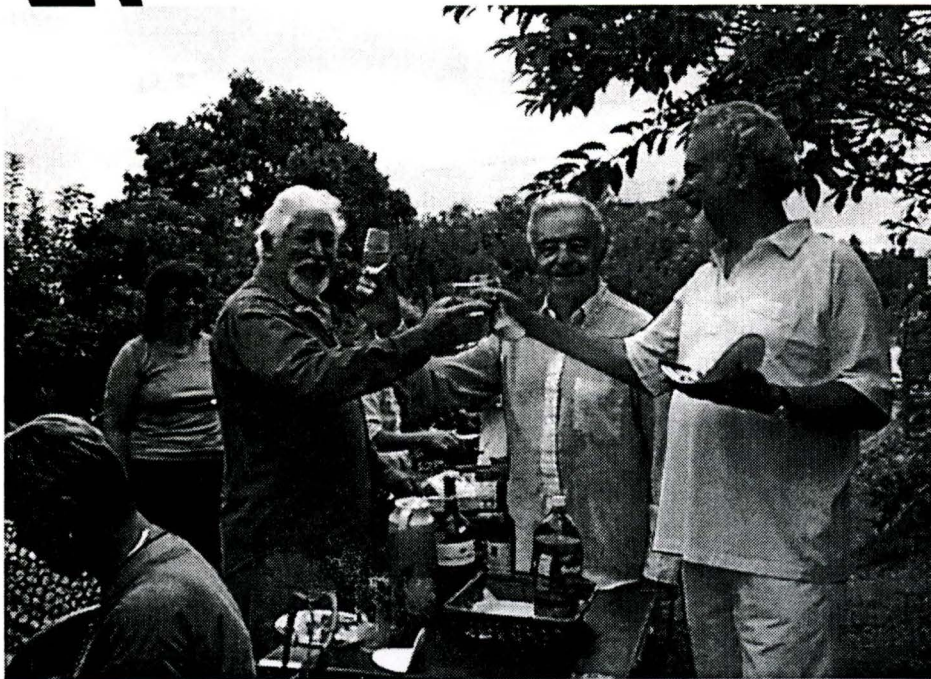




KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly



years of studying at the Butera School, I gave the director a list, 'If things don't change I'm leaving', well the director said, 'It won't be done!' so I left."

So Ray left Boston and Providence with Hensche. From 1949 on, Ray stayed in contact with Henry though he painted abstract for over 30 years. In 1951, he and Grace married, spent two winters in Manhattan and then they came to live in Provincetown year round. They ran a shop next to Spiritus Pizza selling Ray's paintings, Grace's jewelry and a friend's pottery. Ray did some carpentry as so many artists in town have had to do and everybody lived on free fish. For three years he had his own school and he also taught at the Art Association, The Falmouth Artist's Guild and the Nauset Painters. He kept a studio across from Sal's Restaurant for 35 years and rented from Marjorie DaRosa whose husband was Frederick Waugh's chauffeur.

Ray needed a large studio because he painted for over 30 years completely under the non-objective influences of oriental art. The Black Ink School of Sumie influenced Ray to the abstract. Though Sumie traditionally represents nature—birds, flowers,

plants and animals—the art is considered an abstract form. The Romanos Rizk series "One with the Tao" has been an ongoing 30-year study. It has continually impressed those of us who have followed it.

The Lions Of August

The three lions of August and of the art world had a mutual birthday celebration on August 12th at the Hawthorne School of Art. Mischa Richter, Sal Del Deo and Romanos Rizk joined with students and fellow artists to enjoy the day of sun, food, wine and poignant anecdotes on the mutual day of births. Relaxed and happy, surrounded by friends and in the comfort of happy memories, the day was stolen from eternity.

Sal and Romanos mentioned that Mischa came to town before Hawthorne died and met him because he had a message for him. Mischa told me about it later. Romanos—or Ray as we familiarly call him—met Sal at Vesper George Art School in Boston. When Ray looked at Sal's work he asked, "Sal, why don't you paint like everyone else?" Sal explained that he had studied that past summer with Henry Hensche on Cape Cod. "Well, the next year," he says, "there were two of us from there in Hensche's class. And when I returned with my 'Hensche palette', Mr. Schmidt, my instructor, said 'Rizk you are probably the worst painter I've ever seen—the worst,' we were so proud."

"I next went to the Butera School in Boston. I went for two years stating that 'I would paint and draw as long as the teacher didn't interrupt me.' I was under the Hensche influence. After two

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— Romanos Rizk

"'Tao' means *the way*, reality, God, the way of the bow, the sword, the martial arts. Tao means creative action. I have always been interested in oriental philosophy. Through those 30 years I painted 850 pieces of 'One with the Tao' theme. Twelve years ago I went back to realism. I started with a simple still life and it was as if I had never stopped. Observing life as I always do, observing in museums, the hand does what the mind has to offer. Three weeks ago I went back to black and white. I'm sorry Henry died before he could see me go back to realism. The still lifes I could do at home, but with abstract you need a studio so you can spat-

ter. So I have a two-month commitment to a studio in Union Square. I needed a place to paint."

