

Tour

Continued from page 1

Cousin Mariah O'Neill, who lives in the Carriage House at the entrance to the property, remembers summers on the property with a steady stream of family visitors and international guests. Croquet was a popular pastime in the yard, and live-in servants took care of everyone's needs. Mariah points to a high ledge, a favored spot for adventurous children. "We played Murder in the Dark as kids, and we found some great hiding places," she recalls.

Mariah also points out a special treasure found on a wall in one of the bedrooms upstairs. Their grandmother, Marianna Lippincott O'Neill, had a penchant for drawing on the walls as a little girl, and her doodles were uncovered when wallpaper was removed. "Here is a self portrait," notes Mariah, running a finger along words, "going to be presented," written over a sketch of a fancily dressed young woman.

The home was first dubbed "Meeresbilck," German for "seascape." Educated Americans of the day studied German as the preferred foreign language. But the name fell out of favor around WWI with the rise of friction between the two countries. "We never used the word when we were growing up," Peter says.

The Belvedere home, a clapboard-and-shingle design by Charles Bevins, also boasts stately roots. Built by Admiral David Dixon Porter in 1888, the house has experienced a few metamorphoses in the last century. When Anthony and Rita Antine bought the property in 1981, the top story of the house had been cut off. The couple redesigned the top floor, including dormers to restore the cottage's likeness to its former self. They also added a rear living area that follows the line of the original wood and window ornamentation.

The structure still holds its earliest windows of bulleted and stained glass. A brass banister complements the main staircase. "I dreamed of a beautiful bride



At top, the Lippincott house on Beavertail Road, below is the original design of Belvedere. At right is an ornately carved staircase in the Lippincott house.

coming down this staircase," Rita says. She realized her dream when one of her daughters floated down to the staircase landing in her wedding gown.

Custom-made woodwork details beauty throughout the house. A portrait of Admiral Porter, alongside other faces and scenes of note, hangs in the front sitting room. After more than 25 years of summering and eventually retiring to the home on Walcott, the An-

times continue to marvel at the old-world charm of their cottage. Tony and Rita have many stories to tell about their gem, which still holds much of the original furniture. As an added treat, David Adams, the great-great-grandson of the admiral will be on hand to help host the Walcott event.

The Saturday event will be held rain or shine. For more information about the JHS Annual House Tour, call Mary Heath at 423-3333.



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MURPHY'S LAW A SLEAZY FOUNDING FATHER?

The story is well laid out in Edward Achorn's gem of a column on August 14, 2007, entitled "How Rhode Island corrupted a president." Send us an email if you want a copy.

The history of the incident, which casts a considerable shadow over the character of Thomas Jefferson, is well told in Charles Rappleye's excellent book, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade and the American Revolution*.

The parallels and lessons of history are amazing, with the Jefferson episode involving political pressure on the President to use his appointive powers for a despicable and corrupt purpose.

These battles aren't always fought on purely intellectual grounds: one Rhode Islander who resisted the corrupt undermining of federal and state law against the importation of slaves, was attacked as he slept in his home and had his ear sliced off.

Quiz: The most serious crime with which the perpetrating thug could have been charged? Answer: Mayhem. Look that word up in your Funk & Wagnalls.

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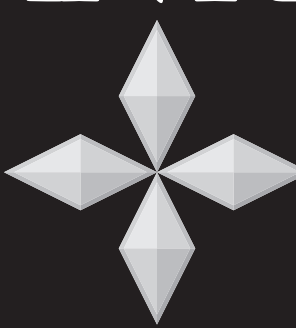
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