The Historic Eleazer Trevett Schoolhouse at 71 Third Street Raised High
The GREEN LIGHT
LXIV No. 1 Spring 2020
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FROM THE EDITOR
No doubt you will appreciate the scholarship and enthusiastic writing in the two feature articles: *The Circus Comes to Town* by Lisa Stuart and *Eleazer Trevett and his Schoolhouse* by Tom Kennedy. It must have been exciting to see a sideshow set up where Cardines Field now stands. More recently, our amusement came from watching the extensive renovation of the Old Schoolhouse at 71 Third Street this winter.

You will enjoy David Sharp’s article on the method used to put down moorings off the Point in the 1970’s. He also illustrated the maneuver with a water color painted by his own hand. You will be glad to hear there are more articles (and paintings) coming to *The Green Light* from this talented man.

Welcome to new advertisers; Realtor Ann Ritterbusch, well known for her expertise in home buying and selling. Horticulturist and Master Gardener Laurie Moore can help plan your garden and landscape. Michele Gorman Ritter at 02840. LLC can re-arrange or redecorate that cute cottage of yours or help you downsize to a cute cottage if that is what is needed. (Yes, she is also host to celebrity dog Raleigh Ritt).

Check out the latest ad from Gladys Barbosa of Edge Realty. She is using her advertising dollars to bring you the latest information on Point home sales.

See you around the ‘Hood.

Ann McMahon
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Information Technology consultation for this edition was provided by Michael “Mac” Cullen.
Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Greetings! As you are reading this, our country is going through an unprecedented time with the coronavirus pandemic. It is a tough time for our neighborhood, community and country, but Newporters (and Point residents) are resilient people. Working together and supporting one another will help us get through this difficult time. Many neighbors have asked what they can do to be of help to others. First and foremost, we must all stay safe by follow social distancing guidelines to ensure we minimize risk of infection. We can also take time to check on neighbors, family and friends to ensure they are all doing well and share with them words of encouragement and offer assistance if needed.

Bill and I were sent this lovely prayer from Peter and Meredith Rugg, new neighbors on the Point. It is a prayer from Rev. Michael Spencer, of St. John’s Episcopal Church of Fishers Island, NY. We found it to be comforting, so we wanted to share this with neighbors.

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.  
May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.  
May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.  
May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those who have no options.  
May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go.  
May we who settle in for quarantine at home remember those who have no home.  
As fear grips our country, let us choose love.  
During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors. Amen

The Point Association is working to continue serving our neighborhood in this challenging time. This edition of The Green Light is but one example of ways we are continuing our work on behalf of our neighborhood. Watch for our emails, our “Points of Interest”, Facebook page posts, and other communication tools to stay informed. To all of our neighbors – stay safe, please observe social distancing, and be sure to check on family, friends and neighbors.

Warmest regards,

Tom Hochaday

PS. A special thanks to Ann McMahon, Editor of The Green Light, and to her team for the hard work they’ve done to get this edition written and to our neighbors!
A Resoundingly Successful Charity Drive. Thanks to You.

The Point Association is proud to announce another successful Martin Luther King Community Center fundraising drive, all because of your generosity to our neighbors in need. The 2019 campaign for the community is the sixth by the Point Association, totaling $58,710 in donations which has provided much needed resources for this remarkable Center.

On January 6, at the Point’s Post Holiday Party, Tom Hockaday presented a check in the amount of $10,135 to Heather Hole Strout, Executive Director and Alyson Novick, Director of Development of MLKCC.

The Martin Luther King Drive will continue to be an annual event. It is a specific part of the Point’s newly formed Charitable Fund. The PA Board hopes to expand the Fund to include other non-profit organizations that impact our neighborhood. Fundraising events and projects to this end are being considered for the near future.

If you would like to contribute your ideas and your time and talent, please contact Bill Rauch at treasurer@thepointassociation.org.

PROTECT THE POINT! PLANT A TREE.

by Maureen Cronin

Like many Newport neighborhoods, the Point will lose many of its street trees due to age. Because of Americans with Disability Act rules, these trees cannot be replaced. The good news is many of us can do something about this through the Street Tree Program.

Many Point properties are PERFECT for planting canopy street trees. Through a partnership among the Point Association, the Newport Tree Conservancy and the City, a homeowner can acquire a tree and have it planted for them on their property within 20 feet of a public right of way. The PA will contribute $55 for each tree purchased by a resident in the Point. The balance of the cost to the homeowner is $50. This includes the tree, a gator bag for the first year, a tree stake and professional planting.

