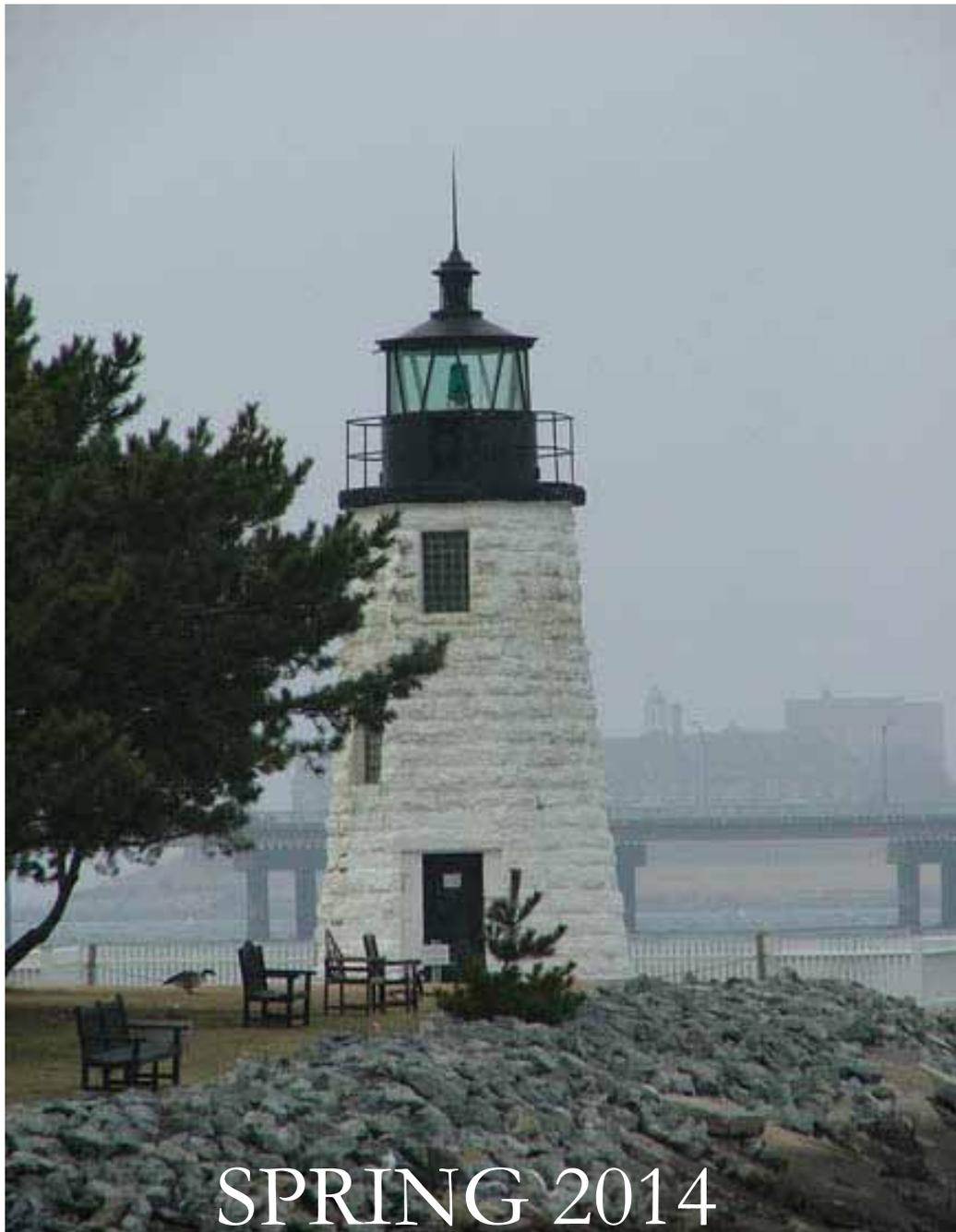


The
GREEN

LIGHT

BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND



SPRING 2014

The GREEN LIGHT

LVIII No. 1

SPRING 2014

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STAFF

Editor	Alice Clemente
Advertising.....	Bill Rauch
Business	Bill Rauch and Hillar Sarapera
Circulation	Marcia Mallory
Layout	Donna Maytum

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.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS

<i>President:</i> Beth Cullen, 848-2945 <i>president@thepointassociation.org</i>
<i>First Vice President:</i> Tom Hockaday, 619-3424 <i>vicepresident1@thepointassociation.org</i>
<i>Second Vice President:</i> Laurie Shaw, 862-0930 <i>vicepresident2@thepointassociation.org</i>
<i>Corresponding Secretary:</i> Joan Rauch, 619-0110 <i>corrsecretary@thepointassociation.org</i>
<i>Recording Secretary:</i> Ron Barr & Nancy Scott, 619-1505 <i>recordingsecretary@thepointassociation.org</i>
<i>Treasurer:</i> Bill Rauch, 619-0110 <i>treasurer@thepointassociation.org</i>

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.

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



There is energy in the air. Can you feel it? This brutal and costly winter may have kept some of us hibernating at home (guilty!), but others have been busy sowing the seeds of revitalization! You will find many "previews of coming attractions" throughout this issue. You will find more details as each important date approaches in the "Points of Interest" emails that are sent out to you every other Friday.

At the *Green Light*, the beautiful new electronic edition has been a huge success. (The printed version is still available for those who prefer it that way.) Another new resource that has come to light over this winter is an electronic archive. The full run of our journal will soon be available through the Point Association website for all those curious or nostalgic about the amazing history of this extraordinary community. Though it is still under construction, as of this writing, you can already access the first five years. Go to the website, click on "History" and then on the link set up for that purpose.

Be a part of the action. Get involved NOW!

