

The GREEN LIGHT

BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

SUMMER 2016



The GREEN LIGHT

LX No. 2

SUMMER 2016

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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: "Colorful Sails with Darkening Sky" by Peter Martin

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



As summer approaches, our beautiful Narragansett Bay catches the attention of photographers and *Green Light* writers alike, albeit in some cases only in passing. From cover photo to two women's memories of girlhoods lived on or along the Bay, to the brief recognition of the work of historians and marine archeologists, and the multi-disciplinary conference on recognizing and coping with the potential impacts of rising water recently held in our neighborhood, all touch on it in one way or another. The Bay is the *raison d'être* of this exceptional community and affects so many aspects of its life, favorably and sometimes unfavorably.

The international conference on the expected but dreaded impacts of rising sea water on historic districts surely reflected the negative side of the Bay's presence but it almost as surely provided some comfort in the face of the unknown. The conference provided a valuable point of reference for the proactive work our city leaders will be doing, along with those others who, under the aegis of the Resilient Rhode Island Act, are preparing for the many contingencies of more severe storms. We thank the organizers of the conference and also, in advance, those who will be following up on its lessons statewide.

Happy summer!

Alice Clemente

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings!

The daffodils have come and gone, and even after a longer than expected winter, it appears as though spring is finally here! With spring always comes the excitement for a new summer in Newport! Not only are plants beginning to pop-up, but so are the many volunteers across the Point neighborhood. In just the last month, this long-standing tradition has been renewed again and is ready for the summer season ahead!

Our annual Spring Clean-up of the parks and driftways on Earth Day was another huge success! Even though it was a cold and cloudy day, dozens of our neighbors pitched in to rake leaves, pick up trash and debris, and leave our public areas a little cleaner. Our Plant Sale Committee is fully engaged and under-way awaiting what will be another great tradition of volunteering on the Point and holding a neighborhood Plant Sale that offers our neighbors wonderful plants and accessories for their gardens.

This year, the Point Association embarked on a new way of supporting causes that are important to our neighborhood and our city. The Association was proud to be a sponsor of a wonderful conference put on by the Newport Restoration Foundation (NRF). The NRF conference, “Keeping History Above Water”, was an international conference on saving historic structures and neighborhood in the face of rising tides and sea rise. Dozens of our neighbors joined in to participate in the conference and learn more of what the future holds with rising sea levels, and what we can do to prepare for it. The Point Association was proud to be one of the sponsors of the event – not only because of its importance to our neighborhood, but because of its importance to our city and our state. Read more about this exciting conference in the article printed in this edition.

All this leads me to encourage all of you to continue in your work and efforts to volunteer and help our community. If you are looking for ways to help in our neighborhood, contact the Chairman of our Beautification Committee, Rich Abbinanti, and offer to assist him and his team in their work caring for the planters and planting beds that the neighborhood association has adopted. Or, offer to help with the annual Secret Garden Tour in June. Many of the beautiful gardens on the Point will be on the tour.

I hope you have a great summer, and we look forward to seeing you across our neighborhood and city volunteering for your favorite cause!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Hockaday". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping tail on the last letter.

Tom Hockaday

P.S. If any of you are not current members of the Point Association, or have a lapsed membership, please go to our website and join/renew today. We need your support to continue our great work! Go to: <http://www.thepointassociation.org/>. Thank you!

MYSTERIOUS GRAVESTONES

Thanks to Bert Lippincott, Newport Historical Society's librarian and genealogist, for supplying the facts and to Point Association Board member, Pam Kelley, for filling in the holes of this grave mystery.

The memorial grave-stones of Reuben Cook and his children were recently located in a basement on Willow Street. They had been removed from their original site in Island Cemetery sometime between 1874 and 1900 when they were recorded by local historians.

According to Pam Kelley, the stones turned up in 1984 at 20 Willow Street. When she and her husband, Brendan, were moving their house to the lot on Willow, there was an existing small house on the property, that they gave away - it was moved to Burnside Avenue and renovated.

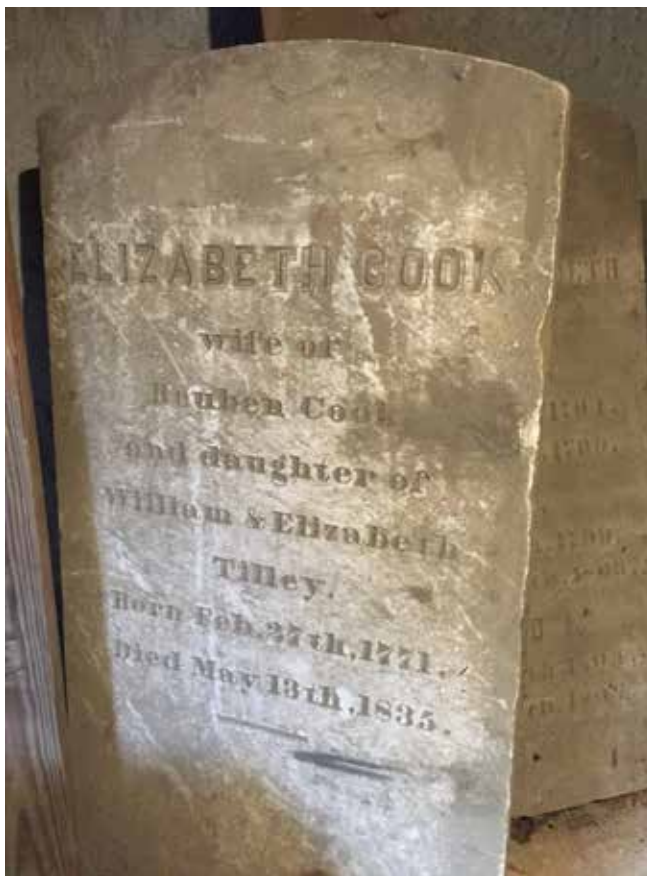
In that part of the yard, they found the 2 gravestones which a former inhabitant later said his father had "borrowed" from the graveyard that he cared for, as




