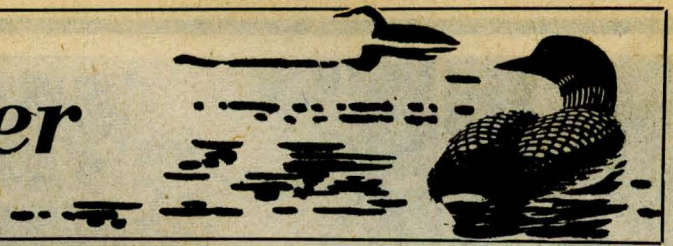


Kelly's Corner

by Jan Kelly



Philly Alexander and his six graft tree

The languorous heat of Indian summer, not that stifling humid summer heat, but days you can enjoy sporting and nights you can sleep easily. At equinox the days and nights share equal time so the sun's rays are gone and radiational cooling can start nearly two hours earlier. Balance seems to be the criterion. No weather extremes, everything manageable. No need for central heating or air conditioning. It is perhaps our most natural time and the most beautiful.

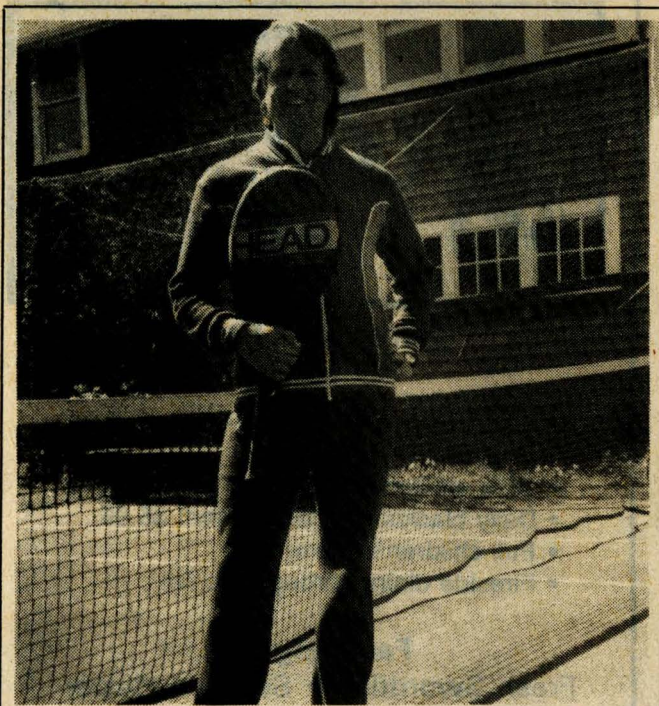
Bluest of skies, bluest of ocean and so much sand to reflect it. The final harvesting of home gardens as well as cranberries in bogs, wild black cherries and final beach plums in sanded hills, mushrooms in dark woods and bright dunes and sea clams from the stretched out new moon flats. Indian summer must be so beautiful so that we won't miss summer too much. An adult season to prepare us for winter. This reason of the seasons is always there, even if you are not looking.

What beautiful weather to just stay outside. When you run out of things to do, which you won't, or just want to slow down, go visiting. Visit people who will be in their gardens or on their decks so you can stay outside.

I visit Philly Alexander often. His garden is beautiful and bountiful. Philly has thirty-two types of dahlias blossoming in soft to raging colors. Every year he lovingly digs the bulbs, tags them with individual nomenclature and stores them in his shed for the spring planting. The profusion of other species transplanted successfully by Philly, and cultivated, is a pleasure to be in for half the year. A lawn that feels like a carpet

displays the variegated hues all the better. The other half of the land is winter vegetable needs. A compost heap of impressive dimensions is at the end of the garden. I've been saving buckets of the recyclable garbage for Philly for years. Nothing is wasted at Philly's house. When I arrived he was stuffing peppers for the freezer. I coaxed him outside to that beautiful weather for a few dahlias and a few vegetables. In the middle of this lovely vegetable-flower garden is a sixty year old apple tree with six grafts grown onto it, five types of apples and one pear. Philly's mother, Mary Carlos Alexander bought an over-sized apple. She saved one seed and planted it. Philly warned her that the apples would not be good, but would be wild apples. Finally, when the tree was ten feet tall, Philly's mother acquiesced and let Philly graft the tree. He cut a limb off the tree and wedged a three inch and a four inch piece of a limb cut from his grandfather Carlos' cultivated apple tree. He waxed the wedges and cut limb and then covered it with white cloth. That was Fall. In the Spring Philly took the cloth off and checked. Both grafts took but Philly removed the lesser one. Leaving the stronger one only gives it a better chance. Philly repeated this process five times with apple grafts and once with a pear graft. That's quite a tree.

