

# KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

I look forward to a great event for all of us. On February 8th in Town Hall will be held the first Annual Year-Rounders Celebration. From 10-4 there will be tables with representatives of and pamphlets explaining the Fire Department, the Rescue Squad, Housing Authority, Coastal Studies, Art Association, library, schools, Community Center, aerobics, Karate, rug hooking group ("The Happy Hookers" we call them), Highland Fish and Game, town committees, any group of year-round timing that would like to show their input into the year-round functioning of Provincetown. it's a celebration of us.

A giant poster with as many photographs of year-rounders as can fit will be printed and keyed. You could be M-14 or P-42, but you could be there and traceable. We are not just a summer resort, we are not just part-time living in condos, we are a 12-month, functional group of people who have continuity to our lives, not roller coaster direction. At 4:00 the explanations go and the school population will help us set up for a 6:00 pm potluck supper. Various musical groups will perform. Linguica Trio to munch your Vinha Dalhoes by, recorder music to chat by, and rock to dance by. Dancing will go on from the end of supper until 12:00-1:00. We can all help; we can all work; we can all have fun and enjoy ourselves. It's by us for us, the year-rounders, and this is the first get involved from the first. What a boost to your memory bank, to your photo album. And every year in the future it is our day. Watch and listen for more information, February 8th will be the day.

Halley's Comet will be in and out of your lives for the next few months, so you might as well have some information of the celestial phenomenon.

It is Edmund Halley who researched that comets have periodicity, and it is when he predicted the appearance of a comet in 1758 that science took steps over phobia and mania. The comet that he contended to be reappearing on schedule came to bear his name, Halley. until that time, all comets and eclipses were considered disasters or "bad stars"-even winter solstice was feared as the end of the earth.

Not that Halley's theory crushed superstition with one heavy step. Not at all. Mark Twain claimed to have entered the earth with Halley's Comet in 1835 and indeed he did, two weeks later. he died the day after Halley's showing in 1910, as he predicted. In 1835 Halley's Comet was at its perihelion, closest to the sun and in 1910 it was three times closer to the earth than it will be for its 1985-1986 appearance. Comet gas, pills, and comet insurance were available for the paranoid. Comet suppers and comet dances were available for smiling fatalists. There is a report of human sacrifice of a virgin attempted in Oklahoma in fear of the 1910

appearance of Halley, but luckily the sheriff arrived in time.

Plagues and famines were associated with comets through history. The death of Mark Twain, Edward VII, and the presage of World War I were events that set fear where science had gained. Halley's Comet became a "dis-aster" again. It spun out to the sun's gravitational pull and in 1948 was farthest away from us. it has been tracking back since then. But this is 1985 and 1986 and with the media as advanced as it is today, I suggest Halley's Comet will be like Hurricane Gloria who was tamed by voyeurism. The coverage will be extensive and it will make a 75 year old attempt at human sacrifice even more ludicrous. We have, besides our intense ground media, four space probes and a space shuttle.

Planetariums will be electric with human excitement. The scientific suggestion is that a comet is the residue of our origins as a solar system and with all that can be learned, the big boom may become more melodious.

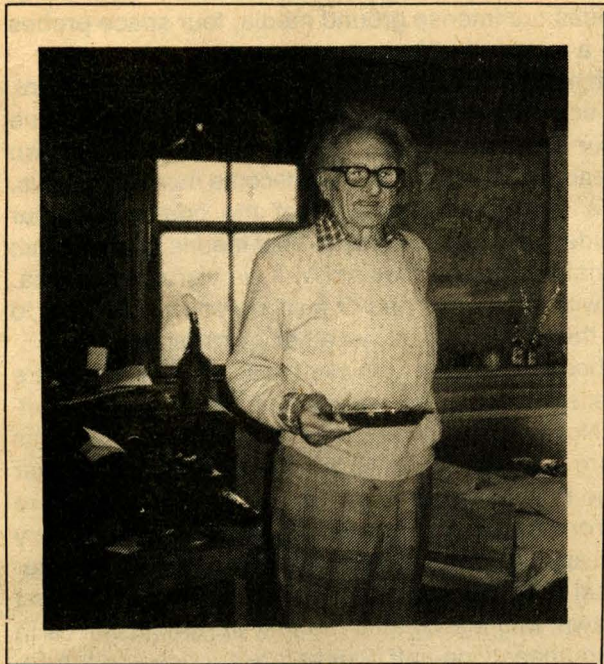
It's true that observation of the comet from our latitudes will not be excellent. That means to view it with the naked eye, we'd do better if we were in Australia. But with binoculars and/or a scope you will be able to see the historic event, weather permitting.

Choose a spot far from electric lights. The dunes are excellent. Dark nights (nearer the new moon) are better. November 16th was one of these, eleven nights before full moon. Look to the end of Orion's Belt over to the Pleiades and then just south. you'll have more than one try, so don't moan if it's inclement. In January it will appear in the west one-and-a-half to 2 hours after sunset. The last week in February it will be in the east at dawn. Mid-March until the first of April, it will be in the southeast one-half hour before sunrise and the second week in April during early evening. Happy viewing.