they were damaged. Apparently they were for a patio. Before that was known, the Kelleys were concerned they might have uncovered a grave site, which would have put off any house building for some time. So they had them stored in the newly dug basement where they became a point of interest, as it were. Needless to say

they were never leaving there without a great deal of effort as they weighed a ton.

Reuben Cook was born in Tiverton, RI, in 1769, son of Revolutionary Captain Isaac Cook. His family moved to Newport and Reuben later worked as a tailor, merchant, and ship owner, in partnership with his brother-in-law and cousin Clarke Cook (original owner of the famed restaurant building). He married Elizabeth Tilley, daughter of Baptist Deacon William Tilley, and had eight children. Reuben drowned in March 1814, probably during a trade voyage. No obituary has been found after many months of searching. His death was probably reported by the crew of his returning ship or by message from another ship. Cook's estate was probated in

April, the following year.



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OLD NEIGHBORHOOD SPAWNS FUTURISTIC STEAM SCIENTISTS by Beth Cullen

Born on the Point in 2003, Jeffrey Cares and Mac Cullen, both 7th grade students at All Saints STEAM Academy, have experienced a year filled with science, technology, engineering, arts/humanities, and mathematics (STEAM). These young men may live in historic homes, but their studies encompass cosmic modern-day technology!



At the school's STEAM event in May, Jeffrey presented his "Google 20 Percent project," that addressed special Veteran Parking. He designed a concept website which maps where special parking is located within cities. His prototype may just be picked up for future use in cities across the country!

Mac's ham radio project "Low Power-High Impact" won a top award in the physics category at the RI State Science Fair. Mac holds a ham radio license and will be attending the Bishop Hendricken

8th grade Honors Institute in the fall.



Both young scientists participated in the May 6th historic amateur radio International Space Station (ISS) contact with astronaut Jeff Williams zooming 250 miles over our island at 17,500 mph. Williams has Newport, and perhaps Point connections, as he is a 1996 graduate of the Naval War College.

ISS project leader Mike Cullen and Newport County Radio Club member Jeff Greer are shown here working on the antenna system on the school roof



Twenty-five year Point resident, Mike Cullen, director of this 14 month long STEAM project, is thrilled to report that all 24 questions were received and answered before the ISS slipped out of range. This was the first time any Rhode Island school has made contact with the ISS. RI was the 49th state in the nation to achieve this...only Delaware remains!



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WHERE IS THE *TRAJAN'S* ANCHOR? by Dave Moore

An 1867 August gale hit the 125 foot Barque *Trajan* (named after a Roman Emperor) off the Rhode Island Coast. She was carrying dangerous barrels of lime powder from Rockland, Maine, to New Orleans. It was to be used for plaster and mortar. As the vessel wallowed in the waves and storm, salt water seeped into some of the barrels, causing a chemical heating reaction strong enough to start a fire. The crew tried valiantly to smother the smoldering casks but the fire was spreading rapidly. The crew retreated to the deck but found the deck itself had become too hot to stand on as the fiery inferno raged below. She soon was towed and then anchored off the west side of Goat Island to be scuttled and sunk. All the crew left the ship safely and watched as the vessel slowly sank, deeper and deeper, a foot at a time, on an even keel, into thirty feet of water. As she sank the smoke became less and less dense, as the water extinguished the fire, until a sudden cloud of steam rose several feet into the air. Finally the great casks left on deck floated off, in line, like a flock of sheep bounding one after the other.

There are hundreds of wrecks in Rhode Island waters and many are from the Revolutionary War era. British Commander, John Brisbane, in 1778, was determined to blockade the entrance of Newport Harbor to hold off the suspected arrival of the French fleet by sinking thirteen surplus transport vessels. Four were sunk off the west side of Goat Island (near where the *Trajan* sank 89 years later) to protect Fort George on the island. Two were sunk near the southernmost entrance to Coaster Island's Harbor and one of these is most likely the former *Endeavour*, the vessel James Cook sailed on the first of his three world explorations.

For over a century and a half the *Trajan* wreck was not found or explored, until two intrepid divers, John Stanford and Mark Munro, found her using magnetometers and side scan sonar in December 2008. They described her as mostly a lime concretion in a pretty big field on the muddy harbor floor. There were still heavy ship timbers and lobster pot lines entangled. Some of the lime-filled oak barrels had turned into concrete and littered the site. They did find a small five foot long kedge anchor which they assumed was the *Trajan* auxiliary anchor.

In the summer of 1986, my car had developed a small radiator leak and was losing its fluid. I drove it to a radiator repair facility in North Kingstown. They said they could repair it, but I had to leave it overnight. The next day I returned with my company's pick-up truck with one of my employees. In the parking lot was a very rusty, heavy Admiralty



Pattern anchor. The shop owner said a diving buddy had retrieved it near Newport and asked him if he could use one of his large watering tubs to leach the salt out of it. It had been in the fresh water tank for over a month. When they removed it, an outer layer of calcareous encrustation flaked or was scraped off making the iron a little smaller in diameter than the original.

