

*The*  
GREEN LIGHT  
BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION  
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

FALL 2014



# The GREEN LIGHT

LVIII No. 3 FALL 2014

## CONTENTS

President's letter	3
Charles Duncan – A Man for all Seasons	4
Gambling Your Life Away.	5
Good Works	6
A Friend Remembers	7
Music on the Point.	8
Community Comes Together to Create a Mural in Hunter Park.	9
A Few Sea Stories Aboard a Newport-Based Destroyer	10
The Point Boys Club	13
Have Newport Voters Been Disenfranchised?	14
A Peek Into the Newport Restoration Foundation House on Bridge Street	16

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*Meetings are generally scheduled for the first Monday of the month and are open to Association members. Please call Beth for time, date, and location.*

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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: Jane Hence

*The Green Light* is published four times each year: the first week of March, June, September, and December.



In this issue, the *Green Light* celebrates the lives of two people who have loomed large in the life of the Point. One of them, Ade Bethune (1914-2002), was a distinguished artist known world-wide for her religious art. She was also an exceptional contributor to the life of both the Point and the city. Not least of her accomplishments was the bringing to fruition of a plan to restore and transform a group of historic buildings into Harbor House. Ade Bethune passed away a dozen years ago. This fall the Point will commemorate the centenary of her birth with the planting of a tree in her honor.

The other figure who we honor in this issue is Charles Y. Duncan, Jr. (1934-2014), well-loved friend, creative sign-maker, mentor and public servant, who passed away this past spring. Remembered by one mayor as "the ideal public servant", Charles Duncan spent 13 years on the Zoning Board of Review and 8 years on the City Council, ending his public career just recently on the Charter Review Commission. Closer to home, Charlie also served as President of the Point Association. The *Green Light* mourns the passing of this caring and generous man with gratitude and with heartfelt condolences to his partner of 19 years, Point artist Rita Rogers.

*Alice Clemente*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Another Point summer has elapsed, with many wonderful memories to savor. Once again, our streets and gardens were alive with the sound of music. From the folk and jazz tunes wafting across the harbor from Fort Adams, to the lively Bridgefest concert at Villa Marina, and the re-awakening of wonderful musical happenings at St. John's Church, harmony was in the air.

Alas, not all overheard was pleasing to the ear! Construction cacophony, horn honkers, squealing tires, and the throbbing bass tones from passing cars, or downtown rock concerts, all at times jolted us out of our summer sanguine. Never dull, and always in need of attention, our corner of the city is the living fusion of the classic and the contemporary. As at the time of our founding decades ago, we must continue to guard against "obnoxious developments." Remain watchful and engaged, our future must be well-crafted.

Your Point Board works to keep you updated and aware as events and important issues arise. Watch for our bi-weekly e-newsletters, "Points of Interest." If you are not receiving our emails, please be sure to let us know! Also, we urge you to sign-on to [www.thepoint.nextdoor.com](http://www.thepoint.nextdoor.com). Though not a Point Association initiative, it is a helpful means of staying informed

Cool fall days bring heated political activity. Our city and state sit at a critical juncture. Choices made in the voting booth will have great weight in paving the way for our next generation. In this *Green Light*, we celebrate two active citizens who left our city better than they found it. Ade Bethune, a Point woman of great accomplishment, and Charlie Duncan, a renaissance man, whose quiet ways affected much hope, often behind the scenes, for young and old alike. From them we learn that socially conscientious and active citizenship, carried out with refined moxie and intellectual clarity, can truly make a difference.

2014 marks the 100th anniversary of Ade's birth, a good time to reflect on what she left behind. Her vision for the future of Newport surrounds us, oft taken for granted. Safe and affordable housing, the well-thought-out Comprehensive Land Use Plan, a collection of authentically preserved housing stock, all due to Ade's acumen and persistence. Ever a crusader for social justice, Ade left behind a legacy of community activism.

Like Ade, Charlie Duncan gave voice to those who had the least power in the community. Though never vociferous, Charlie was the sort of political leader whose keen, old-school, sound judgment serves as a lesson to all those with the license to lead us towards a prosperous, principled future.

Will we, current Point inhabitants, advance the positive differences Ade and Charlie effectuated? Or, will complacency and disharmony diminish their work and vision for Newport's future? Time will tell. I urge you all to stay engaged, informed, and ever-vigilant, and to carry the torch forward...for that next generation lucky enough to call the Point home. Please be sure to join us at the October 16th Fall Membership Meeting. Here's to a glorious autumn!