Applications are online at NewportTreeConservancy.org/Bare-Root-2020 with paper copies at Newport Public Services at 280 Spring Street. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Applications should be submitted soon. Note at the bottom: “The Point Association is contributing to the purchase and planting of this tree”.

This is a fantastic way to protect and enhance the Point’s beauty, mitigate the effects of climate change, and make our neighborhood healthier. Please take the time to learn more about this remarkable program.

Storer seawall and Harbor Walk repair got an early start. It is hoped the Park will be back together by late summer.

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Spring is Here, Why Doesn’t My Heart Go Dancing?
by Ann McMahon

I sympathize with Ella Fitzgerald’s lyrics for this spring. We have “Zoom” meetings instead of PA Spring Meetings, and coronavirus masks instead of Easter bonnets. This season it is “social distancing” not our usual social gatherings. Anxiety about stockpiling sufficient paper products aside, neighbors were lucky to have our Battery and Storer Parks where a bench and a breath of really fresh air could be had.

Barbara Bessette had the foresight to plant her Daffodillion bulbs in her planters last fall.
Tina Lewis sports a “couture” coronavirus face mask made by a friend.
This bunny and his fellow Flopsies and Mopsies stand guard over this spring garden on Elm Street.

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I rented an apartment on Pine Street when I arrived in Newport in 1976. I badly wanted to get back on the water, so I bought the best boat I could afford, which was a very used 19-foot daysailer. Now I needed a mooring. At the time, installation of boat moorings off the Point wasn’t really regulated, and, unlike today, there was no waiting list. So you just picked a spot you liked, dropped your anchor overboard, and then went to the harbor master’s little shack next to the Newport Yacht Club to put an “X” on the big chart on the wall with your name and phone number in a book; and that was that!

I chose a spot offshore of where I kept my dinghy on the beach at the end of Walnut Street, and relatively close inshore to shorten my row. There may have been a half dozen other moorings in that general area at the time, so there was a lot of open water. Because the type and size of mooring anchors wasn’t regulated, they consisted of all manner of heavy objects, including radiators, old car engines, blocks of concrete, and even some actual mushroom anchors.

I bought two used mushrooms and chained them together with Navy destroyer chain, then I ran a smaller chain from the center of this mass up to a float that was actually a big fender (when anchors became regulated this rig was rejected by the harbor master for being impossible for him move when he had to). In those earlier days, the neighborhood had a boat especially modified for setting, inspecting or retrieving anchors. I think my friend Ned actually owned the boat, but it was treated as community property among the group of us who had boats off the Point. Our handy craft was a faded, battleship gray, Navy-surplus workboat about 18-feet long that was shaped like a rectangular matchbox – thus the name “Boxboat.” It was heavily constructed, and someone had added a come-along and a roller on the bow (or it could have been the stern because they looked the same).
The Green Light

The Circus is in Town!
by Lisa Stuart with Jim Cole

Step right up! See The Daring Wild West Riders! Death Defying Aerialists! Rare and Exotic Animals! The Circus is in town!

The first modern circus was performed in London in 1768 at Philip Astley’s Equestrian School. The first American incarnation was held here in 1774 by Newporter Christopher H. Gardner. Gardner was billed as the original American Rider and performed feats of horsemanship.

Gardener’s father, Captain Henry Gardner was the innkeeper of an inn and tavern on Tanner Street (now Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd). When celebrity equestrian Jacob Bates visited Newport from London they met when he stayed at that inn. Christopher Gardener accompanied Bates to Boston and other appearances. When Bates returned to Europe, Gardener, realizing he was Bates’ equal in horsemanship, started his own circus. (Newport Mercury, Oct 19, 1844)

During the late 1700s through the mid-1850s everything from a “learned pig” that could read and write to a panther toured Newport. Equestrian acts performed in the Opera House. Nixon’s Great American Circus touted a lady equestrian who drove 40 horses through the principal streets of Newport. Other acts included clowns and trapeze artists. (Newport Daily News, June 8, 1965)

Newspaper advertisements and posters would announce the many daring acts and
(Circus, continued) exotic animals. Elephants, camels, carriages and performers paraded down Thames and other major streets to the excitement of all. People crowded into the streets to watch the grand entrance of the circuses. In 1957 The Cristiani Brother’s Circus was the last circus to parade in Newport.

