

Artists In Residence

by Jan Kelly

In October of 1985 a group of artists in need of housing and studio space began the slow trek of providing the same. Those isolated and original thoughts in the minds of these worker-artists meshed together in conversation, fueled by an article in the *Cape Cod Times* by Marnie Samuelson exploring and commenting on the problem. The artists realized their housing needs had become so overgrown that exodus was quite near, and they became determined to do something about it. Today they are an eight-member board of directors of Paliss: Provincetown Artists Live-in Studio Space. Hilda Neily, Tony Chimento, Alan Wagg, Kristine Hopkins, Donald Bealk, Gail Mayes, Jackie Kelly, and Karen Hardy formed a non-profit organization for the purpose of creating permanent low equity live-in studio space for year-round Provincetown artists.

As artists this group does not feel separate from the community. Not only are they an integral part of the history and tourist attraction pattern, but they are workers and family people. All of them have year-round and summer jobs as a means of personal support as well as the support for their artistic activity. They are not singular, offbeat, slightly anarchistic people, but are voters, workers, parents of children, in short, citizens. Their arguments are that studios and living space were easily come by at a moderate rent for many years; now all space is limited, expensive and ever-moving in that direction. The artist is part of Provincetown's history and a drawing card for tourists. Artists have families, too, and if families leave, what will the school population be in 10 years? They feel that if Provincetown has no school, there will be no nucleus to Town, that Provincetown will become a town of part-time dwellers.

Hilda Neily's personal quest for studio space ran in a direct line to the formation of PALISS. Hilda has lived in town since 1969 and has painted steadily. Look for her work in the window of the Ellen Harris Gallery across from the Heritage Museum. Hilda realized last year, after reading Samuelson's article, that she was not alone. The plight was multiple and common. But the problem was also particular—studio and living space—visual artists need large windows for preferable north light and space enough to leave the easel and the paints and the brushes being used when a block of work is completed. If all can be left in place, the continuation of the work is not time-consuming

or broken into fractional thinking. The wet canvas can remain on the easel for self-criticism and planning and the necessary tools are at hand. It's not really a lot to ask, though it seems ideal.

The problems are space, land, construction, ownership, and maintenance. The reality of the coming about of this space is work and common sense.

To help deal with this the Board of Directors incorporated. Paul Christo helped them with the paper work for this application. The offices of Lawson & Wayne have given their assistance in completing the articles of incorporation. These are being filed with the state. They also applied for an exploratory grant from CEDA (Community of Developmental Action). This is a technical assistance grant and is given whether the project is a "go" or not. Mark Forrest was contacted last year for advice on this matter. Florrie Povirk has guided the group through the intricacies of bureaucracy. They have met with Town Manager Jim Jeffers, with the Selectmen and with the Building Inspector, Warren Alexander. These steps were all taken as preparation for an Article which will be submitted by this group at Town Meeting on October 27th. If you are interested in listening to or speaking on this Article, I urge you to be present at Town Meeting. PALISS will request the donation or the lease of land for the purpose of building 25 to 30 live-in studio spaces for visual artists who have Provincetown residency and a body of work denoting the person as a "working artist." They have received 70 completed applications for the spaces and expect more at the end of the Fall Arts Festival. The intention is that these units be a low-equity co-op. That is, that they can never be sold for profit but can be sold for the amount that was invested. The Board of Directors is working on the plans with the help of an architect. They are firming up their bylaws to read in accordance with their goals.

On October 27th they should be prepared to speak to you on the topic and to answer your questions. It will be a valid and informative discussion if all are prepared. It's your vote which will say "yes" or "no." If the idea is approached with open minds, the right solution will be the result. Feel free to discuss this proposal with any of the Board of Directors as part of your preparation. They look forward to your input on October 27th as well.



Hilda Neily