

KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

SUMMER IS JULY IS SUMMER

July is the hottest, the greenest and the first full month of summer. July has the most thunderstorms, the most humidity and the longest stretches of continuous hot weather. It's the only month Cape Codders can sleep without a blanket and I have been told by some that it is the only month that they don't use an electric blanket!

The tides are at the highest and lowest in July. Sea clamming on foot is easiest this month, though the clams are a little flabby, having spawned weeks before. Provincetown has 11 and 12 foot tides, big tides. Not as dramatic as the 60 foot tides at the Bay of Fundy or those of the Aran Islands, but dramatic in their contrast to the half-foot tides of the Mediterranean or the Caribbean. Everything seems more dramatic in Provincetown. We sit at the end of a peninsula: three sides water and a slim Truro joining us to land.

In July the Earth is the farthest from the sun or at Aphelion, but we are tilted toward the sun and so are warmer than the proximity of winter. The moon, on the other hand, is closer to the Earth in July than at any other time. Due to optical illusions, the moon also seems larger than usual. Through gravity and magnetism, the moon controls the tides and makes July a month of extremes. The lunar month, the water month, the hottest month, the greenest month and the month hosting the greatest variety of flowers, birds, insects, weeds, births and spawnings... Yes, July is all of those things.

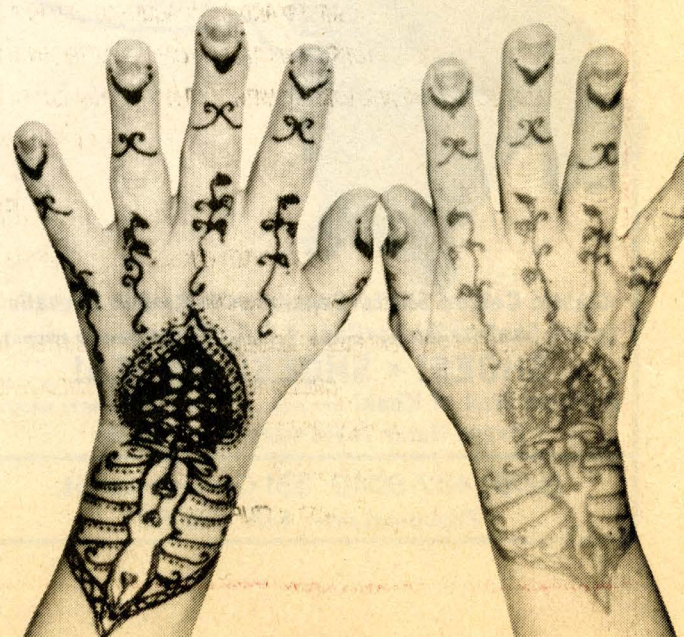
Humans pause while Nature runs riot. The beginning of August brings mid-summer and brings into balance the human role: control. July can overwhelm us and does, whether we know it or not. But let it happen; you are part of Nature, too.

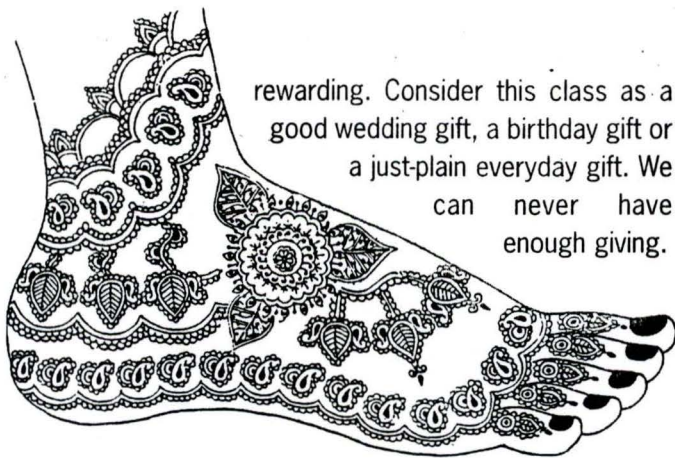
Should you feel overwhelmed, a massage may help. A weekly massage added to your schedule may be the best self-gift you could ever experience. There are several masseurs/masseuses here in Provincetown. Most advertise, so you can select both the person and the type of massage you prefer. Mary Ann Powers has probably been at the art of massage the longest, having strong healing

fingers. If you prefer to go with a friend or mate, you could go to Jay Critchley or Jim Vincent. Each has his own studio under the same roof and each is a gifted masseur. They also perform a four-hand massage giving you a doubly relaxing experience.

