

The GREEN LIGHT

BULLETIN OF THE POINT ASSOCIATION
OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND



Welcoming Garden at St. John's Church During the Secret Garden Tour

The GREEN LIGHT

LXIII No. 2

SUMMER 2019

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Point Association Board Meetings are open to all
Association members.



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.



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The recently completed survey on Point Association communication indicated that the keeping of the history of the Point is one of the most important functions of *The Green Light*. Started in 1957, this journal is sixty-two years old. Think of that. It is older than the Pell Bridge by 12 years.

I am dedicated to continuing to document our history. With this issue people twenty years from now can read of our early efforts to combat flooding at Storer Park, of how our spirit showed during the Patriotic Point celebration and how our community's continuous "doing for others" was recognized by the Martin Luther King Center with the Keeper of the Dream award.

The PA Board is responsible for *all* the Point publications. However, in order to shepherd the actual publication of quarterly issues of *The Green Light*, I've asked Pam Kelley, author of the *Points of Interest* e-letter, as well as Joy Scott with her publishing expertise, to advise me in the production of our booklet.

Now, dear reader, may I ask *your* participation in the making of our beloved publication? Are there some "Brenda Starr - Girl Reporters" out there who would relish covering a Point Association cocktail party? Perhaps a mild mannered reporter (or even a brusque one) who has an idea for an article on a Point-centric topic? Anyone have graphic design skills to share? I am also hopeful there is an individual amongst us who is interested in being an Editor-in-Training. Best for The Greenlight to have a successor in the wings

See you around the 'hood. Ann McMahon
Greenlight@thepointassociation.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors,

Last month I had the honor and privilege of joining twenty neighbors from the Point at the Dr. Martin Luther King Community Center, for the Point Association to receive the Center's *Keeper of the Dream* award. This award is given to a person or organization that embodies the spirit of Dr. King.

It was an exciting and heartwarming event as we learned more about the work of the Center and how staff and volunteers have worked to assist so many people in our community. We are honored that our neighborhood was given this prize.

As I listened to the presentation about the work done by the MLK Center I could not help but reflect on the word "community", and how that description so greatly reflects our neighborhood. The Point is more than a neighborhood – it is indeed a community of neighbors and residents that work hard to make our home a very special place. We care for our neighborhood and for our city, and work to ensure that we have a great quality of life.



When walking the neighborhood, you can always see friends and neighbors who stop to say hello, share a story, talk about a garden, or just to wish you a great day. We are in many ways like a large family – and that is what makes the Point very special.

The MLK Center award embodies who we are and what we do. Center Director Heather Houle Strout said it right when she stated "... you are more than a neighborhood association, you are a community of friends who care about this special place we call home".

As you are enjoying this summer I hope you will join in many of our seasonal activities - showing the flag and participating in the "Patriotic Point"; joining one of the Block Parties; attending our Villa Marina cocktail party or enjoying a picnic at one of the *Music on the Lawn* concerts at St. Johns church. While chatting with neighbors and friends – I encourage you to pause and reflect on what a special place this is.

As always, thanks for all you do for our special neighborhood. We look forward to seeing you at our activities and events this summer!

Warmest regards,

Tom Hochaday

PA Receives the *Keeper of the Dream* Award from the MLK

By Pam Kelley, Ann McMahon

Take a bow if you are one of the generous Point residents who donated to the Point's Charitable Campaign in past years. The Martin Luther King Community Center awarded the Point Association its highest honor as *Keeper of the Dream* at a celebration held at its annual meeting on Monday, June 17, 2019. Through the Point Association, members donated \$47,576 over the last five years.

The prize is a handcrafted glass anchor symbolizing the anchor on our RI flag and the State's motto of Hope. In presenting the award Heather Houle Strout, Executive Director, indicated that the MLK Center can offer hope because community "anchors" like the Point Association stand with them. Ms. Strout went on to explain the rationale when designating a *Keeper of the Dream*, "We look for people who live by Dr. King's most persistent and urgent' question: ...What are you doing for others?"