# CHARLES Y. DUNCAN – A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Ed Madden

(Reprinted from the *Green Light*, Spring, 2009)

A Southerner who became a Northerner, a Mississippi boatman who became a Town Councilor, an author and cartoonist who became a sign designer and manufacturer... Not the typical New Englander, eh?

Charlie was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1934. He spent a few years in grammar school in Pennsylvania. Then he returned to graduate from high school in Louisville. A lifelong love for the water brought him his first job as a deck hand on an ore boat plying the Great Lakes from 1952-1954.

With this experience under his belt, he became a pilot on the Ohio River. His first boat was the *Zachary Taylor*, a passenger vessel. From there, he moved on to bigger game – tow boats pushing varying numbers of barges from the bow (the front for all you landlubbers).

He became a licensed officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine in 1957 with a certificate of his credentials presented by the U.S. Coast Guard. This led to his big time employment on the Mississippi River, as well as the Ohio River and its tributaries.

The enclosed photograph of the *Western* is typical of the tow boats that get behind a string of barges and attach to them with the two upright tow knees at the bow. This was Charlie's favorite boat and you can just make out Captain Charlie in the pilot house. He has some hair-raising stories to tell about his water born adventures, including getting shot at by a shotgun totting "good old Southern Boy" while passing his land.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter instituted a grain embargo against Russia in the Cold War. This led to a drastic shutdown of the grain trade along the Mississippi River. The unintended consequences of this policy led to layoffs in the river work force, including Charlie's job as river pilot.

But as the saying goes, "When you shut one door, another one can open." Charlie's door was opened by a Pell Grant for a one year course in Boston in sign design



and manufacture. Once this trade was mastered, he opened his own sign business in Newport and has been in this profession ever since. He bought a home here in 1978 and has been a member of the Point Association for many years and at one time served as its president.

Charlie says that he always had a desire to participate in community activities and service. In 1987, he began to serve on the Newport Zoning Board and was chairman from 2000-2002. He left at this time to run for and be elected as Newport Councilman from Ward 1. He is now serving his third term in this capacity.

The artistic side of his brain led him to write and publish a book, *Looking at My River*, in 1971. This is a humorous look at the lives of river boatmen. Almost every page is illustrated with wonderful Bill Mauldin-type cartoons, originating from his fertile imagination. Who knows but what another door could have opened back in 1980 and the literary world could have taken him in an entirely different direction! *Que será será.*

## A PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE, MAY 2014

*Several years ago, my wife Dorothy and I were looking forward to our 50th wedding anniversary. As part of our plans, we were thinking about some gifts that we could give to the guests. Someone mentioned that Charlie Duncan could design T shirts with logos and I looked him up at his shop. We decided to use the name of our B & B – Stella Maris Inn – as the logo and the order was placed. Charlie had us return within the week for an inspection. He had designed a logo with the name of the Inn wrapped around a 4 leaf clover with a bright green color on a white background, reminiscent of our Irish heritage. We were delighted as were all of our guests when they received their gifts. Just one of Charlie's many talents!*

*May the wind be always at your back, the sun shine on your face and your path be straight and true.*

We will miss you, Charlie.

# GAMBLING YOUR LIFE AWAY

by Ed Madden

*"The Sharks devour the Marlin while the old man tries his best to protect it."*

One of my favorite authors, Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), wrote one of my favorite short stories, "The Old Man and the Sea", for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. That novella, if you recall, had 3 protagonists – the old man, the giant marlin trophy fish and the school of sharks.

The story takes place in the waters off Cuba. The old man has been a fisherman all his life, living alone in a small shack off the beach and going out to sea daily in his fishing skiff, as did most of his fellow fishermen. On the day of this adventure, he rows and sails out on the ocean much further than usual, out of sight of land and the other fishing boats. His food and water supplies are meager. The story hinges on him catching and subduing the largest trophy marlin of his career. The marlin is larger than his skiff! He estimates it to weigh more than 1500 pounds. After laboring for several hours, he manages to harpoon the marlin and lash it alongside his skiff. He starts the long journey home under sail, elated with his catch and knowing that he will be the envy of all his fishing companions.

His euphoria turns to grief, however, when 2 mako sharks detect the smell of blood in the water and descend on their prey. The Old Man initially fights them off, at first with his harpoon and later with his knife strapped to his oar. However, both of these weapons are soon broken and lost.

