

Another national treasure on Bellevue Avenue

BY MARY LOU DALY

ONE OF Newport's best kept secrets was opened to the public last weekend, providing visitors with an extraordinary artistic display. The National Museum of American Illustration at Vernon Court on Bellevue Avenue, houses more than 2,000 paintings, including 122 by beloved American illustrator Norman Rockwell. The museum was founded by Judy and Laurence Cutler in 1998 and has been open since then on a limited basis, primarily for groups with reservations. The weekend opening to the general public was a first for the museum, which recently won a zoning board variance allowing installation of a second outdoor sign.

Of the many treasures on display by noted artists such as N.C. Wyeth, Frederick Remington and J.C. Leyendecker, are the largest and smallest paintings ever done by Maxfield Parrish. A small mother-of-pearl button he

painted for the daughter of his caretaker is displayed by the doorway to a cavernous room, which holds several of the 18 panels Parrish painted between 1911 and 1916. One of these measures 20 feet by 10 feet covering an entire wall of the gallery. To Build A Fire by Frank E. Schoonver (1908), known by many from the Jack

London children's story, is the one painting gifted to the Cutlers, the others all acquired through years of tasteful acquisitions.

Fortunately for art lovers throughout the region, the Cutlers are planning a grand opening in June 2003, after which time the museum will be open for general admission throughout the season.



SUNDAY VISITORS at the National Museum of American Illustration



IS IT RAINING? Painted in 1935 by McClelland Barclay as an advertisement for the Davenport Hosiery Company



Photos by MARY LOU DALY

DISABLED VETERAN (Soldier and US War Bond) (1944) by Norman Rockwell