

# KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

**B**ette White asked me, "What are those ominous-looking black wasps that buzz in and out of my house, long legs dangling?" Not ominous, once you watch them. That is a mud-dauber, and if you follow its movements, you will note how industrious, ingenious, and non-aggressive the species is.

The mud-dauber is a medium-sized wasp with a black and truncated body, a bit like an oversized flying carpenter ant. The final section of the body hangs down as well as two parallel legs and feet, which carry the mud. If you live anywhere near fresh water, you are more apt to have mud-daubers. They collect balls of mud from pond areas and carry it to rafters, abeams, and crevices in high apartments. I have plenty, living in an attic and being in the vicinity of Shank Painter Pond. If you notice the flight, it follows the same path time after time.

Once they have located the spot where they wish to build their nest—what seems to be countless trips are needed to build and complete the chambered mud packet—notice they prefer entering and leaving by the top of the window. If you notice one in your house, you can help it by pulling the top of the window down; it saves time and confusion. Once the chambered nest is built in a semi-concealed spot and attached to wood, you will see the activity change.

Now the mud-dauber will spend some time laying an egg into each chamber. Next, she will exit and hunt carefully and accurately. She will want a perfect and fat spider for each chamber. She will stun the spider so that it will stay in fresh condition throughout the winter. The stunned and captured spider will be stuffed into the chamber along with the newly-laid egg. When this egg is ready to hatch the following spring, it will have a ready meal. Once the spider is devoured and the wasp has strength, it will prepare to emerge from its mud chamber.

The first day of spring with a summer-like temperature, the mud-dauber will emerge and your house will look as it did mid and late summer of the previous year. Black truncated body aloft, long legs hanging, eager to quietly begin the ritual again—location, mud, egg, spider, emergence. Don't swat or kill them. They are powerful and self-contained creatures. They are far too busy and scheduled to sting you. I have never heard of a mud-dauber stinging

anyone. Just take them on as admirable roommates, quiet and industrious.

"The Ladies Who Lunch," that's how we affectionately refer to our Women's Tuesday Tennis. At 8 am, all who want to play singles show up and warm up for the two hours of doubles to follow. The male population fades to the back courts as the chatter of 12 women athletes interlaces the strokes of the tennis ball. It's a good practice session, too. The winner of one match plays the winner of another match, loser plays loser. We rotate, round-robin and interchange so that each person's game has been washed, rinsed, and fluff-dried by the time Town Hall strikes 11 am.

Joanne Washaver (wash, shave, n' a haircut) has the daintiest overhead smash. Rhoda (Rhodadendron) Rossmore is mistress of the lob. Roslyn Garfield has the Power of Attorney. Roz Baxandall (box-a-lot) has the inside-out Francoise Dure volley. Jane Bloom (Jane-in-Bloom) stands in the alley; Ira told her to. Diane San Germino (St. Germs) smokes as she plays, naughty girl. Marge Gibbons (Decline of the West End), flies down in her own plane, photographs the early group aerially, and then joins in. Que Linda Shea keeps a running commentary and shows us California-style tennis. Mae Bush slings that C.V. dropshot—Cape Verdian Vinha Dalhoes on the racquet. Valerie Ciluzzi makes the most aggressive poach look so demure, a needler at the net. Marcia Brill thinks it's all very funny and laughs at every opportunity. Stella Chasteen is so stately that we're always aiming for her feet since nothing is too high for her. Zania Powers warns her partner in a disciplined Yugoslavian accent "poostie!" ("out")—you'd better not touch it. Marietta Hermanson is the red squirrel of the group, electric energy talking, smoking, hitting, all at once—chatter, puff, put away. We don't know how she does it. And, Marion Harrison is the quietest of the group. She wisely stays far away on another court with so-



