. I offered it my finger as a perch and it climbed aboard and clung very tightly. More amazement! I decided to place him in the heated garage and to tend to him later, when I had a free moment.

After a day of visitations and a pleasant walk along the boardwalk with my brother, I returned to the house and searched through the cluttered garage for the butterfly. It was not where I had left it and was not to be found among the beach paraphernalia and the surfing equipment. Perhaps it flew away when someone else opened the garage door, or maybe it was lying dead in some hidden corner of the disorderly garage. I didn't expect to see it again.

On Christmas Eve, after the gala reunion, my other nephew and his family joined us at the shore house. I told the story of the missing butterfly to Emily, at 18, the oldest of the four children, and a very bright young lady with enviable computer skills. She was clearly interested. Our Christmas dinner was a great success and it was time to wind down and call it a day. Suddenly Emily appeared in the kitchen and announced that she had found the monarch in the garage. Eyebrows were raised

(continued on p. 16)

"Own the water, not the boat!"



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THE POINT SURVEY

by Jane Hence

Here follow bits and pieces from this summer's Survey, presented as quotes from replies to two of the questions. These replies were chosen as they seem to capture the lovely variety and always interesting views of those who are our neighbors on the Point.

Among the answers to Question One (What brought you to the Point? Did you plan to live here, or arrive by accident?):

"Moved here after six years in the Historic District to preserve our sanity."

"Accident...was looking in Newport in other areas. Wanted a larger yard, newer house, privacy—got none of these, but it is the best neighborhood I have ever lived in. I simply fell in love with this house and location, knowing nothing about 'the Point'."

"We were in a condo part time on Kay and wanted a house. Someone told us to look on the Point. We didn't even know what they meant."

"Grandparents moved here in 1918; parents moved in with them in 1933."

Two replies to Question Six (If you could change something in the Point neighborhood, what would it be?):

"Get rid of the bridge; it's what ruined Newport."

"STOP THE CHURCH BELLS" (the capitals are the writer's).

More questions and answers will be in future *Green Light* issues, which we hope will provide amusement, interest and thought and be enjoyed by all.



In all the beauty
One thing does not stay hidden:
Please scoop the dog poop!

THANKS!

from Ed Madden

The resounding defeat of Newport Grand's attempt to install a full-fledged casino will allow Newport to hold its head high. The yeoman efforts of Father Gene McKenna's Concerned Citizens Against Gambling, including David Wixted, Laurice Shaw, Councilman Justin McLaughlin, Rep. Peter Martin, Nancy Corkery and innumerable worker bees — plus the ninth-inning home run by Elizabeth Meyer — sank the gamblers' pirate ship, crewed by the Newport City Council, to the bottom of the ocean where it belongs.

Thank you!

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LOVING YOUR OLD WOODEN WINDOWS

by Laurie Shaw

There are many charms to living in an old house. Looking either at, or through, old windows is one of my favorites. What can compare with the wonderful wave and dance of old glass? New windows don't give you a thing but a blank, dull stare. Old windows wink at you as if to say - they know a thing or two.

I repair and restore old windows. I enjoy it because it is creative and helpful and helps me earn my living. Windows need tender, loving care and if treated right, will last as long as your house. When you consider how long your windows have already been around it makes sense to stick with a good thing!

There is little that might ail an old window that can not be fairly easily fixed. The materials your window is made of are superb! Irreplaceable actually. The wood your window is made of is certainly old growth pine or chestnut which is much denser and more compact than any of the 'farmed fast' woods of today. Look how long it has already persevered under who knows what challenges! Today's wood is like...well...what comes to mind are those little balsawood airplanes we used to fly as kids. If you're lucky they might still be up to the task of giving light and protection from the elements in 30 years but I sure wouldn't bet on it.

Now the glass...I've already mentioned the magic of looking through a wavy, bubbly piece of glass but think about it...it is an image as fleeting as the memory of frost on your window. Remember the magic of that before we were hermetically sealed in our homes? The glass is a moving, captured bit of the past that has not been duplicated in anything but disappointing and expensive ways.

