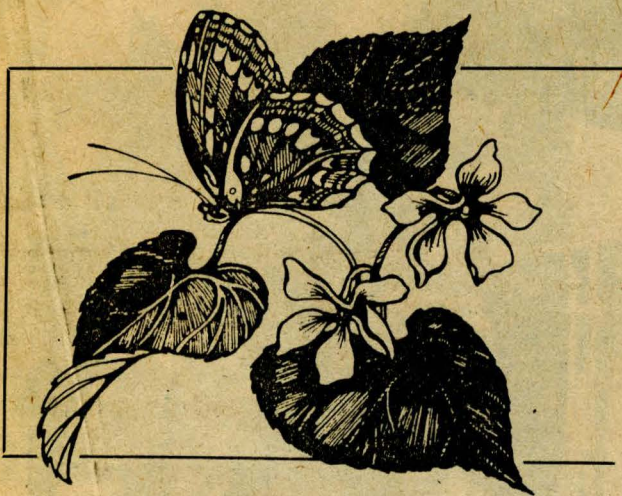


Kelly's Corner



By Jan Kelly

One of late summer's pleasant sights is the languorous flight of the monarch butterfly. You would think a creature that beautiful would be in a hurry and nervous of attracting attention, but no, the deliberate slow and easy flight is smug. Everybody likes to watch it, but nothing wants to eat its acrid flesh. The larvae feed on milkweed and deadly nightshade—foul-tasting and even poisonous plants—so there's built-in protection. Birds and reptiles aren't attracted in the least to any butterfly with that nasty diet, no matter how colorful and tempting. The lookalike but smaller viceroy gains some protection through looking so similar. Good thing it does; with a diet mostly of flowers, I'm sure a viceroy tastes very good, indeed, to its predators.

Don't let that monarch fool you with its lazy drifting flight. It is one of the strongest butterflies and travels from Canada to Mexico and beyond each fall. Monarchs have been spotted in the Canaries and the Azores. It has been suggested that for part of the journey they are stowaways.

They gather in droves for fall migration. Pacific City in California has a butterfly festival the second Saturday in October. The whole town goes butterfly with costumes, decorations, parades, and actual butterflies hanging heavily in the boughs of trees. This area is a regular night-resting spot for monarchs heading south of the border. After a sunny winter, the same butterflies head north. Not all finish the journey; many lay their eggs on the way. The rest head for Canada, and their progeny make the athletic trip back. Notice that self-assurance, that horizontal spread of wing next time you see a monarch. We could all take a lesson in poise from it. You'll distinguish very quickly the slightly smaller viceroy. He's a bit more nervous and furtive in flight. I wasn't even suggesting a taste test!

I bought myself a scope as a birthday present this

year. It is much more powerful than binoculars and aids greatly in the study of shore birds. Shore birds stay in place longer than woodland birds, so a scope is a valuable tool at low tide. Besides being able to bring in characteristic field marks such as bill color and shape, leg color, and foot webbing on individual birds, you can also study flock behavior. One of the happy side effects is showing these wonders to other people. Elsa Allen and Khiara Busa are seven years old. They were delighted to see that one type of bird has a "collar," one has a long bill, one has a constantly bobbing tail, and many of them are nervous-acting and in motion all the time. Elsa and Khiara didn't realize that birds are not all the same but are just as different as people are—more predictable, though.

Most people have or have access to a pair of binoculars. The flats at low tide is another pleasant pastime to add to your life. We are on the flyway for shore-bird migrations. Think that most of America isn't, and you'll feel privileged. As Thoreau said of Provincetown, "A man can stand there and put all America behind him." A woman, too. That's a great feeling as you watch the delicately limbed yellowlegs, plovers, and peeps scurry and trot for nourishment in the pools and on the bars of our bay. You'll identify the species very quickly and be amazed at how entertaining they are. Then scan the breakwater for gulls in variety and also for the cormorants—black "*Corvus marinus*," ravens of the sea. Besides the breakwater, Pilgrim Lake is a good spot to check on cormorants. You'll see them with their wings stretched out to dry like the anhingas of Sanibel Island. That spread-eagle pose is for drying the wings. Roger Tory Peterson says it looks like satanic laundry hung out to dry.

In Japan they use the cormorants for fishing. Yes, use them. I was invited onto a small craft for night fishing with cormorants while in Gifu, Japan. The fisherman had four cormorants on leashes rather like Clayton Snow with his pugs. I got set in my end of the boat. The fisherman lit a crackling fire of charcoal in an open wire basket, so that fish were attracted to the flames. As the fisherman spotted a fish, he released one of the cormorants. Once the fish was in bill or throat, a ring was pulled up on the bird's neck, keeping the fish from sliding down the cormorant's throat. The bird was retrieved, the fish retrieved from the bird, the next fish was spotted, and so on until we had our catch—two hours or so. At first I was alarmed, but the birds were not harmed. They even seemed to enjoy the sport, like kids catching all those bony pickerel they'll never eat.