Additional sharks over the next several hours join in an eating frenzy, biting off huge chunks of the fish. The Old Man becomes exhausted and unable to protect his catch. Several hours later he returns to port, beaches his skiff and goes home discouraged, exhausted and depressed.

Early the next morning, a crowd of fellow fishermen gather about the skiff amazed at the length of the marlin's skeleton which has been stripped of flesh. The marlin's sword extends beyond the bow and its tail past the stern of the skiff by several feet!

My point in presenting this story is to suggest that you imagine:

- the Old Man to be a prototype of the Newport voter,
- the trophy marlin to be the epitome of the City of Newport – America's 1st resort,
- the school of voracious, bloodthirsty, relentless sharks to represent Newport gambling interests bent on devouring the city with a full-fledged casino gambling empire.

Then I would suggest that you reread this abridged version of "The Old Man and the Sea" substituting these 3 new protagonists for those in Hemingway's novella.

But this would just be an enjoyable piece of fiction. Or would it?

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## GOOD WORKS

by Anthony Gill

(Reprinted from the *Green Light*, Spring 2001)

On a cold February afternoon, I went to meet Marie Adelaide de Bethune at 108 Washington Street, a 1906 house overlooking Narragansett Bay, which has been her home and studio since 1953. When I asked to take Ade's picture as part of my interview, she obligingly sat on her own coffin.

Born in 1914 in Schaerbeek, Brussels, to a distinguished Belgian family that can trace its roots back to 1545, Ade remembers the hardships of occupied Belgium during World War I. She also recalls watching Charles Lindbergh as he triumphantly paraded past their home in 1927.

Following the Great War's devastation of Europe, the family—like so many others—emigrated to New York to start a new life with only a few personal belongings. While her mother made lace curtains for the ladies of Fifth Avenue, Ade taught French and studied art at the National Academy of Design and Cooper Union. It was during this period, known as the Great Depression, that she formed her vocation, which was to bring joy to her and to people around the world through her images and words that express the “good news”—The Gospel.

Ade was to change the face of religious art, which had been rooted in pre-Renaissance Biblical imagery in America. In 1933 she discovered a unique newspaper called *The Catholic Worker*, published by Dorothy Day, and immediately offered to supply black and white artwork, starting a lifelong friendship with Day and her work. During this time, she met the visionary Peter Maurin, who was to have a profound effect on the young artist and helped shape a philosophy that would remain throughout her life. The following text from Maurin was the inspiration for what was to follow:

The world would be better off  
if people tried  
to become better  
instead of trying  
to become better off.

Fame found Ade. By the time she was twenty five, she



was recognized as a leading force in religious art. To learn the art of wood carving, she first came to Newport to study with John Howard Benson, a master calligrapher and carver at the John Stevens Shop, founded in 1705, on Upper Thames Street. So began a long and rewarding relationship with the Newport community, starting with the establishment of what must be one of the first artistic communes, called Lion College, “Lion” being her childhood nickname.

Lion College thrived for some years, attracting a number of apprentices and inspired by prominent thinkers, writers, theologians, and artists of the time, including Maurice Lavanoux, Eric Gill, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, and John La Farge. Eventually, Ade became a third partner in the John Stevens Shop with Graham Carey and Benson, producing works of art for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, many churches around the world, and countless publications.

Ade continued her good works, both in art and within the community. She was a founding member of the Point Association and the Church-Community Housing Corporation of Newport. Today, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Newport, she continues to play an active role in the City's urban renewal plan. She designed the first solar houses in Newport and Portsmouth.

Jane Walsh remembers Ade's parents on Washington Street, where Ade's mother, Marthe Terlinden de Bethune (known simply as Bonne Maman), would cook up superb classic French fare for her many guests. She could also be seen, at age 83, driving an oversized Checker car around the Point at breakneck speed.

From her Washington Street home, Ade established a small mail order business, Saint Leo's liturgical art shop, selling her images around the world. As if this weren't enough, she is also the Art Director of the Terra Sancta Guild, a leading supplier of Christian insignia, which



she started with I. A. Serot. Thirty-five years later, the Guild continues to be a leader in the field.

Today, at 86, Ade is as tireless as ever, continuing her good works in art and the community. Her latest endeavor is Star of the Sea's Harbor Point, a mixed income residential community, combining a senior center and support group with a residence for older adults. Work is now progressing on the historic buildings. From her humble start in America, arriving in Brooklyn by cargo boat in 1928, to her far reaching influence throughout the Catholic world, Ade's profound understanding of Liturgical mystery, inspired by her faith, is a celebration of the divine presence in everyday life. Ade Bethune believes that love of work produces true works of art. Ade Bethune is right.

