

KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

August first-Lammas Day-has come and gone. Summer is clocking into its second half. In centuries past in the British Isles, this was harvest time, in particular for grains. The amount of available daylight there causes an earlier crop than in the continental United States. In the British Isles, daylight lengthens to ten in the evening due to the Nordic sun. The latest we can manage here is 8:30 pm—with Daylight Savings Time at that. So, with the harvest in, bread was baked from the new wheat for Lammas, or "loaf mass". The second half of the summer was passed tending to a second batch of wheat and the root crops. Shakespeare honors the feast day in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Theseus, Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta, his betrothed, chose Lammas as their wedding night. The play opens with the happy and eager couple discussing the four-day wait for the New Moon and hence their wedding day. Theseus is impatient with the slow waning of the old moon but Hippolyta calms him that the four days will pass quickly to the night when the moon will look like a silver bow and the wedding ceremony can take place. My parents chose Lammas for their wedding day as did my next-door neighbors, Edmund (Taffy) and Lil Silva. This will be the 66th anniversary of their Lammas Day Wedding. I enjoy reading *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream each August even though Samuel Pepys in his mundane though celebrated biography, heaps negative criticism on a mid 17th century performance of the play. He found it frivolous and thought it much ado about nothing. It's a fun play, plastic in possibilities. I even coordinated a scaled-down version with my kindergarten class years ago. They loved playing

with secret potions (we used a dandelion) and playing the donkey. Caressing the donkey was too uproarious for the tiny thespians. I needed a brave sort for that - Galen Malicoat and Beau Valtz played the parts neatly. August 1st will also be the 88th birthday of Amelia Carlos. I met her at Pucci's celebrating the event with Herbert Hintze and Robert (Rosie) Coane, enjoying a jovial lunch. "Well we are celebrating my 88th birthday," stated Amelia. "But more so we are celebrating *togetherness*. We just like being together."

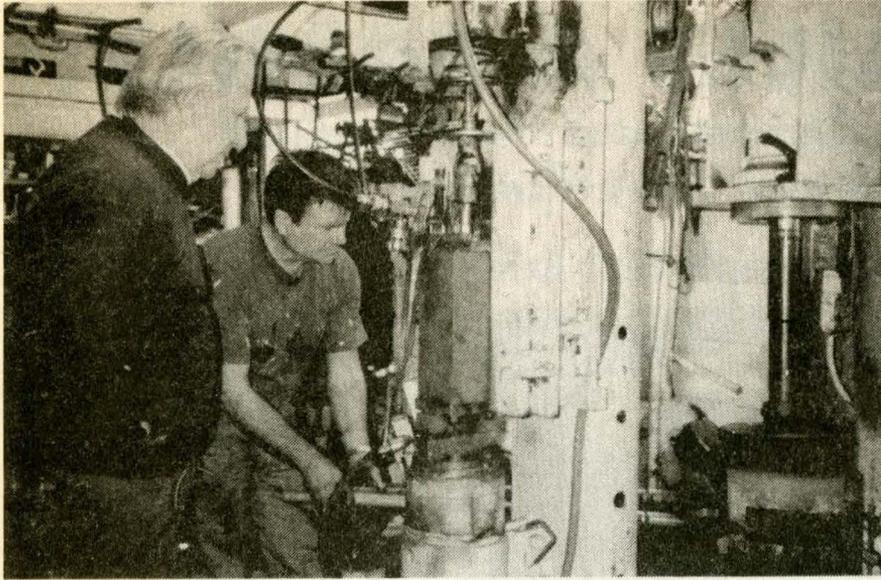
One of the most interesting stops in town is the corner of Nickerson and Bradford Streets: Clarence Kacergis' Welding Shop. You're thinking "Welding? What's so interesting about gates, pipes or a utilitarian small business?" Well, begin with Clarence, add his family and his welding shop, which also happens to be a heavy duty Fantasyland. Besides repairs and steel necessities, there are industrial strength sculptures everywhere you look. Birds, plants, cattails out of copper tubing, leaves cut from fuel tanks, leaves or shovels turned over and painted green, bumpers and bike parts, witches, fish, butterflies and flowers, a bowler with punk-hair—welding cable—and spring-arms-to-throw-the-ball weather vanes, sailboats lined for a race, sculptures whirling and waving or taking a stolid stance displaying a usually light and airy subject. And so crowded! You have to walk slowly not to miss one treasure after another. Work and art in balance—Your mind enjoys being teased as your eyes scan industrial, so serious metals turned to graceful subjects appealing to the lightheartedness, to humor and to fun. What does he do with all this? He displays it. I remember the fine kinetic sculpture shown at the Art Association. A railroad scene and men driving spikes—a favorite as soon as you walked into the gallery.