The window mechanisms are also superior in many, many ways to more modern applications. Give me simple ropes and weights any day! A beautiful design. Many of the spring/pin mechanisms are lovely and simple in their form and function and can work relatively effortlessly with a judicious application of WD-40.

There are some easy tricks to keeping your old wooden windows working smoothly.

First: Don't paint the tracks that your window moves up and down in. It might look more attractive when your window is up but it will cause friction and inhibit the use of the window.

Second: Because your windows and the frames are made of wood they will swell in the summer and shrink in the winter. Not ideal. However, if you wax the tracks your window slides in with plain paraffin in the summer they will move with greater ease. In the winter an application of that 'More-Tite' rope/caulk type weather-stripping, or felt, eased into cracks can silence the breeze and rattle. There are many weather-stripping systems and materials that I use when folks want something more permanent and less hassle.

Third: Paint is your first line of defense. If you keep the outside of your windows coated in a protective sealing of paint you can avoid the problem of loose glazing, which is the stuff that holds your window in. Fixing loose glazing is simple, although time consuming. In addition, I would caution against painting over wood that might have started some rot because that seals the rot in where it can just keep working away at that wonderful old wood your window is made of and, eventually, you have a more serious problem. Wood rot in windows is unfortunate but, again, not difficult to fix.

So - my advice is to love your old windows. Replacement windows can never hold up to the quality you already have - even though it may be buried under lead paint and rattle in the wind. They are the eyes to your home that help you look out at the world they have been seeing for a long time now.

If you want to talk windows please give me a call at 846-3945.



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GHOST STORY

by Ed Madden

Several years ago, a female guest at our B&B, the Stella Maris Inn, came down for breakfast. In the midst of casual conversation, she enquired as to whether anyone had ever asked about ghosts in the house. I flippantly told her that all respectable Newport mansions had their own resident ghosts. With further conversation, she appeared to

be quite serious and told me that as a young woman she had developed an awareness of things extra-terrestrial. She seemed at times to have a sixth sense and would anticipate events often before they happened. She never explored the world of spiritualism and otherwise being a normal, personable and athletic female, relegated these phenomena to the back page. She went on to marry and raise a family but from time to time would still have flashes of a sixth sense. She would usually dismiss these phenomena without dwelling on them.

The previous night she had returned from dinner with her husband and was in her bedroom getting ready for bed. Her husband was in bed reading and she was seated in front of a table with a large mirror combing her hair when she became aware of a definite presence behind her. The presence was feminine and benign. My guest thought that her hair combing and toiletries were the main attraction. There was no conversation and, looking in the mirror, my guest didn't see anything or anyone. Her husband was aware of nothing.

After several minutes, she felt the presence depart and



not return. For no apparent reason, the name "Agatha" came to her mind and stuck with her until she fell asleep. There was no further awareness of the presence on awakening in the morning.

She asked me if the name "Agatha" had any significance in the history of the house. I was taken aback and asked her if she had done any reading about

the history of the house. She stated that she had no prior knowledge of the history of Stella Maris, had not read or heard of the female owner's suicide and was flabbergasted when I told her the following story.

One summer night in 1874 during a family party, Edward Mayer, the owner of Stella Maris, noted that his wife was becoming increasingly depressed. She had recently been diagnosed as suffering from melancholy (i.e. depression in modern lingo) and was undergoing treatment. Unfortunately, valium and its cohorts had not been invented. She apparently slipped away from the festivities and was next seen jumping off the end of the family's pier into the waters of Narragansett Bay. She drowned before help could arrive. Her name was "AGATHA"!

P.S. I have always been fascinated with stories of the other world. I thought that it would be wonderful if I could meet AGATHA and communicate with her. I slept in her room that night and on two other occasions in hopes of consummating my wishes. The only result was three rather insomniacal nights' rest!

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CANDLELIGHT HOUSE TOURS

by Mary Beth Smith

One of the highlights of Christmas in Newport's annual events is the Candlelight House Tour of Historic Private Homes held the three days following Christmas – the 26th, 27th, and 28th. Each day there are 3 different homes open to the public from 4 to 7 PM for \$3 per person per house. These homes are primarily 18th and 19th c. with most boasting original architectural elements.

