

The
GREEN

LIGHT



BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

SUMMER 2014



Waiting for the Summer people . . .

The GREEN LIGHT

LVIII No. 2

SUMMER 2014

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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.



This issue of the *Green Light* is dedicated to Katharine Sutherland O'Brien (1920-2014). Kay O'Brien was for many decades the heart and soul of our journal as contributor, archivist and devoted and enthusiastic distributor. Readers will find throughout this issue of the *Green Light* tributes to this remarkable woman and evidence of her service to the community she so loved.

My own debt to Kay O'Brien is immeasurable. When I hesitantly took on my responsibilities as editor, coming in and remaining an outsider from the northernmost reaches of the state, I soon learned that Kay was the one I could turn to for information on the Point's – and the *Green Light's* – history, as well as for up to the minute information on current residents and events, all of it transmitted to me with warmth and obvious affection for all. In addition, I soon began to receive a useful and wide-ranging collection of clippings that she mailed to me every few weeks or kept on her dining room table awaiting an expected visit. I could not have had a better mentor and, in short order, a better friend.

Alice Clemente

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The summer season is about to arrive, our parks are ablaze in a daffodil glow, scented with the promise of warm days ahead. After such a treacherous winter and chilly spring, let's breathe a collective sigh of relief, summer on the Point is about to begin!

Writing about our neighborhood's happenings is always a challenge, so much to say, so little space in which to capture it all. Today, I find it especially difficult to gather my thoughts, as I continue to think about some very special Point friends who have left us of late. Beverly Adler, Kay O'Brien, Ed Coughlin, and Charlie Duncan, each with a unique life story, yet united by a common thread, their love of the Point.

In this issue, you will read about two very special women who left lasting impressions behind. Kay O'Brien epitomized all that is good about our neighborhood. For so many years, her talents and ceaseless energy, kept the Green Light lively and interesting. Kay faithfully gathered and chronicled our collective stories. And Beverly Adler, the lady in the hat, with her little pug Delilah by her side, overseer of Battery Park, always prepared to offer advice and humor. Sadly, Ed and Charlie passed just as we are about to go to press. Their stories and tributes will be shared in the fall issue. All four would not want much fuss, instead, I can hear them say, "Carry on!" - take good care of the place we loved so much!" And so, we will...

Bridging the past with the present, while preparing for our collective future is what we endeavor to do every day on the Point. As our city celebrates its 375th anniversary, the delicate balance of preservation with progress is never more crucial. Maintaining our distinctive heritage while ensuring that our community evolves and adapts in thoughtful ways for the generations to come needs all of our attention.

Currently, efforts focus on working with fellow Newport neighborhood associations to share information and support, as we strive to partner with city officials and community institutions. Together, we can make our City by the Sea the best it can be. Trash carts, traffic, trees, signs, and flooding are all topical conversations. Studying resiliency, repairing piers, saving historic streetscapes, rail crossings, welcoming RISD and URI students who studied our landscapes and history this past semester, and learning about the great work ongoing as the Opera House on Washington Square is restored, savoring the centuries of culture within the Hunter House--all these facets intertwine and connect us on the Point.

As you take your evening stroll this summer, please take a moment to stop and thank those who find the time to volunteer in various ways. Time consuming and hard work certainly, though for most, labor of love. Your Point Board's tireless efforts keep our organization vibrant, informed, and relevant. I am honored to work with such a great group of friends.

Help carry on the association's traditions of the last 59 years. Join your neighbors to honor our past and prepare for the future. For Pointers young and old alike, there is always so much to do during the summer months. History talks and walks, meetings and lectures, potlucks, park clean-ups, Easter egg hunts, plant sales, picnics, garden tours, block parties, and parades – all wonderful opportunities to cultivate, celebrate, and carry on in our remarkable corner of Newport – The Point!

Wishing you a glorious summer season!

Beth – president@thepointassociation.com



EULOGY FOR KATHARINE SUTHERLAND O'BRIEN

Christopher D. Scott March 15, 2014

Searching through my grandmother's files, hoping to find something suitable for her eulogy, I came across a piece of paper with this quote from Henry David Thoreau's journal, dated February 28, 1840: "On the death of a friend, we should consider that the fates through confidence have devolved on us the task of a double living, that we have henceforth to fulfill the promise of our friend's life also, in our own, to the world." What Thoreau meant, I believe, is that we have an obligation to live our own lives more fully and more purposefully to make up for the ones we have lost. Thoreau's notion of "double living" is a fitting epitaph to the life of Katharine Sutherland O'Brien, who lived life to the fullest and who was deeply devoted to her family and friends, many of whom are here today. It is also a fitting theme for this service, which celebrates the lives of two remarkable women—my grandmother and her beloved daughter, Margaret O'Brien Scott—who mirrored each other in many ways, so much so that they died only two days apart on opposite sides of the United States. Although we mourn their passing, we should also heed Thoreau's advice and try to fulfill the promise of their lives in our own. In other words, it is time to stop dwelling on "double dying" and start focusing on "double living." After all, my grandmother, who was a very practical and modest person, as many of you know, would want us to get on with our lives, not fuss over hers. At the risk of embarrassing her, I would like to reflect on three aspects of her life that you may not know about but that I feel speak volumes about the kind of person she was: her early years growing up in southern California, her middle years teaching second grade in Middletown, and her later years living—or, rather, "double living"—on Battery Street.