Bells made from recycled helium, CO2 and scuba tanks—their "Bells by the Pound"—are a constant and steady shop turn-out. Clarence and son Michael extend the life of these rejects by cutting the top down to the desired length and then forming the bell shape by lowering a forge-heated and glowing cylinder. This spreads the opening to a flared rim. After the cylinder has been

transformed and cooled, a clapper is chosen and the once-discarded cylinder has a new life as a bell. The tone of each is unique and a surprise each time.

Cylinders are inspected every 5-7 years. If they have a 10-year star, 10 years is the maximum life. The life of a cylinder is 5 years if it has no star. If a cylinder has any ping or pit when inspected, the inspector must discard it and—if it's lucky—the container soon becomes a bell. Since there are many different styles the final tone cannot be known until the



product is completed.

Born in the anthracite coal mining area of Pennsylvania, Clarence Kacergis has been at this work for over 50 years. The Navy was the bait that fished Clarence out of the mines. He was stationed in San Diego in 1938, attached to a tender and learned seven trades while attached to the repair ship—the U.S.S. Whitney. Tillie Jackett had travelled to San Diego to visit her sister for what was to be a 2-week visit. She met Clarence and stayed 9 years. Theirs was not the only marriage spawned by the U.S.S. Whitney—Joe Dirsra met and married Caroline Diego while there.

In 1946 Clarence and Tillie returned to Provincetown, “to come back to Tillie’s roots.” Clarence bought the property where they are still living. They started with one stall and a fraction of a store. Within the month, there were two stalls. The next year Clarence and Tillie bought the land and “deplorable shops”. From sandy San Diego for \$4,500.00, things were so slow in the post-war economy that Clarence went to Hartford for a job.

The economy picked up, fishing was strong in those days and Clarence had a steady demand of welding jobs servicing the fishing fleet. He always sculpted. Whatever the job or interruption Clarence Kacergis created sculptures and enjoyed his family life. Clarence states the best thing that ever happened to him was meeting his wife. They have been married 60 years as of July 7th and during those loving years have raised 3 children: Clement, Michael and Kathleen. Do we all remember the two years Clarence would not cut his hair? Shoulder length and leonine, this barrel-chested giant cut quite a figure. The hair could be finally barbered because Tillie finally gave up cigarettes—devotion comes in many forms.

Clarence always had a difficult task convincing the locals to use iron and steel for maritime boat designs. He built a 24’ steel boat in the 50’s for son Clemmy to go sea clamming. “A pleasure boat for a Junior High boy?” The old timers laughed. Some of them even came to the pier to laugh and to watch it sink.” For fourteen years Clarence would repair and replace the courtesy float at MacMillan Wharf. He could not convince those in charge to try a steel float. They were sure it would be too heavy and would sink. After 14 years, when the steel float was tried, the questions of flotation apparatus stopped.

Marine related work has lessened as the fleet shrinks, but fences, railings, gates and, of course, sculptures have filled that void. Our population is changing and growing. Son Michael, the next

generation is also involved in sculpture, taking it another step. Michael is now creating a stunning sculpture behind Berta Walker’s Gallery. It is so far 80’ long, no symmetry, different shapes and without a name. It is commissioned by Serge Joyal, a senator from Ottawa, Canada. It’s an amazing work to witness and every time I tuck into that pathway to take a look, it has grown, changed and become more splendid, high on a hill with like trees for companions. Michael’s sons David and Peter also have welded and created as the representation of the 3rd generation...and it looks like the 4th generation, Clarence’s great-grandson, Aaron Kacergis, age 10, will be the next creator in the family. Sometimes when I spending time with this family, I see only one person in different forms,



different periods of life. They stay close to each other, have similar interests and listen to each other. A mutual respect and a high interest in work, both diurnal and creative makes each member of this family part of a mosaic we can all appreciate.