



Kelly's Corner

By Jan Kelly

The first touch of frost, barely a chill, is what we cranberry scoopers wait for each Indian summer day. Soon the berries will be at their peak. Because bogs are low-lying and out of the wind, you can easily get a good sun color as you work. Bogs are isolated, too, so wildlife doesn't expect you there. Working steadily and quietly, you don't disturb the inhabitants but become like one of them. For a relaxing break you carry a bottle of cranberry wine from the previous year for testing. I have seen deer and the shy brown thrasher while in this relaxed state. The voles, meadow mice, and song birds are regulars. Among the waxy deep-green leaves shining in the October sun are the red berries, blue-topped with ripeness and bounceable because they are so solid. The brown-orange beauty of *Hygrophorus* mushrooms dots the green ground cover; the blue sky, pines, and dunes are all around. Where else would you want to be?

Imagine; after all this pleasure you get bounty, too, pounds and pounds of tartly delicious berries with a flavor unto themselves. I can think of no other taste to liken it to, but cranberries and raw shellfish are my two favorite flavors. I chose the right spot to live. A percentage of everything gathered must be given away. With my portion I get busy grinding for the primary fermenters. Plain cranberry, cranberry-apple, cranberry-grape, cranberry-apricot, and cranberry-orange are the varieties of wine I make. Holiday turkeys love being washed down with these brews. The tannin is heavy in cranberry wines because of the vines, but it does not unbalance the taste of the wine. The tannin adheres to the inside of the bottle, and the wine is free of excess. It's a delicious wine, but sipping is the way to go; it's stronger than you think.

It's October, and the tourist season marches on. I call this season the long-pants summer. There seem to be almost as many tourists; only the shorts are missing. Coming across town on Columbus Day weekend was Rio at Carnival. At every spot I cycled by I'd see the regulars out celebrating, as well as someone I haven't seen for seasons. That bike, laden down with tennis racket, bird food, repaired sandals, soup of the week, and Philly Alexander's beautiful dahlias topping the plastic poinsettias, would not be missed by anybody, so there were enough hellos and stops to keep me cut all day. Zipping through town at top speed,

omitting all the hellos, would be like eating soup with a slotted spoon or telling time by a sundial at midnight—it couldn't be done. Hellos are one thing, but try to get by that Town House Galleria Bar! People were lined subway style for chat and drinks—live music poured out the confines of the front door. If everyone spots you, it's their ball game. "Get that bike in here!" So in it went and circled the tables and the musicians. One flower here, one there, and Anne Kane, pouring, demanding the biggest, brightest, flower. She got it, of course.

I met a person I have heard about for years but have never actualized in the flesh, "Two Guns" B. DeCosta, born and brought up here but now living far away where she can work for TWA. "How P-town has changed. Fishing is bad, and with Coney Island stores summer is only money now. Should have three salaried selectmen to run the town for the people. The cordage factory went to Plymouth because the selectmen wouldn't let it be taxfree, and that's jobs." I cut all this by asking how she got the name Two Guns. Well, it seems Ms DeCosta was at the summer Theater on the Wharf singing Pistol Packin' Momma. While warbling, she felt moved to expose a part of her anatomy. I can only guess that someone said, "Boy, they're a couple of pistols!"

Next to Two Guns were seated Neddie and John Murphey of Truro and Cambridge, which John calls the Moscow of Taxachusetts. John first arrived here at age 16 in 1926. He came to be a veterinary aide to Dr. Killian, his uncle by marriage. John used to come from Quincy in a Model T Ford, and it was 45 mph all the way once he got out of Quincy. John said he never had so much fun in his life as he did when he arrived here. It was a new world and beautiful. He also said animals were lined up outside 4 Atlantic Avenue, where you can still read Killian in wrought iron. [Grace, Dr. Killian's second wife and now his widow, still lives there.] The brisk business was spaying animals. What was the most numerous species of animal treated? Cows! Can you believe that today? John Murphey, so inspired by the fun and enjoyment of those well-spent days, went on to Ohio State to become a vet himself. This handsome white-haired couple can be seen perched on the bar stools of the Galleria almost any weekend for their cocktail hour. Look what you can learn on a one-directional cycle through town.