I asked him if it was for sale. As a youngster I had spent summers at my grandparents' cottage near Lake Ontario. They had a large, similar anchor, painted white, as a lawn ornament and I always admired it. It reminded me of the sailing ships of old. He said yes, as his diving friend had no place to keep it. We agreed on two hundred dollars. He also said it should be painted with

epoxy type paint right away before more rusty iron flaked off. The three of us made a ramp and dragged and pushed the four hundred pound anchor into the back of the truck.

At my home in East Greenwich we pushed it off the truck next to my back sidewalk. I had not told my wife and when she first saw it, she scolded me for not discussing it with her and said it looked out of place. Eventually she also liked it. Morning glories were planted yearly at its base and the blue flowers climbed the iron shank and stock piece making a pretty setting.

After the discovery of the *Trajan* in 2008, I began to wonder if this was her anchor. Here are my reasons for suspecting my anchor came from the *Trajan*:

1. The seller said the diver had found it “near” Newport.
2. The Admiralty anchor was the type in use when the *Trajan* was build (1856). It was all forged iron, unlike the 18th century transport anchors sunk in Newport which had wood stocks.
3. The *Trajan*’s auxiliary kedge anchor had survived underwater for 150 years, but the main anchor was missing.
4. Her location off Goat Island in shallow water (30 feet) made it relatively easy for salvagers to retrieve it.
5. Crane operated work boats for mooring retrieval are located nearby and could have been used to raise the 400 pound weight.

Although the anchor has been in my side yard for forty years, I also wonder if the discovery of the *Trajan* wreck in 2008 makes me culpable for having received an historic item illegally.

In the 1950s underwater divers could pretty much keep what they found. Today, however, there are more strict rules. Courts are using Admiralty Laws, General Maritime Laws, Federal and State Laws – all confusing and conflicting. A First Circuit Court lawyer said: Discerning the laws of this area is far from easy; one might tack a sailboat into a fog bank with more confidence.

Fortunately, my lawyer daughter-in-law said I am protected as a “Bona Fide Purchaser” (i.e. someone who

purchased something with no reason to believe the property belonged to someone else or the property was subject to another party’s claim. The purchaser must have paid a full and fair price for the property and have received the item in the normal course of business.)

And where is the *Trajan* anchor today? It was in East Greenwich. My plan was to move it to my son’s backyard on Cherry Street in the Point section. Sadly, someone had other ideas and it is now missing. Please keep your eyes open for it as there is a reward for finding it.

Ref.:

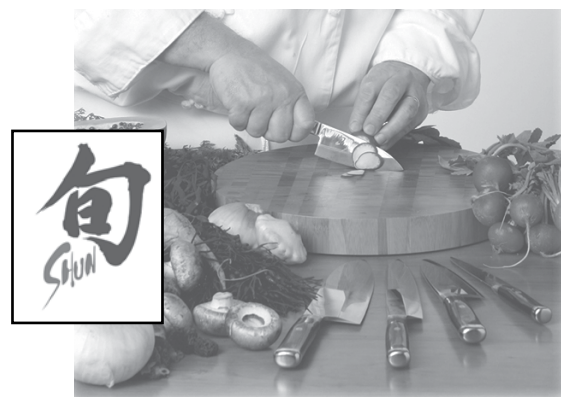
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POINT ASSOCIATION SPONSORS NRF CONFERENCE ON IMPACT OF SEA RISE AND FLOODING ON HISTORIC COMMUNITIES

by Tom Hockaday

The Point Association was proud to be one of the sponsors of a wonderful conference held by the Newport Restoration Foundation (NRF) in April at the Newport Marriott. The Conference, “Keeping History Above Water”, was an international, multi-disciplinary conference on saving historic structures and neighborhoods in the face of rising tides. Being a historic neighborhood that has dealt with issues of sea rise and rising tides, the Point knows first-hand the importance of this issue to our homes, our neighborhood and our city.

The conference was one of the first national conversations to focus on the increasing and varied risks posed by sea level rise to historic coastal communities and their built environments. It was not about climate change, but about what preservationists, engineers, city planners, legislators, insurers, historic home owners and other decision makers need to know about climate change, sea level rise in particular, and what can be done to protect historic buildings, landscapes and neighborhoods from the increasing threat of inundation.

Over four days, specialists from across the United States and abroad shared experiences, examined risks, and debated solutions with an emphasis on case studies and real world applications. “Keeping History Above Water” approached sea level rise from a multi-disciplinary perspective in order to develop practical approaches to mitigation, protective adaptation, and general resilience.

The Point Association joined with other leading or-

ganizations, charitable foundations, educational institutions, and businesses as an active participant. Our sponsorship helped provide the support to promote the conference, and gave members of the Point Association and our neighbors on the Point access to the conference and tickets to the individual sessions, workshops, and presentations during the conference. Interested members and neighbors signed up for tickets to various sessions through the Points of Interest, our eNewsletter of activities and events around the Point and our city.



Point neighbors attending the conference included: John Ward, Beth O'Shea, Louisa Boatwright, Kathy Ward, and Tom Hockaday.