Alice Clemente

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

"I will speak in the name of families, and children, of the elderly, of the poor people, of the pedestrians on both sides of the Point. People who have no advocate to plead their cause and defend their rights." These are the noble words of Ade Bethune, a longtime Point resident who during her lifetime was dedicated to building community and improving our special neighborhood. January 12th marked the 100th anniversary of Ade's birth. Throughout this year, we will honor her spirit of stewardship and good works.

2014 heralds another celebratory milestone, Newport's 375th anniversary. Like you, Point founding families knew how to pick a special place to call home! As our city's oldest neighborhood, we have been invited to participate in the 375th festivities. A Point themed parade float committee is forming – we need your creative ideas and building skills to make this happen.

Speaking of history, some exciting news, past issues of this august journal are now available in searchable form. A new "History" button has been added to our website homepage, click through to read 57 years of *Green Lights!* Thanks to our industrious History & Archives committee, our past continues to come alive. The committee needs your help, if you have old photos, documents, or other materials to add to the archives; or if you would like to participate in the upcoming Point oral history project, by all means speak-out, add to the Point story.

It is early February as I "pen" this message to you, snow and ice cover Point streets and porches. With luck, and nature's good graces, by the time you open this issue, greenery will be springing up in our gardens and parks! As your garden awakens, please be sure to set aside any extra plants and items to donate to Point plant sale!

Our extreme winter weather, colorfully characterized as the "polar vortex," has caused a rash of frozen gas meters in over 40 Point houses. The root cause is under investigation by National Grid. Many theories have surfaced. Some think water vapor has infiltrated the newly installed plastic gas pipes under our streets; others blame leftover water infiltration in the system from super-storm Sandy. If your home has been affected, we want to hear your story.

Being part of a connected community has many benefits. As issues arise, we want to share timely information with you. At the risk of over emphasizing the need, please be sure to register your most current email address with us. Are you receiving a "Points of Interest" email every other Friday? If not, please check your member profile, accessed by visiting www.thepointassociation.org. Also, please be sure to add us to your personal email address book, so Point notices can make it past your firewalls and filters.

Many of you have responded to our requests to renew. Thank you! We welcome Robin Gardner, who has stepped up to coordinate our membership rolls...a daunting task to say the least. If you have problems navigating the online renewal process, please let us know!

With space running short, and much more to mention, I leave you with a running list of ongoing initiatives and events of interest: Friends of Storer Park Pier; Charter & Finance Review; Elm/Poplar RR crossing repair project; Sea-rise/flooding workshops; History talks and walks; Preserving Historic Streetscapes; Hyatt Marina proposal; Capital Improvement Plan; North End development plans; ALN's Neighborhood Coalition; Candidate School; Movies in the Park; Hunter Mural Project; the Opera House Restoration; and our Summer Point Picnic.

Please make a point to stay informed, reach out to your Board, and volunteer your time and talent. I am looking forward to carrying on the conversation at the Point Potluck! Happy spring!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Cullen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

THE PLANT SALE!

by Laurice Shaw

Just writing those words is comforting. There is a soft, wet blanket of snow over the Point at the moment with more still to come. It actually feels rather mild compared to the last storm which had snow blowing in every direction with the bitter temperatures of the arctic ‘vortex’. With Groundhog Day behind us – the official middle of winter – I am delighted to look forward to the Plant Sale!

We are again scheduling the Sale for the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend, May 24th. Lots of folks are in town for the holiday weekend and blossoms are starting to POP!

We are hoping to bring in some new friends to our gardening celebration. “Mini-Scapes”, a wonderful miniature gardening shop at 79 Thames Street, has expressed an interest in collaborating on a mini-terrarium project using recycled glass containers and a ‘kit’ to put it all together. It should be a fun experiment for little and big kids alike. If you haven’t checked out their marvelous “Lilliputtian” plants, environments and accessories please put it on your list of fun things to do.

Mike Conroy of 30 Second Street, and retired from Chaves Gardens, has offered to give a talk on “The Three Hs...Hosta, Hydrangea and Hemerocallis”. These three beauties are among Mike’s favorites and he’ll give us some of the history, cultivation, setting and design involved. He’ll also dispel some of the mystery surrounding how to properly prune hydrangea. He is a wealth of valuable information so be prepared to take notes. The time and place of Mike’s talk will be announced.

We are also hoping to have some environmental information available regarding rain barrels and the like. If you have any thoughts or resources you would like to share, please let us know.



As always, we are asking for donations of plants from your gardens, cool stuff from your garden shed or basement and helping hands in what is great fun and raises money for Point beautification projects. We have created a garden at Mary Ferrazolli Park at the foot of Washington

Street, adopted gardens along Long Wharf, have a long-term plan to beautify the entrances to the Point, and keep Storer Park and Battery Park looking spiffy. Your input is welcomed about future projects so please let us know your thoughts.



Please contact Laurice Shaw for information, donations, volunteering,

at lauriceshaw@msn.com or 401-862-0930.

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THANKS TO TIM!

by Joan Rauch and Tim Reitman

A big thank you to Tim Reitman, the volunteer trash retriever of our neighborhood drift ways! Tim, a senior high school student, committed to cleaning up the drift ways on a weekly basis in the summer and periodically in the autumn and winter. Pride for where he lives and respect for the bay's beauty both contribute to Tim's pledge to keep clean the areas we all enjoy. We are grateful for the outstanding work that Tim has done and for the excellent example which he exhibits to Point neighbors.



Tim writes about his project:

I am very lucky; I am able to spend my summers in Newport, RI. When my family bought a vacation house here three years ago, I had no idea how much the Newport Harbor would affect my life and how important it would become to me. I learned to sail on the harbor, I walk my dog along the harbor, my first and current job is on the harbor. I spend my summer in, on, and around it; it is important to me. When it came time to choose a project for my Capstone, the community service project required by my school - The Gunnery, Washington, CT -the harbor was the first thing that came to mind.

