
KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

(Provincetown) The lady slippers, May flowers, and star flowers are fading. See you next year they palely promise. They are preparation flowers, a burst of springtime growth to let you know summer strength is coming. Predominance of plant growth, summer green is marching on, over tender blossoms, to feed and shelter the universe. Wisps of spring become stalwart plants of high sun and hot season. A never ending quarterly process guides us gently through the calender year—will be there through your joys and sorrows, whether you notice or not. Isn't it a relief we don't have to do all the work in life? Looking closer, we do precious little.

Pollock and squid are running at the pier. The menu variations are endless but the real fun of it is the catching. Separate yourself from it all for an hour a day or so. Early morning is best. Go catch loads of them. Maybe then the skittish mackerel will come in.

Linda Tennyson and family give the best party ever of vital and simplistic means: oysters, champagne, Bossa/Brazilian music, live dancing, a deck on the Bay, good company and most of all good art. Jeannie and Benji were on the oysters. I always give them an hour or so of steady shucking. Victor and Travis were on the champagne. The music of this new group Blue Bossa, a Latin jazz band was the best to get a party going. Sarah Bailey on bass, Lisa Brown on drums and announcements, Ginny Karmen on flute, oboe, and any horn that passed her way, and Rick Arnold on guitars kept a smiling, sipping, slurping, and singing party going. The night air on a spacious deck enjoyed by so many fun and interesting people kept you aware of what you may be missing or somebody's decided taste in art. Many pieces were sold. Red circles enliven a party. What a party; look at it, join in, enjoy it for the rest of your life. I'm so glad for the success of the Tennyson Gallery. The art is varied and most of it of local artists. Most of the artists exhibited were there to enjoy our response to their work. That certainly adds a special touch. The space you have to move in is not only soothing and stimulating on so many levels, it's also never cramped. A party that flows. Maybe it's just as well it's once a year. We could get jaded.

Have you seen John Quinn's sign at Provincetown Realty on Bradford Street? A quick sign was made and tacked outside, "It's Wisteria." I wonder how many times John had to answer that question before he finally made up the sign?

I had a special invitation this week. The first graders of the Veteran's Memorial School were heading west.

They set up their own Oregon Trail, wagons and all, in the Beech Forest. From the Beech Forest to Race Point—overnight originally, 9 pm, secondarily—and they did stay till 9:00, reluctantly leaving. It was a wonderful day for the students, for first grade teachers Cathy Skowron and Sandy Bostwick and anyone who was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of this. Red wagon train worming up hills, skidding down hills and plodding the flat ground until they finally reached their goal. A four mile stretch to Race Point. Why? You're wondering. The Veteran's Memorial School has been studying the "Westward Ho!" movement this semester. The theme is evident throughout the building. The first grades decided to go west. They can campaign for the job of wagon master. Four students ran for the office. Discussions as to "What is a leader?" and the voting process took place through the campaign. The side bulletin board has their campaign posters. One read like this: "I wet two bee the wigmn bkos I bin on the biktral." The winner and wagon master chosen was Laura Stinson. This is her campaign poster. Laura with oversized baseball cap over her long red hair took command immediately and easily and never let down once through the journey. After all, they all know what a leader is now. There was a medical team. Dawn Henrique was the chief physician. Amy Carreiro, Kelly Howes, and Robby Gray were on the medical staff. Wagon repair was operated by Billy Costa, Peter Cook, Jaima Giaquinto (and she can spell that name), and Shawn Richardson. When asked what tools they had to repair the wagons, Billy said, "None, my father wouldn't let me bring any."

The cooks at the chuck wagon were Julie Anne Hayes Gustafson, Tamarind Parris, Erin Thomas, and Gabriel Henning and Kenny Macara and the clean up crew was Evan Phillips, Eric Freeman, Watt Morris, Nicholas Schneider, and Erica Chase. Erica was ill the night before so mother Valerie came out on the trail to take Erica's temperature. Speech teacher Linda DeBenedetto gave Valerie the video batteries to recharge so Valerie was considered Pony Express. Scott Martin collected maps from the Visitor's Center and from Nelson's Riding Stable. The class studied these during the days of preparation and used them during the long haul west to Race Point. Jobs were the main issue of the project, division of labor and responsibility. The school bus was loaded up. Elmer Baker received and placed wagon after wagon and off to the Beech Forest. The unloading was easier. A line was formed



