



# KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

## provincetown team tennis

Provincetown prevails again, of course; first, last and always. People expect it. First landing of the Pilgrims, very edge of the North American continent, always in the middle of whatever is current. And this time it's *All Cape Tennis*. Four teams from all Cape towns competed at the Norseman Athletic Club in Eastham, Wednesday nights from October to May. Provincetown is the only team named for a town because most of the team travels together, coming from the farthest point. The other three teams can pick from a great mixture of players who happen to live in various towns.

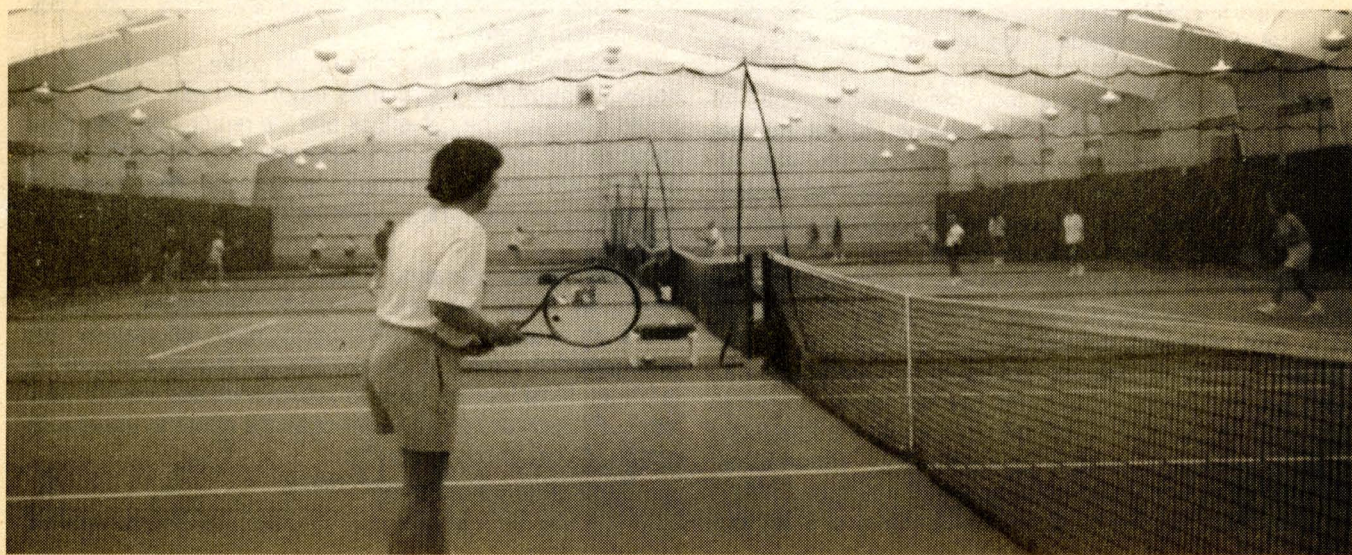
The Provincetown team began in first place and never let go—gladiator tennis each Wednesday night. Provincetown maintained thumbs up for the entire length of the season. Neither storms, flu, travel, town meetings nor family obligations could fence or foil the schedule dotted by holidays and school vacations. The final score of our Provincetown team: 132 sets won. The runner-up won 102 sets, the third 98 and

the fourth, 94. Provincetown always ends up at the top. We don't know quite how we do it since we consider all these players our equals. Maybe it's in the timing, or maybe luck but, of course, Provincetown originality. Prevailers we are, however, prevailers for whatever reason.

Rachel Crosby serves as our chauffeur and statistician. Steady, logical Rachel has a station wagon. Two, three, four conversations press silence away on the trip up Cape. Strategies and pairings take shape and then, back to the chatter. It's all tennis on the way back. Shots and strategies analyzed and weighed. Comparison to former matches against that night's team; observations and suggestions for change. It's all a learning process and a lot of fun.

Rachel's amazing serve and overhands, and her aggressive play dazzle the opponents. Never boring on or off the court, that Rachel. Beverly Haight's lengthy "Bambi" legs are up to that net before the opponent realizes it. Returning the ball with that distraction needs extra effort and deliberativeness, whether in women's or mixed doubles. Barbara "Omar" Bradley gets into brilliant grooves where anything that comes her way becomes a unique and winning shot. Judy Linen remains steady on the baseline letting the opponent make the errors.

I play, but I can't tell you how well. If you haven't seen yourself on video you don't know exactly what's going on in your



game, nor how to verbalize it for the viewer. John Gilbride is a speedy, crafty, a lefty. His racquet contact comes so quickly it's difficult to know the projective effect of the ball. He's fast and has great legs too! Steve Smith can get anything back with his speed, agility and great anticipation. We think

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he has two pairs of legs with that great court coverage.

Brian Snow is tall, strong and when paired with Rachel Crosby for mixed doubles, his serves smoke the opponents into abeyance. He is our troubadour. Long blond hair postures drifting from another century. His facial expressions and his interpretations from another world. I can envision him draped in muslin and velvet, harp slung over his shoulder, criss-crossing the green countryside bringing the news in song from castle to castle.

That is our team and we all love tennis.

Wednesday night matches have moved forward to tournaments and a ladder. A ladder is an in-club ranking of challenge matches, either singles or doubles. And the movement has gone sideways to non-ranked regular competitive games. Days for the free-lancers, nights for the 9-5ers. Lots of tennis all the cold season. The Norseman stays busy at all hours and not only on the courts but in the pool, at the gym, in yoga, tai chi, dance classes, racquet ball, basketball and, after all that, the hot tub, steam, sauna and massage.

There's no need to lose your game or your shape when the temperature drops. Simply select your choice of sport activity. The Norseman is open year round, of course, and some prefer to continue summer play in order to avoid the sun and heat. Everybody is grateful after three rainy days in a stretch.

Town Team Tennis, sponsored by the Norseman, was organized by Cindy Crossman. The club provides great play and competition for forty or so tennis players on Wednesday nights alone. The staff always accommodates and provides an end of the season pizza party. Instead of three courts taken by a town team, all six courts were booked for us and we all got to play each other in a four-game, no add, highly social Round Robin. Richard Pereira's sheep sculpture (Kelly's Corner vol.18 issue 2) served as our mascot. Team B's Sue Haley keeps two live sheep in Eastham. Closing out the night and the season was great fun and great comraderie. Not eager for this great Wednesday night fun to end, we set up individual games and summer schedules with great plans and dreams set for October 1999.

Competition over and light at heart, the May night left us all feeling good. Don't forget the "Tennis for Life" Fundraiser at Bissell's Tennis Courts, Saturday, June 19. Same four game, no add, Round Robin, mixed doubles format. Proceeds will be shared with the Academy of Art Science and Technology at Provincetown High School, H.O.W.—Helping Our Women—and PASG, the Provincetown AIDS Support Group. See you there.