She credited Point Association members who donate food and toys, volunteer over holidays, and help at Santa's Workshop. "They come to our events and they introduce us to new residents in their neighborhood. They are the very best kind of neighbors who care about each other and about those who live nearby and across the community. We're so incredibly grateful they've embraced the MLK".

The warm bond between her organization and the PA began in earnest when member John Broughan came in to make a donation several years ago. John and Winnie Broughan as well as Beth Cullen deserve recognition for their inspiration and leadership in launching the PA fundraising drive five years ago.

The Point Charitable Fund has been set up to grow and manage outreach and charitable efforts. Through this fund \$63,754 has been donated to over 18 organizations since 2010.

John Broughan, Betsy Blair, Bill Hogan and Kevin Kelley oversee the fund with Bill Rauch as Treasurer. With their help and yours, we can continue to



Group Photo by Kate Whitney Lucey Photography

More photos: <https://thepointassociation.org/gallery/keeper-of-the-dream-award/>

make a positive difference in our environment, our neighborhood and our community.

The PA also received Citations from US Senators Sheldon Whitehouse and Jack Reed, State Treasurer Seth Magaziner, Rhode Island Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello and a Proclamation from the Newport City Council.

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Newcomers' Coffee

by Betsy Blair

What better place to meet-and-greet than Belle's Café at the Newport Shipyard? The Newcomers' Coffee was hosted on a rather chilly May morning by Betsy Blair. A relatively new member herself, Betsy greeted a mix of "old hands" on the Point as well as brand new members. Originally the brainchild of Cynthia Lafferty, the coffee and conversation event was revived this summer by Ms. Blair and membership committee head Gail Thatcher. It is an opportunity for newcomers to the Point to meet their neighbors and learn about the Point Association. As if lively chatter and the beauty of the setting wasn't enough, the group had the pleasure of a short tour of the houses on Bridge Street guided by Tom Hockaday and escorted around St. John's Church by Bill Martin. Old and new members will have another opportunity to attend the next Newcomers' Coffee at 10:00 AM on August 20 at Belle's. The rain date is August 28.



Newcomer's group Attendees: L to R: Pam Kelley, Ken Snyder, Bill Martin, Betsy Blair, Cynthia Lafferty, Gail Thatcher, Marie Samuels, Maggie Thomas, Tom Hockaday, Nina Novak and Charles Howard (back to camera).

**AD RATES:
4 issues**

**1/8 page \$100/yr
1/4 page \$180/yr**

Call: Bill Rauch 401-835-8313

The Point Association welcomes the following new members.

Jennifer Arnold	Second Street
Betsy Blair	Bridge Street
Elke Browning	Maitland Court
Randy Browning	Maitland Court
Kenneth Castiglia	Willow Street
Peg Cavaliere	Washington Street
Lisa Conners	The Point
Michael Fisher	Second Street
Richard Fisher	Second Street
Leigh Gallagher	Washington Street
Gary Gillis	LaSalle Place
Lisa Gillis	LaSalle Place
Mike Mahoney	Poplar Street
Courtney Senini	Poplar Street
Nina Novak	The Point
Peter Rugg	Pine Street



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The PA Approves New By-Laws at Spring Membership Meeting

by Tom Kennedy

Members and guests began assembling around 6:30 PM. on May 7 at St. John's Guild Hall, enjoying early refreshments and good conversation. On the seats were an Agenda, an explanation of the Point Association (PA) Charitable Fund containing a Mission Statement and a list of organizations to which the Point Association has donated funds. There was also a Summary of Proposed Changes to the Point Association By-Laws, which were to be voted on during the meeting.

Tom Hockaday, President, opened the meeting around 7:00 PM. He welcomed the members and guests and asked for a round of applause for Pam Kelley who does an excellent job of keeping members informed. Mayor of Newport, Jamie Bova, and Ward 1 representative Angela McCalla, were introduced. Tom spoke about the accomplishments of the Association in 2018, and recognized many of those responsible for them. He also took some time to explain the more formally organized "Charitable Fund" and its purpose.