Kay O'Brien, as many of you knew her, was born Katharine Ann Sutherland on December 21, 1920, in Whittier, California, which was then a sleepy suburb of Los Angeles. Her parents, William and (Anna) Lucile Sutherland, had three other children: Barbara, Janet, and Donald. The four close-knit siblings, all born within five years of each other, grew up in Whittier and a small town called Villa Park, near present-day Disneyland. Back then, however, it was nothing but orange groves. When I interviewed my grandmother in the 1980s for a homework assignment requiring me to find someone born before 1930, she told me:



"Surrounding the schoolyard were never-ending rows of orange trees. We were six miles from town and a tiny crossroads store and two Sunkist packinghouses marked Villa Park. We rode our bikes everywhere and knew the location of all vines or trees bearing fruit. 'No Trespassing—Bear Trap Out' was a terrifying sign in an avocado grove, which of course we heeded. While roaming the hills, we kept our eyes peeled for cactus, rattlesnakes, trap-door spiders, and then in contrast all the lovely wildflowers. We did have earthquakes and the big one in '33 kept us living outdoors for days of aftershocks. Our world was really very small."



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Indeed, life was simpler then. Growing up during the Great Depression made her appreciate the simple things in life. Although she had the rugged stoicism of a true New Englander, she was a California girl at heart. Her sunny disposition, her limitless optimism, and her easygoing manner—not to mention her lifelong love of fruits, flowers, and nuts—were cultivated in those endless orange groves of southern California that no longer exist.

After graduating from Pomona College, my grandmother moved to Boston, where she met her soon-to-be-husband, Donal Francis O'Brien, a captain in the U.S. Army. He almost missed their wedding, however, because he took the train from Boston to California with only one day to spare. With her characteristically dry sense of humor, my grandmother later wrote to my mother, "He said I'll see you in Calif[ornia] if I can make it! Not a word until he showed up on the train in San Bernardino." As many of you will recall, my grandfather was a man of few words, but he always kept his word. Maybe that was the secret of their forty-six-year marriage. They began their marriage somewhat inauspiciously in a shared, heated barn in Taunton. Eventually, they upgraded to a single-family house—with a barn, no less—in Middletown, where my grandfather set up his own veterinary practice and where my grandmother began teaching second grade at the former Linden Elementary School. Those early years on Wapping Road, which I only know through faded photographs and old home movies, seem like the Camelot era to me: happy, glamorous, and innocent. For twenty years, Mrs. O'Brien, as she was called in the classroom, taught reading, writing, and arithmetic to a generation of children, including me. From 1978 to 1979, while my father attended the Naval War College and my family lived at Wapping Road, I attended my grandmother's second-grade class. To avoid any suspicion of favoritism, we kept our relationship a secret from the other students until the end of the year. I have had many good teachers since then, but none as dedicated or inspiring as Mrs. O'Brien. I still remember how she read books to me at night (like "Frog and Toad are Friends"), how she made us memorize the names of the fifty states (like Minnesota, which I always misspelled), and how she broadened my horizons and made me see the world in new ways (like counting the different license plates at the War College). My

grandparents, who were both teachers, instilled in me a love of learning and an interest in foreign languages and cultures, which eventually led me to get a Ph.D. in Japanese literature and become a teacher myself. Although I gave up teaching to become a translator, Mrs. O'Brien's lessons have stayed with me. But the most important lesson she taught me was one that cannot be learned from books: how to become a better person. My grandmother was not only one of the best teachers I have ever had; she was also one of the kindest, warmest, and friendliest persons I have ever known.

After retiring from teaching in 1980, Kay O'Brien moved to Newport, where she began a second career as a full-time grandmother to me and my brother, Matt, and a fairy godmother to many of you. Like the late Nancy Hay, one of her soul mates, Kay O'Brien always looked out for her friends and neighbors. After her husband died in 1989, she followed the example of "double living" and became even more active in the community. Indeed, she was a fixture on the Point, walking around the neighborhood and checking in on

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people, welcoming visitors into her living room and plying them with all kinds of goodies, and working tirelessly as a writer and archivist for *The Green Light*. She was a familiar and comforting presence on the Point, much like the Green Light itself. Her baked bread and other delicacies were the stuff of legend. Her house on Battery Street became a “home away from home” for many people, including my family, which has never really had one place to call home. Newport was our *kokoro no furusato*, as they say in Japanese, our “heart’s hometown.” She also opened her heart and her home to my partner, Weishiun (Andy) Tsai, and my brother’s girlfriend, Evita Garrett. As my grandmother began to slow down in recent years, the community rallied around her. The whole neighborhood seemed to show up for her ninetieth birthday party at Harbor House in 2010, including many family and friends such as the extended O’Brien clan and the late June Gibbs. In particular, I would like to thank “Team Kay” for their heroic efforts taking care of her, both at Battery Street and at Forest Farm Health Care Center, especially Ross Freeman, Gail Forbes and Linda Ludvick, Bill Hall, Elizabeth Gibbs, Joy Scott, Phil and Mary Beth Smith, Linda Garvin, Karen Diez Canseco, and Peter Guest. I would also like to thank my mother, Karl and Greer Lyon, and the extraordinary staff at Forest Farm for making my grandmother’s last three months there comfortable and peaceful. When I visited her there in December, she often sat in her chair in the day room receiving a steady stream of visitors, just like she used to do at Battery Street. Forest Farm had become her “home away from home.” In fact, when I said goodbye, promising to be back in the spring, she smiled and said, “I’ll be here.” Those were her last words to me.