One of the things that I have always noticed was the amount of litter that would wash up along the drift ways, so I decided to make that my project. Throughout the entire summer, the fall

Heads Weekend, and Christmas break, I worked on cleaning each of the drift ways along Washington Street. I started off thinking that I would find cool things washing up, but that was not the case. The only thing that washed up was garbage, but there was plenty of it, almost every time I went to clean. The great part was that when people would see me, they sometimes would offer to help and would say how great it was that I was doing it. The bad part was that it was gross, there was so much garbage, and sometimes I could not even tell what I was picking up (yes, I wore gloves!) People need to be more aware of littering. In the end, it turned out to be a fun project for me and for my chocolate lab, Rudy, who always came with me and helped!

Perhaps we can all learn from our young neighbor's example to appreciate the beauty before us and to contribute to that beauty by not littering and by picking up the stray trash that, all too often, lies before us.



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HEARTFELT THANKS

The following letter, sent to the Point Association by Charlie Duncan, followed upon a fall suffered by Rita Rogers when she slipped at Brenton Point Park on New Year's Day while walking her dog Echo. Rita broke her back and, as of the time this letter was received, had spent several weeks at St. Clare's. She made good progress and reported that she had succeeded in walking across the room.

*Dear Members of the Point Association
and residents of the Point:*

To borrow from Dickens: "It was the worst of times and the best of times..." For Rita Rogers her accidental fall on January 1st was the worst of time. However, the outpouring of support from the Point and the City is and has been overwhelming and the best of times. Rita, who is recovering, and I want to thank all of you for the support, the flowers, the books, and the many visits. Her room is either a subset of the Library of Congress, a deli, a florist!



*Again, thank you!
Rita and Charlie*

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE POINT

by Lauren Carson

Much is in the news today about sea rise and climate change. The Point neighborhood is very vulnerable to the changing sea, since we all enjoy a short walk to the water's edge.

How might climate change affect Rhode Island – particularly its coastlines – and how should the State be preparing for these changes? Should Newport and our neighborhood be preparing for future Hurricane Sandy? How?

The scientific consensus around these issues is robust. A recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that impacts worldwide will be significant, and this creates the opportunity for a timely discussion of this critical issue and its implications for our state and neighborhood.

We have many resources in Rhode Island studying this topic. Academics at the University of Rhode Island, environmental organizations, the RI Departments of Health and Environmental Management all have invested in learning about the issues to determine if we are at risk for flooding and property loss, among other issues.



The Point Association is interested in learning more about sea rise, and we are committed to understanding how we might prepare for future flooding events. A committee has been formed whose members are Laurie Shaw, Tom Hockaday and Lauren Carson. They will work in 2014 to get a better understanding of this issue and to share that information with our Point neighbors. The Committee is planning to organize 3 speakers programs this year and is planning to hold hands on workshops on Green Infrastructure for Point residents in 2015.

The discussion is not about the cause of sea rise; the Committee will focus on the research to date and the risks that may exist for Rhode Island and Newport in the event of sea rise.

If anyone wants to join future discussions on this issue, contact Lauren Carson at u2mama@mac.com."



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THE LAST CAR FERRY RIDE FROM NEWPORT TO JAMESTOWN

By Dave Moore

From the 1940s to the end of the 1960s the shortest way to Newport by car from the mainland was over a scary steel bridge and a ferry. Every weekend in the summer of 1955 I commuted from our summer cottage in South County to the Naval Base in Newport where I was a student at the Military Justice School. In order to make the seven o'clock ferry from Jamestown, I had to get up about 5:30 AM as my classes started at eight. My car was a 1938 Coupe that I bought from my older brother for fifty dollars. I had used it in the previous summer as my "beach buggy." It was fun at parties with a quarter keg in the rumble seat. The car was not very reliable, but very popular with my friends.

The drive over the scary bridge started with a fairly steep rise up the narrow two-lane ramp to the top where it turned into a long open steel-grid deck. As you drove over this you could look down through the grating and see the water 200 feet below. If that was not bad enough, the grate made a funny sound and always seemed to make steering difficult. The car shimmied and felt like you were about to careen into oncoming traffic – or hoping they wouldn't hit you. It was even more terrifying when wet. If a truck or bus was coming in the opposite direction the whole bridge seemed to sway and you had to squeeze as close to the right as possible because it was so narrow in that two lane traffic. The motor cyclists called the grating the "Cheese Grater." I assume their moniker came from the thought that if they skidded and fell it was much worse than falling on pavement.

There were two double-ended ferries, the *Governor Carr*, and the *Newport*, that ran between East Ferry Landing in Jamestown to the slip at the "Government Landing" in Newport. They left on the hour from Jamestown, and the half hour from Newport. When they cast off they gave a long blast on the horn that gave the towns' people a sense of timing. The trip was about twenty-five minutes of beautiful views, but I usually spent the



time trying to catch a quick nap. Several times a deck-hand had to tap on my car window to wake me up as I was holding up off-loading traffic. I just hoped the jalopy would start as I was having trouble with an old battery.

During the week I stayed at the bachelor officers quarters (BOQ) on the base. My roommate, a submarine lieutenant, was also a classmate. He was from Jamestown and lived next door to the *Governor Carr* ferry captain. He didn't have a car and was looking for a way to make the short commute back to Jamestown instead of staying at the BOQ. I was concerned that the Chevy might break down on my long commute to South County, but it might be good for his short haul use. I sold it to him for fifty dollars. Several years later, I ran into him at a party and asked him if he still had the '38 Chevy. He said his friend, the ferry Captain, agreed to have a lottery on one of his ferry runs. Tickets were sold for one dollar each and the stubs were put in his cap. By the end of the twenty-five minute trip the winning ticket was drawn and the car went to a new owner.