Reports from Committee Chairs included Bill Rauch's Treasurer's report. He pointed out that the plant sale raised a whopping 38% of the Association's income. He stressed the significance of the formally organized Charitable Fund. Membership Chair Gail Thatcher told that the PA had 323 active accounts, representing 540 individuals. Maureen Cronin gave the Beautification Committee report. She shared the details of the Plant Sale, a call for volunteers, and a request for donations of plants and garden items. She reported on a positive recent meeting with city representatives regarding the Storer Park storm drain and pier restoration projects.

Mark Marosits, Communication, indicated that the Point Communication Survey had been "live" for two weeks, with 140 responses received. The survey was promoted via postal mail, email and Next Door postings. The results will be analyzed to guide the PA in developing a comprehensive communication plan.

Pam Kelley and Nancy Scott led the discussion on the proposed changes in the By-Laws. It was noted that the current by-laws were 64 years old, placing them long before the arrival of the Internet and many other social changes. The changes would make them more responsive to the needs of the present constituency.



Questions and comments were taken from the assembled membership. Some of the discussion dealt with the change in term limits for officers, the possible use of digital communication at Board meetings, the fate of the printed version of *The Green Light*, and a change in the number of officers needed for a quorum at Board meetings. In the end, the changes were overwhelmingly approved by a show of hands.

Special thanks for this meeting go to volunteers Joy Scott, (event coordinator), Ian Scott (food), Gail Thatcher (reception desk), Jim Marinan (greeter), Barbara Hogan, (clean up) and Bill Hogan, (bartender).

Nina Lynette

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NEIGHBORS SHARE VIEWS ON POINT COMMUNICATION

by Mark Marosits

The Point Communication Survey asked residents for their thoughts about the quality and effectiveness of the communication media with which they engage. A diverse mix of 140 neighbors responded, including full-time residents, part-time residents, Association and non-Association members. Responses were largely consistent and always insightful. Some key findings:

Points of Interest e-news and *The Green Light* are preferred communication channels, followed by *Next Door* and postal mail. A significant percentage of respondents indicate an interest in more use of social media by the Association.

Content in the Point's current communication channels is highly rated. Many respondents note that some modernization of design would be welcome, and that the timeliness and role of each channel should be evaluated.

The types of content in which respondents are most

Music on the Lawn is Back Better than Ever

by Nancy Scott

Do you like live music on starry summer nights, good food and drink, conversations with friends and neighbors and sunset over the Newport Bridge? Then the summer series Music on the Lawn is for you. See the list of performers in: **SAVE THE DATE** Page 15

Your Point Association is once again the overall sponsor for the concert series.

Remember, all concerts are FREE and open to all. 6:00-8:30 pm. Food trucks are Castaway Gourmet and Rhody Roots. Beverages will be available for purchase. There will be a 50/50 raffle at each concert to help support the series. Hope to see you there!



POINT NEIGHBORS!
Don't Miss Out! Share your Opinions
AND Have Some Fun.

**Take the Point
Association Survey!**

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MAY 25, 2019
POINT ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL PLANT SALE
8 AM TO 12 PM
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AND GARDEN ITEMS

JULY 1-7, 2019
PATRIOTIC POINT
CELEBRATION.
SHOW THE FLAG!

JULY 13, 2019
POINT ASSOCIATION
NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK
PARTIES 4 PM TO 8 PM

interested are issues and actions that affect quality of life on the Point, Point history, and Point events. The Point Association Communication Committee is using the survey to make recommendations about the future of Point communication. These will include proposed updates to Points of Interest e-news, the Green Light and the Association website and options for use of social media. Recommendations will also be made regarding editorial direction and publication schedules.

All Point communication is managed by neighborhood volunteers. Sourcing content, writing, editing and managing distribution takes a great deal of time. Anyone interested in volunteering to assist with Point communication should contact Communication Committee co-chairs Mark Marosits mmarosits@e-worldways.com or Maureen Cronin mcronin@e-worldways.com to see where help is needed.



Keeping the Point Beautiful

by Maureen Cronin

It's the hardest working Committee in Newport. Tasked by the Point Association with "The beautification of approaches, streets, properties, waterfront and other areas of the Point", the Beautification Committee requires a lot of hard work from a lot of people. The good news is that the efforts of the volunteers can be seen all over our neighborhood. As soon as the incessant rain finally stopped this spring, the group started the clean up of the parks and driftways.