2012 is the 42nd year for this tour, chaired by Vance Gatchel, in her 19th year of finding homeowners willing to open their homes and acquiring over 100 volunteers to staff the homes. A monumental task done joyfully for the visitors as well as providing funds for Christmas in Newport, a non-profit organization. These funds primarily support the printing of the annual calendar that lists hundreds of events for the month of December.

This event not only prolongs the season but also allows the public to see how these homes are decorated for the holidays. Advance reservations/tickets are not necessary and the listing of homes to be opened will be on the web site by the middle of December. For details and a complete listing of all the Christmas in Newport events visit www.christmasinnewport.org.

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THANK YOU, CHARLIE DUNCAN!



On November 6th, many results came via the ballot box... for Point people the vote to reject the expansion of gambling table games at Newport Grand...and nationally, the voters chose to keep President Obama in place for four more years. One big change for Ward One and the Point neighborhood is the newly elected city

councilor, Marco Camacho. Leaving Charlie Duncan, who held the seat for the last eight years, free to pursue other interests...

The very good news is that Charlie, a former Point Association president, isn't going anywhere. He has agreed to assume a seat on the Point Board as an advisor. We on the Board look forward to his insight, experience, and contacts that will be most helpful as the Point faces many challenges. With the future of the Navy Hospital property still pending and the ongoing plans to redevelop the city's North End, we will make good use of Charlie's guidance as we work to protect and enhance our special section of Newport.

When asked what aspects of the council "job" he will look back on with the a sense of accomplishment, his answer was simple and reflective of his humble nature, "...only one thing, and that was representing us, helping residents resolve problems with the City and trying to do my very best for the City on the Council."

That says a lot. Though I will add something he told my son, a fellow scout, while they chatted after Mass this past Sunday: the values instilled as an Eagle Scout – good character, integrity, respect for others including opponents, accountability, and demonstrating graciousness in victory and defeat – leave him with no regrets. Now those are words to live by, as most certainly Charlie Duncan does every day. Thank you Charlie for all you have done for the Point, and will continue to do in the days ahead!

ANNUAL MEETING PROVIDES POINTED NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION

by Joan Rauch

President Beth Cullen welcomed members of the Point Association at the Annual Meeting on Thursday, October 18, at St. John's Hall. As it was an event-filled evening in Newport, attendance was especially appreciated. "Born on the Point" certificates were presented to Rose Mae Dana and Helen Le Roy Huntley and accepted by the infants' parents. Though the following recipients were absent from the meeting, "Born on the Point" certificates will also be presented to Marilyn Moffatt and Easton Tomaszek.

Committee Reports began with the Treasurer's Report given by Tom Goldrick. He stated that the Point Association assets for the year total \$40,000. He expects a \$349 deficit for the current year. Jack Maytum, Membership Chair, reported that there are 361 paying members of the association of which 73 are new members. Forty-three of the new members are a result of the neighborhood survey conducted this summer. Those in attendance would have an opportunity to pay dues at the end of the meeting.

Beth Cullen reported for Alice Clemente, Editor of *The Green Light*, that the deadline for articles for the winter issue is November 5. There will be an effort to contact those who volunteered to write for the periodical via the survey by the next issue. Also, an ALN, Alliance for Livable Newport, meeting was being held simultaneously with the annual meeting; therefore, information from the Point's representative, Lauren Carson, would be available on the Point Association website within 24 hours.

The Beautification Team members reported that they had completed several projects and had spent their entire budget for last year on plants. Among the completed projects were Arnold Park where trees were cut, the shrubs lowered, and a huge plant placed at the entrance and Storer Park where the area along the Hunter House was cleared, cleaned and mulched. The area in front of the Long Wharf Pumping Station now has been planted with beautiful rose bushes, and new plants now grace the Mary Ferrazzoli Park. An announcement was made

that Saturday, October 20, was Cleanup Day on the Point. Volunteers were asked to bring gloves and bags; bulbs would be planted in three parks.

Amy Harrison from St. John's Church announced two events: the Harvest Dinner on November 3 and the Thanksgiving Service at 8:30 a.m. in the church. All Point neighbors are invited to both events.