I left Ade still sitting on the plain coffin she made with her own hands sixty years ago. It is colorfully painted with images of her earthly dwellings and inscriptions in Latin. Even in her passing, Ade will be a work of art.

Author's note: Biographical information is based on *Proud Donkey of Schaerbeek* by Judith Stoughton. Examples of Ade's work are also taken from this book, except the cover illustration, "Workers in the Vineyard," which was provided by the artist.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Ade Bethune died a year after this article was written, on May 1, 2002, with her Harbor House project completed. Judith Stoughton's biography of this extraordinary woman was published in 1988 by North Star Press of St. Cloud, Inc., in St. Cloud, Minnesota. A room was dedicated to her at Saint Catherine University's library in St. Paul, MN, and in 1999, an exhibit of her work was organized by the Newport Historical Society in conjunction with a project funded by the R. I. Committee for the Humanities. Ade Bethune's papers, along with a large collection of graphic and sound materials, are housed at the Ade Bethune Collection at Saint Catherine University's library. For more information please go to: <http://library.stkate.edu/spcoll/bethune.html> and [http://faculty.ccri.edu/rprisco/RIWA/Visual%20Arts/Bethune/visualarts\\_stainedglass\\_bethune\\_chronology.htm](http://faculty.ccri.edu/rprisco/RIWA/Visual%20Arts/Bethune/visualarts_stainedglass_bethune_chronology.htm).*

## A FRIEND REMEMBERS

by Martha Marie Grogan

Ade Bethune was 81 when we met. She was diminutive, white-haired, opinionated, revered, out-spoken and progressive. For nearly four years we collaborated on Harbor House, the project that would be the last of her illustrious & storied career.



Already famous across many artistic and liturgical platforms, she was quite accustomed to her ideas being put into action. However, in her 80s Ade discovered and enjoyed the magic of people who would cede to her simply in deference to her age. It was a handy trump card for an accomplished activist.

Ade was an early adapter. It was 1995. She had a plain paper fax machine when the rest of us were fiddling with thermal. And a top-of-the-line Apple computer-back when Apple had a mere 10% market-share. How she could make that technology work! A prolific and prodigious writer, she marveled at word processing and electronic communications. I can only imagine what she would have been able to do with text messaging.

Her only vanity was her eccentricity and in the last chapter of her life she was pitch-perfect. The coffin, for example: Tony's article references Ade's hand-made coffin and her obligingly sitting for a photo on the coffin. She, of course, was proudest of the fact that she could actually fit into the coffin some 60 years after she originally made it. And, for a select few, she would willingly demonstrate by climbing in. Now there's an Instagram.

Ade, you are fondly missed and long remembered.

# MUSIC ON THE POINT

by Beth Cullen

St. John the Evangelist, the historic church that sits front and center in our Point neighborhood, is buzzing with activity. This summer, a variety of musical events took place in and outside of the church. The Point Association is so pleased to see the resurgence of public concerts. For those who have been around awhile, you will remember the many British Cathedral Choirs that performed at St. John's back in the 1990s, continuing for several summers in a row.

We welcome Peter Stoltzfus Berton who arrived at St. John's in June 2014, having previously directed inter-generational choir programs at St. John's Church, West Hartford CT, All Saints Church, Worcester MA (where he grew the number of children in the program from 2 boys to 35 boys and girls in four years) and Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn Heights, NY. He grew up in Lancaster, PA and attended the music schools of the University of Michigan and Yale. Integral to his training was serving as Assistant Organist at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Detroit, Trinity Church on the Green, New Haven, and Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York. He lives onsite at St. John's with his wife Jenn and two musical daughters.

In Peter's own words: "I look forward with great joy to being in your midst, serving as your new full-time Organist and Choirmaster and, concurrently, as founding Executive Director of The Choir School of Newport, which initially will take the form of an after-school program for girls and boys, in a joint venture with our sister churches Trinity and Emmanuel. I look forward to joining forces with Stephan Griffin at Trinity and Waylon Whitley at Emmanuel. I look forward, as well, to forging partnerships with other area organists, just as Fr. Humphrey has with his colleagues Anne Marie Richards, Anita Schell, Erik Larsen, Jeff Lewis at St. George's School, and other area clergy. In time, it is our hope that the beams from this program will reach far past the little green light off the Point and beyond our horizon, as a beacon illuminating lives of character and service."