The car ferry service between Jamestown and Newport came to an end on June 28, 1969. The new Newport suspension Bridge, (now called the Pell Bridge) spanning the East Passage of Narragansett Bay was completed. The dedication ceremony included many speeches, and ribbon cutting on the Jamestown side of the bridge. Senator Pell and a number of other dignitaries rode in the first vehicle to officially cross the four-lane bridge followed by a parade. It was said: "Newport was now open to the world, and the world was about to flock to its doorstep."

I had planed to sail down to Newport to watch the activity, but it was much too windy, so instead I drove and took one of the last ferries from Jamestown to Newport. A group of us assembled on the deck of the Newport Yacht Club, believing that to be the best vantage point to watch the ceremony of the last ferry ride.

To my horror, I spotted a baby-blue hulled sailboat coming downwind at full hull speed towards the ferry landing. I knew this was a disaster in the making. I had sold that 23 foot Sea Sprite only a month before to a man who wanted his family to learn how to sail – particularly his thirteen year old son Robert. A group of us owned the boat manufacturing company in North Kingstown where I was experimenting with different hull colors other than the traditional white. We built green, black, red, and one light blue one. The latter one I thought we would never sell because it did not look very nautical, but one day thirteen year old Robert and his father came into our plant and fell in love with it.

They said they were going to self teach themselves how to sail. In the next few weeks, I heard they made some bad mistakes. They had dropped the anchor into the boat from a high pier and it broke through the floor boards. Another time a friend had to pull their boat off “round rock” - a submerged rock pile off Warwick Neck which was well marked by a nearby buoy. The light blue boat came screaming down toward the leaving ferry in a twenty knot wind. Certainly, I thought, they must immediately turn about and head back into the wind – but no, the father was on his hands and knees at the bow with the anchor and rope in his hands. “No! No!” I said out loud. “Don’t drop that anchor overboard!” I found out later Robert was at the tiller and his mother was hanging onto the floorboards and crying.

Yes, the anchor was dropped over the side and yards of line followed it down. The ferry had just left the slip and gave a final blast of her horn which was her goodbye salute as the crowd cheered. I thought the sailboat was sure to hit the ferry, but the anchor caught on something – a cable or some underwater obstruction. It only took a few moments for the anchor line to become banjo string tight and it whipped the boat into the now empty ferry slip. I first thought Robert was lucky, but then the rigging got caught on one of the tall pilings, and I saw the mast and sail disappear from view. I ran all the way from the Yacht Club to the slip at the ferry landing. There were people reaching down to pull up Robert and his mother from the tangled mess of sails, lines, and rigging. The boat was full of water and almost submerged. The father must have been thrown overboard as he was swimming to the side of the boat with his eye glasses hanging pre-

cariously from one ear. Shamefully, I couldn’t stop myself from bursting out laughing at this debacle.

Years later Robert wrote: “You would cringe if you knew some of the things I did to my first Sea Sprite while learning to sail. In fact most of the adventures I had were kept quiet then and the better (worse) ones are still a secret even today. If my parents knew what really went on while I was sailing, my sailing days would have ended that first year I went cruising with the family boat. I (even) managed to swamp my daysailer.”

A passenger on the above ferry, when it arrived in Jamestown, had this to say: “I remember the last ride of the ferry. We were coming in for a landing. But what we realized was that we were not slowing down. And Gil said, “Oh! No way! We’re going to hit.” So, we watched it happen. The captain was totally impassive! We could see him and he wasn’t showing anything in his face. And it was low tide; the ferry slip was lined with vertical, wooden pylons. It came in, hell bent for leather. And we went KABOM! And knocked them forward, downward, and the ferry boat went KAWHOOO! And ended up stuck.... The people in the cars were hysterical. There were people like us who realized that we were going nowhere. And we’re mad as hell ‘cause our bourbon was back in Newport!” -- Elizabeth

Was this an accident or was the captain making a statement? We may never know what caused the boat to slam into the dock on its final ferry run, but it ended with a bang and not a whimper.

Ref:
Bell, Michael - The East Ferry, Jamestown – Echoes of a simpler time <http://www.quahog.org/factsfolklore/index.php?id=30>

Gainer, Robert – Trans-Atlantic with a Sea Sprite; <http://www.goodoldboat.com/newsletter/augnewstt55.html>

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THE ROSE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION: BEACON OF PRESERVATION IN NARRAGANSETT BAY

by Kyle Hence (Reprinted from www.EcoRI.org)

Newport -- A buzz of activity and preparation surrounds a growing fire in a rough stone-ringed fire pit just above a small south-facing beach, just below one of the most iconic lighthouses in Ocean State. A dozen or so intrepid souls have ventured by boat from Fort Adams to Rose Island to enjoy hot dogs and kale soup on a brilliant, if frigid, sunny first day of 2014.

Rose Island, a jewel in the glistening Bay just west of Newport, has a heartening story to tell this New Year's. It's a success story of conservation and historic preservation, one of repeated victories thanks to hundreds of volunteers whose dedication and vision over 30 years have restored and protected a great Rhode Island treasure.

It's a story told and retold by countless thousands who have visited or overnighted on the island. I follow in their footsteps as a guest at the annual New Year's Day cook-out hosted by David McCurdy, the Executive Director of the Rose Island Foundation [<http://www.roseislandlighthouse.org>], the organization that rescued the lighthouse under the leadership of Charlotte Johnson in 1984.

Abandoned by the Coast Guard fourteen years earlier, the dilapidated and vandalized lighthouse, now relegated surplus, was just a hurricane away from being swept off its foundation. However, thanks to the initiative and leadership of Johnson, and an active community that rallied to the cause, the lighthouse was saved. Within a decade the lighthouse was restored and the light re-lit as a private aid to navigation.