Those who attended learned about adaptation and mitigation efforts that are taking place and, as important, what other communities in our country and across the world are doing to prepare for this sea rise. Our Association's involvement gave many neighbors on the Point the opportunity to learn more about the challenges the future holds,

and obtain the information needed to become advocates for solutions that impact not only our neighborhood, but also our city and other coastal communities in Rhode Island.

The Point Association will sponsor a forum and discussion on the proceedings and findings of the conference when the NRF completes its final conference report. This forum will be open to the entire neighborhood and public. Watch for details in our Points of Interest.

It was an exciting conference, and the Point Association was proud to step up and sponsor this event! To read more about the conference, please go to: <http://www.historyabovewater.org/>.

SAVE ISLAND CEMETERY

Do you own a lot/plot/grave at the Island Cemetery?

If yes, you are a shareholder in the Island Cemetery Company. You have an important voice in the cemetery's future.

Please contact The Friends of Island Cemetery:

MATT MCENTEE,

matt.mcentee.ri@gmail.com, 847-4646,

or

BETH CULLEN, bethcullen@cox.net, 848-2945.

Preserve this cultural gem for generations to come

HISTORIC CEMETERY TOUR

by Beth Cullen

On Saturday, April 16, Historic Cemetery Restoration and Awareness Day, tours were led to both the Common Burying Ground and The Island Cemetery, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The Common Burying Ground tour, conducted by the Newport Historical Society and the Newport Restoration Foundation, shared information on the notable stone carvers whose work is represented there, as well as on Newporters interred there, from William Ellery and Ida Lewis to those interred in "God's Little Acre," possibly the oldest and largest surviving collection of markers of enslaved and free Africans in America. The Island Cemetery tour was hosted by the newly formed Friends of the Island Cemetery. Prominent figures in that cemetery include the brothers Oliver Hazard and Matthew Calbraith Perry, architect Richard Morris Hunt, and financier August Belmont. It was a blustery, though sunny day but the wind did not deter those who participated in these extraordinary tours.



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THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT SERIES

ANNE RAMSEY CUVELIER, OWNER AND OPERATOR OF THE SANFORD COVELL VILLA MARINA BED AND BREAKFAST

by Nancy Abbinanti

The Newport Point Association History and Archives Committee continues to record a collection of Oral Histories with longtime Point residents to learn about their experiences in the neighborhood. On September 16th, 2015, John Ward and I spoke with Anne Ramsey Cuvelier at the Sanford Covell Villa Marina B&B at 72 Washington Street to hear about the history of the house and Anne's life on the Point. Anne is the great granddaughter of William King Covell II who purchased the home in 1895. The family has owned the house ever since. It was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1979.

When the Sanfords died, the house was left to their nieces, the Barter sisters, who didn't want the house, as they lived in the Isaac Bell House. The house at 72 Washington Street became available and Anne's great grandfather, William King Covell II, purchased it in 1895 via a bid at public auction for \$16,500, although the house had cost over \$100,000 to build. The country was in the midst of a major recession in the 1890s.

The house at 72 Washington was used as a summer residence, as it wasn't heated. The Covells also resided in a house near the Mumford School on Farewell



Milton Sanford built the house in 1869/70 and he and his wife used it as a summer resort home, as they also had residences in Kentucky and New York, where they were involved in horse ownership. Mr. Sanford moved the Townsend House that was originally on the site to Second Street. The Sanfords didn't have children but a niece Kate Field stayed with them and was famous as a singer and writer. She was a friend of Alexander Graham Bell at the time the telephone was invented and she made one of the first calls in which she sang happy birthday to Queen Victoria. She was also a friend of Mark Twain and would meet with him at the Newport Literary Guild.

Street. They also owned a hard goods store in town and used a horse drawn carriage to transport furniture between the two houses. Mrs. Covell's family were close friends of Lizzy Borden and supported her by attending the trial in Fall River daily and taking food to her in jail. After she was acquitted, Ms. Borden came to stay with the Covells, as she was being teased and taunted in Fall River. The trial was in 1893 and the home was purchased in 1895 so it is unknown if Ms. Borden stayed at the Villa Marina but she definitely stayed at the house on Farewell Street.

Anne's grandfather had maintained a successful business on Thames St. and was fortunate to send his

two sons to Harvard and his daughter, Anne's mother, to Vassar. Anne's mother married a naval officer stationed in Newport at the time. When Anne was a child, they lived in Alexandria, Virginia, and visited her grandmother and uncle each summer at the Villa Marina. In later years her grandmother required nursing home care at a facility that was located at the Isaac Bell House where the two sisters resided who had previously owned the Washington Street house. Between the cost of the nursing home and the great depression, Anne's uncle was not able to keep the house. It was taken over by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and her uncle had lifetime tenancy. The house was open as a museum for a few years. When Anne's uncle died, the Society took it over but there was a contract stipulation that gave the family first right of refusal with a purchase price of \$60,000.

When the house became available for purchase, Anne was living in San Francisco with her family and came to see it, as she had always loved the house, and decided to take it over in 1980. In order to cover the mortgage and taxes, she converted the home to a bed and breakfast. The house was made for entertaining and Anne has enjoyed meeting people from all over the world. Many guests aren't aware that the quiet historic area at the Point exists, as they generally travel straight down Americas Cup into town. The view and the number of 17th and 18th century houses in the area impress her guests.