In the end, I was not able to fulfill my promise to see her again in the spring. But she has kept her prom-

ise to me: she is still here. She is in the wind that blows up Battery Street from the bay, she is the gardens of the Point that lie in wait for spring, and she is in the light that still shines from the little lighthouse on Goat Island. Indeed, she is all around us... Kay O’Brien and Maggie Scott may not be alive anymore, but they live on—in translation—through us..



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FRIENDS REMEMBER KAY

MY MEMORIES OF KAY

I will always remember Kay for her cheerful personality and welcoming attitude toward all. She had a self-deprecating manner and was more interested in talking about 'you' than herself.

When our family first met Kay and Don, they shared their 'camp' in Vermont, pine and spruce trees and Andromeda shrubs, too numerous to count, to plant in our yard. She spent countless hours trimming, weeding and planting daffodils in the landscape at the United Congregational Church on Valley Road.

Her dining room table was always covered with an array of articles that she had culled from a newspaper or a magazine that was of special interest to you and saved it for the next time she saw you.

Kay's signature anadama bread and shortbread cookies far exceeded any others. Just like her, she added something special that cannot be duplicated.

Mary Beth Smith

A FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR

Kay was a friend and neighbor for many many years and her energy was inspiring – tending her lovely garden, daily walks around her beloved Point neighborhood, greeting new home owners with the latest copy of *The Green Light* and the endless historical tidbits she gathered and loved to share with visitors. Kay was the quintessential conversationalist – always ready for a chat, always interesting.

When Kay had to have several old trees removed from her yard, we watched the production sitting in beach chairs in front of my house. Years later when she wasn't getting out as much, we watched from her hallway when the huge tree was cut down on the southeast corner of the Harbor House property.

Another recollection is seeing Kay out on the roof of the sunroom, shoveling off snow or sweeping wet leaves away ... well into her eighties! I told her she was setting the bar too high – Ian would be expecting me to be doing these things in my eighties.

I think of Kay often and fondly – and I hope she is sitting in a beach chair somewhere getting ready to watch workmen raise the John Townsend house on Bridge Street!

Joy Scott

Sports were a big part of her later life. She was a big Patriots Fan and we often watched games from beginning to end, rooting for the Brady miracles. We also played the ponies during the Triple Crown. Her system for picking winners was very simple. She would either pick the odd or even numbers on race day. More often than not, she won.

Kay was as devoted to her friends and family as they were to her. We are very lucky to have known her and spent time with her. She was special and made us feel the same.

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KAY'S FILES

by Isabel Griffith

We wrote the “Green Light Book” in the colder months of 2007 and 2008. Alice (Clemente) and her posse of writers, editors, and proofreaders met regularly to plan, share, brainstorm and lend mutual support; Kay was usually there with good advice and ideas. We were so proud of *The Green Light, 1957 – 2007*, published on schedule in the spring of 2008.

I had heard of Kay's files and seen some evidence of them as she always had several things to show us – pictures, newspaper clippings, fascinating stuff from years ago about the Point, but also about Newport. She once gave me a copy of a clipping from 1966 with a story about the pending restoration of my Operation Clapboard house and a great picture of what it looked like then. So, when I was assigned the article about Point gardens for the book, I turned to Kay as my resource. For several weeks we sat in her dining room surrounded by the files. I spent two or three hours a week going through old copies of the *Green Light* searching for material about Point gardens and anything related.

“Look at this, Kay,” I would say when something caught my eye. In her quiet voice Kay would answer, “Oh, yes, that was when... I think I might have something else about it.” She would dip into the files and come up with a reference or an article, but more often she would start with, “Back then,” or “I remember.” What things she knew! About the Point, Newport and the whole world beyond. She was naturally curious; her interests were wide and varied and she was wonderfully objective about human nature. Kay was a great observer who never judged or criticized. Her observations about character were shrewd, balanced by a gentle sense of humor.

Those afternoons with the files are what I remember most about Kay. I believe most of the material she left is now part of the Point History and Archives collection. All of her old *Green Lights* are at my house. I think of her when I add a new issue to the files.

KAY'S TREE

by Marcia Mallory

A few years ago Kay told the Point Association she could no longer take such an active role in the *Green Light*. She did not have an official position but was the heart and brains of our paper. She had voluminous resources both in her head and on her dining room table.

