

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 groupings 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 thistledown.

Goldfinch 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, Blue Jays, House Finch and others 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 and the thistle to be available. 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.

Goldfinch 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 fun-loving. Beautiful in sound and look, the Goldfinch cheers anyone who observes it, though the Goldfinch is not aware, takes no credit, but flies on in the pursuit of life.

The Art Association's exhibit—"Jewels from the Collection"—was curated by Jim Bakker, Vice President, Auctioneer and gallery owner. The first work and probably best known is Charles Hawthorne's "His First Voyage". A family study, a socio-historic study and a study in light and composition, this beautiful painting is well-known by and dear to its Provincetown audience. The members of the family in the study are recognized as portraits, Hawthorne having painted the figures as such, not straying into artistic license for even an eyelash. Fanny Fields, the youngest figure, and found on



the lower right of the painting is still living. "Aunt Fanny," as generations of schoolchildren and teachers addressed her, was in charge of the cafeteria at the Veterans Memorial Elementary School. She knew every child by name of course, but also knew their likes and dislikes and pampered every one of them. Aunt Fanny pampered anyone

who would come within her sphere. Do you remember how we all waited impatiently for Wednesdays? Aunt Fanny made the best chicken soup and chicken sandwiches ever. How could something so simple be so good? It was.

Seeing the Richard Miller portrait of Reeves "Eddy" Euler brought back some mental fun—the owl painted into the picture was in Eddy's house at 4 Brewster, part of his life-long props. We used to tease Eddy that the stuffed owl had more life in it than he and that he'd better watch out—things reptilian are part of the owl's diet. Eddy would only "harumph" and

complain to his hard-of-hearing wife, Frances, who could ignore him legitimately.

The Gerret Beneker of Will Bangs, "The Plumber" is a beauty. It is an "inside-out" painting. We are looking at a capped bespectacled man in a workshop done in brush strokes, but have a splendid view to the bay with sailboats and done with a palette knife. Beneker painted several working men, Hawthorne too. It adds to our knowledge of local and social history. There were three plumbers in town at that time, 1921. One for the East End, one for the West End and one for the center of town. Jim Zimmerman ably guided me into several landscapes, pastorals. The George Elmer Browne could be typical of motif #1—the area behind the Art Association itself. The Hawthorne School of Art was up on the hill behind and the students trundled down the easy route and painted. Jim also showed me an interesting early Edwin Dickinson, "Still Life with Guitar". There is also a black and white photo of this painting in the collection. Written on the back of the work, presumably in Dickinson's hand is "Capt. Lavender Studio—Commercial and Arch Street". Fun finding such bits of history.

We looked at Joe Kaplan, Chaffee and Alvin Ross' "Apples on a Chair", remembering life experiences and tales as we viewed. I stopped at Max Bohm's "Country Scene"—pastoral, bucolic, beautiful and reflected how

fortunate we are that we are now into the 4th generation of this family as active and productive artists in town.

There are always multiple shows at the Art Association. Don't like one subject or style?

Go to the next gallery, the next room. Peter Macara,

Jim Zimmerman and Robyn Watson keep those walls ever interesting and ever changing.

There are also classes, recitals, panel discussions, vintage films and a craft fair this month. Step into the cool galleries any hot afternoon to refresh your mind and body. Go any evening to scheduled events and stimulate your mind and

social life. Don't miss the annual consignment auction on Sept. 19th.

Jim Bakker is not the only one to curate shows. Students in the 2nd, 4th and 6th grades at Veterans Memorial Elementary School and the 8th grade from the High School have been involved in the Student Curators Project since 1992. It will have completed the first full 10 year cycle in the year 2002. The program is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Cape Cod Bank & Trust. There are four exhibitions a year. Each grade has its distinct and separate show. The students go through all the steps as any adult curator would. Their selections are made from a set of cards displaying photographs of the artwork. Preliminary choices are made. From this list eliminations and choices are made. The physical space of the gallery and the

look that a hung show will deliver—a harmony among the works—is important. The works of art on the gleaned list are viewed in actuality by the students to secure the choices. After the elimination of their choices, the students go back to the classroom to record their comments as to why they

chose the work they did. These are printed in the catalogue of the show and signed by the students. All the steps of a professional curator. It is a strong learning process, a powerful lesson in art appreciation. As the Art Association notes —quite different than "a field trip to a museum!"

This ambitious project is organized and worked out by Paul Bowen, Project Coordinator, Robyn Watson, Executive Director and the School System. Four shows a year and four shows for each student through their school years is a solid dose of mature art appreciation. These exhibitions are well attended by all students, their proud families and their many fans. In a town of 3500, all students' progress is observed. Each child is important, today and in the future.