*Kneeling: Bill Martin, Susan Powers, Louisa Boatwright,
Standing: Maureen Cronin, Sheila Desrochers,
Mary Shean, Kathy Ward*

*Back row: John Ward, Beth O'Shea, Tom Hockaday, Mark
Marosits, Larry Farley, John Powers, Nancy Abbinanti.*

Volunteer Not pictured Richard Abbinanti.

Beautification Committee Members

Mark Marosits	Nancy Scott	Larry Farley
Kathy Ward	Barbara Bessette	Mary Shean
Maureen Cronin	Joan Rauch	Casey Farley
Rich Abbinanti	Trudy Conroy	John Ward
Nancy Abbinanti	Mike Conroy	Beth O'Shea
Lisa Stuart	Susie Powers	Kitty Beard
Marlene Schinto		



A Blooming Good Plant Sale

by Maureen Cronin

The annual Point Association Plant Sale is one of the Association's most significant fundraising events. This year a near-record \$3,560 was raised to support beautification of the Point, and for the Association's charitable activities. The day was warm, sunny and crowded. Tireless volunteers helped a nonstop crowd of eager shoppers.

There was an abundance of plants and garden items for sale. Many of those at the sale commented on the great selection and quality of plants. Beautification Committee volunteers outdid themselves in collecting and readying plants for sale. Plants were generously donated from neighborhood gardens, the Blue Garden, the Preservation Society, Green Animals Topiary Gardens, Justin McLaughlin's dahlia collection, and more.

Special thanks go to the members of the Point Association Beautification Committee and the many others who make the Point Association Plant Sale possible. In addition to the Committee members listed, thanks also go to Father Nathan Humphrey and the St. John's team; Tom Hockaday and Bill Martin for their donation of the raffle basket; Bill Rauch Treasurer; and Mac Cullen for customer service on checkout. To join the fun on the Beautification Committee, contact co-chairs Maureen Cronin mcronin@e-worldways.co or Mark Marosits mmarosits@e-worldways.com



Master Gardeners Show Their Stuff

by Ann McMahon

Of the six Master Gardeners participating in the *Gardening with the Masters Tour* on Aquidneck Island, Newport was fortunate to have five of them, three of them right here on the Point. It was a statewide garden tour sponsored by the URI Cooperative Extension that took place on June 29 and 30, 2019. Information on taking a course for Master Gardener certification or to attend less intensive classes, visit: <https://web.uri.edu/mastergardener/gardening-resources/> There is a wealth of information for every level gardener on that site.



Carol Nagle 63 Cherry St
Casey Farley 14 Poplar St
Susan Powers 29 Second St
Johanna Becker 180 RI Ave
Michelle Walker 70 Ellery Rd



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A black and white photo of a woman wearing a beret and a light-colored jacket, holding a small white dog. The background shows a beach and ocean.

Not Just Another Pretty Garden

by Ann McMahon

Our neighborhood loves The Secret Garden Tour this when those who know gardens make a trek to see what is new and wonderful in the lovingly tended Point gardens. It should not be lost on the many visitors that the proceeds for this event go to a very worthy cause. *The Benefactors for the Arts* use the funds raised to support artistic endeavors in all the public schools on Aquidneck Island. Money is available for projects in art, music, theatre and other cultural programming. For more information, go to



<https://www.secretgardentours.org/> for an application for funding for a special project or write to Benefactors of the Arts, P.O. Box 742, Newport, RI 02840.



Trudy Conroy in her garden on Second Street.

The Patriotic Point

Once again our community is glorious with red, white and blue bunting and flags of every size. Here are some of the homes displaying their pride. Our website has more photos of the patriotic display. Perhaps there is a photo of your house here? Find out at: <https://thepointassociation.org/gallery/patriotic-point-2019/>



Patriotic Point

Show the colors

The Point Association urges all homes to fly the flag the week of July 4th.



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Construction in Storer Park

by Isabel Griffith

“All of a sudden, there it was.”

It began with colorful plastic fencing snaking through the park, between trees carefully wrapped with wooden strips around their trunks. For a while it looked like a “sculpture event” in Central Park. Then came the heavy equipment, slabs of steel, four-foot diameter pipes and all the rest. Now Storer Park looks like a serious construction site.