Once again, St. John's is alive and well and producing lovely sounds in our neighborhood.



7/20



8/20







## SPRING PLANT SALE TEAM

Thanks to all who made it a success.  
Next year, any one?



## COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO CREATE MURAL IN HUNTER PARK

The large retaining wall in Hunter Park, located in the Point section of town, will soon be home to the largest outdoor mural in Newport. The #CaptureNewport Mural, funded by the Andrade-Faxon Charities for Children and the Newport County Fund, is a collaborative project that will beautify the park and bring residents from all over Newport together to participate in its creation.

Over the summer, Newporters submitted over 400 photos to the Women's Resource Center's #CaptureNewport photo challenge. A group of local artists, ranging in age from teens to retirement, are using these images as inspiration to design the 200-foot mural.

On Saturday, September 13, community members of all ages and abilities are invited to come help paint the mural as part of the #CaptureNewport, Create Community Day! Artists will be on hand to help anyone who wants to participate, so there is no need to worry about artistic skills. Other Create Community Day activities will include food, music, games, and other fun activities.

The #CaptureNewport Mural Project is an exciting collaboration that brings together a diverse group of partners, all of whom share a commitment to a strong,

healthy Newport community: The Women's Resource Center, the City of Newport's Clean Cities program, the Point Association, the Arts and Cultural Alliance, the Alliance for a Livable Newport, and Fab Newport.

For more information, please contact Jessica Walsh at the Women's Resource Center, [jwalsh@wrcnbc.org](mailto:jwalsh@wrcnbc.org) or 401-236-8345.

## JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



### We Need Your Help!

The History and Archives Committee is busy putting together a fundraiser recipe book "Celebrations and Holidays on the Point". Please share with us a memory and recipe about Thanksgiving here on the Point.

Email them to  
[historyandarchives@thepointassociation.org](mailto:historyandarchives@thepointassociation.org)  
or send regular mail to The Point Association,  
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Watch for AVAILABILITY in Points of Interest!

# A FEW SEA STORIES ABOARD A NEWPORT BASED DESTROYER

by Dave Moore

The Korean War was raging during my college years and I was certain, on graduation, that I would be drafted into the army. I had two other options: graduate school or join the navy. I had a love of the ocean and very little money so I took the latter. This led to sixteen weeks of Officer Candidate School followed by eight weeks of Communication School at the Newport Naval Base. During this time I was impressed by the graceful lines of the destroyers moored “out in the stream” off the Point Section. Some said they were greyhounds of the sea, while others called them tins cans or sub-killers.

It was the popular book *The Caine Mutiny* that made me want to serve on one of these formidable fighting ships. Just before graduation, however, we were told that they were not taking any more destroyer officers and my heart sank.

I did not want to serve on an aircraft carrier, oil tanker, mine sweeper, or worse, an ammunition ship. Fortunately, at the last minute, they decided to accept just twenty graduates for the destroyers. I was one of them – probably because I did some sailing and

was accustomed to the pitching and rolling of small boats. As an extra bonus, we were to meet Admiral “thirty-one knot” Arleigh Burke of WWII destroyer fame – known for running his destroyer squadron at flank speed into the battles of the Pacific. We met him in his office aboard the Destroyer Tender *Yellowstone* in Melville for coffee. He told us we were the luckiest officers in the Navy to serve on destroyers. We did not know at the time that he would become the future Chief of Naval Operations.

There was a thread of similarity between Willie Keith, the protagonist in *The Caine Mutiny* story, and myself. We were both new Ensigns and Communication Officers boarding our first destroyer. My first night watch at sea made me wonder if I had made the right decision. I remember trying to get dressed for this mid-

night watch as the ship’s bow went up and down like a rocking horse. Could I take three more years of this? It was obvious why the crew gave our ship, the moniker “Bouncing B.” Another aside – our radio call sign was “Grease,” but contrary to what the crew thought, it had nothing to do with their chow.

In the book, the fictitious Caine suffered a typhoon, but my ship had a different disaster. It happened during a gunnery exercise in my first month aboard. A Navy plane, out of Quonset, towed a target on a long line while our 5”/38 guns tried to hit it. I was on the bridge at my station for general quarters watching for any traffic dead ahead while the senior officers observed the firing from the port wing of the bridge. As the plane flew by the ship, I noticed the twin barrels of the gun mount just below the bridge swinging up and tracking



the towed target aft. As the muzzles of the guns came closer to the bridge where I was standing, I knew something had gone wrong. A quarter master, with headphones on, was

standing next to me and was oblivious to the moving guns. I grabbed the back of his collar and dragged him with me as I ran around to the shelter of the pilot house on the starboard wing – just as both barrels fired off.