Anne described wonderful summer memories of staying at the house as a child, which included going on her uncle's boat to Mackerel Cove for swimming and blueberry picking. The family also spent evenings with neighbors singing, accompanied by piano, mostly Scottish songs. They occasionally came to Newport at Christmas and would carol up and down Washington Street, returning to the house for hot cocoa. Anne remembers traveling to the Point by ferry before the bridge was built and liked the feeling of being on an island.

Over the years there have been many changes to the Point neighborhood. The Torpedo Station was close by on Goat Island and the harbor was filled with destroyers and battleships, as the Navy held a strong pres-

ence. Washington Street was well maintained but the blocks leading to Washington were considered slums. There wasn't money available to restore the houses and if money had been available, it most likely would have been used to tear them down. It is fortunate that Doris Duke recognized the importance of restoration and the historic houses were saved. Anne and other family children weren't permitted to walk down Long Wharf which was filled with bars and brothels -- so different from today. The Point neighborhood had various small stores where Anne remembers as a child getting candy and ice cream. There were no supermarkets but locals were able to get their essentials from the various stores located in the neighborhood.

The present day Villa Marina remains a gathering place for B&B guests and Anne's friends and family. Over the years Anne has improved the residence by restoring the pier that was damaged by hurricanes, adding a saltwater pool and installing solar panels on the roof. Fortunately Anne opens her home for various neighborhood functions such as the Point Association's and the Bridgefest Annual Cocktail Party. Visitors to the Villa Marina can learn about its rich history by looking at all the photos displayed in the home that capture family moments and changes to the areas surrounding the house. Guests also have access to one of the best locations in Newport to experience the sunset.

The Newport Point Association History and Archive Committee is thankful to Anne Ramsey Cuvelier for participating in this oral history interview. We appreciate having Anne share the history of her historic home and memories of time spent there over the years. We encourage readers to listen to the complete interview that is available on the Point Association website.



Anne's uncle King Covell

“RAZZLE DAZZLE” AND ITS NEWPORT FOOTPRINTS

by Shelby Coates

Currently on display on the second floor of Newport's Seamen's Church Institute is a National Museum of the United States Navy sponsored exhibit subtitled "The Art and Science of Ship Camouflage during World War I." In addition to the exhibit's principal focus (with illustrative examples) on this form of attempted deception, the exhibit, including its accompanying written explanations and commentaries, provides the full historical sweep of submarine and antisubmarine warfare in European waters during 1914-1918.

There came a time in early 1917, following Germany's declaration of "unrestricted" (sink all ships including those of neutrals) warfare, that Great Britain, dependent on seaborne importation of food and munitions, was nearly brought to its knees. British and American artists were urgently consulted and several of them advanced their proposals for painting the hulls and superstructures of naval and merchant ships in irregular patterns having the objective of making it more difficult for a submarine skipper, looking through his periscope, to determine a target's course, speed, and distance away. The work of six of the involved artists is dramatically illustrated in this professionally arranged exhibit.

Proponents of the 1917 camouflage effort (plus an urgently needed convoy system) included Admiral William S. Sims, Commander of the U.S. naval forces in Europe. He had been President of Newport's Naval War College before the Great War and was reappointed to that post after the War. In retirement he and his family lived at 73 Catherine Street, a large Victorian house which is still there (now as a Bed & Breakfast).

One of the placards accompanying an illustration states that "...the convoy's best protection was its escort group composed of destroyers and supporting aircraft that screened the seas ahead and on each flank, discouraging U-boats from closing to torpedo range." The exhibit does not mention, however, the fleet of U.S. steam yachts, converted and armed for antisubmarine warfare, based at Brest, France, which also performed convoy duties in the submarine infested Bay of

Biscay. A member of that fleet was WANDERER, a 197-foot steam yacht that had been turned over to the Navy early in 1917 by Newport resident H.A.C. Taylor. At that time Mr. Taylor's residence was the grand "colonial revival" house on Annandale Road that had been designed by McKim, Mead & White circa 1886 (but since torn down).

One of the American artists featured in the exhibit is George de Forest Brush (1855-1941). The system he promoted was called "countershading", a technique in which lighter surfaces were treated with darker tones, and those appearing darker or in shadow were painted white or in light tones. It was intended to merge all sharp structural lines and to bring the ship's appearance to a flat, even mass, better to blend with the horizon.

Brush, as did Sims and Taylor, had his own Newport connection. He resided here for a time during 1916 to do a commissioned portrait and to lecture at the Art Association (predecessor of the Newport Museum of Art). Serendipitously, on June 20, 1923 he was awarded an honorary Master of Arts degree by Yale University, the same occasion on which Newport's esteemed author, Edith Wharton (1862-1937), received her honorary Doctorate of Letters degree also from Yale.

Stop by Seamen's Church Institute soon to take a look. The exhibit is expected to move on in early September.

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BEHAN FAMILY MEMORIES

by Julianne Behan Kelly

Growing up on the Point in the 50s, I enjoyed what we now refer to as a “free range” childhood. Free range means that in days gone by, children were given quite a bit of freedom to wander, explore, and even roam the streets of their neighborhoods. There were boundaries, of course, with Hunters Playground extending my own backyard to the east and Van Zandt Pier to the west. It was a magical place to roam, especially for the youngest (by 14 years!) child of George and Gwen Behan. Quite shy as a youngster, for me spending time by myself was a habit. It was interrupted by visits from my cousin, Carol Beekman, who was only 6 weeks younger than I. Either alone or with companions, I delighted in my special place.

