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Nancy Ferguson - September 1948

TUESDAY, MAY 15, 1962

Provincetown Artists Can't Use Sidewalks

Selectmen Order Ban for Summer On Activity

PROVINCETOWN, May 15 — Selectmen, meeting in executive session after last night's public meeting, sounded the death knell to sidewalk artists in Provincetown this Summer, voting unanimously that there will be none. Last year more than 30 artists sketched passing visitors using the sidewalks as studios.

Selectman Anthony P. Travers offered the motion to ban sidewalk artists. Selectman Marion Taves seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous that there will be no sidewalk artists this Summer. This does not exclude artists from renting shops to conduct their sketching of the passers-by.

Artist Salvages Salty Prestige

Charles Kaeselau Corrects Terrible Blunder In Bank Painting

After a long absence of seven years, Charles Kaeselau, noted water-colorist and marine artist, has come back home to Provincetown.

Walking up and down Commercial Street to renew old acquaintance with the town he was cheerfully greeted by many oldtimers who remembered Mr. Kaeselau from years gone by. But more pleased than anyone was Myrick C. Young, treasurer of Seamen's Savings Bank who stood on the steps and gave a hearty welcome and hauled the artist aboard.

It seems that seven years ago the bank commissioned Mr. Kaeselau to paint a large picture to adorn the lobby. The painting was to depict Provincetown harbor during a howling southwester, with all kinds of fishing vessels pitching and tugging at their moorings. The idea was to suggest to fishermen and others that they "save for the stormy day." This Mr. Kaeselau accomplished with remarkable skill, creating an unforgettable tempest at sea. The painting was accepted, hung, and . . . incidentally, paid for . . . an important matter to an artist.

It was fully two years later when a near-sighted skipper walked into the bank to attend to some business. First he looked the place over and his eyes stopped on the picture. For some time he gave it a thorough going over and finally his face broke into a radiant smile. He pointed to one of the big fishing schooners

in the painting. "That's my vessel," he said, "var-ry nice pitchur." Then taking his nose away from the painting and looking at it from a few feet away, he repeated, "Var-ry, var-ry nice!" Mr. Young overheard the appraisal, but said nothing and retired to his inner office.

It was some minutes later when the captain was leaning on the customer's writing desk, just below the painting and had adjusted his bifocal glasses on his nose. With pen dipped, ready to put his name on a paper, he happened to glance upward at the painting again. The skipper's eye caught a red spot on "his" schooner which he knew didn't belong there. He dropped the pen, put his nose close to the canvas, shoved his gnarled finger at the starboard shrouds and let out a howl, "Look! who the hell hung that red light on the starboard side on my vessel!"

A dead silence followed. Behind the grill a girl paled. The young man lost count in the midst of a big batch of change. A sense of doom hung over the place, as though a counterfeit thousand dollar note had just been discovered in the cash.

In the sad days that followed and the catastrophe became known, Mr. Young was besieged by offers from artists, local and visiting, who offered to correct the terrible thing. But, Mr. Young reasoned, Mr. Kaeselau was a topnotcher in his field. None but the master himself should touch the painting.

"Some day," he hoped, "he will return to Provincetown. We will wait."

He did come back and with one stroke of his brush he transformed the blunder back into a masterpiece again. It was "green" for "red". His prestige has been restored.

THE CAPE CODDER

OCTOBER 31, 1946

LAST OUTDOORS ARTIST

Years back we used to observe Nancy Ferguson doing her outdoors art work far into the Fall on a Provincetown street. Her seasonal appearance as the lone artist who works regularly in the autumnal outdoors, even on sharp weather days, has become a tradition. She is seen now in her familiar smock and her familiar hat, on a folding seat, bent over a wide canvas frame, while she does a new oil painting of the towering First Congregational Church in Wellfleet. Motorists see her at the side of the main highway every day. She is there regularly, whether it's fair or overcast.

Jan. 3, 1967

Miss Nancy Ferguson

Word has been received of the death of Miss Nancy M. Ferguson, well known Philadelphia artist who had a Summer home here, who died Tuesday, January 3, at her home in Germantown. Interment was in Vernon Cemetery.

Miss Ferguson, daughter of the late George and Margaret Ferguson, attended Philadelphia Girls High School and studied art at the Philadelphia School of Design and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Her awards included a number of traveling art scholarships. Her work has been exhibited both locally and nationally.