Beth Cullen spoke quickly about three committees that need to be formed in this next year – a traffic committee, a history and archives committee, and an odds 'n ends committee that will follow up with problems, complaints, and ideas. More about these committees will be forthcoming.

The Nominating Committee announced three Board positions that needed to be filled for the upcoming year. John Ward, nominating committee member, nominated Beth Cullen as President, Laurie Shaw as First Vice-President, and Joan Rauch as Corresponding Secretary. After no other nominations came from the floor, all positions were accepted by the attending members.

Laurie Shaw asked that the Point Association take a stand on the referendum on gambling in Newport. While the Point Association rarely takes political positions, this issue is vital to the neighborhood based on the proximity to the Slots business. Laurie explained that if the issue passed in the general election on November 6, there is a concern that the state could allow not only more games, but also an expansion or relocation of the building. Newport receives only about \$200,000 per year from this business. If Newporters pass this issue on November 6, we never again have a say; if this issue does not pass by the citizens of Newport, the issue can be brought up again in two years. The yellow ballot that Newport residents will receive on Election Day is the host community vote for or against this issue. Votes were taken by the attending members to reject the issue: twenty votes rejected, four votes accepted, and five were undecided. Peter Martin, State Representative and Point member, reminded neighbors to get out and vote on Election Day. However citizens vote is what we will live with; voting is crucial.

Mike Cullen spoke about ways to "Keep in Touch" in the neighborhood. There is the Point Association's website,

(continued on p. 18)

YOU CAN GET HERE FROM THERE

by Ed Madden

Our two paths crossed in Newport in 1990. I had moved here with my wife and family from East Greenwich, R.I., to take up residence in a lovely home on Washington Street that needed a lot of T.L.C. Our plan was to convert the home to a B&B and this is where we first met.

Frank Nagle was the owner of the Newport Hardware Store on Broadway. He had been raised and educated in Newport. He graduated from De La Salle Academy in 1955 and served four years in the U.S. Air Force from 1955-59 as an aircraft mechanic. On returning to Newport after discharge, he worked in the service department of a home heating company, had additional training at N.E. Tech and obtained an associate degree at Roger Williams Jr. College in 1965.

A job in the sales department at Stanley Hardware resulted in nationwide employment and travel. His job took him to Minneapolis, New Orleans, New Jersey and Indianapolis to name a few places. It was in Milwaukee that he met and married his bride, Roberta, in 1967. A change of employer several years later to Knape & Vogt Manufacturing led to further travels as national sales manager. Then further employment as a national sales manager for a plumbing products manufacturer for four years completed his apprenticeship and travels. Frank was primed for the ultimate move to self-employment and ownership. He returned to Newport and he and his wife took over the Sullivan Hardware Store on Broadway in 1980. This proved to be a perfect match for their talent and, for 33 years, their Newport Hardware Store has been a Broadway beacon for all of us do-it-yourselfers on the Point and elsewhere in Newport.

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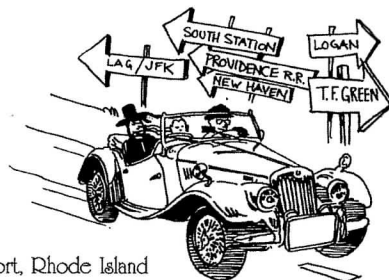
Phone: [401] 924-2402

Email: Rep75@StacyHouse.com

The conversion of our home to a B&B in 1990 nearly cleaned out many of Frank's shelves. As much as his supplier kept us on a 24/7 schedule, his expertise and invaluable advice and recommendations, utilizing his vast training and experience, kept us out of harm's way.

This man who always seemed to be available and apparently never got around to taking a long vacation is retiring now. We wish him a well-deserved rest and will miss him but hopefully he may reappear from time to time in the Newport Hardware Store at the Casino Terrace run by his nephew Joseph Nagle. It's hard to keep a good man down!

