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OPINION

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OUR VIEW

American art has a haven in Newport

Among the rare gems that can be found in Newport is the National Museum of American Illustration.

Like many cultural institutions we are fortunate to have in our midst, the museum — housed in Vernon Court on Bellevue Avenue — is too often underappreciated by local residents. We hope that will change with its latest exhibit, "Norman Rockwell: An American Imagist."

Founded in 1998, the museum was established to house Laurence and Judy Cutler's collection from the "Golden Age of American Illustration," featuring works from 1895 to 1945 and by such household names as Rockwell and Maxfield Parrish.

Rockwell, whose work is best known for appearing on the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post*, is the subject of the first Rockwell exhibit to be shown in Rhode Island, according to the Cutlers.

More than 60 original paintings and studies from six decades of the artist's career, from 1916 through the 1960s, are displayed throughout two floors of the museum. Many are in a ground-floor loggia gallery that took two years to restore. The 1898 Tiffany murals on the upper walls and ceiling were restored by staff from the Winterthur Museum in Delaware, the University of Delaware and the Sorbonne in

Paris. This is the first time the public will be able to view the impressive restoration.

The museum is open year-round for tours by reservation, but no reservations are needed on weekends this summer. The museum is open Saturdays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and a guided tour is available Fridays at 2 p.m. through Aug. 31. Admission ranges from \$8 for children from 5 to 12 years old to \$18 for adults.

Visitors to the museum will be familiar with many of Rockwell's illustrations, but there are masterpieces that have not been seen very often. One of the paintings, "Young Valedictorian," has never been exhibited or published before, Laurence Cutler said.

"It's a secret Rockwell," he said. "Judy convinced the collector to lend it to us."

Lovers of art and of Americana would do well to see the Rockwell exhibit, which broke attendance records at the Naples Museum of Art in Florida last fall, while it is in Newport. It is a wonderful reason to visit the museum. And even after the exhibit has moved on, the National Museum of American Illustration will continue to be a wonderful reason to visit Newport.



There's no expiration date

Thought we had seen the last

"Them Jews aren't going to let President Obama talk to me." — the Rev. Jeremiah Wright

"I hate gay people ..." — Tim Hardaway, former NBA star



"A Third World country." — Tom Tancredo, former Colorado representative, speaking of Miami

armed security stand-off. Last week, a man walked into a store and opened fire, fatally wounding guard Stephen Johns and injuring the intruder.

Authorities say the intruder, John Brunn, was an avowed anti-Semite well known to the world of white supremacists who monitor it. He had been a hoax and American garbage dump." He