

# Summit News

May 1998



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## History Project Mini-Course Slated for June

The next Summit Neighborhood History Project mini-course will take place on consecutive Mondays in June. Everyone is welcome to join this free workshop and learn how to research house histories while contributing to the Project's goal of nominating Summit Neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places. Mini-course participants will meet from 6pm to 8pm at the Rochambeau Library on June 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th. For more information, contact John Bazik at 331-1644, or just come to the library at 6pm on June 8th and see for yourself.

## Miriam Presents Master Plan

On March 4th, Miriam Hospital held a public meeting at Hope High School to discuss their institutional master plan. According to a hospital spokesman, the plan, which is still being developed, will call for the sale of several properties, but that no other significant changes to Miriam's infrastructure are envisioned in the short term.

Master plans are required of all non-profit institutions in the city. Each plan must detail proposed

changes to land holdings, land use, capitol improvements, demolition, parking and more over a five year period, and must be in keeping with the city's Comprehensive Plan. The law took effect in 1995, so the first five-year period comes to a close at the end of next year. Lifespan, parent company of Miriam Hospital, is the only organization that has not yet complied with the law.

According to the spokesman,

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## Neighbors Oppose On-Site Dry Cleaning

Neighbors of **Eden Park Cleaners**, 831 Hope Street, recently sent a letter to the store's owner asking that he not install a dry cleaning machine at that location. In their letter, they note that perchloroethylene or "perc", which is the solvent used in the machine to clean clothes, is a probable human carcinogen and has been linked to a range of human ailments.

When Eden Park moved from its former location across the street, neighbors worried that the larger store would be used for on-site dry cleaning. Though they were assured it would remain a drop-off business only, they later learned that the owner was considering installing a dry cleaning machine. This led to a meeting on April 9th between neighbors, Councilman Kevin Jackson and the distributor of the machine.

According to representatives of the distributor, Aldrich Clean-Tech, Eden Park's owner, Mr. Henry Byon, has chosen the safest dry cleaning machine made. The Union U2000 is a self-contained unit that meets EPA regulations and is one of a few machines to comply with California's stringent requirements for containment and air quality. They pointed out that Mr. Byon could have chosen a less expensive, and less safe machine and

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## Group Home Takes Over Hillside Residence

On February 26th, Ocean Tides purchased a one family residence at 20 Hillside Avenue in the Summit neighborhood, on the Pawtucket line near North Main Street. It is now operating as a group home for up to eight adolescent boys, each of whom has been placed in the care of Ocean Tides by the courts.

Hillside neighbors were unhappy to learn of the home only after the fact. They are concerned about property devalua-

tion, the effect on the quality of the neighborhood, who the boys are, their supervision, staff training, building code issues, turnover rate, upkeep of the property, and the program's responsiveness to the neighborhood.

State law exempts group homes from local zoning regulations throughout Rhode Island.

At this writing, the SNA has just learned that Ocean Tides will hold an open house on Sunday, April 26th from 2pm to 5pm.

## Miriam

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Joseph Piechocki, Miriam plans to sell most of their properties on North Main Street, including the former Sears, Ethan Allen and Sears Automotive buildings. They also plan to sell four houses on Fourth Street, which are currently rental properties. They intend to hold onto the parking lot behind the Sears building, where most of their employees park during the day. They also plan to retain several other houses which are currently used for office space. Nearby neighbors, who suspect that Miriam is the source of soot deposited on their properties, were heartened to hear that the hospital plans to replace an aging boiler.

What disturbs neighbors is what is *not* in the plan. The three parking lots along Seventh Street and Summit Avenue consume 28 former house lots to produce 472 parking spaces, 330 for employees and 142 for visitors. The outpatient clinic on Fifth Street, which was once an elementary school and playground, today services more than 50,000

patients each year. Neighbors would like to see Miriam make an effort to move as much hospital traffic and parking out of the neighborhood as possible.

Miriam already operates a shuttle that carries employees and some visitors from the Sears parking lot (340 spaces) and the Arena lot (191 spaces), which is on North Main Street between Second and Third Streets. The hospital has long considered, and residents have long urged, construction of parking decks at the Arena site. Parking decks at that location, only two blocks from the hospital, would provide most of the parking needed without bringing a single car into the neighborhood.

Miriam objects that parking decks are too expensive to build. The objection is only understandable when you consider that the hospital provides free parking to both visitors and employees. Any type of parking has costs; the land must be purchased, paved, lit and plowed in the winter. And hospital surface parking carries an additional cost to taxpayers: it is land underutilized and untaxed.

## Jewish Home

Giving up on plans to expand the facility, Hillside Health Associates (HHA) is going forward with the purchase and renovation of the former Jewish Home for the Aged at 99 Hillside Avenue. HHA has now proposed creating a 150-bed home, and appears to be moving forward with that plan.