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AT THE POST OFFICE

by Isabel Griffiths

I went to the post office at about 11:00 am on Saturday. I like to go at a busy hour every once in a while just to "take the pulse of the nation." I had a large envelope to mail. There were about five people in line...the action begins:

One woman was on duty – dogged, determined, and most concerned that every piece of mail was really going to the place intended. "Are you sure this is where you say it is?" Looking at her screen she asks about spelling and zip code and comes to an agreement that the mail will go to the correct destination.

We all watch. By now there are ten people in line. I am curious about a young man who will be up next. He looks like someone from the South Seas and doesn't seem to speak much English. Three or four family members wait outside for him. The postal clerk tells him his envelope, picked from those on sale at the post office display, is incorrectly addressed. "Where is it going? But that has to be here," she says, pointing at the envelope. "Write it here," she says and motions him aside.

We all watch. The young man obviously has not a clue about how to fix the problem. Then a woman who has been gossiping with someone in line steps up beside him and says, "Can I help you?" They huddle together over the counter while the line begins to move. She takes a look at the envelope and waves it at the clerk. "Is this free?" she asks. "Nothing is free," calls the clerk who is stacking a package in the back. This cracks up the whole line of waiting customers; we laugh together.

The young man and his new friend work out the address. The letter is going to the Marshall Islands. The clerk motions him to bring his envelope. We hold our breaths. "I can't seem to find this," she says as she taps her machine. The young man provides some numbers; she taps again and the appropriate sticky labels appear. She wields her stamp – thump! And thump! (By canoe, longboat?). Looking official, the envelope begins its journey. Who knows what is in it. A birthday card? Money order for \$50,000? Secret codes? It's on its way. How absolutely lovely that no one will open it to check. After all, this is the United States Postal Service!



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ST. PATRICK'S DAY BLIZZARD OF 1956

by Dave Moore

On Saturday, March 17, 1956, I turned twenty-four and it turned out to be the worst birthday of my life. My ship, the *USS Brownson*, was tied up next to the *Charles H. Roan*, and the *Samuel B. Roberts* at a large mooring buoy off the Point in Newport. Just three days earlier I was in Brunswick, Georgia, finishing five weeks at the Naval Air Control School. I guess the other officers on board felt that I had had a "cushy" vacation while they stood watches and did sea duty. Therefore, they disregarded my birthday and ordered me to stand duty for the weekend while they went ashore.

The Captain was a little hesitant in leaving me in charge with just a third of the crew because there had been snow warnings. Also, I had only a year's experience as a naval officer. It was important to him, however, to get home to his wife, near Boston, as he hadn't seen her in quite a while. The Executive Officer said I was promoted to "Command Duty Officer" which meant that I had complete charge for the safety of the three ships while they were gone. This seemed way above my pay grade!

The Captain and the liberty launches left the ship at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, the 16th. It was a bitter cold day and the wind had picked up making it a rough passage for them to fleet landing. I took my duty to heart and went aboard the other two ships and introduced myself. I found that most of their senior officers and crew had also left the ships for the weekend.

Very soon the wind started to howl and within an hour it started to snow. It was the start of a Nor'easter and the launches were no longer running. I could feel the ships tugging at the mooring lines so I worked my way up to the bows and inspected the lines. The snow was now coming down almost horizontally and was stinging my face. I called the Chief Engineer and told him to light off another boiler – in case we had to get underway if the mooring lines parted or if some other vessel drifted down on us. In the past I had stood deck watches at sea where I had control of the ship but never in sight of land let alone a crowded harbor in the middle of a blizzard. Returning to the other two ships, I suggested they be ready also. It was

important to contact the Captain, but a message arrived saying that he was already on his way back to Newport. Unfortunately, there was no way for him to get back to the ship in this storm. Next, I went up on the bridge to try to get a compass bearing in case I had to get underway to leave the nest and the bay.

Just about this time an Ensign from the middle ship came over to me and asked me to encode a high priority message to the Commander of the Destroyer Atlantic Fleet. He knew I was the Communications Officer and did all the encrypted messages on board. I told him I was too busy with ship preparations and didn't have time. He said he did not know how to do it, and he believed his career was on the line. Feeling sorry for him, I took his message and went into the crypto shack. I tried to do this as fast as possible as I could feel the ships straining at the mooring lines – just like hounds on leashes seeing a rabbit. I soon found out that this high priority message to a senior officer required a special type of code that I was not very familiar with – but I did my best, although I was sweating hard thinking of my responsibility.