The concussion of the blast blew the quarter master off his feet and pieces of shattered Plexiglas from the bridge windows covered his body. The canvas cover over the bridge deck was blown to shreds and the wooden grating we had just been standing on was now a mass of splinters. My hearing was gone and I thought the quarter master looked dead, as he was not moving. After a few moments, however, the sailor slowly got up and shook the Plexiglas off his uniform like a dog shaking after a bath. He said he was OK, but wanted to know what happened. I soon found out that the mechanical stop had failed on the gun mount.

My brother told me that they had the same mechanical failure on his destroyer, the *Wilson*, ten years before, and he was also on bridge at the time.

In January of 1955 our ship left Newport for the Charlestown ship yard near Boston. There we were to receive new radar antennas and have our torpedo racks removed. The torpedoes were not very practical for a destroyer and were suicidal against larger warships. I was happy they were removed as I had the menial task of checking the alcohol storage that was used in them. Once a month I had to take a flashlight deep in the bowels of the ship, and with a dip stick, measure the level of the fluid in a bilge tank. I guess the alcohol might have been a temptation for the crew.

As my ship was being torn apart, I was lodged in a bachelor Officer Quarters just sixty feet away from the *USS Constitution (Old Iron Sides)*. Each morning as I awoke and looked out the window I thought I was in the eighteenth century. During the month we had a change of command and received a new Captain. I was sorry to see the old one go as he was my mentor and a great ship handler. Our new skipper must have risen through the ranks because of his attention to paper work, but was a terrible ship handler. (On one occasion, for example, he ripped off our whale boat backing out of a slip.) Our Executive Officer was a snarly old commander who talked with a distinctive nasal voice - much like Humphrey Bogart who played Captain Queeg in the *Caine Mutiny* movie. If I could meld the new Captain and the Executive Officer into one man, it would be a clone of Bogart playing Queeg.

On our way back to Newport, the Captain, for some unexplained reason, decided to anchor off Provincetown at the end of Cape Cod. Unfortunately, our deck crew had not secured the final chain link to the ship and we lost the anchor and hundreds of feet of chain. I am sure the new Captain was chagrined that we had to radio Boston to send out a tug and diver to retrieve the dropped anchor. While we waited for the tug, the Captain called me to his cabin and told me he had a love for lobster and he thought it would be a good idea to set some traps in Narragansett Bay. I was to take two men and the boat ashore in Provincetown to buy a few traps. I thought it very odd for a fighting ship to now act as a fishing vessel and wondered if this was the

reason we were anchored off Provincetown.

It was a bitter cold February and I believed that this would be a fruitless journey as this summer colony was pretty much closed down. We did find an open bar and went in to have a drink just to get out of the cold. The bartender was helpful and gave us directions to one of his customers who built traps in his cellar. We found the old fellow and bought four traps, and he helped us carry them back to the boat. At the ship they were hauled up to the fantail.

The trip back to Newport was uneventful – until the Captain found that the lobster traps were missing. If you remember Captain Queeg's missing strawberries inquisition in *The Caine Mutiny*, then you know what our officers and crew went through. No one would fess up, but I found out six months later that the Chief Boatswain Mate had been incensed when he saw the four traps on his freshly painted deck on the fantail. He personally kicked them overboard on the trip back to Newport.



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I believe I became a competent destroyer sailor. At General Quarters the captain trusted me to give commands to the helmsman for intricate maneuvers involving dual ship attacks during anti-submarine warfare exercises, gunnery shoots, etc. – and I was only in my early twenties. Thinking back, that seemed very young to control a 390 foot war ship with 300 men aboard. There were good times, bad times, and humorous times – but always plenty of adventure.

Joseph Conrad said it best: “By all that’s wonderful it is the sea, I believe, the sea itself – or is it youth alone? Who can tell? But you here – you all had something out of life: money, love – whatever one gets on shore – and, tell me, wasn’t that the best time, that time when we were young at sea; young and had nothing, on the sea that gives nothing, except hard knocks – and sometimes a chance to feel your strength – that only – what you all regret?”