2013 saw another major renovation thanks to with a Department of Transportation "Enhancement" grant of \$330,000 administered by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The renovation included new exterior wooden storms, clabbered siding, copper roof, a new light and new safety railing around the lantern room.

2014 marks the 30th anniversary of the Foundation and after spending half the day walking the island and touring the restored lighthouse with the island's stew-



ards, I learned there is much to appreciate about this 18.5 acre refuge and its shining beacon. In particular a strong and integral environmental ethos.

This was no where stronger in evidence as in 1990s when a group of local residents ringed the entire island with vertically erected bed sheets as a demonstration of their will to protect the island from development.

"They sewed sheets together and circled the entire island," Nora Eschenheimer told me as we walked around the entire island after the picnic. Eschenheimer, a niece to Johnson, has been coming to the island every year of her life, giving tours to visitors since she was 10.

"There was a plan for a 700 boat marina on the North side with condos," explained McCurdy, "It was really happening for a while." Ultimately however, parking issues on the mainland and sewer, water, power became too complicated for the developers, explained McCurdy.

Today harbor seals are the only seasonal residents, often seen lounging on rocks just offshore. "Just last week they counted 26 seals one day, and 22 the next," said Cathy Herridge, the Foundation's Education Director, referring to the seal sightseeing tour run by Oldport Marine during the Winter.

With the exception of the 1.5 acre site of the lighthouse (owned by the City of Newport), the entire island is owned by the Foundation and preserved forever, guided by the current management plan [http://www.roseislandlighthouse.org/management_plan.html].

Where once the U.S. Navy mixed high explosives, made TNT and manned anti-aircraft fortifications, now migrating egrets and ibis's nest and novice light keepers overnight in a National Registry building that boasts modest environment impact thanks to an array of systems, from the most simple to the more complex.

A 1 kilowatt wind turbine mounted on an aluminum tower high above the lighthouse produces ample electricity to run the recently installed LED light within a fresnel lens. The LED is 3x more efficient than the incandescent it replaced according to McCurdy. When the 48 volt battery bank nears depletion a diesel-powered back-up generator kicks on automatically tapping a fuel tank that must be filled periodically using 55 gallon barrels hauled out by boat.

There is a plan to add solar panels for a wind/solar 'hybrid' power system that would make the generator unnecessary except in emergencies. Being entirely off the grid "the engineering is like on a boat," said McCurdy who explained how an inverter converts battery power to 110 volt household current.

McCurdy proudly pointed out the new custom made windows made from reclaimed mahogany matching the originals from 1870 are tightly fitted to retain the passive solar gain when the sun is shining. Situated as it is, well above the Bay, the lighthouse soaks in sunlight from dawn to dusk. By early afternoon on a clear New Years Day with temperatures in the 20s and a brisk westerly wind, it was nearly 70 degrees on the first floor, all without burning gas or oil.

Downstairs in the basement is a 900 gallon cistern fed only by rainwater collected off the rooftop. Outside, a simple low-tech outdoor shower uses gravity-fed passively heated water. Indoors, typical showers with hot water are also available to guests.

In addition to modeling sustainable-systems design and the use of small scale renewable energy sources, the lighthouse showcases many of the original household items used by the light keepers for decades, including



a cast iron wood burning cookstove, a RCA Victrola and a foot-powered sewing machine.

Income from weekly rentals and overnights covers about one-third of the total operating budget according to McCurdy and the lighthouse's unique accommodations on two floors are available year-round, weather dependent. As part of its on-going fundraising efforts, the Foundation is planning a kayak and watercraft rendezvous in the Summer. For the time being however, the refuge and restored lighthouse offer

the adventuresome a truly unique opportunity to experience Narragansett Bay in wintry splendor; a chance to add your own story to the unfolding story of Rose Island, and make your own contribution to its preservation and improvement.



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SOME MEMORIES OF THE POINT

by Syd Williams

Sitting on a bench at Battery Park last spring, enjoying my second cup of coffee, I started thinking about how much the Point section of Newport has meant to me and how much it has been, and continues to be, a part of my life. The good times, the bad times, the fun times, the sad times, the being-a-kid times, began to trickle through my brain like a gentle stream. As I enjoyed the moment, I wondered how many of those who currently live on the Point realize how diversified it really was when I was young. How some things have changed and how some others have not.

I am not a native Newporter. Nor am I a native Point Hummer. My mother was born on Pine Street at home in the early 1900s. She eventually married a sailor who had been born in New York City. After three years of living in Brooklyn, they separated and with a three month old baby, my mother came back to Newport in 1928 to live with her mother at 26 Second Street. She later remarried another sailor in the late 1930s and this marriage lasted for 30 years but because we were Navy, we moved around a lot. However, we came back frequently to live on the Point when my stepfather was at sea.

There are early memories of the Point in the late 1930s and early 1940s when sights and sounds were fresh and new to a youngster. The occasional aroma (?) of baking seaweed; the honking of foghorns on a misty night; the sounds of squawking seagulls battling for the insides of broken clams; the sight of the old four-stacker destroyer (DD-141) tied to a buoy almost 100 yards from the Van Zandt Avenue pier; the

sound of the Angelus bells chiming from the Chapel of the Cenacle; the sound of the old knife sharpener's bell as he announced his presence in the neighborhood . . . brought a smile and more memories.

From the mid-1930s came glimpses of the Naval Training Station recruits marching on the field in front of the War College at Saturday review or manning the rigging of the USS Constellation on special occasions. These future sailors also could be seen marching from the Training Station south on Third Street, turning into Cyprus Street, and then left onto Second Street on their way to marching in some parade in town. Later on, the same sailors marched back to the Training Station (they had no bus transportation then) but came by way of Third Street. Even then both Second and Third streets were one way. Many times these future sailors marched over the Walnut Street Bridge as they made their way into town.