* * *

(continued on p. 14)

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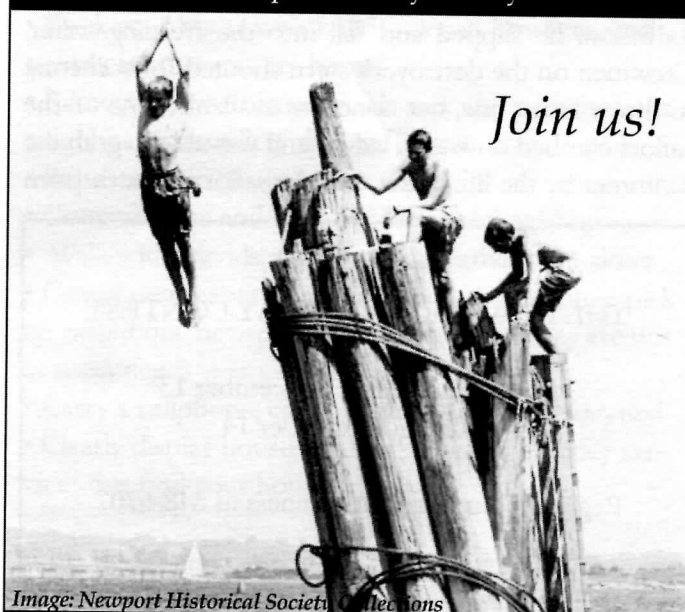


Image: Newport Historical Society Collections

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(continued from p. 13)

Unbeknown to me, there was a tragedy occurring at a nest of four destroyers at a mooring somewhat astern of me. The *USS Preston* and the *Irwin* were two of the ships involved. The *Preston* had just returned to Newport from the Charlestown Navy Shipyard in Boston where she had undergone her scheduled yard overhaul. The *Irwin* had undergone overhaul in Philadelphia.

The *Preston* had sent their first liberty launch in at four o'clock at about the same time we did. They also noted it was a very rough trip because of the high winds. When the boat crew returned for another trip, they landed in the relative shelter between the sterns of the *Preston* and the *Irwin*. The wind had come up with a wild ferocity, and the heavy snowfall limited vision to a few feet from the nest. Their duty officer had the same concerns that I had about the nest breaking up or something drifting into it. He sent a message to his Captain explaining how rough it was getting and asked if they should cease using the launches. The reply was to stop them after the next boat came back.

The officer went to the stern of the *Preston* as the last launch approached and noticed the boat was tossed so high on the waves that its keel could be seen at times. As the launch was ready to tie up, two of the boat crew jumped to the *Preston's* ladder. When the bowman tried to follow, he slipped and fell into the freezing water. Crewmen on the destroyer's stern shouted for someone to throw him a line, but none was available. One of the sailors climbed down the ladder and was able to grab the swimmer by the life jacket, but the sailor was torn from

his grasp when the strap broke. Meanwhile, in the confusion, the launch had not been fully secured and began to drift aft out of reach.

The ship's twenty-four foot whaleboat was quickly lowered to assist in the rescue. Five men boarded the boat, including Annapolis graduate LTJG John Juergens and Reese B. Kingsmore. They were able to find the rapidly drifting forty foot launch and the two got aboard and started the engine. The three others stayed in the whaleboat and bravely continued to search for the sailor who had fallen overboard. Boatswain Mate 2nd Class R. C. Moore served as coxswain, although that was not his normal duty. He had told his shipmates he was going along to make sure everything was done right.

When the liberty launch appeared out of the storm and arrived safely, there were cheers from the ships. The launch crew was taken below for warm dry clothing and medicinal brandy. However, the whaleboat had not returned and the wait made everyone very nervous. The shore-based commodore also wanted a report as soon as anything new

(Continued on p. 15)

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(continued from p. 14)

developed. The hours passed as the day turned into night.

As dawn broke a boat from the Destroyer Tender *Cascade* went out for the search. The wind had died down, but it was still snowing. One of the crew spotted the boat. It had washed ashore on the beach of the Barclay Douglas Estate on Ocean Drive near the mouth of the harbor.