What’s Going On?

The installation of an outfall tide gate on the 48-inch Bridge Street storm drain began in May. The tide gate will permit water to flow in one direction only, so tidewater will be prevented from flowing into the storm water system while outfall will be into Newport Harbor. The city received a Bay and Restoration Grant from the state Department of Environmental Management for \$425,000. The city’s Water Pollution Fund will cover the remainder of the approximately \$760,000 cost of construction.

Why?

In 2015, CH2M Hill of Boston, an engineering firm, conducted a drainage investigation and flood analysis of two areas in the city prone to flooding: the low-lying area around Bridge Street and the city’s shoreline at Wellington Avenue. On average, almost 70 flooding events a year occur in the Bridge and Marsh streets area of the Point Neighborhood. CH2M Hill recommended installation of tide gates to help mitigate the flooding.

Outreach by City to Point Residents

On April 9, the Newport Department of Utilities held a workshop in City Council Chambers for Point residents about the tide gate project. (Thank you, Point Association!) In answer to the question, “Will this work?” Julia Forgue, director of the Department of Utilities, explained that tide gates are being installed routinely throughout the country and they are proving successful in controlling the kind of tidal flooding we experience in Newport.

Site Restoration

What will you see when the work is completed? Near the center of the park there will be a 5’x 5’4” aluminum hatch embedded in a 5’8” x 6’6” concrete access

structure.

At each end and close to the access structure will be a 24” manhole cover and a 6” valve cover. All of these will be flush with the grade so you will see them but are not likely to trip over them. Because the tide gate must be cleaned periodically, the grass surface surrounding the access structure will be a “grass paving system” able to withstand heavy vehicular traffic. This is *real* grass growing on top of a load support grid. Replacement sidewalks will be made of pre-cast, porous, concrete panels. NOTE: Most of the sidewalks will remain as they were before the construction.

And Then What?

As soon as possible after the tide gate construction is complete the city will begin RESTORATION OF THE STORER PARK SEAWALLS; HOORAY!



Down to Earth Approach to Storer Park

by Ann McMahon

Throw, throw, throw your change
Gaily in a jar - - - -
Pennies, nickels, quarters, dimes
All help Storer Par - - - - k.

The jingle above was used by the Point Association to raise money to purchase Storer Park from the Redevelopment Authority in the early 1970s. *The Green Light* in 1973 reported an accumulation of \$31,000 from pledges, donations, and Point Association activities and savings. In September of 1973, Storer Park was formally donated by the Point Association to the City of Newport at the Annual Picnic.

The Point residents continue to protect their beloved open spaces. Officers from our current PA are working with the City to be sure that the Park is returned to its former beauty after the construction of the very much needed flood gate. Credit also goes to Julia Forque, Director of Utilities for the City of Newport. She ran an informational workshop at the start of the project and provides weekly updates on its progress.

The following is an article from *The Green Light* of August 1981 and re-caps the history of Storer Park:

“Perhaps our best-known park is Storer Park. Agnes Storer was, in 1939, the guiding force behind the initial, though ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to create a park

on that site. The park is actually composed of three lots; of which two were transferred by deeds dated August 15, 1972. The smaller, the front right corner, if you will, if one were looking at the park from Washington Street, was given by the Preservation Society; and the larger, which makes up more than 80% of the park, was donated by the Point Association. The third parcel was bought by the City in 1969 and is little more than the north face of the wharf on which is the Goat Island Causeway. The deed to that parcel contains no restrictions concerning park use.

The two main lots, however, “shall be used and maintained solely for park and recreational purposes and...no buildings shall be erected thereon.” This stipulation has generally barred commercial enterprises from the park. ...

Henry Eccles, president of the Point Association at that time, offered his thoughts on the park:

“Storer Park is both a symbol and a challenge. It is a symbol of what can be accomplished by constructive neighborhood and community cooperation. It is a symbol of people of all sorts who can work with other people, with every person having an opportunity to contribute in accordance with his capacity, in order that all may benefit. It is a challenge to the neighborhood and the community to overcome neglect, suspicion and hatred; human decency and love for fellow human beings is enduring.”