I attended Saint Joseph’s School, at Washington Square, and in 5th grade a large enrollment forced the school day to be split into two sessions. My session began at 12:30, giving me weekday mornings all to myself! I remember walking down to the Pier, bucket in hand, to collect periwinkles and catch crabs. To catch larger crabs, I followed by mother’s instruction. I would crack open a mussel, tie a string to its broken shell and using this bait, “fish” for crabs that were too scary for fingers alone! Waiting for one to slide out from under a rock, I would find and latch it onto my bait, and then slowly hoist it successfully out and into my bucket. It was a thrill! After a quick trip back up the street to show off my catch, I would return to release them for another day. I remember my mother telling me how she and her siblings (more free range youth) would gather mussels and cook them in a tin can over a small fire they would build on the beach. I was fascinated and amazed. (I still am.) It seemed so exotic, like a scene from *The Box Car Children*, my favorite book.

On the hot days of September when the school day was over at 5:30 PM, my mother would walk me, after dinner, down the street so I could cool off in the Bay, jumping off the raft that was anchored to the pier. I learned to swim at the Van Zandt Pier, as she did at the Elm Street Pier. These were simpler times for sure; the Point was a working to middle class neighborhood by and large. Mostly there were stay-at-home moms and

one bread winner- my father. But my mother could indulge me in the wealth of where we lived by taking me for an evening swim at the pier after a day at the beach!

In the summer, Hunter Playground offered programs for neighborhood children. I can remember Crazy Hat Day and Pet Contests. I usually had a dog to bring along (not usually a prize winner) but one summer there were no discernable pets. I won the contest with a Praying Mantis, while my cousin entered a box of tiny hoppy toads collected from my mother’s garden.

I learned about environmental disasters on the Point. An oil tanker had grounded, spilling thousands of gallons of crude oil into the harbor. Carol, and her brother, Russell, came over to see the thick swells coming into shore. This was well before the Newport Bridge, and at the end of Washington Street, where it met the Naval Base, we found a seagull covered in oil. Somehow the three of us managed to secure the bird without losing an eye among us. Bringing it to the house on Third Street, it was a quick trip in my father’s Public Works vehicle to my cousins’ Champlin Place address. I guess my aunt, with her brood of five children, seemed to us a more accommodating shelter for the wounded seagull, and maybe my aunt wouldn’t notice. She did. Whether Animal Rescue or the Bird Sanctuary interceded, I have no recall. That image of thick, thick black, oily swells and one confused seabird has never been forgotten.

Learning about the seasons and the natural environment was part of growing up on the Point. My mother was a great friend of the sisters at the Cenacle, and each September, she would get permission for me and a cousin or two, to collect chestnuts from the huge trees on their property. We came home with grocery bags full of beautiful, shiny, mahogany-colored treasure. In wintertime, a good snowfall would turn Hunters Playground, in my imagination’s eye, into an Artic landscape, where I, with my trusty sled dog, Peppi, (of short haired hound extraction) could trudge through mounds of snow and drifts, hoping to make our way back to base camp through the blinding blizzard!

Ah, growing up on the point was GREAT for the imagination!!

EARTH DAY by Mary Shean

On Saturday, April 23rd, in celebration of Earth Day, volunteers from the Point Association, in conjunction with the City of Newport, hosted a neighborhood cleanup. Despite a wet start, we were pleased with the turnout of about 18 volunteers. The volunteers cleaned up Battery, Storer and Arnold Parks, as well as the driftways. After the winter, it was a fun event in which we caught up with our neighbors!



Tom Tobin, Bill McKay, Ron Barr, Bill Martin, Ann Souter, Beth O'Shea, Mary Shean, Tom Hockaday



Mary Shean, John Ward, Pam Kelley, Nancy Scott Barr



Nancy Abbinanti, Casey Farley, Larry Farley

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WHERE IS THE BEAVERTAIL LIGHT? by Ed Madden

A pleasant drive on a warm summer's day over the Newport/Jamestown Bridge and then heading south on Jamestown Island (or should I say Conanicut?) brings you to the southern terminus of the island. There you will find a sign welcoming you to Beavertail Lighthouse and beyond this the Atlantic Ocean. An overhead view of this topography might suggest the appearance of a beaver with its tail pointing towards Europe? But as a certain professional football coach from New England has surmised: "It is what it is."

Be that as it may, a leisurely walk around the Beavertail State Park with the bracing ocean breeze and the stunning views of Newport Harbor and its many seagoing craft can help take all your cares away.

Within the state park is the 3rd oldest lighthouse in America – Beavertail Lighthouse – dating back to 1749. It was originally of wood and stone construction. In 1779 during the Revolutionary War, the British burned the structure and removed the lighting beacon. In 1783, Congress appropriated the funds to rebuild the lighthouse and it lasted until 1856, when its deteriorating condition led to its replacement. At that time, a 4 sided square granite tower was constructed extending 64 feet above sea level. The precisely cut and crafted granite stone, fixed to a solid foundation has been a rock solid edifice ever since, withstanding the onslaught of the 1938 hurricane. A 4th order Fresnel lens flashed a green light 8 times per minute visible far out to sea. The Coast Guard determined that the light was unnecessary and it was darkened in 1971.

The light tower is attached to the light keeper's house. There are a total of 5 buildings embracing the tower. A museum is housed in the larger buildings and is well worth exploring. There are models on view of every lighthouse in R.I. as well as local crafts and memorabilia in the gift shop.

