

# Kelly's Corner

BY JAN KELLY



## ART AND MUSIC Brenda Silva's Magical Life

**B**renda Silva, local artist, musician, teacher and gallery owner is having a busy summer. She's showing her work at the Art Association, the Provincetown Public Library for the entire month of August as well as running her own gallery/studio in Whalers Wharf.

Brenda Silva was born on Conwell Street in her great grandparents' house, the "yellow house." They came to America with several children and settled first in Maine and then followed the fish to Gloucester, then Provincetown and Conwell Street. They lived downstairs and Brenda, brother Larry and parents, Gladys and Custodio, lived upstairs.

It was close quarters. When Gladys Silva heard that a house on Standish street behind Duarte's parking lot was up for auction she, according to Brenda, "packed up her two babies and went over the hill and bid \$500. Her bid was accepted and the total price was \$5,000. My dad was at sea fishing. He didn't know

anything about it. When he came home, he was moved."

"I was four and Larry was five," Brenda continues. "The new house was freedom. My parents raised five children in that house. They sent all five of us to college. If one college didn't work, we'd try another. Three years ago, they both retired and moved to Florida finally selling the house. My Nana Josephine Silva also sold her house and went to Florida. She used to own Josette's Beauty Parlor on the corner of Conant Street."

Brenda went to Provincetown schools and is a graduate of Dean College in Franklin, Ma. She married and raised two daughters, Brianna and Brett. Outside of motherhood, Brenda taught music in the Provincetown school system for 19 years, grades 4-12. When the 19 years were over and her own girls were off to college she asked herself, "what do I do now?"

*continued on page 102*



my paintings and I wanted my own paintings on my walls and so I painted this scene of wild horses. I keep it in my studio."

"When my brother Custodio and his wife, Karen, opened K.C. Animal Resort I painted a gift for their housewarming: a portrait of family dog and cat, Champ and Flounder. They encouraged me and said 'Why don't you hang here?' So I painted a large canvas of air balloons. I still didn't get to hang it in my house. George Polay of Icon Gallery represented me then. It was 1999."

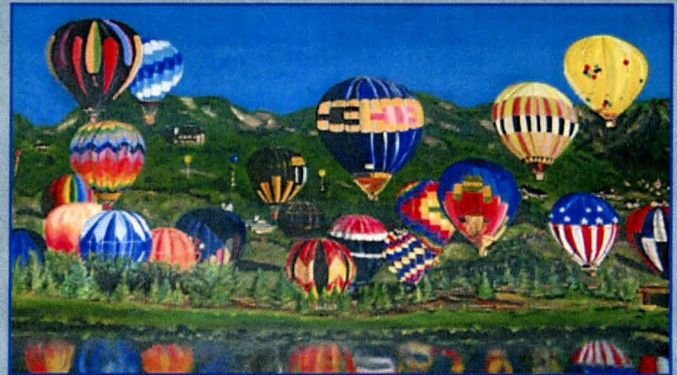
"When I went to have back work done by Donna Heitzman in Whalers Wharf, she told me her partner K.C. was looking for a space to show. It will be three years this November that we opened the Silva Smith Gallery. K.C. died in March but her works, her beautiful photographs still hang there. But now it's renamed Studio S for Silva but also called the Grace Note Music Studio where I teach band instrument

lessons: trumpet, sax, clarinet. There's no room for a piano. And of course I paint here as well."

These days Brenda's work tends towards images of the oceanic. The coast and sea were always important to her family. "My dad, my brothers all fished," she explains. "That's what makes me paint marine pictures with passion. I know what a boat

smells like, how much which part costs. I know their schedules and their superstitions. It's my life. That's why I call these paintings 'My Heritage—My Home.'"

"The ocean, the bay, fishing was all," Brenda went on to explain. "My brother Larry and I used to play and spend so much time on Macara's Beach where Land's End Marine is. My great grandfather had a little shed there. He was in his 80's. He spoke only Portuguese and he would be in there baiting his lines. He was still in his dory hand lining for cod.



*Formally housed in the kennel, Silvia's painting of hot air balloons now hangs in her gallery.*

He was old and weathered. With all his lines coiled in baskets, off he would go. There's a portrait of him at the Provincetown Inn, a solo fisherman pulling in a fish. It's called 'Sou'west Harbor.' That was his nickname, 'Sou'west.' This boat thing is in my blood."

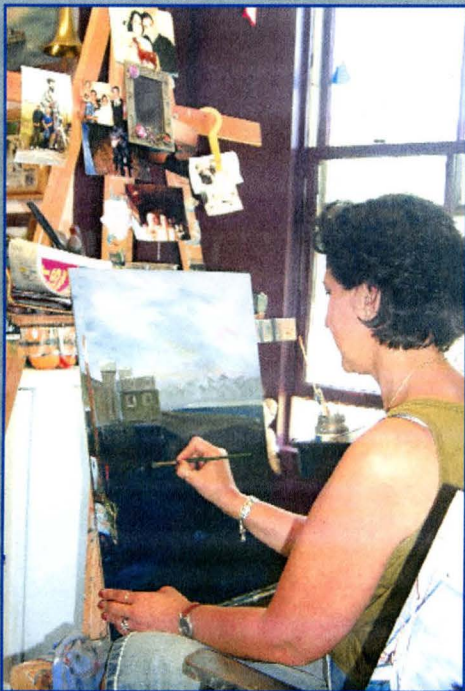
Recently Brenda sold a painting of a night scene of the wharf which had been hanging at the Art Association. The buyer visited Studio S the next day, showing a deepening interest in her work. You can visit Brenda in Studio S too or just head down to the Provincetown Public Library to see the paintings on display.

Brenda will be having an opening at her own gallery in September. Studio S will be open throughout the winter 11 am to 3 pm daily. She paints and teaches music every day. Brenda Silva also plays for the Lower Cape Concert Band and has for 23 years. She also is an accompanist for the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House.

We went on to discuss the 2005 Portuguese Festival already in planning stages. We spoke of an art show for local Portuguese artists that is in the works. It will be on the agenda for the first meeting for next year's Festival. Chairman Don Murphy is already excited about the plan.

'And while we're at it,' quipped Brenda, "How about the Lower Cape Concert Band? They played on our boat our first year for the Blessing. They love being part of it."

We all love the Blessing, especially myself and all the other Irishman who volunteer. We love a party. We wish you well Brenda with all your plans. It's a magical life of art and music you lead. Keep on. ■



*Brenda at work in Studio S.*