
KELLY'S CORNER



Executive director Colette Sullivan reading the lease to prospective tenant

by Jan Kelly

(Provincetown) Will that chill east wind ever stop so that the warblers can start? One black-throated blue, one red-eyed vireo, prairie, palm, and loads of yellow rumped warblers, not astounding, and weather is the culprit. It's a strange feeling to be in sheltered woods hearing the roar of the back shore. Days of north wind will keep the ocean aggravated to noisy waves. It can be heard for miles if you are in a receptive spot. The birders came to the Beech Forest from many surrounding states. How lucky I am to be in biking distance. Cold and disappointed by 8 am or so, most had left. I stayed on in the low part of the loop to watch the scene-stealing yellow rumps; thought I'd saturate myself with the one species. After 10 minutes or so of watching flitting and butterfly-like movements, a "swoosh" came through the same area, a second "swoosh." With chattering warning sounds the yellow-rumps escaped. A female merlin perched, cursing her miss and developing another strategy. The face markings are not strong and the breast feathers are buff-colored making a camouflage pattern with the bark, branches, and few remaining oak leaves. She rested about five minutes. Only her head moved. Then she swooped over the pond and I could hear the alarm of yellow-rumps on the other side—a miss again. Then back again. I went as quickly as I could to the spot where I sighted her. No merlin, only a few feathers from an unfortunate yellow-rumped warbler. This drama made up for the scar-

city of species to view.

Back home in civilization, the street kids of the bird world were carrying on so loudly, they scared the neighborhood cats. Two house sparrows were defending their nest against a bold and tormenting starling. What a racket. I interfered and the starling took his defeat politely.

The Art Association is involved with the number forty according to their last announcement. From May 23 to June 26, there will be a juried exhibition open to all artists 40 years and younger. Jim Forsberg will be displaying a collection of works from 1940s through the 1980s.

The "moving in" days at the Housing for the Elderly was an experience on so many levels. All construction men, superintendents, and contractors had left the scene. Colette Sullivan, Arthur Jones, Nora Welch, and myself were left to help senior citizens understand a lengthy lease, practice the three different keys given out, (outer door, apartment door, and mailbox) remove tape, plastic and cardboard from new stoves and new refrigerators, plug in appliances, activate the circuit breaker for the electric stoves, explain the cautions of electric stove use, (one tenant wanted to know where the flame was and we did have a few creased fingertips first day), screw in coaxial cable, activate the circuit breaker for heat and set three thermostats (living room, bathroom, and bedroom), activate the two 80 gallon hot water heaters, straighten out the jumbled numbers of the intercom system, order immediate maintenance supplies, help move furniture, place garbage cans in their proper



furniture drone

spots, direct a new crew of finish painters who arrived, check each room for defects of any kind, test windows, water pressure, locks, doorbells, peepholes, and buzzers and finally leave a calm and happy tenant—24 times. Then there were the four family units to deal with and then the phone company, the post office and the relatives and friends. These were not short or easy days. They were not only days, the experience went non-stop without punctuations like noon, five o'clock, or bedtime. It ravelled itself around your being so that you were thinking or doing nothing else, dreaming nothing else, blank to all else. If someone told you a sensational piece of international news, if a friend you hadn't seen for years entered the scene, if someone told you it was Xmas or your birthday, or there was a live circus on Commercial Street, they would all get the same response, a blank stare. All energy, every brain cell of these four people was in use and on automatic pilot, no stopping. We'll never be able to repeat it again. I hope we don't have to; I hope the needs are met.

Around the four in the center of the hive, a constant group of drones drove up in any vehicle that could carry boxes, bags, furniture, paintings, lamps, plants, brooms, and television sets. I didn't see one suitcase. I didn't see one record player. The moment we hooked up the TV, a game show filled the room with the first sound waves. The tenant was lost to conversation for a few moments, but beamed with one more touchstone of home. As they would watch someone winning a console tv, a trip to Hawaii, or

\$10,000, I would look at the dropped packaging and baggage around me. Looks like "no scheme to it." But felt pens spelled out "kitchen," "blankets," and "photographs." Next week it will all be in its place and live happily ever after. When you've had substandard housing or changed domicile due to the whims of progress and you finally enter an apartment that is yours and is brand new, plus the fact that people care about, protect, and value that property in a humane and non-profit manner, you can finally be relieved and smile as hard as you can. Many cried. I have tears as I write and recall. All were happy. Besides the physical comforts of plumbing, heat, and-ventilation, they have companionship, someone to talk to when they wish, many to meet with when they wish, but they can also close the door and be alone and private when they wish. Choices have been rebuilt into a narrowing life. We all feel so good about it.

In June we will have the dedication and Open House so that all of you can have an opportunity to visit and to see the result of so many years and so much work. You may be invited at other times, too. One couple is planning to hold a celebration for their forty-ninth wedding anniversary. That will be in the Community Room. And they're already deciding where to put the Xmas tree. I'll write an article recapping the major steps of planning and construction and the resulting outcome before the dedication. You'll have its history so you can enjoy your visit here.