The role of lighthouse keeper and family, which in by-gone days was a crucial presence to the safety of men who go down to the sea in ships is now just a memory of times gone by. The lighthouses which still have a vital function in preserving safety on the water are now mostly automated and devoid of full time human habitation.

For those of you with a flair for adventure and treasure seeking, there is the tale of Captain William Kidd—the pirate and privateer—who reportedly buried much of his ill-gotten loot in the area of Newport Harbor and Narragansett Bay never to be found again. He was captured in Boston and transported to London where he dangled on the end of an executioner's rope without revealing the whereabouts of his treasure.

Do you think it is worthwhile getting out your metal detector and shovel for an afternoon of exercise? I'll bring my shovel and help you should you find pay dirt! Cheers.

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A Note to All Members by Robin Gardner

A decade ago the annual individual membership fee was changed from \$7.00 to \$10.00. Ten years later, with costs ever increasing, this fee no longer covers our basic costs, including the printing and mailing of the popular Green Light. At the same time some have complained about the confusing fee structure that has evolved over time.

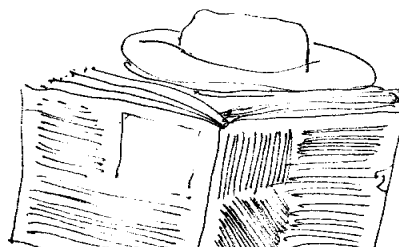
As a result, your Board reviewed the situation and has approved a simplified fee structure with nominal increases. Effective July 1st, the new structure will be as follows:

Individual member:	\$15.00
Family membership: (Up to 3 members in one household)	\$25.00
Patron:	\$40.00

Your future renewal invoices will reflect this simplified structure. We are particularly grateful that so many of you have already adopted the Patron level of membership. In reality, it is these extra funds provided by the Patron membership that allow the board and our many volunteers to work on the various projects that enhance our neighborhood. This includes the continual beautification of our parks and maintenance of driftways and other public areas within the Point. Other activities feature working with city officials on signifi-

cant issues, most importantly, the protection of our private and public properties, as well as the safety of all residents and visitors to our neighborhood. With this in mind, we hope those who have joined as Individual, Family or Subscriber members would consider moving to the Patron category on your next renewal.

We appreciate you being an important part of our Association, and hope you will enjoy our planned community activities in the summer months ahead.



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**Patron level supports The Point Association's continued efforts to beautify and protect our special neighborhood.*

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Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Primary Email: _____

POINT COMMITTEES & ACTIVITIES

Many hands make light work. Please check your volunteer interests.

___ Beautification ___ Waterfront ___ The Green Light ___ Plant Sale ___ Communications
___ Membership ___ Event Planning ___ History & Archives ___ Public Services

Thank You !

JOHN J. MARTINS MEMORIAL PARK by Peter Martin

As you drive south along Washington Street, you will see a construction project underway at the John J. Martins Memorial Park that is located just past the Van Zandt Avenue Pier. The 2015 winter edition of the *Green Light* had three photos of the park area showing the seawall of the park area with a title “MARTIN’S PARK WALL GETS A FACE LIFT”. I decided to do a bit of research to learn about the origins of this park, which honors one of my childhood friends. I contacted Newport’s historian, Patrick Murphy, who supplied me with the background information.

I learned that the park was dedicated on November 8, 1987 in honor of Newport native John J. “Jack” Martins, who was the owner/proprietor of his family’s liquor store at the corner of Third and Walnut Streets for over 20 years. The *Newport Daily News* published an article about the dedication ceremony the following day. Its article mentions that about 100 friends and relatives attended the dedication ceremony during which “Jack” was recognized for establishing the annual Point Cleanup Drive to eliminate litter and debris in the area. “He used to reward the participants with refreshments, games and prizes at a post-cleanup party he held in Hunter Park.” It continues, “In preparing the area, the City of Newport Recreation and Public Services department had removed a chain link fence that had been installed along the sidewalk. They installed the fence along the seawall in order to turn the area into a waterfront park”.

The *Green Light* published an article about the park in its December 1987 issue:

“Newport has a new park - its 35th - as of Sunday, Nov. 8th when the John J. Martins Memorial Park was dedicated. It is a small area bordering on Washington Street and overlooking the Bay, a spot which Jack loved and where he often walked.

Benches for the park were donated by the Friends of Jack Martins and the Point Association; landscaping was done by the city, and more will be done in the Spring.

Over 100 people were present and heard talks by William Gurney (City Director of Recreational and Public Services), Councilman Jack Crowley, Brian Burns (representing the Friends of Jack Martins) and Pete Peters of The Point Association.

A City Council proclamation was presented to the Martins family and Patricia Silveria (Jack’s Sister) spoke on behalf of the family.

The speakers emphasized Jack’s significant contributions to his neighborhood, his caring work with children, his desire to preserve the environment, and, above all, his love for family, friends and neighbors.

Although Jack died almost a year ago, his presence was very much felt by those who attended the ceremony. We are sure that his memory will long be preserved by the John J. Martins Memorial Park.
Virginia Covell”

So who was “Jack” Martins?

Jack was born in the Fifth Ward. His parents were Manuel and Margaret [O’Brien] Martins. He attended St. Augustin’s grammar school and went on to be a member of the class of 1956 at De La Salle Academy where he was a “three-letter” athlete. He was the captain of the high school’s basketball team.

Following his education, Jack migrated to the Point to run his family business thereby covering both “ends” of the community.

