



# BARBARA RUSHMORE **BLOOMS** WHERE SHE IS TRANSPLANTED



## Kelly's Corner

BY JAN KELLY



BARBARA RUSHMORE SITS ACROSS THE TABLE FROM ME rolling pennies out of a three gallon bucket, compliments of *Suzy Cream Cheese*. *Suzy* donated the pennies to Barbara's Trees For Town Project because her winter was not as bad as she had expected. You've got to really need money to roll pounds and pounds of pennies. Barbara Rushmore will do it for the sake of a tree.

We were discussing the last three trees planted: a Bradford Pear in memory of Linda Silva at the site where she was murdered September 12, 1996; a Sweetgum for Aaron Avellar at the new offices of the Center For Coastal Studies at Ryder and Bradford Streets; and a Weeping Mulberry for Gordon Gaskill, a man who knew trees and plants for loving and for a living. Barbara Rushmore has been planting trees around town for 20-25 years and she has planted close to 100 memorial trees.

"Frances Euler was our Founding Mother. She thought too many trees in town had perished and we had to take action to replant them. But Frances had a black thumb. Well Ray Wells joined us and she had some experience with plantings. Then Mary Hackett Everett joined us and Ghee Patrick, and we became 'Regreening of Provincetown.'

"We learned by doing, one tree at a time. We thought we would plant and the town would maintain, but it's only recently that the town has a building and grounds committee that helps so much. We still need volunteer waterers and help improve our islands downtown. The Department of Public Works has been great, clearing poison ivy on Shankpainter Rd and the pathway at Harry Kemp Way, but we still have a watering problem.

"The Beautification Committee and Regreening merged and made plans for a ten foot wide 340 foot long stretch from MacMillan Pier to Fisherman's Wharf—the Provincetown Waterfront Memorial Park.

"When the *Patricia Marie* and the *Captain Bill* went down, the town was devastated and this was one way to bring healing. We planted almost 50 trees, all dedicated, many to fishermen. When those two boats went down, we started naming trees for lost people. Eventually we will have a plaque for all who were lost at sea. We continued the concept. The Family Tree Project is for AIDS victims. We purposely mingled all

our lost citizens, whatever the cause of death.

"Chris Silva, Al Silva's son, whose boat was the *Christy Boy*, died in a diving accident. He was only in his twenties and so handsome and so knowledgeable about the sea, this harbor, shell-fishing, catching and cleaning fish. He received the largest funeral since Monsignor Duarte. We have Justin Avellar's tree looking out over the sea.

"Rodney Garbato was a summer visitor, a writer...so well liked...he died of AIDS...we planted an olive tree for him. We have some trees that lean right over the water.

Olive trees can take the salt water spray. We planted one for Preston Babbitt who did so much for the town. He owned the Rose & Crown Guest House, was an artist and was active in the community.

"Everybody in Provincetown overlaps. People here are multifaceted, have many talents. I planted a Russian Olive tree for Edie Costa Rose, too. For Gwen Bloomingdale and Barbara Gard I planted two Japanese Black Pines which are shaped by the wind. For John Snow, our witty bon vivant town moderator, I planted a sycamore maple at the gas dock and dingy tie-up because he used to greet visiting dignitaries there.

"For Grace Gouveia and her brother Cul, I planted Black Pines side-by-side, as they were in life. Herman DeSilva, Manny Zora and Frankie "Bottles" Souza are in that area.

And now the fifty plaques that will be a job. Carefully drilling holes, but by the end of June they'll all be up. We have Paul Christo, Ron Schleimer and Nicky Wells—three Scarlet Oaks—out on Shankpainter Rd...they'll all be tagged.

"Sometimes I receive memorial donations. Kay O'Donnell donated for her brother "Harmony" Veara. I planted Scarlet Oaks for him and Joe the Barber.

"When I started Trees For Town, I put out small wine carafes in 10-12 places. I collect each week in summer, less often off season. I have a

milk can in front of the library and a wooden cut out flower box in front of Bubala's.

"I get the trees from the Sylvan Nursery in Westport, MA and have been doing so for 20 years. They're very nice to me. If I get \$1,000 - 1,200 worth of trees, they sell them to me wholesale. They also replaced one tree that didn't make it. I'm not non-profit, so I have to pay taxes and shipping. I'm also not a town board, so I have the freedom to plant on private property.

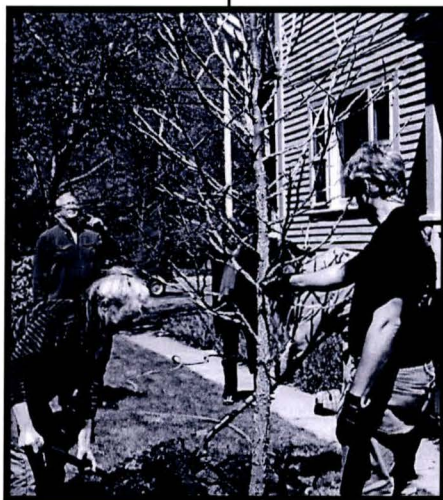
"When I first came to P'town, I was so thrilled to be 'in the country.' I brought 100 tulip bulbs with me and planted them all upside down, not knowing much back then. A few managed to turn in the soil and come up. People would say, 'I've never seen a tulip so close to the ground!' I would say, 'Oh, they're from New Jersey.'