As a way to commemorate all Kay had done for the Point Association and particularly the *Green Light*, the board decided to plant a tree in her honor in Storer Park. Kay, in her usual modest way, did not want any marker on the tree, but it was known as “Kay's Tree”. When it was first planted, it came with one of those green plastic watering things that went around it. Kay was extremely conscientious that first year to make sure it was kept watered. There were a few spring bulbs planted at the base, and Kay kept the area neat and tidy.

The tree is at the corner of Washington Street and the Causeway that goes over to Goat Island. It is a hawthorn tree, with lovely flowers in the spring and red berries in the fall. It has grown considerably since it was planted and looks quite healthy. The next time you are walking on Washington Street, why not take a look at “Kay's Tree”?



KAY'S ANADAMA BREAD

by Liz Mathinos

Kay O'Brien was the perfect neighbor – always there for all of us living nearby – with advice, veggies from the Middletown garden, or best of all, a freshly baked loaf of anadama bread. Her recipe made two loaves – one for the baker and the other went to welcome a newcomer, comfort someone ill or to cheer a deserving elder. A loaf of anadama bread shall always remind me of Kay!

Anadama Bread

*1/2 cup - warm water - in bowl - add 1 pkg. ^{yeast} yeast
Set aside*

*in pot: 1 c water - bring to light boil
add 1/2 c corn meal which has been mixed with
1/2 c water*

*Stir in corn meal - cook minute or two
add scant T salt
T Crisco shortening
1/2 c molasses*

When mixture lukewarm - add yeast mixture

Start adding flour - as much as you can

Cover pot - rise overnight or several hours.

Then knead - makes 2 loaves

let rise to desired size

*Bake 400° oven 30 minutes
Turn off heat and leave in
5 more minutes -*

Enjoy!

FRONT ROW SEAT

by Kay O'Brien

(Reprinted from *The Green Light*, October 1990)

As usual it's been a great summer for watching waterfront activities, but a favorite has been the preparations for the BOC Challenge round-the-world race which started here on Saturday, September 15th.

For several weeks the boats had been gathering at Goat Island, and the sea of masts thickened as they nestled together at "B" dock. What a colorful scene on daily walks, almost feeling part of the action. But when Saturday came, the skies darkened, the heavens opened, and not a breath of wind was stirring.

However, the hardy well-wishers braved the elements and crossed the causeway to watch the little tow boats circle to await their turn to guide the racers out to mid-channel. With so much activity on each boat one had to wonder how a single sailor could manage the high tech gear alone.

As the boats were set adrift in the East Passage, the skies cleared and the winds picked up. Helicopters landed and took off with photographers. The seawall was lined with spectators speaking many languages. One was even heard to ask "which way are they going?" – not being familiar with the geography of the bay. The ten-minute gun and then the five-minute and at noon off they went, as they cleared the starting line west of Fort Adams. Everyone left behind had the greatest admiration for the solo sailors on their first leg to Capetown, then on to Sydney, and to Punta del Este, and after 27,000 miles back into Newport next spring.

A century ago Joshua Slocum became the first person to sail a boat alone around the world, taking 38 months. Times have changed but alone is still alone. We'll be here to welcome them back.

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Charles Y. Duncan, Jr.
passed away on May 5, 2014
We plan to honor him in our next issue.

BEVERLY ADLER (1931-2014)

by Tom Kennedy

I still recall clearly a warm day in spring when I first met Beverly Adler in her driveway on Cherry Street. I was considering buying a house on Maitland Court and was touring the neighborhood to satisfy my curiosity. Beverly, as was her wont, spotted me as a stranger and engaged me in a long, friendly and humorous conversation. She showed me her small backyard festooned with spring flowers, and assured me that I would find the area congenial and welcoming. This unexpected and pleasant meeting sealed my commitment to settle on the Point.

Years later, when I was near retirement and finally moved into the house on Maitland Court, Beverly and I met again, but this time it was our dogs that brought us together. Beverly's pug, Delilah, and my chocolate lab, Brown Dog, became fast friends, and Beverly and I spent many an afternoon walking and talking together behind our pets. Delilah's peculiarity was a dangling tongue, always on display. Beverly would sometimes tilt her head, stick her tongue out, and ask who was cuter, she or Delilah? She would also complain to those who had treats for Delilah, but nothing for her, and ask where her treats were?

In the warm weather Beverly wore broad-brimmed hats and bright colors, which suited her personality. She was an unofficial ambassador and overseer in Battery Park, where she engaged anyone she met in conversation, and did not shy away from reminding transgressors to clean up after their dogs or to keep their dogs on a leash. You knew where you stood with Beverly. She was also an itinerant teller of jokes, and would regale anyone who would listen with her latest offering. This talent was especially popular among staff and customers at local restaurants and stores, where Beverly spent a good deal of time. She knew many of the staff by name and they would often prod her into telling a joke, which she would do quite willingly. Beverly was also quick to offer practical advice and tips to anyone who had a problem. If the advice didn't resonate, she would



offer to supply the person with one of her recent purchases, which would ameliorate the problem. For Beverly's house was full of "bargains" from her daily shopping sprees. I have several Beverly gadgets myself. Her motto in this regard, found on a plaque hanging on her porch, was "shopping is cheaper than psychiatry."

