

Kelly's Corner

BY JAN KELLY



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WITH JAMIE AND

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PROVINCETOWN'S SIMPLE/COMPLEX PERSONALITIES, you can always flip the coin and spend another life. And then there are many who are like pieces-of-eight, so varied are their talents and their approaches to life. Here! I'll give you "two bits" (slang for the American quarter, and originating from "pieces-of-eight" because you could snap off two bits if you didn't want to spend it all) of the comfortable and interesting lives of two of our most friendly and most loved town folk, Jamie and Marek Kryszkiewicz (Jamie and Marek, or Marek and Jamie, are easier to say).

Marek arrived from Wraslav, Poland, 25 years ago. He and Jamie have been married for 22 years. They have been operating Silk and Feathers for 20 years. And how did they get to Provincetown? They were vacationing on Martha's Vineyard. The questions, "How can we make a living?" and "How can we live at the beach?" prompted some exploration. Provincetown was investigated. Their friend Ed Hogan was here with his own shop, Rising Sun, and suggested that they set up shop, too. The first location was across from Shop Therapy.

Marek and Jamie started by selling pillows, thus "Silk & Feathers." Jamie searched out the accessories and Marek pursued the gimmicks: Pillows, sweatshirts, presents like a toothpaste dispenser in the shape of an elephant you can clip onto the wall, and clown wigs. Twenty years ago clown wigs were such a hit! "People love to change their image quickly," Marek beams. "The key in the beginning was the fast image change."

"I was dyeing socks and scarves fun colors," Jamie laughs. "I bought those white cook shirts -- thick cotton, short-sleeved. They were a big hit. I couldn't dye them fast enough. Bright colors!" This interview has such wonderful energy, stimulating and peaceful.

"Then we went into consignment and grew out of that to a higher end," Marek continues. "We imported and then became our own buyers. Now, here at 377 Commercial St. we are in a

more sophisticated market, but still with a smile on the clothes. They are care-free, relaxed, wearable. We have year-round and all-occasion clothing which falls and drapes the body. We have bright-

ness and mutedness...whatever suits your mood. We enjoy the business; we do our own shopping. We go to Las Vegas, New York City, Europe and Mexico. We mix travel, pleasure and business. It's not a stressful business."

A handsome dog came to sit behind us. "That's Tashi," Marek says, "100% mutt and she's our executive director."

"We listen to everything she says," Jamie confides.

When is the shop the busiest? Late afternoon, before dinner -- all day it's welcoming and popular. Jamie adds, "We have such a variety of people -- adults, of course, but we also have little girls coming in asking for feathers. And when little boys see the 'executive director,' they jump in the door. We're open from Easter to New Year's and then on some weekends beyond that. This past year we were closed only during February and the first half of March."

According to Marek, "The service is not pressurized. You can come in and embrace everything and go out with nothing. You can discuss style, color, etc. We contribute a tremendous amount of happiness to people. People love to dress. A new sweater can make a person feel good. We like to have fun and don't take ourselves too seriously."

Jamie adds, "We have much besides clothing. It's fashion, but we keep it right. We sell jewelry, much of it ethnic. We have jew-



elry from the Tuareq, the nomadic Blue People; and we have turquoise from the Midwest...New Age, slick with clean lines. We have reading glasses, those oh-so-necessary reading glasses with fun frames, and sunglasses -- high fashion, low prices. We have cosmetics by Dr. Hauschka, European shoes, hats, scarves, lingerie and stockings. We also carry woven hats from Minorca, a sister island of Majorca, and soon we'll have beautiful hats from Russia."

While sitting in this relaxed and fun space, surrounded in luxury by beautiful clothing and objects, the conversation is easily, friendly and informative. The second part of the "two-bits" seems worlds away from all this urban sophistication, and yet it is not. The other "bit"? Yoga....

"In 1980," Marek begins, "Paul Richards gave me a catalog from Kripalu in Lenox, Massachusetts. He wanted someone to go with him. We were exploring the healing arts, and so the three of us went. The weekend was one of welcome and orientation. We started gently with yoga, then we returned for some workshops and then onto yoga teacher-training in 1987. I began teaching at the Community Center in 1987."

Jamie adds, "I taught at Gabriel's, but I wanted yoga's effects in my body more than I wanted to teach. As enrollment grew and classes enlarged, we both taught at the Community Center starting in 1988." And they are still teaching this popular and much in demand class Mondays thru Fridays at 8:30am. They have also taught at the Norseman, the Schoolhouse Gallery, the Provincetown Gym, and Mussel Beach. Jamie was at the Fine Arts Work center on Wednesdays this past summer for "Early Risers" yoga.

For the last five years, Jamie and Marek have brought their yoga practice to Mexico for the months of February and March to "Yoga on the Beach" at Playa del Carmen on the Gulf of Mexico, just below Yucatan. The first week in March they hold a retreat where many of P'town's summer people join them.

While "Yoga on the Beach" is happening miles and miles away, Provincetown locals continue their yoga practice at the Community Center with capable Kripalu-trained instructors substituting for Jamie and Marek. The practice continues daily every weekday morning with Center Director Dennis Clark responsible for the times and monies.

The practice of yoga has helped practically everybody, being so low-keyed, noncompetitive, and with privacy assured no matter how many people are in the room. Yoga is a simple way to a better life...only walking is simpler. Jamie shares how yoga is so beneficial to breathing: "Most of us breathe shallowly, and we don't aerate the body, the blood. There are so many breathing techniques to benefit the body and the mind, so many different ways to move. Yoga helps one achieve presence, being right there at the time, in the body, truly living in your 'house,' learning 'not to be out there.' We see so much hype, news and advertising; we are so distracted. It's important for students to get the needed focus.

"We watch people grow," she continues. "We can see a huge difference in some people. They may come in with no flexibility, and after a year they look so much better. They also get into their body, from the intellectual to the physical." Then Jamie and Marek look at me with clear, happy, open faces and say simultaneously, "All are welcome!" See you at yoga class! ■