Finally, the duty officer at the Base Commander radioed the worst possible news. Not only had the sailor who had fallen overboard from the launch died, but also the three who had selflessly set out to rescue him in the whaleboat had also perished. The crew of the *Cascade* had discovered the frozen bodies of Moore, Britton and Hutchinson lying in the boat. They had died of exposure.

* * *

The storm finally abated and the Captain and crew started returning to my ship. They told me the wind velocity had reached 70 mph, snow fall was almost ten inches, and some drifts were five feet in height. The Captain congratulated me for a "job well done." I also received an urgent message to report to the Base Communications Officer. I thought I was going to get another commendation for my encrypted message sent out during the height of the storm. Instead, I was told my message could have compromised that whole fleet-wide coding system. My heart sank, but then he said he was going to let me off the hook. He said our own best code breakers could not even decode it – therefore, no one else could either.

References:

Rider, George S.K. - My Navy Memories, Saint Patrick's Eve Tragedy 1956.

Newport Daily News, Saturday, March, 1956 – Front page.

BE SAFE! PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR PROPERTY

by Joan Rauch

The best way to deal with every kind of crime is to take every step possible to prevent it. With long dark nights approaching and many of the neighborhood homes with black windows, it is critical to follow basic common sense rules of crime prevention and safety.

- Keep all doors and windows locked at all times
- Never leave a spare key under the doormat or in the mailbox
- Never leave notes on doors whenever going out even for a few minutes
- Install deadbolts
- Never open the door for someone you don't know; beware of solicitors
- Keep curtains closed at night
- Install motion detector lights outside your home
- Cut trees and shrubs that provide hiding places for criminals
- Consider an alarm
- Keep your garage door down
- Park in well lighted areas
- Keep valuables out of sight in your home and car
- Lock your car doors – always and without fail
- Deck your home with holiday décor, however small, to indicate that you are home
- Remove snow from your sidewalk and perhaps your neighbors' sidewalk if they are absent
- Report suspicious behavior
- Communicate and look out for your neighbors
- Walk with friends and neighbors rather than alone
- Cancel newspapers and mail when not at home; pick up neighbors' newspapers and mail when they are not in residence
- Carry a cellphone; call for help if feeling threatened
- Clearly display house number so the emergency services can find your house

With diligence and personal responsibility, Point residents and homes can be safe. In the event that there is suspicious activity or a threatening feeling, always call 911.

Chuck DiTucci

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Healthy & Organic Gardening

(continued from p. 5)

Was she serious? A deputation set out for the garage. I spotted the monarch and grabbed it by the wings. It was brought into the kitchen and placed in a large, plastic juice container with a flap top. Our butterfly looked to be in good shape despite some cobweb remains on its wings. A magnifying glass was produced and we read the information on the little wing patch. Emily powered up her laptop and went on line to "Monarch Watch." She emailed the requested information to the website, which included the code found on the sticker and the details of the discovery. We were all quite pleased with ourselves. Sampson (Emily's name for the monarch after we ascertained that it was a male) looked quite uncomfortable in the container. Emily, who had some experience raising butterflies in grammar school, decided to offer Sampson a drink. She placed a folded paper towel in warm sugar water and placed it in the bottom of the container. Sampson reacted quickly with his proboscis and we were all delighted. Then she decided that he needed a perch and brought in a twig from outside and placed it in the container. Sampson climbed up the surface of the twig and looked considerably more at home. That evening we gathered around Emily's laptop and learned a great deal more about monarchs. What truly wondrous creatures they are! This delicate, colorful insect flies two thousand miles from Canada or the northern United States to Mexico for the winter!

Emily volunteered to take care of the monarch. I left for home the following day, hoping to hear from her if she received any feedback from Monarch Watch. Sometime later, in January, I received a message that Sampson had died. His origins remain a mystery. That he survived as long as he did in northern climes was a wonder. By losing his way on his southern migration, he found a special place in our lives and in our Christmas memories.



