

# Art & Soul

It's nice when Rhode Island is at the center of a national debate, isn't it? Our latest foray

into controversy involves the National Museum of American Illustration, in Newport. The museum, like the art form itself, got off to a tenuous start. First it battled zoning laws and neighbors who feared that the museum would attract too many tourists to their neighborhood. Then, critics, who thought that works by "artists" such as Norman Rockwell weren't worth charging admission to view, said that such a museum would be irrelevant.

But the museum's founders, Judith and Laurence Cutler, believed that illustrators deserved to be studied and appreciated. They persevered, and with backing from notables such as Whoopi Goldberg and Matt Lauer, the National Museum of American Illustration is finally up and running strong in Vernon Court, a turn-of-the-century mansion on Bellevue Avenue. The Cutlers also corralled support from directors at the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian, who wholeheartedly say that illustrators have played a prominent role in the development of American art.

The museum houses about two thousand works by the likes of Rockwell, Maxfield Parrish, N.C. Wyeth, Frederick Remington, and other artists who made their living, in part, through commercial ventures — illustrating books, newspaper stories, advertisements, and magazine covers. They are works that Laurence Cutler has called the quintessential American art form, and the positive international attention the museum has received — finally — suggests he's right.

Now the only controversy surrounding the museum involves the price of admission: a steep \$25. Hey, trailblazing doesn't come cheap. 492 Bellevue Ave., Newport, 851-8949. —A.M.



Liberty Girl, 1943  
Norman Rockwell

Norman  
Rockwell

# 17%

of Rhode Islanders  
drive silver-colored cars,  
making it the most  
popular automobile  
color in the state.

CHRIS VACCARO



## SIBLING REVELRY

WICKFORD VILLAGE'S self-proclaimed mayor, Fred Dixon, calls Rosemary Pariseault's hot new boutique a "knick-knackie" kind of shop. My Sister's House is that, and a whole lot more.

You'll find one-of-a-kind pocketbooks from young designers, lovely silver and semi-precious stone jewelry, snugly pillows and throws, marabou feather cozies for wine bottles, and aromatherapy candles with fun, prescription-sounding names like "Lowzac" and "Niagra." Great mood changers.

And what's with the name? Rosemary, who has four sisters, finds many of her favorite things are always "at my sister's house." 85D Brown St., Wickford, 294-4228. —Bea Temkin