Amazing conversation in so brief a time at a distracting

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— Sal Del Deo

though pleasant gathering.

Sal joined in reminiscing about their art school days. The 7 AM train out of Providence, RI had a contingent of art students off to Boston and Vesper George. "It was like a Clifford Odett play with all these characters. Mihran Chobanivan was studying drama; he later switched to sculpture. Joining us in Pawtucket was Charlie Couper, he was five years older. Those train trips—great times." I was thinking of the conductors and hoping they had a sense of humor.

Sal continued, "One day at Vesper George there was a painting demonstration by Henry Henschel who would travel all over the country giving demonstrations. I was amazed at his colors but also liked how he encouraged study of the old masters. I asked him where he lived. 'Provincetown,' he said. 'Where's that?' I asked. I thought it was in Canada. 'On Cape Cod.' Henschel said. 'Where's Cape Cod?' I asked. We didn't travel in those days. Nobody trav-

Kolsky was the first man to commit suicide off the George Washington Bridge. It was new then.

— Mischa Richter

elled the way people do now. So Henry invited me [to the Cape]. Charlie Couper and myself went down and who should we meet in the class? A little well-dressed Italian from New York, Ciro Cozzi. So the three of us and Elliot MacMorrow rented the second floor at the corner of Cemetery Road and Conwell St. from Nathan Roach. There was a steam cleaning business [downstairs] and you can imagine how hot it got with all that steam and heat!

"Well, we went back to school that fall with a new palette and I used a clam shell for my paint. There was an uproar at the school! The next year they all signed up. Romanos Rizk, Connie Black, Ed Giobbi, Bob Hunter, Jim Parr—there's a long list. Henschel had a big influence.

"Indirectly, he was a watchmaker for Josephine and me. Josephine finished university in three years. Her mother, Osma Todd, thought she would give her a fourth year and so Josephine went to Tyler Art School in Philadelphia. Henschel gave a demonstration there one day and though Josephine did not study with

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Henry, it was he who drew her here. She talked with Henry about the town and was impressed enough to visit. And it was Harry Kemp, "Poet of the Dunes," who introduced us, and so here we

are 46 years later, painting, writing, teaching and learning."

I finally got around to Mischa who "got here in '28-'29." What was this message he had for Hawthorne? The secret began to sound like the Pope's message from Fatima — "Oh yea," he says, "the message." Well I was elected to go up to the barn. I was asked to invite him to a party. Ganini Kolsky, "Gancha," we called him and Channing Smith were giving a party. Kolsky was the first man to commit suicide off the George Washington Bridge—it was new then. They had a studio in the Washington Ave area. There were two stories and I lived below. I could stay there if I did the dishes. We used just paper cups so there wasn't much to do. Years later when my son went to Kent, that posh art school, Channing was his teacher.

"When we immigrated here from Russia we went to Boston. I had four uncles and two aunts there. I went to the Wendell Phillips

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School. I went to English High, which, in those days, was safe. Boston was the Athens of America. It was beautiful.

"I was up to my armpits in study and wanted to go to art school. Three scholarships were available to the Museum School and I won one. I did charcoal drawings from the caste every day. There was a Chinese art student there, who has done very well. He's not missing any meals. He told me 'Why not go to Yale?' They had tuition scholarships—deferred payments. You could pay 10 years later. My Dad was very proud and supportive of me and didn't want me to be anything but an artist. He paid the tuition.

"I've been very lucky all my life. I had supportive parents and got work right away. Magazines were hot; cartooning was very big. We lived in Connecticut and I would take the train into work. All the publishing houses were within two blocks of Grand Central [Station]. These were highly political times. I was at Yale between '30-'34, the height of the depression. There were lynchings.

"I was syndicated doing "Strictly Richter", national and abroad. So your not talking to a nobody, your talking to a has-been!" — Mischa Richter

Veterans were fired for asking for their veteran's bonus. There was a great consciousness of social events. Painting was immersed in social realism. When I read that a Van Gogh exhibit at the Fine Arts Museums had an amazing 20,000 attendance I thought 'if a magazine had 20,001 circulation, it would fail'. Times were changing fast. Cartoons were the rage, in demand. I switched to cartoons. They were paying \$50 a cartoon. I was making a good living at \$1,000 a week in the time of depression. I worked for King Features of Hurst Publications. I was syndicated doing "Strictly Richter," national and abroad. So you're not talking to a nobody, your talking to a has-been!"

Happy 89th birthday, Mischa! That sardonic humor gets you through everything. Happy Birthday Romanos, & Sal!

August 12, 1999.