Laura Stinson's campaign poster

immediately and clothes line rope was in and out and over and under the little red wagons in unique methods of fastening. One wagon was only eighteen inches long, ten inches wide. The few big ones could take the excess. Enough flashlights to dim Times Square and every brand of bug spray, sleeping bags of Muppets, Rainbow Brite, and Care Bears, lunch boxes of Star Wars, Kermit and Sesame Street, more jackets and sweatshirts than Ruth's Rummage, padded the wagons for a variety of stuffed animals. Jaima Giaquinto held her white bunny rabbit, "Cuddles," throughout the ordeal. Only when she had five toasted marshmallows on a stick did Cuddles end up, and I mean "end up", on the sand. Cathy Skowron took a good picture of it. Robby Gray's grandmother Susan Hovig baked Toll House Cookies for everybody. The cookies and beans, marshmallows, "Health Store Hot Dogs," and drinks were in Cathy's car at Race Point. Good that they were. Most canteens and reserves of juice in individual wax cartons were going fast during the packing. Finally the twenty-two six year olds were off. What a racket those wagon wheels made—all day long. By 9:00 they had avoided two sand paths and had discovered the bike trail. Oh, the thrill of discovery. At 9:15 and one hundred yards, Laura thought it was time for a lunch break. Cathy urged onward gently. The first mile was constant readjusting. Wagon contents were slipping, spilling, and dragging. Everybody was responsive and busy.

By 3 pm they reached Race Point. They rested, ate snacks, and then got on with the job of firewood. Danny Kanis emerged as leader of that project. Beans and hot dogs were the main course. They all swore they wouldn't eat "yukky beans" but a bean was as scarce as gold by 5 pm. Marshmallows were everywhere on the sand and the length of Jaima's sleeve. Priscilla and Anthony Jackett went out for a look. Priscilla and I were birdwatching at 7 am in the Beech Forest while waiting for the arrival of the wagon train.

Priscilla asked Evan Phillips. "How was the Oregon Trail?" "Oh, we're still on it." Evan said Sandy Bostwick was eating hot dogs with ear muffs and gloves. Gloves for cold, earmuffs for noise.

The trail was conquered, though at 2 pm, the teachers were wondering "seven more hours of this?" The wheels' noise was constant, like sore throat peepers. Evan fell down and the wagon landed on top of him. "Call the doctor!" went the alarm. Dawn Henrique and crew patched him up. Jaimie White's wagon got away from him and crashed down a hill.

After much struggle to set things right again, Jamie collapsed on his wagon. Toilet paper and water were the high priorities. The bike riders were quite surprised at this miniwagon train of cowboy hats, sombreros, and coon skin caps, but took it very seriously though very smilingly. The final job of the day was to break up the fire, spread it and pour water. They were very stern about this. Wagon leader, Laura Stinson called teacher Cathy Skowron, the night before, questioning if Cathy had remembered to get the permits.

The next day, Wednesday, everybody showed up at school. They were still in such a state of excitement. By Thursday everybody was tired, droopy and catnapping. They had learned to read signs for direction, even though they are too young for the concept of distance or miles versus kilometers. They all wanted to go back mostly to see a snake they had spotted. Kenny Macara thought bikes would be easier next time. We watched the video and they thrilled at each portion remembering all. But they were tired, starting to scratch from poison ivy and were wearing their voices out reacting to themselves. Hearing the video and the live noise is somewhat of a bombardment on ears. Denise Russell had her own special day. Denise is recuperating from a knee operation and the Oregon Trial would be a bit much to maneuver in a wheelchair, so Denise became a guest of the second grade for the day. She had a wonderful time, too. If you want to join in and have fun with the "Westward Ho!" theme, go to the school fair on Tuesday, June 17 at noon. The theme is just that and a whole school's worth.

Speaking of traveling, I hear Zee Von Kleist and Nora Welch are going cross country in September, delivering a car. Their plan is to stay at youth hostels right across the U.S. I insist they put a tape recorder on the front seat. They really should go to Europe together. That formidable duo would be our answer to terrorism and the nuclear cloud.