- i. <http://thepointassociation.org/resources/GreenLight/2015-Winter.pdf>
- ii. *Newport Daily News* – November 9, 1987.
- iii. <http://thepointassociation.org/resources/GreenLight/1987-December.pdf>

Author’s Note:

It was Terry Burns not Brian Burns who spoke on this occasion.

THE POINT'S LIBERTY TREE AND POLE by Dave Moore

The citizens of Newport were incensed at the British Parliament's passage of the Stamp Act on March 22, 1765. This act required the colonists to pay a tax on every piece of printed paper they used, such as legal documents, licenses, ships' papers, newspapers, other publications, and even playing cards. If this new tax was allowed to pass without resistance, the colonists reasoned, the door would be open for more troublesome taxation in the future. We know that King George was a little loony, as it was his idea to raise money from the Stamp Act to help pay the costs of defending and protecting the American frontier near the Appalachian Mountains with 10,000 troops. (This seems similar to the contemporary loony idea of building a wall all along the Mexican border.)

In 1764, a young lawyer, Augustus Johnson, a loyalist to the crown, accepted the office of Stamp Master. This was so odious to the people that he was always insulted when seen in public. In August, effigies of three loyalists, Johnson, Dr. Thomas Moffat, and Martin Howard, Jr., were drawn through the streets and hung on a gallows in front of the court house. The effigies were burned and the mock funeral seemed to end peacefully. That night, however, the leaders of the Stamp Act Resistance incited the mob into further action by offering the rioters "strong Drink in plenty with Cheshire Cheese." The cheese was a good choice and so popular the Royal Navy ordered it stocked aboard its ships. The leaders, mostly William Ellery, Robert Crook, and Samuel Vernon, all owned slaves, "talk about liberty!"

Sailors, slaves, and free blacks made up most of the enraged and desperate mob that went to the homes of Moffat and Howard. There they completely destroyed books, furniture, walls, dining ware, and even wine cellars. The three sought protection on board the sloop of war *Cygnet* in the harbor. A plan was formed for the capture of the *Cygnet* and the fugitives. If the plan was carried out, Newport would have won the distinction

of being the first to say they heard "the shot that was heard around the world." This might have brought on the beginning of the Revolution. Fortunately, harmony was restored and the war was delayed for four years.



In the early morning hours, some of the diehard mob returned to Howard's house and, finding nothing left to destroy, cut down the locust trees in his front yard. Once cut, the trunks were jammed into the barrels of two large guns overlooking the harbor – something they may have regretted when the war started.

On November 5th a riot was feared on Gun Powder Treason night (Guy Fawkes Night). The citizens were still inflamed, and this was a night known for festivity and the burning of popular hate figure effigies, but the occasion passed quietly. During the year, however, the citizens tried to discourage the importation of European manufactures. Many wealthy gentry of the city were determined to wear only clothing manufactured in this country which kept the spinning wheels busy.

In the spring of 1776, the news arrived of the repeal of the hated Stamp Act. It was decided to dedicate a special Liberty Tree as other cities had done. Citizen William Read, a Son of Liberty, "donated" a triangular piece of property so the tree could forever "stand as a monument of the spirited and noble opposition to the Stamp Act." It was a "Large Button Wood Tree" dominating the corner of Farewell and Thames Street. Read was not the most gracious of givers, as he accepted a small price of five shillings from each of his four friends on the deed. His ego also made him publish the deed in the *Newport Mercury* so that the town's citizens could witness his patriotic spirit to the cause of liberty.

The people of Newport were now in the mood to celebrate. Flags were flown from the Liberty Tree and on

top of the Liberty Pole (a tall mast) at Fort George on Goat Island. Ships in the harbor also displayed colors, bells were rung, canons were fired, and in the evening rockets were sent up at both the Liberty Tree and Pole. "Open house" parties with ample grog and cheese were held everywhere.

The Liberty Tree remained a gathering point during the decade up to the Revolutionary War. The Sons of Liberty celebrated the repeal of the Stamp Act at the tree every March 18 until the British occupied Newport in December 1776. The local tree became such an icon for the independence movement that it was ordered to be cut down by British General Thomas Gage.

Historically, the Newport Sons of Liberty were not the first group to sanctify the space around the tall Tree. The seaport's African population was already having annual celebrations, commonly called the "black elections" at that space as early as 1755. These ceremonies allowed the Africans to celebrate, share stories, engage in feats of strength, and elect a black "king" or governor. Elections were important to them because they could see the pride and honor which their masters felt and the power of holding office. One commentator described the 18th century Africans as "creatures of mimic and imitation."

With the war over, the departure of the British and the signing of the Treaty of Paris, Newport residents celebrated by planting an oak tree at the site in 1783. This became the second Liberty Tree. It flourished until the early 1860s. A new oak was planted in 1876 but died just 21 years later. The fourth Liberty Tree, planted in 1897, was a leaf beech tree and is still thriving today. It was hoped it would live a long life and that Liberty would also. The tree was rededicated in 1919, when Henrietta C. Ellery deeded the property and gave the tree to the city. It is now called William Ellery Park.

Ref.:

Andrews, Edward E., *Creatures of Mimic and Imitation*, Providence College History Department Faculty Publications, Fall 2007.
New England Magazine, volume XI, number 1, September 1894.
 Newport Historical Society, *History Bytes: Newport's Liberty Tree*, March 18, 2016.

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From our archives *Another View of The Green Light* by Tom Kennedy 2013