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PLANTING ON THE POINT HAVING FUN BEAUTIFYING NEWPORT

by Beth Cullen

Newport's Long Wharf is even more picturesque due to the recent beautification efforts by members of the Point Association.

As part of ongoing park and roadside improvement projects, Joan Simmons, chair of the Point Association's beautification committee, and Laurice Shaw, Point vice president, rolled up their sleeves, and tackled a garden in front of the city's pumping station on Long Wharf. After removing the old shrubs, they planted 7 new rose bushes. These pink "Knock Out" roses are disease resistant, have a very long blooming season, and require little to no maintenance.

Earlier in the summer, the Friends of the Waterfront's Mary Ferrazzoli Park, at the southeast corner of Long Wharf, was also given some special sprucing by Point planters. Lilies, Black-eyed Susans, Echinacea, grasses, and marigolds were incorporated around the base of the park signs. Some plant materials were purchased with a portion of the proceeds from the Point Association's annual spring plant sale, and "left-over" perennials from the sale were also used. Others were donated from the gardeners' own backyards.

Scott Wheeler, Newport's Tree and Grounds Supervisor, said it best, "The City does its best to insure that the grass and trees in our parks are well maintained but we depend on partnerships with neighborhood associations and adopt-a-spot sponsors to bring our public spaces to the next level. The beautiful new flowerbeds

in Mary Ferrazzoli Park and on Long wharf sponsored by the Point Association are perfect examples of what is possible when we work together."



Gardens were dressed with compost and mulch supplied by the city. The Point Association supplied the labor and the plant materials. Together, they achieved a wonderful public-private partnership, resulting in enhanced public spaces.

The Point Association was incorporated in 1955, with a mission to preserve and protect the area that reaches from Cypress Street south to Long Wharf and from Farewell Street west to the harbor. For over 55 years, Point volunteers have given of their time and talent to tackle the job of improving the many parks and green spaces that are woven throughout their historic seaside corner of Newport.

The plantings on Long Wharf are great examples of how all Newporters can dig in, get engaged and make our community even more attractive. Gardening with friends is fun. Why not have fun while making Newport's public spaces more beautiful? To learn more about public site planting and take community gardening to the next level, contact Scott Wheeler, swheeler@cityofnewport.com, or visit www.NewportinBloom.org.




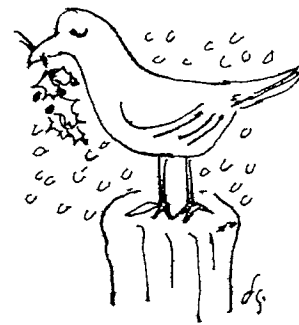
(continued from p. 10)

www.thepointassociation.org, which is the formal way to know about the Point. Mike specifically explained the website, www.wildapricot.com, which tracks members, renewals, and allows board members to send informative emails to the entire membership at once. Another website, www.nextdoor.com, is a for profit site that authenticates neighborhoods and allows conversation among neighbors. It is especially valuable for public safety issues. Also establishing communication with the police department is www.newportready.org. It is important for neighbors to offer email addresses and phone numbers to receive critical information that is timely. Examples of that kind of information would be directions regarding hurricane evacuations or timely notification of a crime that happens in the neighborhood. Lastly, there is a Facebook group called Pointer Sisters, a group of women who remind each other of upcoming events. Point Association members are welcome to go to Facebook and sign on as members.

Approximately every 10 years, there is a survey presented to neighbors regarding what our future should look

like in the neighborhood. Jane Hence spearheaded this year's efforts by writing the questions and getting the survey out. Who we are as a neighborhood, what is important to us and how the Point Association could improve the quality of life in the neighborhood were some of the things addressed in the survey. There were 91 returns among members and 58 returns among non-members, a total response rate of 24%. While the entire results will be on the association website, a few interesting notes: 67% of residents are fulltime residents, 25% of residents have lived on the Point for 20 plus years, and one of the most favorite things to do is – walking!

Refreshments followed the motion to end the meeting.




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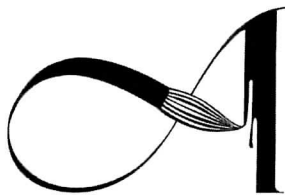
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