Christy Brothers Circus parades on Long Wharf

During the 1870s, “Buffalo Bill” (William F. Cody) was a frequent visitor to Newport. In 1883 he started his Wild West Show featuring Sitting Bull and Annie Oakley. His Wild West Show performed many times in Newport. In 1871 P.T. Barnum brought over a large shipment to the USA on the ship *Eric* including an Egyptian mummy and a rhinoceros. His circus appeared 11 times in Newport—later partnering with Bailey’s Circus and then The Ringling Brothers. Many other circuses performed in Newport including J. R. H. Murray’s, Howe’s Great London Circus, Forpaough-Sells and Cole Bros. Circuses performed in many different lots throughout Newport. Jim Cole, circus aficionado, has done extensive research on the various locations—everywhere from a lot on Barney Street to a lot on Perry and Spring streets. One of the lots was right here in the Point: The Old Basin Lot. The lot was opposite the train depot where Cardine’s Field is now located. You may recall from an earlier article in *The Green Light*, the Basin Lot was filled in by the railroad in 1891.

The next photo is of a “society circus” that took place there in 1906. A “society circus” is one that does not have all the acts that are found in a traditional circus. The carnival was under the management of Bishop & Schwartz. Admission to the grounds was free but there was a charge for the various exhibitions. In addition to the circus there was vaudeville theatre, illusions, band concerts and merry-go-rounds. One of the featured acts was a fire diver who leaped into a blazing tank of water from the top of a high pole. The pole and tank can be seen in the photo below just to the left of center. Small boys made a little pocket money selling post cards and programs. Car races were held on Easton Beach as part of the Carnival Festivities.

The Carnival featuring a Society Circus in the Old Basin Lot, The Point 1906

From 1850 to 1950 circuses grew from equestrian acts to include acrobats, aerialists and sideshows. The growth was tied to the increase in the rail lines across the United States which enabled touring to both small and large towns. Circuses not only served as entertainment, but also often provided the audience with their first exposure to other cultures. (RISD, Circus Exhibit Program).

Older Pointers recall the excitement from when they were children and met the circus trains as they pulled into the Point. They would run down to watch the animals disembark. The circuses hired the kids to help with tasks, often paying them with passes to the circus instead of money.

1926, Christy Bros Circus pulling into Newport Rail Yard. The McKenzie Winslow Grain Elevator can be seen in the background.
Circuses also arrived by ferry. The photo below is the Gorman Circus arriving on the Point on May 27, 1935.

Not everyone was thrilled with the Circus. The City of Newport gave notice in the newspaper: “As Barnum & Bailey’s Circus will be in the city Thursday June 11, 1908, all persons are cautioned and warned to secure your doors and windows!”

Mill owners were also unhappy. Their workers would attend the circus instead of coming to work. By 1916 there was quite a bit of protest against circuses taking place in Newport. Circuses started securing lots in Middletown in addition to the lots in Newport. A lot on Con nell Highway became a popular location for circuses.

Although circus trains and circuses no longer come to the Point, many older Pointers have happy memories of the exciting days when the circus came to town. If you have memories or photos you would like to share, please email the History & Archives Committee—we’d love to hear from you!

historyandarchives@thepointassociation.org

Further information about circuses in Newport can be found on the Point Associations FlkrPro account. https://www.flickr.com/photos/146411860@N03/albums

James “Jim” Cole, Circus Aficionado

Jim was born in Newport and saw his very first circus here in 1949 at the age of two. The Italian clown in the show was the father of one of his good friends. He has been collecting circus memorabilia and conducting extensive research on circuses in Newport ever since.

Jim has a daughter who is a circus artist. She worked with the Nik Wallenda high wire act on Big Apple Circus in NYC two years ago!

Jim’s daughter Khera doing “the 7” with the Wallenda high wire act in 2018.
North End Planning: Big Changes Ahead
by Ann McMahon

Despite the pouring rain, about 40 stalwart individuals made their way to St John’s Guild Hall on March 3 to attend the informational meeting about an “Urban Plan” being developed for the North End. The plan will focus on the former Casino property owned now by the Carpionato Corporation and the 475 acres to be freed up by the Pell Bridge ramps realignment. The eventual development of the Naval Hospital land to be acquired by Newport is also being considered.

The PA Board of Directors requested this informational meeting specifically for Point residents as changes may very well have an impact on our neighborhood even though we will be less affected than those who live north of Admiral Kalbfus Road.

Last fall, rather than accept a plan for a shopping center advanced by the Carpionato Group, the City of Newport put a moratorium on development until the City’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning regulations could be updated.

