

KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

There seems to be an abundance of American goldfinch this season. Either that, or people are noticing them more. Their bright yellow color, their undulating flight pattern, their canary-like songs, or their gregarious grouping would all attract attention. Their overall impact is cheeriness, and everybody is curious about and attracted to cheeriness. The American goldfinch is also referred to as the wild canary because of its songs and color, and as the thistlebird, since that is the species-preferred food. They also line their plant-fiber nest with thistle down.

Goldfinches are one of the more gregarious and sociable birds. You may see them in small groups or large flocks, each member occupied with singing, flitting, and seed snapping. They are so sociable that they border on being neglectful parents and hardly bother to clean their tight little nests. They come to parenthood late. After you have seen the robins, catbirds, bluejays, house finches, and other struggle and finally fledge their young, then you see the goldfinch begin to nest. Some begin when summer is on the wane. The reason is that they are seed eaters and must wait for the seeds to ripen. Their food supply is later than other birds! You may see flocks of goldfinch in open fields, several on one plant deseeding with quickness and accuracy. They sing as they move. They can pick and split a seed more quickly than you can observe the process.

Goldfinches are tiny and delicate rather than powerful. If they get caught on burdock while extracting seeds, they may not be able to break free. If the threads of the August webworm entangle them, they may also perish, unable to escape. I hope you never witness that, because the goldfinch is symbolic of all that is carefree and funloving. Beautiful in sound and look, the goldfinch cheers anyone who observes it, is not aware, takes no credit, but flies on in the pursuit of life.

And a bit of trivia about our Bas Relief located in the park behind Town Hall. Que Linda's grandfather, Paul M. White, III, modeled for the little boy's legs about 1920. Cyrus Dallin, the artist, was White's next-door neighbor in Arlington,

Massachusetts. Larry Dallin, Cyrus' son, posed for the head. (I must take a closer look to see the proportions of this figure.) Cyrus Dallin is also the sculptor responsible for the statue of Paul Revère in the Boston Garden and "appeal to the great spirit," which is in front of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. After this writing, Que Linda's legs will be checked by all readers for similarity.

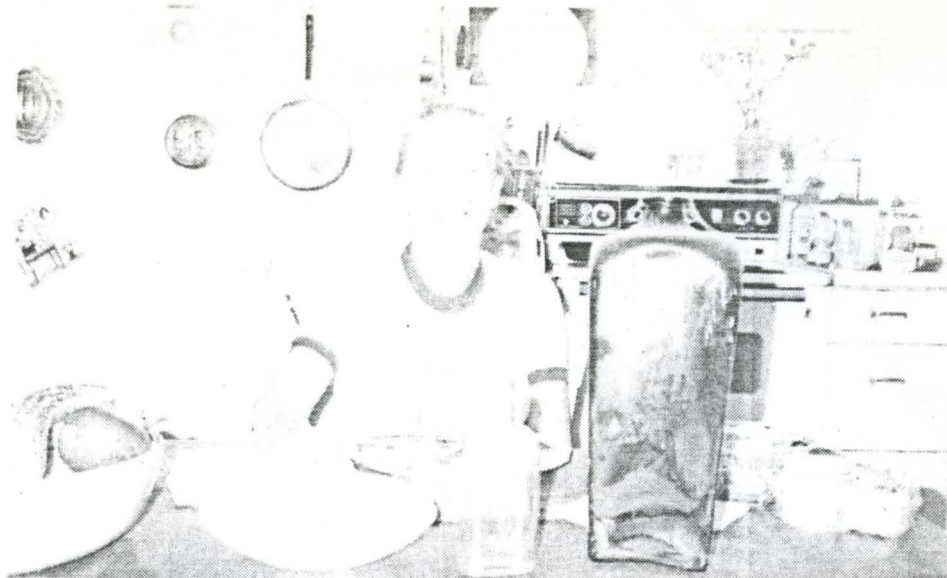
Last week I had lunch with Margaret Roberts. We wanted to discuss some Library business, which we did, but Margaret is so from another era, another plane, that it was even more interesting listening to her life story and ideas formulated.

Margaret and her two sisters, Ruth and Mary, were born at the family homestead at 8 Center Street. "People come here with great valises asking 'are you Mrs. Lynch?' I tell them, 'Oh, no, you're a mile away.'" See what I mean, another plane? You have to know that Edna Lynch lives at 8 Center Street and rents rooms, and that is about a mile away. Growing up in Provincetown was an enjoyable time when town was so quiet, and you could hear the surf from the back shore most days.