Summers were delightful because you didn't have to go to school and you also didn't need to go to a beach. It was an easy walk to either Van Zandt Avenue or Elm Street Piers or the Blue Rocks and you could stay all day. The playground was also available at Hunter playfield with swings, a sandbox, tennis courts, a baseball diamond and a football field all rolled into one place. There was also a vacant lot on Third Street between Battery Street and Van Zandt Avenue where games of pick-up were played and no adults were there to supervise. Rules were made up by the kids and changed as they saw the need. There are several houses there now, but memories are still fresh.

Winters are usually the longest time in a child's year and it was the same then. Since there were no school buses provided by the city, everyone walked to either Cal-



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lender School on Willow Street, Mumford School on Farewell Street, or Elm Street School. Other children who went to Hazard Memorial School on Washington Square had the furthest to go – almost a mile each way in good weather or bad. If you wound up wet after reaching school, coats and shoes were placed near the steam radiators in the room, and when it was time to go home for lunch, were dry and ready for the trek home. After lunch, it was back to school until dismissal time around 3 PM.

Wartime in the 1940s on the Point was not as joyful because so many families had sons fighting overseas. Those homes usually flew a small flag in the window to indicate a member of that home had someone serving in the military. Occasionally a small flag with a gold star was in the window indicating that a loved one had died in the service of our country.

Some sounds of war could be heard almost every day at any time of the day. The deep throated rumble of a submarine backing out of a slip at the Torpedo Station (Goat Island) fully loaded with torpedoes heading to sea; the roar of motor torpedo boats coming

down from the Melville PT Boat base to practice maneuvers just outside the bay near sunset; automobiles with headlights containing strips to cut down the lights of the city so that German U-Boats could not silhouette targets against the glow from the land; seeing German war prisoners from the Afrika Corps being transported from the Training Station along Washington Street to the Jamestown Ferry and thence to the prisoner-of-war camp on Jamestown.

These and more memories run through my head. Some times I can almost visualize the mom and pop stores: Pete’s Canteen on Third Street with the parrot on the owner’s shoulder; Spire’s Grocery Store at the corner of Van Zandt and Second Street; Howard Goodwin’s Meat Market on the corner of Third Street and Sunshine Court; the First National Store on the corner of Third and Poplar; the shipyard with the Old Fall River Line New York boats; the gigantic America’s Cup racing yachts...!

Oh well, time to finish my coffee and go on my way. Sorry to say I don’t live on the Point. So I come to Battery Park from time to time to have a cup of coffee and dream a little bit... See you there sometime?

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THE LITTLE STORE AROUND THE CORNER THAT COULD AND DID

by Ed Madden

In 1962 Elizabeth and Anthony Bucci bought a parcel of land at 3 Thames Street in Newport just across the street from the William Ellery Park which is the home of the Tree of Liberty. There was a small building and two in ground gasoline storage tanks on the site. The Buccis had the storage tanks and building removed and a new building constructed. This became the Bucci combination store which has been a neighborhood fixture ever since, selling a variety of wines, beers and liquors plus a wide selection of food and drink staples, newspapers, magazines, books and DVDs.

Elizabeth was born in 1929 in Middletown, Connecticut, while Anthony was Newport born in 1928 and remained a local Rhode Islander apart from his military service in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. They first met as teenagers at a high school dance and then reconnected after the war and subsequently married in 1948. Three children, two boys and a girl, resulted to continue the Bucci line into the 21st century.

Anthony worked at Quonset in the civil service after his military career until 1958 when he elected to retire. Then he and Elizabeth opened the present business and their store filled a neighborhood need, rapidly becoming a welcoming gathering place for friends and customers. There were three elementary schools in their section of town and the Buccis' store was considered by the local police to be a "safe haven" for children after school – if any parents were unavoidably delayed in their pickups.

A back room addition was soon added for more storage and to accommodate many of Anthony's military

buddies and friends for storytelling and a local chess league. Elizabeth mentioned during our recent chat that ice cream treats were often available for hungry children as an after school bonus. A mail and package drop-off site followed along with a pay phone outside the building, giving much appreciated service for neighbors without this home convenience.



Sadly, Anthony died in 2000. Elizabeth then had to gear up to run the business by herself, since she never thought of retiring or selling. Her work schedule increased from a 4 hour day to a 10 hour day. She had to familiarize herself with all the book-keeping and stock ordering, much of which Anthony had always done. She does have some trustworthy, reliable part time help now to give herself a breather and some free time.

Elizabeth talked about some changes in customer taste that she has noted over the years. The quantity of liquor sales has diminished and the quality of sweet and fruit alcoholic beverages is becoming more and more sought after. Wine sales have increased throughout the years and beer sales have always been brisk especially in the warmer weather. A walk through the well-stocked aisles at a leisurely pace is a pleasant change from the often chaotic free for all in the chariot carriage races and wars of the American supermarket.

So, if you have forgotten a vital ingredient or two for tonight's dinner, after an afternoon of waging unrelenting battle in the big box stores, or you discover that someone mysteriously drained your last bottle of chardonnay as you are setting the dinner table, the little store around the corner is a reasonable stroll or quick drive from anywhere on the Point. Meet you at Bucci's!

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF GOAT ISLAND

by Tom Kennedy

The first European visitor to Narragansett Bay and Goat Island was Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524. He and his crew of 50 explored the Narragansett Bay environs for 15 days and reported back to the king of France under whose aegis the voyage had been undertaken. Verrazzano wrote glowing descriptions of the local Native Americans (probably the Wampanoags), praising their friendly and helpful disposition and healthy lifestyle. He also wrote positive accounts of the beauty and fertility of the land. Later, in colonial times, Goat Island received its name from its use as pasture land. The island became part of Newport in 1673, when Benedict Arnold and John Greene, who had purchased the island (“Nomsussmuc” or “Nantee Sinunk”, depending on your source) from the chief Sachem of the Narragansett Bay Indians in May of 1658, deeded it to the town of Newport. Goat Island would undergo many transformations between long fallow periods during the ensuing centuries, but its use as a military installation would dominate its history.

