

## KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

Peter Hutchinson called me the other day with a discovery as he will a few times a year: two wild flowers at "Lake Little League" that he was unable to identify. The first we could piece together over the phone: nodding ladies'-tresses, a member of the orchid family. In this case it was double spiralled on a spike anywhere from six to twenty-four inches. Our locals are usually six to eight inches. They are creamy-white, fragrant, but fast fading, have the diagnostic lower lip petals arching downwards, and are arranged in a double spiral. The leaves are basal, lanceolate, but are so grasslike too that you have to ferret them from all surrounding green to be accurate. Areas of moisture, meadows, swamps, fields, or thickets are its habitats. Because they are white, they often go quite unnoticed and are even stepped on before being noticed. It was a thrill to see them propagating through the area. As for the second flower, we agreed upon its being a penstemon, but couldn't determine which one so far afield. So we made a date for the next day at 3 pm. We biked together for the identification.

Penstemons are of the snapdragon family, and our locale grows a varying fifteen species. This particular penstemon is the hairy beard tongue. Spectacular in color and design, but also close to the ground and can be missed by a casual walker. Penstemon hirsute, hairy beard tongue, is in the violet-blue hue group with a wooly stem, a stalk. The flowers are trumpet or snapdragon shaped, the lower lip hairy and almost closing the flower. The unopened flower looks like a compaction of energy jamming around the calyxes, three or four horizontally-looking as if they want to burst open as you are looking at them. A beautiful design and growing healthily across that moist field.

The treat of the day was to find a third species, scarce and new in that area far from the first two species. It is Virginia meadow beauty of its own family, and in its newness to us even more dramatic than our first two identifications. The stem is four-sided, the leaves paired and opposite, some toothed, some ovate, some smooth, some elliptic. This Virginia meadow beauty is also excep-

tionally dramatic to view because its four wide pink petals give show to twice as many, eight, large bright-yellow stamens that give the effect of miniature fireworks cascading through the air. The fruit is urn-shaped and prompted Thoreau to call it cream-pitcher shaped. Most meadow beauty species are tropical, but this Virginia meadow beauty is hardy enough for Cape Cod and a little league field. We were thrilled. All through this investigation, Bunny Grant, out for her diurnal walk, tagged along enjoying as well and asking mushroom questions. We didn't break the ongoing study for any small talk, but Bunny understands, and when she had her information, left the two of us crouched in the wet mumbling Latin to one another.

October 15th will be a big day for all of Provincetown, for the library in particular, but that is all of Provincetown. The repair of our beloved library is nearing. The selectmen have chosen a contractor, and so scaffolding may be in place at this date. Marcia Shannon of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners will visit Provincetown and will be holding a meeting/discussion at 1 pm at the library. Her message will be one of instruction and guidance to fund raise, to help with the costs of projected plans such as a *Provincetown Room*, the use of a computer to facilitate library business, reading courses, reading groups, and the visits of other library personnel and friends of other libraries to pass information and experience that may help us locally. Everyone and anyone interested is invited to become of help in these projects. This invitation can be your first step in joining us to support the library, its programs, and its ongoing life. We urge you to attend and to lend your knowledge and support. October 15, at 1 pm!

One of our town institutions which is thriving is Maushope, our senior citizen housing. The expertise and the selflessness of Colette Sullivan, Maushope's Executive Director, is the ongoing key to this success. Hours beyond the designated office hours are unselfishly given by Colette Sullivan. The first year of a new building is difficult and time-consuming. Following up any construction problems and the welfare of so many personalities under one roof is far from easy. The tenants have formed a tenants' association and are now more aware of the constant work of managing such a program. All have breathed their sigh of relief in finding a permanent home, and now the work of living together in harmony goes on. Dick Anthony, Kay Touchette, Barbara Jones, and Claire Mingel are the officers. They have their own meetings where problems and plans are discussed and then are passed on to Colette Sullivan. Working together is the concept; last week work stopped for a little play. The tenants joined together for a barbecue, everybody helping with the work. With so much work involved, it's a pleasure to sit a while and just socialize. The community room is of ample space, is comfortable, and

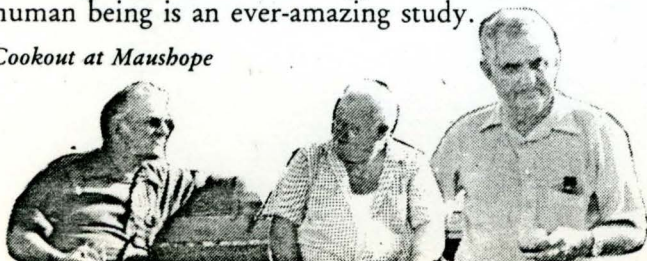


has a complete kitchen to facilitate such occasions. Some of the tenants have gardens and products from these gardens graced the table as well as flowers. Provincetown can be proud of Maushope Elderly Housing as well as the six family buildings involved in three separate programs of public housing. We are doing our share.

As we are writing about our oldsters, the Sunday the US. Open was rained out, history of and asides of tennis were featured. The section I tuned in on was the seniors, the over 70s, over 80s, and over 90s. Yes, that is a group of two with an anxious 89 years, 6 months candidate rearing to get into that class. It was a wonderfully rounded story. Septuagenarians, octogenarians, and nonagenarians dressed in tennis whites rallying carefully in a slightly stooped crouch, but for these fellows it's in the bones now and their natural stance. They look so fine on the grass courts at the Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island. The tournament was on, and they were ready. The top seed was interviewed: trim, without glasses, quick spoken, and in his late seventies. The interviewer was asking questions of regime and diet. It must certainly be a strict and studied diet to bring this fellow this far as an athlete. "Don't look at me," was his response. "All I eat is meat, potatoes, and ice cream." The number two seed was then interviewed as to diet. More soft-spoken, the reply was, "Well, I get up about 5:30 and have a cup of tea. A half-hour later I have a martini." "A martini?" "Yeh, it gets me going." "Did you have a martini this morning?" "No, I have a tournament to play today."

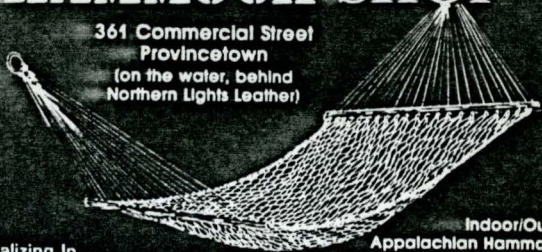
Next, one of the wives was interviewed: a large and buxom woman, blonde, bejeweled, and full of life. She knew the language of smiling well. "Do you think it's a good idea for these fellows at their age to be playing a sport as strenuous as tennis?" "Oh, it's wonderful for them. If these old fellows didn't have their tennis, they'd dry up and blow away. And, I'll tell you, it's good for us. It makes them better husbands. It makes them better lovers. It's good for everybody. The cheering wives of equal years agreed. Their award banquet was next, a 92-year-old receiving the first award. He put down his bourbon to go center stage and receive his award. Formal dress and drinks all around. They may be doing everything a little more slowly, but the gutsy spirit is still there. Imagine being over 90 years old, still planning tournaments, strategy, and social life. A human being is an ever-amazing study.

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