Beverly was close to her three children, whom I first met at her 80th birthday party. Her youngest grandchild, Julian, still a tot, used to skype occasionally with his grandma. He would insist on having Delilah in the picture. Grandma would oblige and hold Delilah while talking. Beverly was especially proud of Julian because he was so clever. His candid comments would especially amuse her. Delilah was a "skunk". And grandma's smooth complexion had a "big wrinkle" in it. Such a smart boy!

For years Beverly was active in the Edward King Center, the local branch of the AARP, and Temple Shalom in Middletown. In later years she experienced some serious health issues, but always remained upbeat. She would regularly tell me that "life was great, as long as you don't weaken". And she never did weaken, right up until her sudden death, which, incidentally, occurred while doing her favorite thing – shopping. The figure of Beverly pushing a collapsible baby stroller (to help her with balance) accompanied by her little black pug and wearing a large sun hat was an everyday occurrence in the warm weather. I know there are many, I among them, who will miss Beverly's buoyant, cheerful presence. *Requiescat in pace.*

A LONDON PLANE TREE AT HARBOR HOUSE

by Liz Mathinos

On the grounds of Harbor House, next to the Priest's house on Second Street, stands a very tall tree, which is over a hundred years old. Since my childhood, I have always believed that it was an American Sycamore, because of its distinctive peeling bark. In comparing the photo (circa 1914), and on the judgment of John Byrne and arborists, imagine my surprise to learn that it is a London Plane tree! Another beautiful Newport tree!



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RIDING SHOTGUN ON THE CHINESE RAILROAD

by Ed Madden

In the winter 2013-2014 edition of the *Green Light*, I wrote a story about our Jamestown neighbor Bruce Livingston, who enlisted as a private in the United States Marine Corps at the age of 17, with parental consent, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He retired 30 years later as a Colonel having been involved in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War and having along the way spent some time at the Naval War College here in Newport as well. Bruce had innumerable stories from that era worthy of further nurturing. I have selected this one related to this story's title for your reading enjoyment.

First – a little history for background. There had been a Communist Party in China since 1928. From its inception, there were increasingly bitter battles with the Nationalist army which was trying to unify the country. The eventual leader of the Nationalist Party and army was Chiang Kai-Shek, and the Communists united under Mao Tse-Tung following the famous Long March of 1935. In 1931, the Japanese invaded Manchuria in the northern part of China. In 1937 they advanced south down the Chinese coast and then into the interior by 1940, essentially controlling the whole Pacific coastline. The Japanese presented a common enemy for the Chinese Nationalists and Communists, so that they frequently joined forces to fight the invaders.

When the Japanese surrendered unconditionally in August of 1945, Bruce was training on the island of Guam with elements of the 1st Marine Division preparatory to invading the Japanese home islands. Plans changed radically after the Japanese surrender and Bruce was dispatched along with approximately 80 Marines to Northern China to help expedite the repatriation of Japanese troops back to Japan.

The Marines also were assigned patrol duty on a Chinese railroad that was transporting coal from the coal mines in Tangshan in the Chinese interior to the port city of Tientsin some 60 miles away. From there it would be shipped to Peking and the vast surrounding countryside. Coal was and is the main source of energy for homes, factories and buildings in China. The Tangshan coal mines were the most modern coal mines in China and the standard gauge railroad with steam loco-

motives was the most advanced coal transport in the country at that time.

Typically, a coal train consisted of the steam locomotive and its attached coal car plus a dozen or more coal gondolas filled to the brim with coal. A caboose brought up the rear for the housing of Marines providing security. It was their job to “ride shotgun” on the trains to guarantee the safe arrival of the coal. The track and rail bed had to be policed to prevent sabotage and the troops had to be on the alert for Communist snipers throughout their journey. On one occasion the Marines shelled a village in retaliation for enemy fire. It was the Communist goal to disrupt as much of the Chinese economy as possible. They hoped to persuade the Chinese peasants that the Nationalist Party was incapable of running the country and that the peasants should join the Communist Party. Their plans came to fruition with the vast majority of the population rising up against Chang Kai Shek, defeating his party and forcing him to flee to Taiwan along with his supporters. The Chinese Communists subsequently became the masters of the Far East. An interesting postscript to this story is that in 1976 there was a massive earthquake that destroyed a good portion of the city of Tangshan.

Bruce remained in China from 1945 to 1947 living at times in the coal train's caboose as well as in housing at the port city of Tientsin and in the American legation in Peking. One of his most unusual jobs was to act as a paymaster for the coal company, bringing the paychecks to the workers down in the mines. In our interview he remarked about a photograph of Herbert Hoover hanging on the wall in the business office. In his prepresidential days, Hoover apparently was an engineer for the Belgian company that built the mines. Bruce speaks with fond memories of his stay in China, particularly being impressed with the architecture of the foreign embassy buildings, including the American, and the charm of many of the local inhabitants.