## Bond Issue Update

The Summit Neighborhood Association continues to pursue a way to make Providence's \$50 million bond issue continue to pay off past this election year. A group of members is researching investment options and crafting a proposal that will ensure that Summit sees continued capital improvement and redevelopment money throughout the 25-year term of the bond and beyond.

## Street Tree Deadline Approaches

The deadline for the next round of Neighborhood Planting Tree Grants is June 1st. To qualify for a grant, groups of neighbors band together to plant 5-20 street trees in close proximity. The program is competitive, and applications for 10 to 20 trees are favored over smaller requests.

For applications or more information, contact Street Tree Coordinator Leslie Urgo at 785-9450, MWF.

**Summit News** is the official newsletter of the Summit Neighborhood Association. It is published three or four times a year and distributed for free to households in the Greater Summit Area.

**Eden Park**

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still meet all environmental regulations.

Still, the danger of any level of exposure to perchloroethylene worries neighbors. The U2000 loses about 20 gallons of perc each year. Some of it ends up in sludge, which is collected inside the machine and disposed of as hazardous waste. The rest is lost in clothing and vapor after each load. It is the vapor which escapes from the machine into the store, and is vented through the roof, that has raised concern. Although the concentrations are very small, neighbors worry about the long-term health effects of living so close to and downwind of a source of even a small amount of perc.

City zoning allows up to two dry cleaning machines in commercially zoned buildings like Eden Park. EPA and DEM regulations permit it. There is nothing in state or local law to prevent Eden Park from cleaning clothes on Hope Street. Mr. Byon has chosen the safest machine available. But neighbors note that scientific evidence of the long term

**Business Scene**

**Leave The Car At Home**

A short, pleasant walk along tree-lined streets, past attractive, pre-war American foursquares, Dutch colonials and bungalows, brings you to restaurants, cafes, delicatessens and bakeries, shops selling clothing, toys, flowers, cameras, antiques and offering services from auto repair to hair styling. There isn't much that Summit neighbors might want that they can't find in their own backyard. For those who seek relief from malls, shopping centers and super stores, Summit is a

health risks of perc are incomplete and ominous. The machine's retailer estimates that only 15% of the machines they sell are in residential settings.

Questions remain about what level of exposure to perc is safe, and whether a residential neighborhood is an appropriate place to conduct chemical dry cleaning. The SNA joins neighbors and Councilman Jackson in urging Mr. Byon to keep his Hope Street business a drop-off store, and do the dry cleaning in a location away from homes and families.

oasis. Next time you reach for your car keys, consider instead getting a bit of fresh air and making a small investment in the place where you live.

**Comings and Goings**

Welcome to **Zia Elena's** Italian restaurant, serving lunch, dinner and take-out, at 748 Hope Street, formerly East Side Joe's.

The **Hot Wok Cafe** recently opened at 752 Hope Street, formerly Chef Chan Restaurant. Their chef, with ten years' experience in Chinatown, promises authentic Chinese cuisine.

**Free Gardening Class**

**Blooming Blossoms** will offer a free gardening class for Summit neighbors. Using a typical East Side backyard as a classroom, professional gardeners will demonstrate how to make the best use of available space, prepare your soil, choose the right plants, design your own garden, and plant and care for new seedlings.

The class will meet at the store, 815 Hope Street, on Saturday, May 23rd from 10am to 11:15am. Call 274-3929 for more information.

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**Join The Summit Neighborhood Association**

Complete this form and mail it to: *Summit Neighborhood Association  
Box 41092, Providence, RI 02940.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is \$10.00 for **1998**  Individual  Family Membership

(Make checks payable to *Summit Neighborhood Association*).

I am concerned and would like to help with SNA activities. I am particularly interested in working on the following:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Summit Neighborhood Association  
Seventh Annual**

# **Yard Sale**

**9am - 3pm**

**Saturday, May 9, 1998**

**Church of the Redeemer**

**655 Hope Street**

## **Donations Needed**

Household goods  
Furniture

Working Appliances  
Toys

Clothing  
Books & Records

## **Volunteers Needed**

Pickup  
Setup

Day of Sale  
Trucks/Vans

Sorting  
Cleanup

Please bring items to the front door of the church. It is helpful if you can estimate the price of each item, and already-tagged items are especially welcome.

## **Dropoff Dates:**

**Thursday and Friday, May 7th & 8th**

**6pm to 8pm**

The Yard Sale is the Summit Neighborhood Association's annual fundraiser, and provides most of the association's budget for newsletters, events and activities.

For more information or to volunteer, call Liz at 274-1086.

**Rain Date - Saturday, May 16th**