Wisely, the City hired a highly respected consultant group, NBBJ, to gather the thoughts and wishes of those residents most affected by the development and incorporate these in a plan by late April. The Boston based group was chosen because of its successful history of outreach to the community. It bodes well that the traffic engineer for NBBJ is a Newport resident. Their recommendations, will be used to update the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning regulations giving the City the legal say-so in what the land is used for rather than take whatever is offered by a developer.

To learn more about the project, go to the consultant’s website
https://coUrbanize.com/projects/northend/information

After the presentation and a general Q & A, the group broke into smaller groups to discuss the plan, ask clarifying questions and make suggestions for what they would like to see included in the plan.

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Eleazer Trevett (1781-1858) and his Schoolhouse
by Tom Kennedy

The bustle of activity at 71 Third Street in the Point signals a unique project to refurbish and restore a significant historic structure for reuse as a private residence in 21st century Newport. The building in question, Eleazer Trevett's Schoolhouse, was in danger of succumbing to old age until an entrepreneur by the name of Michael Terra purchased it and planned its restoration and reinvigoration. Michael's enthusiasm about his new endeavor was obvious when I met him by chance on Third Street while walking my neighbor's Yorkie. As a result of this and subsequent meetings, and at the encouragement of Ann McMahon, I undertook to write this essay.

Eleazer Trevett was born in Newport on the 20th of January 1781, the son of Eleazer Trevett and Elizabeth Gardner. He married Catherine Easton, a descendent of one of Newport's founding families, in 1802. Shortly after the wedding a notice appeared in the Rhode Island Republican advertising the opening of Eleazer's shop in the house of Catherine Easton on Washington Street, just north of the shipyard, selling "West-India goods and dry goods." (R.I. Republican, Dec 25, 1802) Sometime later in life Catherine and Eleazer divorced, but I was unable to ascertain when.

On November 15, 1805 the following notice appeared in the Newport Mercury: “Messrs. Marcy and Trevett, respectfully inform the public, that they shall open their SCHOOL on Monday, the 18th, in Clarke Street, near Washington Square, late residence of Mr. William Bridges; - where Youth will be carefully and expeditiously taught Reading grammatically, Writing, Cyphering, Geography, Book-Keeping, by single and double Entry, etc. – Those who may entrust them with their Children, may depend on the strictest attention being paid to their morals and manner of behaviour. Hours of Tuition from 9 to 12 o’clock in the morning and from 2 to 5 in the afternoon. – The Evening School from 6 to 9 o’clock. - … Latin and Greek languages will be taught to those who wish it.” (Newport Mercury, Nov. 15, 1805

William L. Marcy, Eleazer’s friend and business partner, was, at the time, a student at Brown University. He later had a distinguished career as a lawyer, judge, U.S. Senator from New York, Governor of New York for three terms, Secretary of War under President Polk, and Secretary of State under President Pierce.
Significantly, in a subsequent notice, Eleazer offers to teach “both sexes the different branches of literature,” (*Newport Mercury*, March 27, 1806) at a time when girls were not often included in the student body of schools of this type. In 1807 Eleazer boasts of a “private room for young ladies” at the school. (*R.I. Republican*, April 1807) It is not until 1809 that Eleazer advertises his new schoolhouse: NEW ACADEMY on Barney Street. This building is the one now at 71 Third Street. The public are informed that the new airy ACADEMY of Mr. Trevett’s is ready for the reception of pupils. He flatters himself that the pleasantness of the situation; the accommodation of the building; together with his determination to pay every attention to those placed under his tuition, will ensure him a portion of the public patronage. (*R.I. Republican*, Apr. 29, 1809)

Although an article in *The Green Light* of January 1962, p.4, places the construction of the schoolhouse “in 1796 or earlier,” I was unable to corroborate that claim. All other references I ran across that referred to the construction of the schoolhouse date it from 1809. One such reference is found on a monument erected in 2000 by the Museum of Irish History on Barney Street.

It is a large commemorative stone faced with a bronze plaque entitled “St. Joseph’s Cemetery” in recognition of the Irish Catholics buried there, who started the first Catholic parish of Rhode Island in 1828. “The site had on it a small schoolhouse, built in 1809, and this was used as the first church dedicated to St. Joseph.” Reading further on the plaque, one discovers that our modest schoolhouse was the initial church in a series of parish churches which culminated in the construction in 1852 of St. Mary’s on Memorial Boulevard, famous for hosting the Camelot wedding of Jacqueline Bouvier and John F. Kennedy. From small acorns grow mighty oaks!