April Showers, May Flowers, and Augustitis. What is this insidious malady, this battle fatigue without the war, this affliction which permeates all like humidity. Augustitis is the "I've had it" syndrome which attacks all summer resorts, Provincetown in particular. Sighs without breaths are heard up and down Commercial Street. There's an almost pained expression at the thought of performing a repeated chore one more time: opening a shop, or asking "Do you want more coffee?" Passing out menus, cleaning up after the horse in front of Town Hall, saying "We have a sale on." Greeting



town crier Gene Poyant and Grace Gouveia Collinson@
this week's darling grand marshals@

this week's company, finding a parking space or a restaurant where you don't have to wait half an hour. Trying to get across town in a hurry, waiting in the post office and bank lines, the A&P and laundromat trips, and fighting for a spot to watch the sunset. You know it's August when Anne Kane mails letters using Easter seals for stamps and when Felix in front of the Lobster Pot sits down to hail and haul in the customers. When the sale signs in the shops get drastic, so does human behavior, like the frantic and separate energy of bride and groom before the committing ceremony. But we all survive it and relax in the Indian summer days with a contentment that is fat. By February it's lean again, and people are eager for the sight and sound of summer throngs they don't know and won't know, but who are there.

We all like to go out into those crowds and rinse our moods off to an audience which will never really know us. One method is girls' night out. We laugh so much during the evening and for days after that we'd break the legs on a psychiatrist's couch. When we went to see *Piaf*, whom should we meet at the intermission but Lynn Carter in a \$2 bathing suit from Ruth's Rummage—purple swirls, a top and skirt—and \$2 *peau de soie* pumps from Neiman Marcus. Jean Kent was dressed in her navy blue shorts (mail-ordered from the big man's catalogue), a striped blouse with puffy shoulders and sleeves (the gift of her sister), and, of course, her work boots and socks. Joan Pereira was in her regular flash, and Que Linda and I were in \$2 dresses from the flea market. What a fashion show! I insisted everybody come to my house for a spot of champagne after the play, and then we could march down to the Painted Lady and show those gals in tailored tweed what fashion is about. Well, we were

received royally, as is the nature of the Painted Lady. Chef Joseph dashed off and returned with a rose for each lady. The champagne cork clucked, and down the hatch—more bubbles. What fun and talk for hours, and the laughter. Lynn Carter loves lying on the beach in her \$2 period-piece suit. Under those plastic D cups she doesn't flatten out. (She knew Esther Williams and all those beauty queens couldn't have been that firm.) When asked to join a friend for a swim in the bay, she said, "What? In my new suit?" The laughter went on and on. Jean Kent was receiving all the male attention that came to the table, work boots or not. Jean has such a crinkly smile. When she smiles, her eyes disappear. The attraction was somewhere. Finally we asked her, "What perfume are you wearing, Jean?" "Brut," she answered. They all loved the \$2 dresses, so Que Linda is going back to the flea market to buy one for everybody possible, that's everybody.

Somebody asked me, "How could I know you without your bike?" How could you know Smokey Joe Veara without his cigarette? Dottie Feld without her broom? Roz Smith without her poodle? Preston Hall without his parking lot? Iron Man without his bag of aluminum cans? Craig Landry without clamming boots? Sam Oppenheim without Emily Walker? Bruce McKain or Priscilla Jackett without a smile? Joe Poire not dressed in brown? Bobby Rushmore without her rhinestones? Peter Macara without his roller skates? Ray Wells without her silver jewelry and watch? Marian Roth or Gabriel Brooke without a camera? Jackson Lambert without his pipe and an idea? Anne Kane without a one-liner? Mae Busch without her mussel earring, drink, and cigarette? Frank Hurst without a joke? Buddy Myer without a pun? Hawthorne Bissell without whites? Chester Peck without his blue Cadillac? "Wendell" Haggerty without a bird? Donald Edwards III without his skateboard? Jimmy Majestic without a great laugh and a shopping bag full of great music? Eva Perry without her dark glasses? Rachel White without a perfect hairdo? Joan Pereira without a dreamy look (until she goes into action)? Joel O'Brien without Jill O'Brien? Arturo without his khaki? Harvey Dodd without his blue jeans? Jean Rogers without a lengthy brown cigarette and stylish garb? Marcy McClure without half a dozen gremlins around her? Mark Robinson with hair? Sammy T. Janopolis without a flower in his lapel? Heaton Vorse without a "Hiya, Hiya"? Helen Fernald without an ad to sell? Kurt Ruckstal without a station wagon full of trinkets? Or Provincetown without all of us?

I tried to help a friend who was grieving. As I listened to the tale, I could certainly relate to it and think of my own experiences. As bad as it seems at the time of occurrence, it does get better. It is strange to think, when you are stronger, that remembering events that made you so happy could make you so sad. There's a deliberateness to life, and you've got to keep with it even when you want to slow down, stop, and drop. Nothing doing. Take two arms from flanking friends and keep going. It will be worth it.