If you are a couple and would like to take a bit of the knowledge and art of massage into your own life, you might visit Laura Marshall and Nick Panic at the West End Salon. Nick Panic learned his skills at the Swedish Institute of Massage in NYC and specialized in Swedish, Shiatsu and medical massage. Nick is happy in his work and states "I believe in using the healing power of touch to help people attain and maintain physical, mental and spiritual well being."

Why Provincetown? "[Because this] is a beautiful and special place where the ancient and therapeutic traditions of Mehndi and massage are easily at home." Laura & Nick offer another option of massage: massage classes for couples. In this class, couples can learn the basics of mutual massage, a true gift to each other. Whether on the heels of a long day of stress or a long day of relaxation, or the rebonding after a serious discussion or confrontation, you can use this easily learned and transmitted skill to enrich one another's lives and enhance your relationships. A massage can last from 10 minutes to 2 hours and, regardless of time, can prove therapeutic and





rewarding. Consider this class as a good wedding gift, a birthday gift or a just-plain everyday gift. We can never have enough giving.

Laura Marshall has another skill: the art of Mehndi or henna painting. A trained vocal performer from New York University and a trained Reiki practitioner graduated from the Loving Touch Center, Laura added henna painting to her repertoire after receiving a home kit. She has traveled extensively to study Mehndi artists. Henna painting is more than 1,000 years old and is practiced throughout the Muslim world, including the Mideast, India, South Asia and North Africa. Egyptian mummies display examples of henna dying. The reddish dye comes from the processed dried leaves and shoots of the Mignonette tree (or henna shrub).

Hair, beards, hands, feet, palms and soles can be dyed with henna. The henna tannin is also strong enough to color leather and horses' manes. Henna strengthens and conditions hair. Although a natural product, henna should not be used on chemically treated or permed hair. The proper use of henna is an art and has spiritual and magical overtones when used in rituals and benedictions. In some cultures, henna plays an important part of the marriage ceremony. Both bride and groom are decorated separately, often by their mothers. The ceremonial ancient and present day practice attempts to ward off the evil eye and put the marriage candidate in a meditative state as well as a in cosmetically enhanced state.

While living in Morocco, I saw the practice frequently and was painted myself in lacy patterns. The townspeople of Sidi Kacem Zaouia were always curious as to what type of henna I used in my hair since it was always the same. The Scandinavian invasion into Ireland, caused my red hair but the Moroccans would look with curiosity and a little fear.

Laura is so talented in this art, deeply ethnic and yet universal. "I am gifted with the opportunity to impart beauty infused with spirit in a manner that is peaceful and pleasurable." The henna is fun to wear, goes on black and peels off to an earth tone of burnt sienna. The design can

last one to two weeks. So, if you would love the thrill and danger of a tattoo but don't want the life commitment of one, try henna. If you would like a tattoo but are not sure which symbol or design to use, try henna.

You can have the traditional laced hands and feet or try anklets, bracelets, biceps bracelets or any type you choose. You could even have your whole body done as Nubian women used to do, achieving the desired effect of looking like a ripe date. The Egyptians rubbed henna over the body to make limbs supple. When rubbed on the palms and the soles of the feet, they claim to experience a cooling effect.

So, you can go to West End Salon, check in with Doug and Kippy and be introduced to Nick and Laura as well as couple massage and the Art of Mehndi or henna. I've invited Laura to come to the next hot tub, pot luck dinner of the Tuesday Ladies' Tennis Group. We'll start out at Bissell's Tennis Courts and make our way up to Ellen Langer's perched house and hot tub. With that group you can be sure each will have an individual slant on the art of wearing henna. I'll let you know.

Kelly's Corner would like to thank Joe Peters for graciously allowing me to use his "A" House photographs in my article, "Atlantic House at 200 Years." Thank you, Joe!



Nick Panic & Laura Marshall at the West End Salon