the ladies who lunch and play tennis

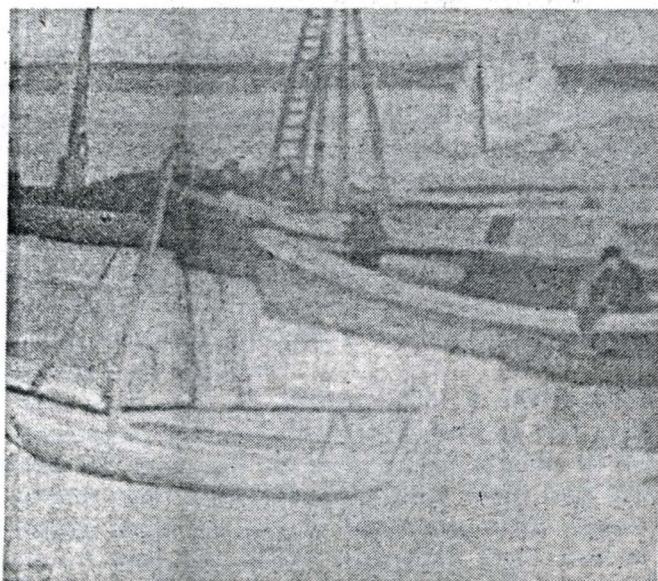


meone who doesn't know any of us—the only way to survive a Tuesday morning at the Provincetown Tennis Club.

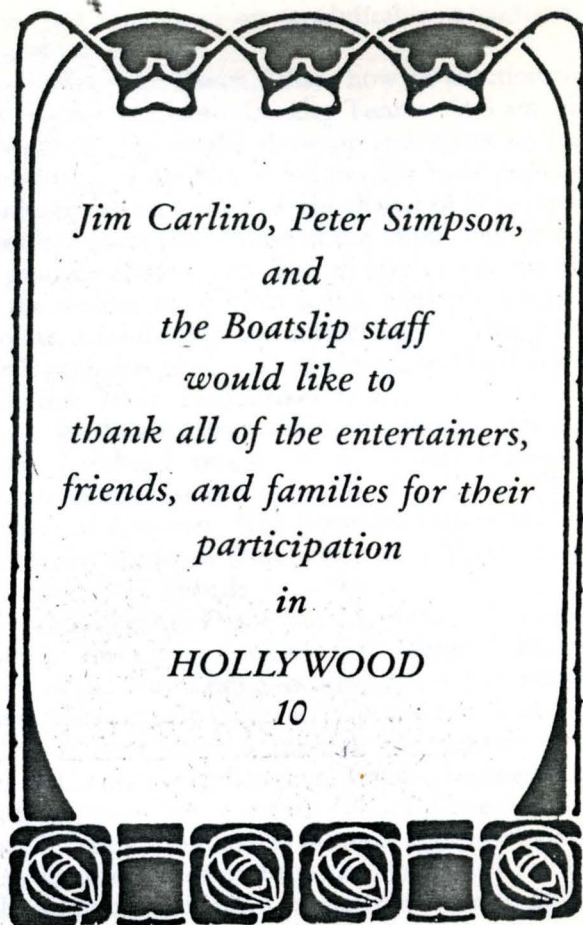
The deck is active and trembling with jokes and laughter after game time. Guzzle water, wipe the sweat off, smoke if you must, but please everybody, talk and laugh at once, social tennis is a contagious disease. We grow every year. 11:30 Nute and Bert Breathe a sign of relief as we all rush off to Pucci's where the staff will be braced for us. "C'mon Joan Boudreau, get those most wonderful wings and nachos out here." The water sparkling, the sun high, the deck illuminated by nature's flawless lamp. Everything is color, light, and sound. Greetings all around and a happily-earned meal is devoured with fun conversation, sincere stories, and the determination of a repeat. The game, the camaraderie, the conversation, the food, Provincetown all around us—can you blame us for loving our Tuesdays?

And while we're on the subject of women, the Provincetown Heritage Museum is hosting a show of women's work: oil, watercolor, silkscreen, charcoal, and woodcut for media and dates from 1920 to the present. Lucy L'Engle, Mary Hackett, Lena Gurr, Ada Chaffee, Blanche Lazell, Marion Hawthorne, Alice Palmer, Stella Johnson, Janice Biala, Majorie Windust Halper, Mary Lefson, Ellen Ravenscroft, Mary Bacon Jones, Hope Voorhees Pfeiffer, Agnes Weinrich, Tina Dickey, and Joan Pereira are represented. The show is in the upstairs east wing and gives you an added interest to visit the Heritage this year. It's rather like holy duty visiting the Heritage once a year. You can check Flyer Santos' progress on the *Rose Dorothea*, the largest indoor scale model of a boat. He was hoisting the sails as I watched and wrote. Eight long years of dedicated work finally coming to a close. Attendance is high this year. Make a visit, and make it higher!

Friends of the Library will have its annual book sale Wednesday, August 5, 10 am to 2 pm. Something for everyone. See you in front of the Library.



Ellen Ravenscroft's Trapboat  
at the Provincetown Heritage Museum



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