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THE EAGLE HAS LANDED—AT NEWPORT'S STATE PIER

by Dave Moore

In July of 2012, the Tall Ships arrived in Newport. My favorite ship was the 295 foot, three-masted sailing barque, named *Eagle*. She is the training vessel for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and was tied up at the head of the State Pier. I wanted to see her again and hoped to go aboard her. Parking my car was a problem because of the crowds, but I found a legal place on a side street in the Point section.

The sidewalks along the south end of Washington Street and the pier itself were lined with many vendors, in kiosks, selling their food and wares. The *Eagle* was as beautiful as I remembered her with the tall masts, white painted hull and the Coast Guard "Racing Stripes" near her bow. Her pedigree states she was built in Germany in 1936 and named the *Horst Wessel*. She was used by the German cadets for training during WWII and was seized by the U.S. Government as a war prize in 1946.

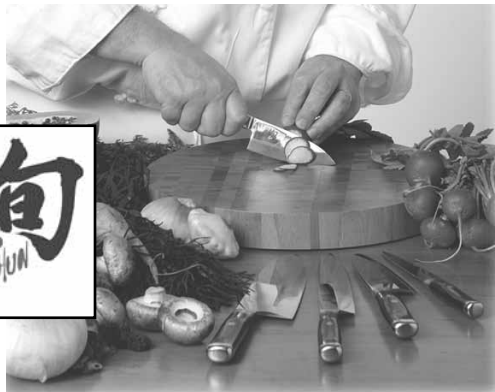
I was surprised that there was no queue of waiting spectators at the boarding ramp – just two cadets who welcomed my wife and me aboard. We worked our way towards the bow where we met four female cadets in

uniform who told us they were brand-new plebes. This was their first training mission and they politely addressed us with a "sir" or "ma'am". At the ship's mid-section, or "waist area," we had to climb down a steep ladder, but now met some of the new male cadets. I asked if any of them had climbed the masts. They said that it was part of their training to climb to the "royals," and yes they were attached to a safety harness. Moving aft, we saw the ship's double spoke helm, navigation shack, and the American flag flying off the stern. We took many photos.

Several months later, I met a man who had spent four years in the Coast Guard in his youth and he told me he had served aboard the *Eagle*. I asked him if he had to climb her tall masts. He said "yes," and many did not use safety lines in those days. He also told me this story:

After fifteen weeks of training at Cape May, NJ, he was assigned to the *Eagle*. On his first cruise, they left New London, CT and sailed down to the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Maryland, located just outside Baltimore. They spent several months there, and on January 27, 1967, they were scheduled to return to New London.

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Because of an early morning fog they waited to get underway until the fog had lifted. This occurred at about eleven o'clock. As they left the docks and entered into the Chesapeake Bay, they were again caught up with patches of fog. They continued on under power, with no stay-sails set, even as heavier fog rolled in. They were confident in their navigation because of their charts, lookouts, radar, and other electronic equipment.

He said lunch was served at noon in the crew galley located one deck down and just forward of amidships. After lunch a few of them went into the next forward compartment and sat down for a chat. The next thing he remembered was a loud metal-grinding type of sound.

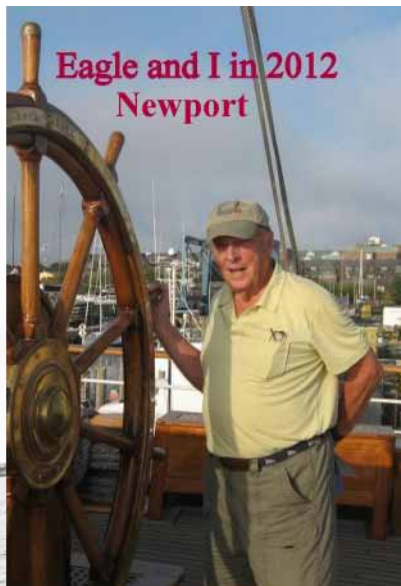
At the same time the ship lurched so hard that it sent him sliding about twenty-five feet across the deck into a metal bunk frame.

His first thoughts were that the ship must have rubbed against a large buoy that marked the channel. He and his friends immediately scrambled up the ladder to muster at their duty stations and to see what had happened. As they arrived at a hatch that led them out to the waist deck, a third class bos'n mate stopped them. The bos'n shouted that the rigging was falling, and they began to hear metal thumps and crashes just overhead.

They waited a few minutes after the noise had stopped before they opened the hatch to go out on deck. There they saw the black stern of a large, high-sided vessel with the word "Manila" on her transom, disappear into the fog. (It was the motor vessel Philippine Jose Abad Santos.) They never saw her again. After arriving at their assigned stations, they were told they had collided head-on with another vessel. As part of the damage control party, he and another crew member were given battle lanterns to inspect for water leakage below decks. They worked deep down into the bowels of the ship and even forward into the chain locker, but found no water gushing in.



When they returned to the main deck, they could see the still hanging, standing rigging lines and the fallen debris. They were immediately assigned to help with the helm. He and five others found it was almost impossible to bring the ship around to the headings they were given. However, after what seemed like an eternity and a lot of



spent adrenaline, they managed to hold the proper bearing. The ship was able to return to Curtis Bay with the assistance of a tug.