The school had excellent teachers, such as Arthur Perry for French, History, and Biology. He kindled the love of learning. He might give you a knife and a fish as a Biology test, but you would understand more about a fish than a meal or a picture could teach. If the class' homework was done well, you would get to play "teapot" at the end of the period. "Teapot" was a word game. Mr. Ramee was the Principal and the Math teacher. He would race his students to the conclusion of problems. He bought a group of Beach Point cottages, made his fortune, and left teaching.

It was 1936, a time of good orchestras and ballroom dancing, long dresses, and the slippery floors of Town Hall. Margaret Roberts, at 51 years old, was 5' 10," taller than all of the other students and teachers. She and her also-tall sisters marked the entrance door of their home with their height marks. Any young man entering was quickly and silently measured. Movies were the other passion of the 30's. "Days after seeing a Clark Gable film I thought I had Clark Gable's face pasted on my eyes. It was so captivating. There was nothing else like it. We gave movies up for Lent, and we would lose weight pining for them." The 30's also brought the depression but Margaret said, "We were not aware of the deprivation." There were always free fish and plenty to eat. When they would be given \$3 for a birthday, it went into the bank. They felt peers who spent were foolish and would have nothing. "Now I realize what it was I would have: a great 50 bucks. I don't worry about money, so people think I do have money, but I don't. I just don't think about it."

After Margaret's father died, she went to N.Y.C. to seek her place in American theatre. Mrs. Roberts



Margaret Roberts at home

fledged her daughters, encouraging their life interests. Mary because a high school English teacher, and Ruth worked for the 2nd Judge Welch.

Margaret was onto a career of theatre and television. She lived at the Rehearsal Club at 53rd St. It was a rooming house for aspiring actors and actresses. It cost \$40 a week room and board and tips on jobs. These brownstones went on into the 60's until towering taxes forced the system out.

Margaret met Fred Astaire's sister, who married a titled Englishman. She met Cary Grant, Ray Bolger, and John Golden, the producer. John Golden invited Margaret and friends to lunch to warn them "what to watch out for in the theatre." The girls wore their black dresses and white gloves and listened attentively. Burgess Meredith was most helpful with his gentlemanly ways and paternal guidance. Margaret was invited to work summer stock at Rockport with Maureen Stapleton and Marlon Brando. Burgess Meredith was helpful to actors. He loved the profession. He told Margaret's mother that "Margaret is the only girl in the theatre who's not on the make." Meredith was helping Zero Mostel at this time with *Joyce in Nighttown* off-Broadway.

Margaret thinks of the theatre as "nothing more fun, more adventurous, wonderful, and the friends you have in the theatre are treasured friends. I had a 'hot five years,' but I made a big mistake. I started in television. I worked with Stella Adler, and so I left the theatre. I did museum shows. They were successful art on TV. I would decide which paintings 'would carry' on TV. I worked with Don Pardo of *Saturday Night Live*, and a monkey on a children's show. I would take a cab Saturday morning at 5:30 and go to Trefflich's Animal Supply and pick up a capuchin monkey insured for \$50,000. He would be nervous in the studio with all of the hot lights and would cling to me. Every week, when Don would sign off,

monkey in cage next to him, he would extend his arm and be bitten, every week. He had a large rabbit, too."

"Well, I went to Emerson, and when I had my first audition to read an ad, I read it terribly dignified as if I had just taught. The interviewer said, 'I wouldn't buy a 25 cent glass of beer from you. You'd better write.' And write I did, disc jockey shows, writing about music, *The Greatest Hits of 1936; Bing Crosby's Best.*"

"I finally came back at my mother's request and ran our store, The Provincetown Liquor Mart. I did that for 20 years and retired 6 months ago. Frank Volton worked there 30 years. Manny Lewis has worked there 50 years and is still there. I'm giving myself a year off to do nothing. I don't know what I will do. Maybe I will write. I'm in an exercise class, and now it's fun, but I'm distressed, I can't skip. Isn't that amusing? The teacher said it's normal, and I'll get it back, but I think it's funny. I can't skip."

Lunch was fun. It was interesting and pleasant reminiscing with Margaret, but we did have an appointment to discuss library plans. Margaret is Chair of the Trustees. I am President of Friends of the Library. First, we discussed a room or area for the Provincetown Collection. Cecelia Francis and Josephine Johnson have left valuable works. Any local who has written that we can plan and handle, will also be included. But the Library needs painting, iron work, heating work, general construction. A fund drive such as Wellfleet and other Cape Libraries is in the planning stage. Perhaps a consortium with other groups such as the Art Association did with Castle Hill. Where help is needed is in the writing of a grant. If you feel you could help the library with grant information, please contact the Librarian, Joe Poire, or Chair of Trustees, Margaret Roberts. Help is needed, a division of labor, rather than the same few.