For more than a century, from 1703 to 1836, Goat Island functioned as a fortress to protect Newport harbor, serving at various times the Rhode Island colonial militia, the British army, the French army and the army of the United States. The first fortification with 12 cannon was completed in 1703 near the center of the island and named Fort Anne after the then reigning queen of England. A bizarre occurrence in 1723 on Goat island was the burial of twenty-six pirates on the shore of the north end of the island between the high and low water mark. The pirates had been hanged in Newport at Gravelly Point in a sensational event, which proved to be the most extensive execution of pirates that ever took place at one time in the colonies. In 1738 the old fort was enlarged and improved and renamed Fort George after King George II. Newport proved to be a restless and quarrelsome town for its British overseers. In 1764 angry Newporters briefly took over Fort George and fired on a British ship, the *HMS St. John*, whose captain had ordered the seizure of a cargo



of sugar and was on a mission to impress colonists for duty in the Royal Navy. This early action among others was a harbinger of the rebellion to come.

Rebels took over Fort George again briefly in 1775 and renamed it Fort Liberty, until the British occupied Newport and returned the

Fort to its original name, Fort George. Then, when the British were forced to withdraw from Newport, Fort Liberty once again appeared. In 1784 the fort was repaired and refurbished, and renamed Fort Washington. Goat Island was sold to the Federal Government in 1799 for \$1500, with the stipulation that the government maintain a fort there for the defense of Newport harbor. Fort Washington became Fort Wolcott, named after Oliver Wolcott, a general in the Colonial Militia and a member of the Continental Congress from Connecticut. During the War of 1812 Fort Wolcott was the primary means of protecting Newport Harbor.

The construction of Fort Adams began in 1824. Fort Wolcott was still garrisoned until 1836 and then abandoned. In 1841 the U.S. army moved into Fort Adams and it became Newport's primary defense. Ironically, the enormous and grand Fort Adams quickly became obsolete with the introduction of steel hulled, steam driven ships, and never witnessed a battle. The United States Navy would shortly step in to shape the future of Goat Island.

The Goat Island lighthouse was another prominent feature in the island's history. The first lighthouse, constructed on the north end of the island, was activated on New Year's Day in 1824. A nearby keeper's dwelling had six rooms. In 1842 a larger octagonal tower was built on a breakwater, where it still stands. The old tower was dismantled in 1851 and relocated to Prudence Island, where it still operates. A new lightkeeper's house was constructed adjacent to the light. It was badly damaged in 1922 when a submarine rammed the breakwater on which it was built, and was subsequently torn down. That same year the beacon was converted to electrical power. The lighthouse was automated in

1963. In 1989 the Coast Guard completely renovated the lighthouse and it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Starting in 2005 its beacon showed a fixed green light with a visibility of eleven miles. A second restoration was undertaken in 2006 by the American Lighthouse Foundation.

The history of Goat Island as a naval installation began in 1869 with the founding of the Naval Torpedo Station, which would expand massively and play a crucial role in Goat Island's development for nearly a century. The station would test and manufacture many of the Navy's torpedoes during World War I and World War II at the island's Navy Torpedo Factory. The station opened with only two employees and grew to employ 13,000 at its peak during World War II. After the war, in the 1950s, the station was gradually phased out and the island was declared government surplus. In 1964, after nearly a century, Goat Island was returned to Newport. The construction of a causeway connecting the island to Aquidneck Island was begun in 1965. Demolition of the naval Torpedo Station was carried out during the ensuing years, leading to Goat Island's modern development during the 70s. The construction of a hotel, marina, condominiums and a banquet facility have entirely changed the look and purpose of the island. Its transformation from fortress to industrial complex to tourist destination is complete.

Sources Used

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NEWPORT TO CELEBRATE ITS 375TH YEAR

by Isabel Griffith

On May 16, 1639, a group of dissidents from Portsmouth, including William Coddington and Nicholas Easton, agreed "the plantation now begun at the southwest end of the island shall be called Newport."

At a public forum hosted by the Alliance for a Livable Newport on January 23rd members of the ad-hoc Newport 375th Anniversary Committee presented a preview of events and plans to celebrate a significant "birthday" for the City of Newport. Former Mayors Stephan Waluk and John Trifero are co-chairs of the group.

A yearlong celebration packed with free events open to the public will commemorate the founding of our city. Concerts and a lecture series are scheduled for March. Lectures will focus on first settlements, what Newport looked like 100 years ago, the Navy, prohibition, hurricanes and the history of Newport's public schools as well as other topics in Newport's past. The Island Moving Company dance troupe will perform to the locally composed "Newport Colonial Suite" at Rogers High School and Rosecliff. The official opening ceremony will take place on May 24 at 6 pm in front of the Colony House on Washington Square.

Throughout the summer scheduled events include: a family scavenger hunt in the historic downtown area; a community parade followed by a cookout on the Meeting House field; a clambake; an evening of food and entertainment on Broadway and a 375th themed July Fourth firework display.