That night and the following day they found that the prow was opened up like a peeled banana. The ship's figurehead was gone as well as the windlass, chains, anchor, and part of the foredeck. The bowsprit was dangling alongside and upper yardarms on the foremast were loose and swinging free. The lower end of the thick steel foremast itself was actually bent. It was later confirmed that the *Eagle*, in the fog, had steamed past the point in the channel where she should have turned to starboard and had crossed in front of the inbound cargo ship.

If you inspect the *Eagle* today, you can see that the steel repairs on the new bow are all welded together. This is unlike the rest of the steel plates on the ship where rivets were used. Also, the starboard and port anchors are different because the starboard anchor which fell to the bottom during the collision was not recovered.

* * *

I have a fond old memory of the *Eagle*, but am a little hesitant to write about it as I may have committed a federal offense (trespassing on Federal Property). It happened, however, sixty-two years ago and I believe the statute of limitation must have expired long ago.

One long spring weekend in 1952, two of my college classmates and I had traveled to the Coast Guard Academy for sailboat races against the Academy and five other colleges. Our sleeping quarters overlooked

the magnificent *Eagle* tied up to a long pier just below us. One evening, out of boredom and a “dare,” we decided to sneak aboard the darkened ship.

It was amazing that without being seen we were able to board her with three dates from Connecticut College for Women, located nearby. We sat down on the far outboard side to avoid detection. As our party progressed, our voices and laughter became louder and the chance of being caught became greater. The thought of disciplinary action from our college began to sink in and I knew we had to leave. Thankfully, we were not caught as Section 1382 of the Federal Code of Protec-

tion of Government Property “forbids trespassing on military bases. This section applies to any military, naval, or coast guard reservation...Persons violating this section are subject to six months imprisonment, \$500, or both.”

I apologize for our foolhardy sophomoric mischief, but that was the era when rival fans, following their visiting teams, would try to steal each others’ mascot or perform some other prank. College fraternity pledges had hazing rituals that led to even more outlandish deeds. I never felt like a fugitive as no harm was done, and it was fun – thanks to our great ship *Eagle*.



On April 19th, a few Point families and friends gathered at Storer Park for an Easter Egg Hunt. Young Point Hummers including Chloe Green, Rose Dana, Helen Huntley, Marilyn and Hugo Harrell and Pippa Boss found all the hidden eggs and met the Easter Bunny. Thanks to Nell Soper and Andy Green for organizing this great family event and arranging for the Easter Bunny to attend. JENNIFER FULHAM HUNTLEY



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NEWPORT'S EARLY YEARS –

A Lecture by the Newport Historical Society for The Point Association

by Lisa Brew, History and Archives Co-Chair

On January 15th while waiting for a lecture to begin at the Newport Historical Society (NHS), I was struck by the richness of our regional history. Surrounded by books, documents, and antiques, it is easy to transport yourself into the community's past. In the hour or so that ensued, Ruth Taylor (Executive Director), Bert Lippincott III (C.G., Librarian, Genealogist), and Matt Delaire (Executive Assistant to the Director) shared a wealth of information. They unraveled a tale of Newport's history, peppered with 5 centuries of dates, people, and events. In one hour there was enough information to fill a small book. I would like to share a small part with you.

We all stood around the old conference table, 22 faces eager to learn of the Point's place in history. Bert entered the room with an old scroll, and with white gloved hands, proceeded to unroll a map, a very old map. The lambskin vellum, dating from 1723, held onto a faded image. Silently, we gathered closely to see a piece of our past. Looking closely, straining at the image, you could begin to recognize the streets, the coastline, the land that would shape the Point.

It all started with nine people 375 years ago. They came south from Portsmouth, RI to settle the land near the mouth of the bay. Recorded by a land deed, is a farm, belonging to William and Mary Dyer, which dates to 1644. This land was marked on the south by what is now Van Zandt Avenue and on the north by Coasters Island. The original deed still exists and can be seen in Providence at the Charter House museum (a copy exists in the records at NHS). In 1657, Van Zandt Avenue to the south became the property of Nicholas Easton, founder of the Quaker Meeting House (The Society of Friends). This land was left to Ann, his widow, in the 1670s. She later married Henry Bull and the land was sold to the Society of Friends in 1708. (<http://www.newporthistory.org/properties/great-friends-meeting-house/>).

In the 1720s, Sam Easton, a surveyor, was hired to divide and map the Point area. Lots sold would benefit the Society of Friends. The total land area was 65 acres. The north-south streets would be numbered and

the east-west streets would be named for trees. Quakers did not believe people should have streets named after them. Their belief was that no man should be elevated above another. This idea of using trees and numbers was taken directly from William Penn's plan of the city of Philadelphia in 1682. So Washington Street was originally called First Street and Van Zandt was originally called Hawthorne Street. The Point borders at that time became Farewell Street on the east, Waters Edge on the west, Dyers farm on the north, and The Cove on the south.