True then; True today.



Look No Further

by Lisa Stuart

Interested in learning more about your house? Or seeing photos of the Point from the 1800s? Would you like to hear about what the Point was like in the fifties from people who lived here then? Well, look no further. The History and Archive Committee has been working for the past five years on digitizing our archives and adding information and resources to our Point Association website.

From our website you can read and/or search every issue of *The Green Light* since it's first issue was published in 1957. If you'd like to see if your house is mentioned simply put your address and/or house name in the "search" box and all the articles that mention your house will appear. Curious about the history of Battery Park/Fort Green? A search will reveal an interesting and detailed article by Louise Sherman. Do you wonder who King Covell was? A search will lead you to many articles about this bigger-than-life person who owned Villa Marina. Looking for a good recipe for quahog dip or advice on what herbs to plant when? A search will reveal advice from Point "Hummers".

You can also click on the link to our Flickr Pro account which contains thousands of digitized photos from our archives including photos of houses, people, maps and many other topics. In addition to the Point Association's photos, the History and Archives Committee has gathered photos of our neighborhood from many other sources—including families who lived/live on the Point, The Providence Public Library and The Olmstead Company.

There is also information concerning the history of the Point such as Operation Clapboard and has oral histories conducted recently as well as some going back to the 1980s and 1990s.

So you want to know more about something here on the Point? Look no further—the Point Association's website holds the answer.

*To get started, choose "The Green Light" from the "Our Neighborhood" on the top menu or click here: <https://thepointassociation.org/the-green-light/>
Look for the blue search icon a third of the way down the page. It is a little hard to see the search box to its left. Ed.



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The Creative Point: Now a Fourth Generations of Famous Stone Carvers

by Lisa Stuart, Curator. Ann McMahon Text

When John Howard Benson purchased the John Stevens Shop at 29 Thames Street in 1927, John Stevens, with his sons and grandson had already engaged in various forms of skilled stone work at this site since 1705. Benson, his son and grandson continued the tradition making the Thames Street shop the oldest in this country engaged in the same work at the same location.

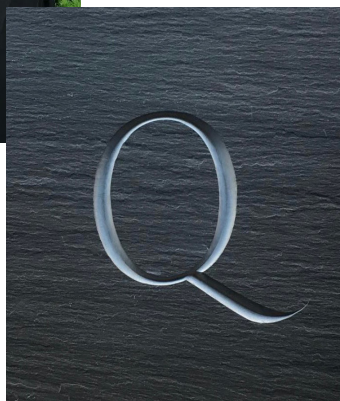
John Howard's son John Everett "Fud" Benson now co-owns the Stevens Shop with his son, 2010 MacArthur Fellow Nicholas "Nick" Waite Benson.. Among the many achievements by this family include the carvings on the John F. Kennedy Memorial in Arlington Cemetery and the National World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington D.C.

Nick's young daughter Hope Benson is trying her hand at the family business. From the looks of her carving below, we may have a fourth generation of legendary Benson stone carvers in the neighborhood.

Below top: John "Fud" Everett Benson and Nick Benson.

Below - Hope Benson and an example of her carving.

Right - an original font "Alphabet" by Nick.



Save the Dates

Music on the Lawn – St. John the Evangelist Church Yard: 6:00 to 8:30 PM

July 18 - The Strattones. (South County Band)

August 1 - Doug Woolverton and the Groove Merchants

August 8 - Aztec Two Step featuring Rex Fowler and Friends

August 15 - Mike Warner and the Ubiquitones (regulars at the FastNet)

August 29 - Max O'Hara. (from Liverpool, England)

September 5 - RI Sound, from the Navy Band Northeast, Navy War College

August 20, 2019. 10:00 AM: Newcomers' Coffee Hour at Belle's Café at Newport Shipyard

August 22, 2019. 6:00 to 8:30 PM: Point Association Cocktail party, Villa Marina, 72 Washington St.

December 3, 2019. Time TBD: Point Association Tree Lighting and Holiday Party at St. John's Guild Hall



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THE GREEN LIGHT

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