This is only the beginning. The Newport community is preparing for a really big show in honor of the city we call home. Volunteers and sponsors are welcome. For more information go to the website for the celebration at www.Newport375.com

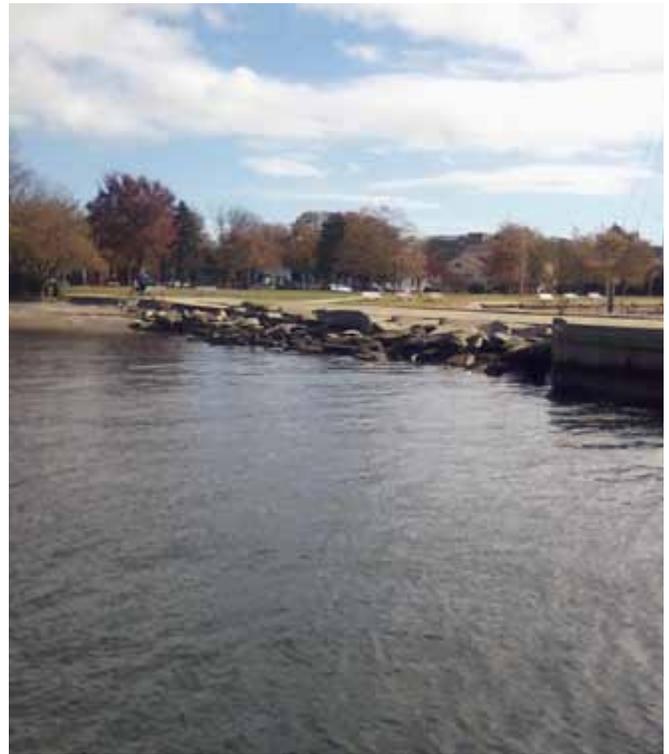
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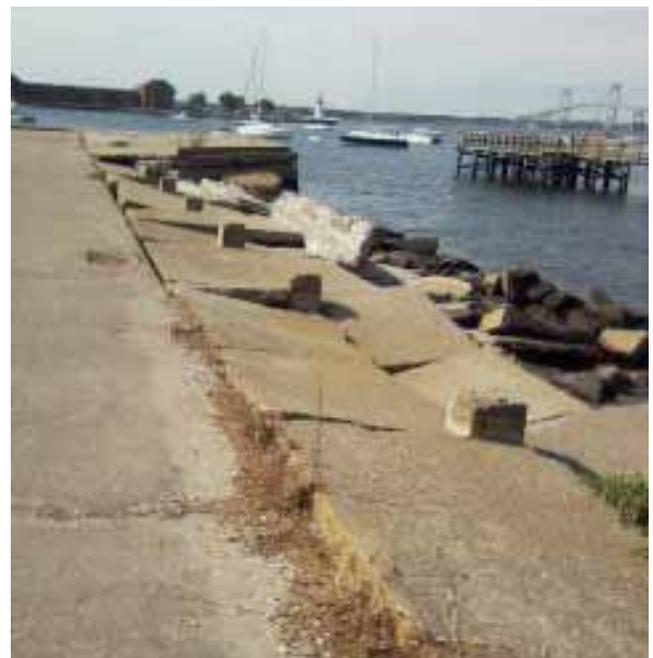
by Laurice Shaw

A new group has recently formed to advocate for the repair and future use of the concrete pier at Storer Park. If you've visited Storer Park and walked to the western boundary, no doubt you have noticed the unsightly and dangerous condition of the pier. It used to be one of the "Fleet Landings" for sailors coming into town for liberty and no doubt, if the pier could talk, there would be many a salty tale to tell. This was before the Torpedo Station was demolished and the causeway to Goat Island built and it seems the pier has just languished since then. It is the intention of the Friends of Storer Park Pier to gather the history, tell the story, and gather the energy necessary to bring the pier into the 21st century. The deed for Storer Park includes strict prohibitions against any commercial use of the park. That caveat makes it perfectly clear that the public is the intended recipient of this beautiful and valuable area. The FOSPP will be finding ways to save the pier and enhance the public's use of this beautiful part of our neighborhood.



The core group of FOSPP are all members of the Point Association but the group will be independent and intends to organize as a 501C-3 corporation. Current folks involved are: Jennifer Huntley, Lauren Dana, Tom Hockaday, Bill Martin, Hillar Sarepera, John Broughan, Beth Cullen and Laurice Shaw.

Please stay tuned for news and outreach from FOSPP. Contact Laurice Shaw for more information: laurice-shaw@msn.com



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REPORT FROM THE HISTORY AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

by Lisa Brew and Lisa Stuart, Co-Chairs

We were thrilled to have Bert Lippincott III, C.G., Librarian and Genealogist, Newport Historic Society, conduct a show and tell of maps of the Point to our members on January 15th. We will have a full report on the lecture in the summer issue of the *Green Light*.

Our technology guru, Mike Cullen, has started putting the old *Green Lights* on our website—a huge technological achievement. In addition to being great reading, the old issues are an invaluable resource for researching houses and historic events. We recently assisted a professor at Salve Regina University with his research by providing several articles from old *GLs*.

A big “thank you” to Tom Hockaday and Bill Martin for their donation of office furniture for our archive room. It will certainly make our work more comfortable and organized. And our continued gratitude

to John Byrne and Harbor House for providing the space to us.

Our committee has been humming along the last few months. We are continuing to sort through and identify photos and documents in our archives. We welcomed Lisa Beth O’Shea to our committee. This issue of *GL* has a wonderful article “Point Memories” by our member Syd Williams. If you would like to share some memories with us, please email them to historyandarchives@thepointassociation.org.

A SAD NOTE

Kay O’Brien,
a beloved Point resident and *Green Light* stalwart,
passed away Saturday, February 15 at age 93.

We plan to honor her in our next issue.



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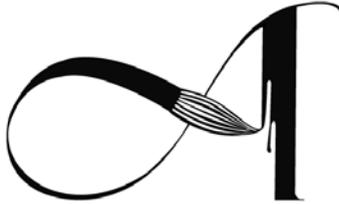
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Sunday, March 23, 6:00 p.m., St. John's

SPRING CLEANUP

Saturday, April 12, 9:00 a.m.,
Storer AND Battery Parks

SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, April 24, 7:00 p.m., St. John's

"SEA-RISE AND FLOODING" WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 22, 7:00 p.m., St. John's

PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 24, 10:00 a.m., St. John's

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