Ref:

Wouk, Herman, *The Caine Mutiny*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952

Conrad, Joseph, “Youth”-1902; “Joseph Conrad Sea Stories”-1985, Carroll & Graf Publishers, page 160

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# THE POINT BOYS CLUB

by Thayer Donovan

Long before the Newport Boys Club on Church St. was formed, there was a "Point Boys Club" on Second St.

John Kwassinkas, who ran the market on the corner of Walnut and Second Street, was responsible for getting the club started. Herman Katzman owned the corner market and several buildings around it, and he ran it for many years, but he leased it to John during the early 1950s. There were many boys and girls who lived on the Point in that area and we hung around the outside of the store as kind of an informal meeting place where you planned what you were going to do for the day or night. We played handball against the storage building right next to the store.

John, I think, wanted to get us another place to hang out. So when he had an opportunity to talk to a representative of the Boys Club of America when they were looking for a place to start a boys club in Newport. John had his own idea: let's get one started on the Point.

He approached Herman Katzman about donating the use of one of the storage buildings on Second Street

for a Point Boys Club. Herman agreed and John rounded up a number of boys on the Point, told us his idea and we set about cleaning and painting the building inside and out. Some old furniture was donated by Point residents, officers were elected and the Boys Club was off to a start. John had a professional sign made up and it was hung over the door of the building.

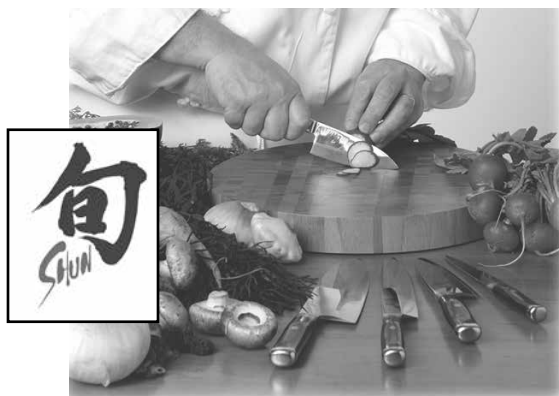
During that summer, the club was used sparingly, as we had the waterfront and Hunter Field to steal our attention. But it served as a gathering place for us and for the most part kept us away from the front of the market.

The club was short lived, as John died in October of 1953, leaving the club without an adult to oversee it. His family moved back to Connecticut, Herman took the market back until Walter Blacklock, John's butcher, took it over and the club faded out of existence.

Several years later the boys club on Church Street was started by the Boys Club of America.



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# HAVE NEWPORT VOTERS BEEN DISENFRANCHISED?

by Isabel Griffith

In an unprecedented 4 to 3 decision on July 23, the Newport City Council refused to allow key amendments recommended by the Charter Review Commission to appear on the ballot in November. Councilmen Camacho, Neville, Winthrop and McLaughlin were in the majority on this question, deciding against the voters. Councilmen Leonard, Farley and Napolitano preferred to have the issues on the ballot. Earlier this year the Council quickly approved asking voters (again!) to decide on table games for Newport Grand, citing the “people’s right to decide.” Should an elected official govern based on what he thinks is best or on the wishes of constituents? (Full disclosure: the writer of this article was Chair of the Charter Review Commission.)

The amendments that generated strongly worded debate from the Council plus editorials and letters in two Newport newspapers (all in favor of putting the recommendations on the ballot) were: 1) changing the number of Council wards in the city from three to four and 2) providing for the election of seven School Committee members from the four wards with three elected at-large.

The Council session on July 23 provided an excellent opportunity to learn about members of Newport’s City Council and their beliefs regarding citizen input to the governing process:

**Councilor McLaughlin** - “[The voters] look to me to tell them what’s important sometimes. I’m not depriving anybody the right to vote. I’m making a decision as to what I think is best for the community at this point in time.”

**Councilor Leonard** - “I’m not one to say, ‘I think I know what’s better for you’. I have the right, as your representative, to let you tell me what you want.”

**Councilor Neville** - “I’ve sat here for the last three and a half years trying to bring the three communities on the island together. To me, the proposal for four wards is the antithesis of that.”

**Councilor Farley** - “This issue is too important for the seven of us to decide. This City Council convened a Charter Review Commission to vet these ideas. They held public hearing after public hearing. I’ll support their efforts. It’s a good exercise in representative democracy.”

**Councilor Napolitano** voted to delete the controversial proposals on July 9 but changed her vote on July 23. The number of people in the city who wanted the opportunity to vote on the issues persuaded her although she personally does not support all the recommendations.