We have several senior citizens who will be seeing Halley's Comet for the second time. Heaton Vorse, who will be 84 years old on December 18th, is one of them. Heaton saw Halley's Comet from the deck of a ship headed for Gibraltar when he was aged eight. His parents awakened him at 10 pm for the grand event. Star gazing is one of Heaton's interests and has been along with many others all these years. Heaton first arrived in Provincetown in 1906 with his parents, Mary Heaton Vorse and Albert White Vorse. Heaton's full name is Heaton Albert White Vorse. That "White" is proudly kept in the family name. Heaton is a descendant of Peregrine White. Peregrine White was born on the Mayflower and his cradle is displayed at Plymouth, Mass.

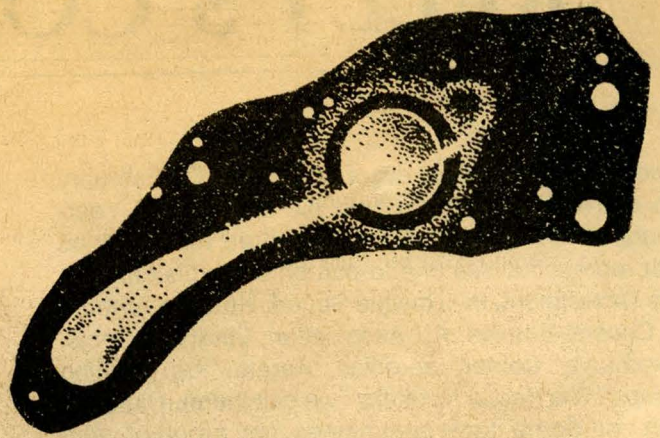
There is heavy discussion as to who was the first child born in the "New World." Virginia Dare was born at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. Peregrine White was

born 1620. But Jamestown's entire colony was wiped out by the Indian tribe of which Pocahontas was a member. Therefore Virginia Dare has no descendants. Peregrine White had eleven children and though his dad died in that first trying winter, Peregrine spread the name of White so well that Heaton has cousins in every state of the union. he has many on the Cape. His grandmother was born in a cabin shown to Heaton as a child. The following year the Canal was there. Heaton's mother's family started twenty years later in 1640. Heaton has descendants in all the New England states: Heatons, Paines, Blackmans, and Allens. Ethan Allen is Heaton Vorse's great-grandfather. No wonder Mary Heaton Vorse writes in her book of Provincetown, *Time and The Town*, "Though I've been all over the world, this is home."



Heaton Vorse

So in 1906, Albert White Vorse, Mary Heaton Vorse and young Heaton came to Provincetown and in 1907 they bought the Kibbe Cook House on Commercial Street. All were born in Manhattan, but Provincetown and Kibbe Cook House were and are home. Heaton grew up beach plumbing, oystering, mushrooming, sailing, and swimming from the age of five. That's about 80 years of these activities. He had a horse "Kite" whom he didn't cherish because of all the daily grooming, feeding, and exercising. A horse was fine but Heaton wanted a sailboat. His parents told him, "When you can swim to the Point, you can have your own boat." Heaton did at 14 and was awarded his boat, *The Molasses III*. *Molasses I* belonged to Dad, *Molasses II* belonged to Mother. When Mary Heaton Vorse would sail and breast feed infant Heaton, all sailboats would converge. All the Molasseses were Swampscott dories, same as the Tamerlane at the Red Inn.



Heaton left the merry and casual life of Provincetown for Columbia University where he studied chemistry. From college life, he became involved in labor movements and labor unions. Mary Heaton Vorse was a labor reporter and Heaton was an organizer. Ever the radical, Heaton was in the picket lines with the protesting workers. Sit Down Strikes were flaring. "A man has a right to his job," was the slogan. In 1937, Heaton was shot in both legs while picketing. A chunk of destroyed muscle in the right leg caused a cavern mid-calf. Buckshot can be felt in both legs. These wounds kept Heaton from serving in combat in World War II. He worked on top secret work in Washington instead.

So secret, he couldn't tell me its content more than 40 years later. If the FBI wanted to identify Heaton, they would x-ray his legs. Like Betty Grable, he could insure his legs with Lloyd's of London. Fifty years later, those muscles still jump adjusting to the metal. A vigilante group shot and wounded Heaton and relegated him to a lengthy recuperation on crutches, but Heaton won the strike.

Heaton's life is still full of activity at 84 years old. He's even a movie star, having been in *Reds*. If you buy the record or tape you'll hear Heaton singing *I Don't Want To Play In Your Yard*, accompanying himself on guitar. Heaton and his mother knew John Reed, but that's all another story. You'll always hear Heaton speak at Town Meeting and be listened to by all and carefully. Heaton's half-brother, Joel O'Brien, also carries on the family tradition of political interest by being articulate at Town Meeting as well as the family tradition of reporting—Joel on the radio, Heaton in print. Heaton has written for every publication on the Cape since he settled here year round.

It's always a pleasure to visit Heaton. You get good conversation: intelligent, and objective. That's probably what I like most about Heaton, his intelligent objective view of life, his deductive reasoning, yet, all so warm and human. Oh sure, Heaton is full of criticisms but they are studied observations, put forth because he cares. He doesn't damn.

His mind is ever on the future. The next Halley's Comet and a better world. He was planting crocus bulbs in the December earth as we spoke.