

Kelly's Corner



The ponds are low this spring. The past three springs have been near flood condition, the bike trails being impassable at spots. But this year the golden club is struggling to grow in mud, rather than water, at the pond's edges. The rain finally did come and at full moon—whatever the weather is at full moon, it usually holds for at least three days.

Sea clamming was a misty, foggy experience this month, weather rather like Ireland. But because of the persistence of the dampness and mist, I always say that Ireland has no weather, only atmosphere. The rain usually starts as the tide turns and starts to come in, so you can be finished before any heavy rain begins. Much of Provincetown is having clams tonight, chowder, pie, stuffed shells, fritters, or fried rims and eyes.

There are no tern yet, and just a few sand lances. There are some brant, some yellow legs, and of course, the ubiquitous herring gull. The brant is primarily a sea goose, handsome, with black and white markings, it could look like a small version of the Canada goose to a non-birder. Brant keep you company all winter on the flats. Their diet depends heavily on eel grass so that's where to look for them. Eel grass has more uses than food for brant. The early settlers insulated their houses with it. It was also used as mattress and upholstery stuffing, and was the first excelsior for packing. Today it is mostly used as fertilizer and mulch for gardens. The eel grass is related to pond weeds and is an important stabilizer of marshes and flats. It also provides shelter for bay scallops and small fish. So in 1931 when there was a blight (believed to have been a water born fungus) which killed off the eel grass the results were disastrous. Brant starved, the survivors lived on sea lettuce, bay scallops disappeared, cod and flounder declined. Because the waving leaves also acted as a filter, their absence caused silt and sewerage to drop directly on to the sand. The clam and oyster beds suffered. So next time you see this black confetti littering the beach in windrows, think of all its benefits.

Most Provincetowners enjoy that trip to the Post Office every day. It's one of the "what's going on?" points of the day. Good news is shouted out, and everybody hears it. Bad news is kept in the pocket until the security of home protects the reading. There is usually something in your mail-box, though, which can bring a smile. I receive an 8 1/2 x 11 plain brown envelope each month from E.C. Publications in NYC. Since there were many people waiting at the window, (something I see as a ready audience), I asked the question, "What

do you think I receive in a plain brown wrapper each month from E.C. Publications?" Most were eager to know, some too embarrassed. I titillated them up to a drumroll and then whipped out the secret subscription, *Mad Magazine*. Half laughs, half disappointment.

Have you ever been to a dog's birthday party? Well, "Max", I call him Max-a-thousand, Marianne Aerobic's dog, invited me to his birthday party. He is two years old. He served devil dogs and hotdogs for the humans and dog snacks for his other friends. The dogs: Lash, Cupcake, Beau, and Libby joined him, the cats tolerated it all, and the humans checked each other for ticks. Marianne Aerobic's cat and dog look so much like her you could often start a conversation with one of them and realize when there's no English response that you've got the cat or the dog and not Marianne. She is still holding strong as the world's best aerobics teacher, with the best tapes as well. Her class is held Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8:30—10:00 am at the Provincetown Inn, and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 4:00—5:30 pm at the Martial Arts Building at 96 Bradford Street. If you have, or have not, tried aerobics yet, visit a class to see how you like it, or call 487-0435. This is the first, the original aerobic class in Provincetown. Mothers with babies are welcome, so if baby and lack of sitter is keeping you in the house, come to aerobics. You'll have about thirty willing adults to help you with baby. Nobody minds a wail from baby now and then, it can't drown out the disco music. Older children visit too. It's good exposure for them to see a group of motivated, friendly, adults setting aside time three times a week to keep in shape. Why? Because they enjoy it.

The warblers are in the Beech Forest in concentration and scattered around town. These small migratory birds use Provincetown as a flyway while going north. Even if you don't have binoculars and have never heard the word "warbler," go to the Beech Forest parking lot one afternoon before sunset and watch the trees. I guarantee you won't be immune. A precious fever will trap you into wanting more.

With Vietnam revisited, the tenth anniversary of WWII and the Holocaust remembered, it seems like we are triple-timing bad times. Let's think of the next generation and make their lives interesting by work, interest in life—a generation without the horror and subsequent guilt which have gone on. Vietnam was murky and confusing even if you were alive and old enough to understand it. We were fighting the communists. Which communists? Chinese? South Vietnamese, North Viet



namese, Cambodian? They are all different, localized.

It's hard to believe World War II ever happened. How could the world go so mad? And the Holocaust. The Holocaust approaches the most unbelievable tale that could be fabricated. You were aware of it from history class, but it was so ghastly, you remembered the facts only. You never knew the reality until you met the individuals who suffered and survived this tragedy. When I was in my teens, I went to the "Borscht Belt" of the Catskill Mountains to work as a waitress in the Jewish hotels for my college tuition. I learned more in that summer season than in the next two semesters of school. I returned for more education and tuition on high holidays, at Passover, and again in summer. Until that date and experience, my knowledge of Jewish people and the Jewish religion was academic and marginal. As a part of a moving, working team, my knowledge became more personal and real. I saw tattooed numbers on the inner forearms of many of my fellow workers. Reality. I saw unannounced nervous breakdowns which were cleared in a few reassuring moments by other veterans of the camps. Reality. I saw people who looked twenty and thirty years older than their chronological age. Reality. I had many conversations that summer which were not fun, not joyful, but were the slow release of a still pus-filled wound. Better than it was in 1945, better than the fifties, but not emptied, not ready to heal. Some I spoke with had gained strength from being subjected to the horror. Was it worth it? I think about those individuals, their intense will to go on, to live, to be alive. Not to buy things, to own things, but to be alive without fear. It seems so simple; it is not. When I was in my teens, I looked upon it with immature compassion. I listened. But now I look at it, not as a youth who feels immortal, but as an adult, more human. Who knows when either disease or accident may pull me out of the present.

There have always been massacres and slaughtering through the ages: The Aztecs, the Turks, the English, the American Indian. Buddhism is considered

the only religion that has not spilled blood in its "cause." But the systematic, long term killing of millions of human beings is beyond imagination. It is science. The only glimmer of hope I have in studying this step of our history is Terezin or Theresienstadt, a Nazi concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. Each inmate was allowed to carry forty pounds of personal goods to this camp. Many chose to carry their paints, books, and musical instruments. In the evenings, after so many hours of grueling work, the show went on. People painted, wrote, sang, acted, and played their music. We have a legacy, from Terezin, tragic and hopeful in content. The adult and child drawings, paintings, poems, and stories allow us an intimate view of this bizarre daily life. We can only hope that the opportunity to create made their terrible situation more bearable. Though hope can be cruel, it's better than no hope.

Should wrong-doing be exposed, given quiet thought and public discussion? Yes, whether it is wisdom, guilt, shame, or future actions, we can adjust an attitude and gain. The human who preconceives acts, and does, or would repeat bad actions, should be made known. Knowledgeable defense will save the next victim. One can't be an ostrich, nor can one be a hawk. We must never let another Holocaust or war happen. People fight wars; people can prevent them. Now we only have nuclear war to arrest. Will our problems ever be simple?

Taffy Silva is home recuperating smoothly after a triple bypass operation. His beagle Misty was so happy to see him, think she was tired of my dragging her around town. Taffy says he will be fit two sea clam tides hence.

Let us all hope Robin Garran will do well in her second operation at Tufts Medical Center, Pediatric Division. The first operation was for her right leg and pelvis. This one will be for her left leg. This unfortunate accident is just one more result of drunken driving. Licenses are too easily given, too easily abused. I'm sure Robin would enjoy a card from all of you.