"I made bayberry candles, jelly...the first year. Everything once. But I had never planted and the town was so bare from Dutch Elm Disease and the Hurricane of '38. People had not been eager to plant, especially near their buildings, But now we've come so far. If a tree perishes, we replace it with another variety. For Chelsea Earnest we planted a Kousa Dogwood by the Bas Relief."

I asked Barbara, as she so patiently continued to roll Suzy Cream Cheese's pennies, about the amount of volunteer time involved. "Time? It's not as if it takes time, I enjoy it. I must say in the past few years no trees would have been planted if it weren't for the highway department.

"When I get a big order, I ask if it's OK to have it delivered to town property. David Guertin tells me 'If they come at 7 AM, I'll have people to offload.' Then they're in a safe place under trees and near water. We're mostly women who plant and a 100-200 pound tree is too heavy. Their backhoe saves both backs and time.

"I have a list of regular volunteers, about 15. I start calling when I have a project. When I get five volunteers, I stop. I don't plant in summer, just in spring and fall. I've had so many wonder-



ful volunteers through the years as you know, Kelly. Jackie Freitas is always there. Robin Evans tends the flower plantings around the playgrounds. She waters too. She is knowledgeable and helps a great deal.

"Along these 75 years, the town has become affluent. The homes are physically better off. There are attractive gardens and plantings, repaired fences, straightened stairs. There's an interest in doing things right with plantings for the whole yard, not just a lawn.

"It's ten times nicer but the real beauty is in the sky, the beach. That will always be there. We're lucky...the town is lucky. We've had no bad fire to destroy the town, no urban renewal. City planners have resisted. The state highway mentality of traffic flow has not taken over. We prefer pedestrians to cars. We manage not to let well-meaning people widen our streets. That's good, Narrow is safer."

"Do you get great satisfaction seeing your trees thrive all over town?"

"Oh yes, especially at this time of year. The

Bradford Pear trees are in bloom. As I go down Commercial St. I remember each tree as I pass. For my sister Mimi, I planted a Carpathian Walnut at 532 Commercial St., a Washington Hawthorne for Christy who first operated a restaurant at the Little Fluke location. At Harry Kemp Way Karen DePalma planted a row of Kwansan Cherry. I had \$500 in the bank so I went to David Guertin and asked him if he would dig the holes. I would buy five more Kwansan cherries and plant them along the parking meters on the other side of the street. People donated more and the D.P.W. cleaned the land. We have a grassy patch there so we put a bench too. 'Harry Kemp Park Place' we call it.

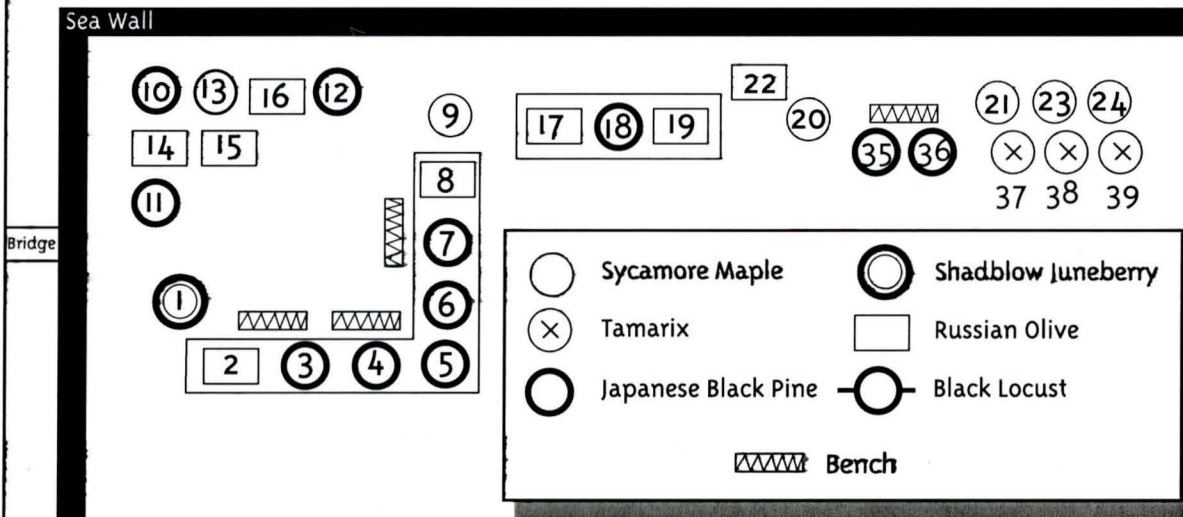
"I don't think there is any memorial to anyone that is nicer than a tree. Shade, smell and attraction. I like trees planted for an occasion, too. A commitment, a birth...a tree improves the town and works out just fine. They're not the Taj Mahal, but they're so simple and within the means of most people. They live long, but not forever...we don't need to have anything last forever."

Thank you, Barbara and may we all be together in some way on Memorial Day.

# PROVINCETOWN MEMORIAL WATERFRONT PARK

## Harbor

MacMillan Wharf



This map for tree reference only. It is not drawn to scale.