
KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

(Provincetown) Golden club, our so special pond lily is thriving in the Beech Forest. The Canada geese find it tasty. Nature is sharing rather than being destroyed. The shad bush is enjoying the balance of small blossoms at the end of slender arms. The green leaves of the May and star flowers are ready to set off the unbloomed white. Only in very sheltered areas have they come forth. There were at least 30 warbler watchers at one time today. All quiet, all respectful of the others and the birds' space, and all whispering identifications and locations to each other.

Spotted so far are: pine, palm, Wilson's bay-breasted, parula, black and white, black-throated blue, magnolia, Canada, yellow-rumped, yellow, red-eyed vireo, solitary vireo, Philadelphia vireo, black burnian, oven bird, prairie, and Nashville. A water thrush, a purple finch and several spotted sandpipers were seen too, as well as the many gliding swallows and ground scratching white throated sparrows. The catbirds have been here several days and today for the first time they filled the air around the thickets with their mimicking songs. I think they're simply tired after such a long flight. Florida and the Gulf states is quite a flight when you're only eight-and-a-half inches long. May 17 I heard the first chimney swift. If the weather holds, tomorrow will be even better.

Have you ever received an obscene phone call? At a recent social gathering this question provoked many humorous tales. Donn Hagerty told us of one quite long-winded caller. Instead of verbalizing dismay or shock, Donn just listened. He let the caller go on and on until he was out of words and out of breath. When he was sure the violator had finished, Donn said, "Thank you very much. That's the most attention I've received in 25 years." Dottie Freitas got a collect call, obscene, and unthinkingly she just accepted the charges.

I had two charming apartment hunters visit with me yesterday, Michael and Tricia. Michael is from South Africa and speaks Afrikaans which developed there in the 17th century. South African Dutch is its other name. I asked Michael if he knew a Dr. Anthony Botha, specialist in post nuclear disaster medicine. He told me that indeed he did and that Dr. Botha was now in the Soviet Union assisting the Russian people and government with the study and correction of the nuclear meltdown at Chernobyl. Did you know Dr. Botha visited Provincetown? About 1980, two hundred physicians from most countries of the world met in New York City. These physicians were all experts in post nuclear disaster medicine. Dr. Botha and his wife wanted to rest after the arduous convention and after New York City. They asked a travel agent for "something off the beaten track." So they arrived in

Provincetown in February. The contrast to New York City was a shock to them. I met them on the breakwater. I had been clamming and Mrs. Botha asked me what was in the bucket and then what would I do with them? What did they taste like, etc. etc. So I suggested they come to my house at 1 pm for dinner. They arrived with South African brandy and some dried grapes. I couldn't call them raisins, a bit plump and still on the stem. They loved the oysters, quahaugs, linguica, steamers, and lobsters. Best food they had experienced in America, they said. They were appalled at the amounts of snack foods and sodas and the obvious results of them. I gave Mrs. Botha my pearl collection, mostly quahaug. A passion for pearls she had. Next evening Leonard and Edith Ferguson met with us and we went to the Methodist Church supper, where many were speaking in Portuguese and a transvestite waited on them. "Off the beaten track we wanted and that's what we got." Mr. Botha was an intelligent and hard working researcher, public speaker, and doctor. I'm just sorry he finally has a chance to put into action his years of nuclear disaster studies. He promoted nuclear energy but with the urgency of caution and protection. He may be back for another conference after this, another conference and another shore dinner at Kelly's.

Mary Boyle is a well-known outspoken quasi-political artist who lives in Provincetown for how long, she doesn't know. Not that Mary Boyle wants to leave; she doesn't, she loves Provincetown. The problem is housing, affordable housing, as it is for so many in Town. This problem affects you if you don't own your own property despite age, sex, or nationality. Even if you do own your own property, you can't be smug. Taxes, water, insurance, and upkeep can be threatening, too.