All lots sold were numbered and recorded with the town clerk at Brick Market in Newport. Though we still have many of the Colonial residences built on those lots, many did not survive. In 1776, the British arrived and took Newport. Fifty percent of the residents left and 200 homes were destroyed. They were burned, as most of us were told, not for malicious intent but simply for firewood. Those left unscathed were used to house the British officers. The occupation lasted 3 years and the British left Newport in 1779 with the arrival of the French. With the departure of the British troops, so went the history kept of many of the homes. All records kept from 1700-1779 at Brick Market were taken by the British on a sailing ship to NYC. Unfortunately, the ship sank off the coast of Long Island. Some records were retrieved from the wreckage and stored for many years in attics in Newport. The sea water, unfortunately, did great damage to the paper. Some of the surviving documents are in fairly good condition and others are badly damaged or illegible. Those that were saved are now stored at NHS in silk liners where the public is welcome to see them. There are 60 volumes to review, though the history of the houses is spotty. The recordings of the homes, by address, can be clear, illegible, water damaged, or no longer in existence.

Documents also exist that track the history of the French officers. Aristocratic by birth, the officers were assigned residence with local families. This was not a volunteer assignment but a duty. Contracts were written (and remain in the NHS archives) between local families and the assigned officer (and his family). Most families welcomed the opportunity to welcome the

French. One record indicates the contract between Tom Robinson (Quaker, Washington St) and Vicomte De Noailles (1780-1781). Many families maintained bonds with the families they housed. Friendships and marriages between families were not unheard of.

After the Revolution, Newport lost its importance as a major seaport due to the lost trade with England and the Caribbean markets (including the prosperous slave trade). Its Golden Era was at an end. The Point area was affected especially hard and the residences saw a long period of neglect. Many of the homes that survived the Revolution were later lost to time and the elements. Newport's Gilded Age would begin with the new area of growth on Bellevue Avenue, where the "summer cottages" would be built starting at the end of the 19th century. The wealthy came, primarily from New York and Philadelphia, and spent their summers in our "City by the Sea".

Serious restoration on the Point did not occur until the 1950s, 1960s, and the 1970s. Operation Clapboard, a restoration collaborative, led by Thomas Benson helped to save numerous homes. These records are

kept and are available through NHS. Their work can be identified by a plaque on those houses. The next time you are strolling through the neighborhood look for the OC plaque with the oak leaf logo and you will have found a home saved by this group. Another restoration project was overseen by Doris Duke. She created The Newport Restoration Foundation (NRF) and was responsible for the purchase, restoration, and upkeep of many of our colonial treasures on the Point. NRF continues with her work. Her master carpenter, George Weaver, donated his working drawings and records to The Point Association Kay O'Brien Archives. These homes are identified by the NRF plaque on the exterior of the houses. I am in the process of having the history of my home researched by the NHS. They too provide a plaque verifying the historicity of our homes, yet another reason to take a stroll through our streets. Strolling has become such an integral part of our lives. We take for granted that people come very long distances to walk in the shoes of our founders.

Sometimes, while sitting in my parlor, I like to imagine the people who lived here before me. I try to imagine their families, their conversations, what their home (my home) looked like. How many people passed through my front doors? It is as if we are the caretakers of this era. Our homes, these treasures, will stand long after we are gone and we too will become part of their history. I can't think of a place that I'd rather be.

Note: We hope to repeat this lecture in the spring. Please keep an eye on our points of interest emails.

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CLIMATE CHANGE & THE POINT

by Lauren Carson

There is no longer any reason to argue over the science. Rhode Islanders want their government to provide clear guidance and standards for the use of scientific and technical information in planning and decision making as we solve this problem using practical cost and environmentally effective solutions. We read each day of new data and mapping that point to sea rise, flooding, drought and storms.


Rhode Island Governor Chafee appointed the Executive Climate Change Council by Executive Order in February of this year (<http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/climate/>). The governor's charge to this Council was to act in the best interests of the state, its businesses, and its residents by leading by example in the creation of a comprehensive approach to reduce Rhode Island's greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impending impacts of climate change. (<http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/climate/guidelines.pdf>). By acting boldly and acting now, this Council has positioned Rhode Island as a national leader in climate adaptation to strengthen its resiliency and support its long-term economic well-being.

This report calls upon our Rhode Island academic institutions to support policy development and reliable in-

formation for state and local planners, decision-makers and our friends and neighbors that will encourage collaboration and coordination to increase resiliency. We must accelerate vulnerability assessment and increase communication statewide to aid municipalities in protecting infrastructure, storm and waste water facilities, energy grids and communication systems.

The Point Association understands that we must provide leadership on this issue. We live in one of the most vulnerable and historic neighborhoods in the city and in Rhode Island. To that end, we are continuing our speakers' series launched on May 22 just prior to the PA Plant Sale. Watch for further programs and speakers' programs throughout the summer and fall to keep us informed and preparing ourselves for flooding resiliency.

We must pursue opportunities that develop greater resiliency. Rhode Island can excel in science and technology, design and green infrastructure techniques that can spark new jobs and new industries. This forward thinking can be a model for addressing climate change locally, making our contribution to other global efforts and preserving the quality of life that we all enjoy.




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Source: RI Statewide MLS- as of May 12, 2014

This information is deemed reliable but is not guaranteed

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biveekly, on Friday.