Eleazer’s school reached out to the poor as well as the fair sex. “Whereas a citizen of this town has contracted with me, year by year, to educate ten poor Children at a time, in my school, boys of the age of eight years and upwards – This is therefore to inform those who wish to embrace such an opportunity, to apply… No regard will be had to the religious or political sentiments of their parents or friends.” (*R.I. Republican*, May 3, 1809).

It is difficult to know whether the Barney Street School prospered or merely survived. During the next few years Eleazer placed several notices in the newspapers, which encouraged those whose payments were in arrears to take care of their debt and pay up. In April of 1811 Eleazer offered his home on Charles Street for rental at $100 dollars a year. (*R.I. Republican*, Apr. 6, 1811) He also rented his schoolhouse out for evening meetings of the Tamany Society (*R.I. Republican*, April 29, 1812) In July of 1812 Eleazer offered for sale his “beautiful schoolhouse and lot, and until sold will let the same, evenings, to those who may want it…” (*R.I. Republican*, July 14, 1812)

A storm known as the “Great Gale” struck Newport and Providence on the morning of September 23, 1815 and destroyed over 500 houses and dozens of boats. Eleazer almost lost his schoolhouse as a result:

“Special Notice. The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public, that altho’ in the late visitation of Divine Providence, his schoolhouse was thrown off its foundation partly into the adjoining lot, he has fitted it where it stands, (so as to recommence his school) until he can remove it to its former foundation. –His Evening School commenced last week – price of Tuition Two Dollars per quarter”. (*R.I. Republican*, Sept. 27, 1815)“

There is still a worn plaque on the Rhode Island Hospital Trust building (built in 1917)” showing the high water line of the Great Gale of 1815 “along with a newer plaque showing the higher 1938 hurricane water level.” (*Wikipedia*, “1815 New England hurricane”)

In 1822 Eleazer’s school is still being advertised: “My Spring School is open for the reception and Tuition of Masters and Misses, in the following branches, viz – Reading, Spelling, Writing, Cyphering, Book-Keeping, etc. …N.B. Those whose accounts have been standing unsettled over a year, are requested to call and adjust the same.” (*Newport Mercury*, April 25, 1822)
By 1839 Eleazer finds himself as a member of the Newport Committee of Public School No. 2. He is engaged in soliciting credentials for teaching positions and setting policy in the public school system.

H.E. Turner sums up Eleazar's career in Newport as follows: “Mr. Trevett’s school was always esteemed a good one. It subsisted many years, and he was a man of substantial estate. He was for many years a Justice of the Peace, and after the establishment of our municipal court he sat upon its bench, and thus attained the dignity and title of Judge, by which title he will be familiarly remembered by many of our citizens who had no associations with him as school-master.” (H.E. Turner M.D., “Schools and Schoolmasters of Newport”, The Newport Historical Magazine, No.4, July 1883, 223)

Eleazer died on April 28, 1858 and is buried in the Common Burial Ground. His will does not refer to any children, so it is probable that any progeny predeceased him or that he had none. His schoolhouse, a real survivor, was moved to Cherry Street before it found its place on Third Street sometime between 1853 and 1863.

My thanks to Bert Lippincott of the Newport Historical Society for his generous aid in researching this topic.
Point Resident Jeff Holden of “Holden Building” and Ben Lundgren renovate the former schoolhouse.

Recent Home Sales

42 Walnut St (3 beds/3 baths) $1,900,000
70 Bridge St (4 beds/2+ baths) $1,565,000
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Save the Dates

Unfortunately, some annual Point Association events are postponed or cancelled due to the need to stay in our homes because of the coronavirus pandemic. Please watch the PA Facebook page and Points of Interest for updates.

June 27, 2020, 6 PM (Tentative): with a rain date of Sunday, June 28 6 PM – Annual Block Party. Willow Street “East”
July 1 - 6, 2020. Patriotic Point Celebration. Show the flag!
August 20, 2020. 6 to 8:30 PM: Point Association Annual Cocktail Party, Villa Marina, 72 Washington St.
December 1, 2020, Time TBD: Point Association Tree Lighting and Holiday Party. Storer Park to St. John’s Guild Hall.

More Ways to be “In The Know”

As we enhance our communication to members and neighbors, we are embarking on a program to increase the Point Association’s presence through social media. We have reactivated our Facebook page and we urge all members, friends and neighbors to follow us on Facebook!

Being part of our Facebook family will enable you get updates and follow our posts on activities, events, and current issues facing our neighborhood. It’s easy to do. Go to our Facebook page and click “LIKE” to start following us. Link to our page at: www.facebook.com/hepointassociation/

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