Are you complaining about yellow jackets, too? Well, if you drink sugary soft drinks, you will complain until the real freeze comes. Bumble bees don't bother your drinks; only yellow jackets. The yellow jacket's proboscis is not long enough to reach down those funnel-shaped flowers that are so sweet, but they need the same sugar. The residue in the tops of aluminum cans suits them fine. Don't shoo them. One quick sip and they're off.

I saw Michelle of Window Washers in the laundromat while I was on my Bruna Lecce run. I asked her if she was tired of climbing ladders and had decided to just do her customers' windows at the laundromat. I had

to do my own laundry, and it's a bustle in there from 6 to 7 in the morning. First, grab a machine. Bruna Lecce places second, so, while I'm loading the laundry, I rest her dish of boiled haddock or cod on the change box of the machine. More than once I've had people blinking and waiting. They don't want to be noticed noticing me, so I pretend I see nothing. They watch the steps: clothes in, soap in, coins in, push. But they're all really wondering "What part does that fish play in the wash? Is she really going to throw it in?" I can't help a good laugh at that point and explain Bruna Lecce's unique laundromat residence.

Well, Lewczak the Oenologist struck again—not with a salmanazar this time, but with five heavy distinguished reds. A 1974 Callaway Petite Sirah, a 1974 Antoniolo Gattinara, a 1971 Freemark Abbey Cabernet Sauvignon, a 1980 Chateau Baychevelle, and a 1971 Chateau-Margaux. Five members of the Men of Taste wine-tasting club and myself sat down to this sipping after a morning on the dunes. The decanter, candle, glasses of two types, and cradled bottles arrived. They had stood five weeks and were ready for decanting and tasting. Form sheets and pens were put out so that each person could judge each wine for clarity, color, aroma, bouquet, body, acid, tannin, sugar, balance, unresolved finish, general taste, and an overall opinion. The measure rests between 0 and 20. This ultimate check sheet is the result of three years of additions and eliminations by the Men of Taste. What a way to spend an October afternoon—in that vineyard, this chateau, that year, and this company! Wine is the best of drinks. It is always educating itself and us.

The whale watch for Coast Week 1984 was one of those intense and delightful days spent in nature and kept in one's memory forever after. Beauty is hard to forget. It causes a lot of joy, too. The day was right to begin with—no wind, calm seas. After a swift orientation in the morning, we rejoined at one o'clock at Macmillan Wharf—new friends were quickly made, old friends were greeted heartily, and we were off. Oh, beautiful Provincetown, do you know how you look dwindling away, the wake of a boat in front of you? Phantasmagoric—the same as you will when we approach you again after all is done. Once offshore, our energy switched to pelagic, or ocean-going, birds. These shearwaters, jaegers, skuas, gannets, and petrels spend most of their lives on the water. Strong, dramatic, and so determined, they work the ocean surface for sand eels and other small fish. They are far more easily identifiable than shore birds. Anyone going on a whale watch could identify each species with a little study and a guide in hand—it makes half the trip.

The other half is drama, too; 20-foot small whales and 50- to 60-foot silent, slow-surfacing, and diving black smooth creatures that make you love them in one look. Tons of flesh gliding through tons of salt water. The view is one of comfort, sociability, and play. Such a giant could destroy what we are before him—tiny humans out of our element, held by a steel hull. The idea of aggression never comes to the minds of these

trusting humans who dash from port to starboard to view something equally as wonderful as themselves. Because they may do it only once or rarely, and because the event is presented so well, they are overwhelmed—as they should be; it's good for the soul. Finbacks, humpbacks, and one minke are spotted. Windburn, sunburn, and the feel of leg muscles shifting to sealeg muscles add to the physical aspects of the day. When all has been sighted, thrilled over, and put into each person's precious-memory bank, the Provincetown profile exhibits itself phantasmagorically again—under a ball of Indian-summer-red sun—first above it, then in it, then gone, leaving evening.

We had two sixtieth wedding anniversaries in Provincetown last month. Al and Helene Smith of the Joshua Paine House had a gala celebration at the VFW Hall. I suppose I'll see Al out in the cranberry bogs this week. Frank and Marion Bent celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary on September 29, the same date as the birthday of his wheelchair-pushing comrade, Lillian Howard. The trio celebrated many years of comradeship.

How did you like that cover photo of Anthony Souza and Charley? Now he is *really* an original—brilliant, very cheery, and not connecting for a moment to what the bulk of mankind seeks. He is contentment in a body, a human who enjoys his life moment by moment. By his method you miss nothing.