Mary Boyle came to Provincetown seven years ago. Originally from Ohio, she and a friend decided to move to the Cape and they spent three years in Chatham. Being an artist, Mary Boyle was lured to Provincetown, the spot she loves most dearly due to the inspiration she gains from the landscape and the people and something she calls, "the intrinsic nuttiness of the place." Mary Boyle has no formal art training. Self taught and ever an experimenter, she has mastered still lifes, cartoons, sign painting, poster work, and landscapes. Mary waited to experiment with oil painting because "with that amount of money, I had to know what I was doing; oil are expensive." Mary just drew naturally all through her childhood but she had to hide her materials and work in secret since her parents did not approve of this alternative to study. "I just tried everything. Since I had no art training, it was all rules and no rules. So if everything you do is wrong, then all things are equal. It was a roundabout

way to freedom."

That was the problem then and it was conquered and now the problem is housing. Mary Boyle has moved nine times in the last seven months—three times in the last month, yet she has managed to put three shows together, all new material. Whenever a benefit poster was needed by WOMR, Mary did it. She, like many artists, gives freely of her talent. The Missing Link and The Little Store are two of her signs. She helps the theatre company and most individuals who have sought her help. But now Mary is saying, "All right P'Town. I've gone my 900 yards and I don't want to stop. I want to work, I want to create, I want to give. Give me a place to stay. I can't live and paint in a 12'x12'. Being that close to paint fumes twenty-four hours a day can make you ill." Mary Boyle urges the artists to unite, turn the bad to good. Artists do posters, advertisements, give paintings to auctions, draw tourists to the area. But what is the Town doing for the artist? Should they live in vans? A closet? camp? The people in Town who feel the brunt of this housing squeeze could make up a brochure and set it right along all the others at the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce could have two lists, a rotating list of people who need an apartment and flexibilities. Example: "Mary Boyle. Can live with two people. Needs a 14'x14' space and access to water." Not a great demand. The second list would be an ongoing compilation of yearround housing. Artists are also willing to move twice a year as long as they are assured of a spot both times. The townspeople need places to live, places to park, resident discounts, and protection of Town workers. It's difficult to have to pay to see the sunset, to go to the beach, and to park or have the fear that a student will take your job at a lesser wage once July is here. But housing is the biggest problem. Apartment seekers wish there were a bylaw to insure a percentage of each multiple dwelling to be set aside for year round residents. They would like some of the ugly half-used buildings in Town set aside for studio space. No frills, a space, and access to water. There has to be a way for the tourist-worker-artist system to run. Mary feels the summer workers work too hard for their money and so seek diversions of drugs, alcohol, and consumer spending to make themselves feel good for all the hours put in. So many people looking for the same spots keeps that competitive edge sharp.

The artist is part of Provincetown's history as much as the Pilgrims and as much as its unique ecosystem. But an artist needs a permanent place to live. Unless building is loosened and turned to their direction, the artists will only live in history and the brochures. Bonnie Fuoco left. A fine artist, growing steadily. Her apartment is now a condo. She searched in untimely May for a yearround rental, a break. After a futile



Mary Boyle

search, she packed up her materials and few belongings and went back to Philadelphia. She won't waste her precious artistic energy on survival anymore. Though she loves Provincetown, it is spatially and financially too difficult. Mary Boyle is not afraid to speak out, not afraid to be part of government, but this song, written on the seventh of May, warns us that we may lose yet another fine young artist. You can see Mary Boyle's work this summer at the West End Salon, at Spiritus', and whoever else will display this gifted artist.

*Ah, Provincetown, you know I want to stay
your elusive magic still beckons me
But I can't, you know I can't anymore
...and I've been drawing away
Staying away from your shore, don't you
want me any more?... what a wicked twist of fate
you say be gone... don't be late
oh-oh-oh, Provincetown.*

*It's the middle of May
I lost my year-round rental suddenly
I can't find a place to stay in Provincetown
it's not as if I even need a one bedroom
I know the competition can be stiff
while unsold condos stand hovering,
empty enough... I am discovering
I am the fool and life is rough
in Provincetown.*

*So... I guess I'll have to move along
find another town to sing my song
If she'll house me one more summer
then I'm gone, travelling on*

*Oh Provincetown
if you won't shelter me
I'll pack my bags and paintings
take the play that I was writing here
and start another life that there
waiting for me, Oh Provincetown
your artists flee, they run away
no place to stay, no rent for me
in Provincetown.*

7 May 1986 Mary Boyle