**Councilor Camacho** (who unsuccessfully proposed abolishing all of the wards) - “I have a fundamental problem with the ward system. Is it enough that I bring home the bacon for my ward, instead of acting for the city as a whole? I’m not accountable to 100 percent of the population of Newport.”

**Mayor Winthrop** - “We appointed the Charter Review Commission to report back to the Council with recommendations. We decide whether to accept them or not.”

\*\*\*\*\*

Voters will have the opportunity to see and hear all the candidates for City Council and School Committee at public forums sponsored by the Alliance for a Livable Newport this fall. All forums except the Casino issue will be at the Newport Public Library.

## FORUMS

Tuesday, September 23, Council Wards 6:00 - 7:30  
Wednesday, October 1, Council At Large 6:00 - 7:30  
Wednesday, October 15, School Committee 6:00 - 7:30  
Thursday, October 23, Casino Table Games 6:00 - 7:30  
Tuesday, October 28, Ballot Questions 6:00 - 7:30

Check the Point Association “Points of Interest” emails for reminders of the forums.

\*See *Newport This Week*, July 31, 2014.





## THE POINT PICNIC

Sunday, July 6th  
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# A PEEK INTO THE NEWPORT RESTORATION FOUNDATION HOUSES ON BRIDGE STREET

by Lisa Stuart, Co-Chair,  
History and Archives Committee



If you are like me, you've been watching the beautiful restoration of 88 Bridge Street and wondering about NRF's plans for the newly acquired Townsend House at 72 Bridge Street. Lisa Brew, Martha Ginty (preservationist and advisor to the HA Committee) and I were fortunate to have a peek inside these wonderful colonial houses.

Robert Foley, Preservation Director, NRF, lead us on a tour of 88 Bridge Street—the Dayton-James House. The house is a gambrel roof house with two floors plus an attic. It is likely the only house of this once common architectural style to survive in Newport.

In a fascinating tour, Mr. Foley shared the extensive structural work needed to save this house. In addition, he discussed the sleuthing done to determine the original use of the space. I will not give this away since Mr. Foley has agreed to talk at our Annual Meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Peter Roos, Executive Director of NRF, lead us on the tour of the homes and shops of cabinetmakers of Newport, including the Christopher Townsend House located at 74 Bridge Street. The Townsend and Goddard families of Newport developed the American style of cabinet making. Christopher Townsend was a shipwright and cabinetmaker. The house and shop are recent acquisitions by NRF and restoration is just beginning.

Fortunately, the former owner had treated the property as an artifact. Of particular note in the house is the beautiful wood carved mantel and moldings. Through the restoration of the house and shop and digs of the



yard NRF hopes to learn about how 18<sup>th</sup> century cabinet worker shops operated. Upon completion of the restoration the property will not be a NRF rental or a museum, but will have public access.



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## THE POINT ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

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\_\_\_ Individual \$10 \_\_\_ Family \$15 \_\_\_ Subscriber \$25\* \_\_\_ Patron \$40\*

\*Subscriber & Patron levels support The Point Association's continued efforts to beautify and protect our special neighborhood.

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\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_ Event Planning \_\_\_ History & Archives \_\_\_ Public Services

*Thank You !*



# SAVE THE DATES

PRIMARY DAY ~ Tuesday, September 9

## HUNTER PARK MURAL PAINTING PROJECT

Saturday, September 13, 11:00-3:00 (See Press Release on page 9)

## POINT ASSOCIATION FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 16, Harbor House,

5:45: Ade Bethune Tree Dedication, Harbor House north garden

6:00: Remembrance to honor the centenary of Ade Bethune's birth,

6:30: Business Meeting and Board Elections

7:00: Guest Speaker: Robert Foley, NRF Director of Preservation,

Illustrated Talk: "88 Bridge Street, Before and After"

Harbor House Great Room, lower level

Light refreshments



HALLOWEEN PARADE IN STORER PARK ~ Saturday, October 25, 10am–

Contact: Lauren Dana and Jennifer Huntley, for details: [events@thepointassociation.org](mailto:events@thepointassociation.org)

ELECTION DAY ~ Tuesday, November 4

For voter information go to: <http://www.cityofnewport.com/departments/canvassing>

Rick O'Neill, Canvassing Clerk, 845-5386

**For a list of ALN-sponsored Forum dates on Candidates and Ballot Questions, see article on page 14, and watch for the "Point of Interest" emails.**

