

KELLY'S CORNER



by Jan Kelly

end of an inner voyage

When leaving Provincetown, passing Pilgrim Lake or East Harbor, you move from one geological period to another-Provincetown. A sand spit formed from wind and wave action is 8,000 years old. The bluff where the Outer Reach Motel sits is the end of the glacier and is 15,000 years old. Provincetown has no bed rock, and its ponds are seepage, controlled by rainfall or the lack of rainfall.

Truro and on up have kettle ponds, so called because they are round and deep, characteristics of a kettle. They are round and deep because icebergs left at their final resting place melted gradually and were both below and above the moraine or rubbish of the glacial flow. Because of the depth, they have a lower temperature than Provincetown ponds, a phantom of the Glacial Age. Also, in Truro is the Pamet River, a glacial riverbed and also a phantom of the great force and rumbling of stone, ice, and dirt being forced from ocean to bay. From that brutal force that carved and left divided the bottom of a shallow valley is left a peaceful ribbon of water, sometimes so narrow you can touch both sides from your canoe.

The highway divides the Pamet into South Pamet and North Pamet. On the high tide you can course the stream by canoe with the interruption of portage at the highway. Que Linda, Roz Baxandall, and myself did this last week. Each of us had the feeling of being in another world. Setting into the Pamet Harbor, the feeling of ocean, salt air, and expanse dwarfed our well-worn canoe.

This changed quickly as we skirted our first phragmites and entered into a scene of more vegetation than water-green overpowered blue and gave habitat to citizens of nature. Their sounds were all around us. Representatives of several species showed themselves for our silent and close viewing. Kingfishers, kestrels, mallards, cedar waxwings,

goldfinches, catbirds, red-winged blackbirds, brown thrashers, and kingbirds forced our view upwards. Brown trout, turtles, minnows, and water striders forced our view downwards. Swamp lustrife, cattails, bayberry, water parsnip, great mullein, choke cherry, and phragmites kept our gaze level as we wound around the serpentine route of the glacial riverbed. Respect and joy of being there was the unanimous reaction.

We were grateful for this gift of nature, another outing enriching our quality of life. Friendship is like that, a constant enrichment, a broadening of view, a sharing and a going forward. We three have been friends for five or six years, but it seems like always. A day such as this on the Pamet gives us the opportunity for closer and deeper communication. Good company is another gift of life, its worth uncounted.

The Pamet is named for the Pamet Indian tribe. It is pronounced properly "Pahmut." These lower-Cape Indians had a gracious life I speculate, living in beauty and abundance. The kitchen middens of the High Head area materialize the clues of good living: oyster and clam shells, glasgow pipe stems, and beautifully shaded and shaped arrowheads. It's still good living there, though now it's snug Cape Cod houses, gardens, tennis courts, mostly a summer retreat for those busily engaged in city life and livelihood.

A bit burnt, a bit sore, and a bit weary, we would down at Ballston Beach and secure our canoe at rest. We cheated on the portage at the highway and hitchhiked. It caused a bit of congestion and a lot of laughter. Everybody wanted to get a look at three women merrily thumbing a ride with canoe in tow. We hitchhiked back to Baxandall's to get Que Linda's ark of a station wagon to ferry the canoe this lap of the trip. First car again! Good times are infectious.

If I seem nostalgic at this writing, it is with good reason. Roz Baxandall has returned to the village and to her teaching post at New York State University, Westbury, Long Island, where she teaches American history and women's studies. Que Linda has returned to California, where she teaches 6th grade at Fountain Valley School, Orange County. I won't see my good friends until June next. We'll write and phone and miss each other. We refer to the nine month teaching stint as their gestation period. By March, they feel the kicking, and April and May pass quickly, and then one sunny day, we are all at the net chatting again, planning summer day by day.

When they each leave, I pretend they are going to Hyannis shopping and will be later returning as usual. Also, we always have plans for the next year: a Monomoy trip, sea clamming, a repeat of the Pamet, tournaments, and flashes of social life.

One definite social night will be when the Empire Loisa Samba School returns. This wonderful and drug-like Brazilian music thrilled to the tiptoes all who heard it in Town Hall. Bill and Skipper Evald hosted a night of samba music as a benefit for the Art Association and held it at Town Hall. Once the music started, you were transformed to the streets of Rio, of Bahia, Salvador. The human energy of this music pushes you to a level of dance quite out of the ordinary. The drumming group intoxicated all in the hall. The bar served up caranguejo, a strong liquor made from sugar cane and served with sugar and crushed limes. Two strokes of the imagination, and you were in Rio, street dancing at carnival.

I enjoyed the night so much, I have already invited ten people to be my guests next year. Food and drink and "confluenza" at my house and then on to the dance. My birthday present to each of them: "confluenza," or confluence, is that waiting and readying period when each samba school prepares to display the enthusiasm, ability, and result of a year of intensive practice to the judges of carnival. The "confluenza" takes about two hours. Passing through the center of the great bleached stands about one and one-half to two hours, and they just keep on through the night until the sun comes up, and they drop as we will next summer to the music of empire Loisa Samba School.

Reggie Cabral of the Atlantic House will be running a benefit for the animal shelter on Friday, September 18. Reggie has some surprises for all who attend. Provincetown is a town of animal lovers, so please join in. Celebrate together and celebrate our Provincetown animals. Your help is welcome.

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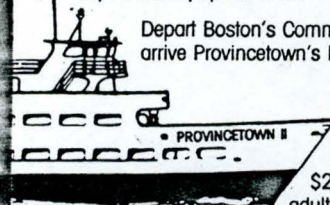
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