Philly's house is of equal interest. It is the house he was born in and has always lived in. Philly Alexander will be eighty-one on December 16. The house was floated over from the Point. It was an ell of a house and it was too large for the piece of land it was floated over for, so Philly's dad, John J. Alexander bought it and



Nute the tennis coach

put it on the land at 248 Bradford Street. It has been there for 119 years. The lower level was a boat house. Besides boat storage, it was used to mend nets and sails. Upstairs were the living quarters. Eleven children were raised in this house, nine boys and two girls. Many of the boys were gardeners and landscapers. They had a truck farm business while in high school. They fished during the Depression. You can read where they are referred to in Harry Kemp's rhyme of Provincetown nicknames. "The Bullfrog Brothers work so hard." Philly is the only child left and if he is an indication, Harry Kemp was correct in his line. Besides a house which is kept prim and spotless like a true New England Inn and a garden which could be called Eden, Philly has served his town in true Alexander tradition. He has been Dog Officer, Animal Inspector, Tree Warden, served on the Breakwater Commission, was on the Board of Zoning Appeals for seven years and has been with the Fire Department for forty-two years. Ever involved in the welfare of Provincetown, Philly is quick to become embroiled in political discussion. Beach nourishment was the discussion this day. Philly's not shy at all about sharing his political views. Discussion ended, back to the peppers and me on my way. If you want to see a picture of Philly's grandfather, who was also John J., go into Town Hall and look at the Charles Hawthorne painting of the fishermen in oil skins. Philly's grandfather is the man holding the water jug. He was from the Azores, was a grower of pineapples and lost one eye which was gored by a bull. Without the benefit of a doctor's expertise he healed and lived to the age of ninety-seven. Let's hope Philly can beat that record.

Robert "Nute" Reeves is our tennis club manager and tennis coach. Members are unloading their rust of the summer on court number two daily. Nute works it out of us and sweeps it off before his after school junior

tennis members arrive for their lessons. A year of munchkin tennis coaching has developed Nute's teachings skills to a basic and minimal approach which really gets results.

People just walking by on Bradford Street have been impressed with the teaching sessions and have signed up. If you've thought time and again you would like to play tennis, Fall is a good time to start. The weather is right and you'll have many months of practice before the summer season. Nute arranges games for visitors and locals and keeps the club running smoothly. It's quite a combination to have an athlete, a sportsman, a business manager, a financier, a teacher, a child psychologist and handsome guy with a scintillating personality in charge of your tennis club. When he isn't moving swiftly in all these directions in Provincetown, he is peacefully at home in Wellfleet with wife Elsbeth or "Bobo" as we call her. Peacefully, I say. I call Wellfleet black and white tv. I always feel I'm back in the fifties when I'm there. Very picturesque town. How did Robert Reeves get the name "Nute?" It's a name he was dubbed in high school, Nutria, the largest rodent in South America. Makes a lot of sense, huh? Well you do have a choice: Robert and Elsbeth or Nute and Bobo.

Josephine DelDeo, representing the Heritage Museum, Barbara Rushmore representing Trustees of the Library, Peter Macara representing the Art Association, myself representing Friends of the Library and assistant librarian, Dan Lewis met yesterday at the library to discuss a fitting tribute to Arthur Markman, Provincetown's "Mr. Volunteer." Checking Markman's record for this summer he had donated twenty hours a week at the library, eighteen hours a week at the Heritage Museum and four hours a week at the Art Association. The spirit of volunteering is a small town tradition and is stronger in Provincetown than in most towns. After much discussion, the group finally decided on a lecture series to be given in all three buildings in Arthur's name and the designing and striking of an award pin. The Arthur Markman Award. It will have the Provincetown monument as a design and will be given in two degrees, to volunteers who have accumulated two hundred hours of volunteering and to those who have accumulated five hundred hours.

Donations for the execution and purchase of these pins can be given to the "Gift Fund For Arthur Markman." The donations can be given at or sent to the Heritage Museum, the Art Association, and to Friends of the Library. Checks should be made out "Gift Fund For Arthur Markman." We will be honoring a dedicated volunteer past and our conscientious volunteers present.

Divil loved all his birthday presents but there is one thing he really needs which I will purchase for him if someone could tell me where. He needs an oval waitron's tray, metal. This is what the base of his cage is and his present tray has only moments of use left in it. I never realized he was on a serving tray all these years.