

KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

(Provincetown) You hear, as you do every season, "not as many people this year," or "so many people this year." I think the humans are in direct ratio to the gulls, plenty of them and ubiquitous. The gull by its numbers has the power of becoming the most-used symbol of Cape Cod even though there are prairie gulls, California gulls, European, Mediterranean, African, Icelandic, Arctic, and so many international gulls. What force dissipated the locusts' plague in the Salt Lake area of Utah? Gulls. No fish to eat, they ate grasshoppers, so adaptable is this family of birds. They built a monument to the herring and great black backed gull. Many people think all gulls are alike, but if you look only at these two species abundant on the Atlantic coast, you will note obvious and dramatic differences immediately, then, the not so obvious, but yet dramatic. The herring gull is grey backed, smaller, and more abundant. The black-backed is of course, black, larger, and not as numerous. The black backed has a massive bill. Both species have the red spot on the bill as the signal point for the chick to tap and demand food. At this tapping signal, the adult will regurgitate the half-digested fish to the young. Both breed and winter along the Atlantic coast. Many migrate within limited ranges. No dramatic flights like the Arctic tern but maybe to an isolated spot, an island or peninsula, safer for their young. Both live to be quite old. Four years to mature and then depending on wits, twenty years can be a good life. Eleven to fifteen years is an average, but a herring gull in captivity laid fertilized eggs to age 32 and lived to age 39. That's the oldest on record. Cornell School of Ornithology takes credit for that research. These gulls demand study. They were so few in the 30's, gained population in the 40's and steadily every year. Now they are a major population, so much more refuse and fewer home-bred animals to eat it, gulls are scavengers and eat indiscriminately. They have been known to swallow light bulbs, all the utensils at a clambake as well as the leftover food, fishing plugs, some successfully and some victimized, drinking cups, string, rope, cloth, wood, anything swallowable and in the way. While walking on any beach area, you will see crumbling and well-worked over aluminum foil, regurgitated by a gull in an effort to gain its contents.

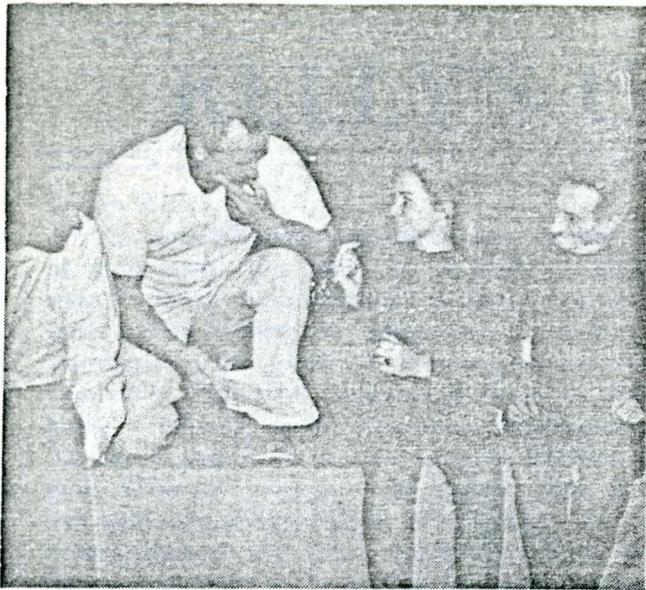
In breeding plumage they are handsome: white head, bright orange-red spot on strong yellow bill, strong pink legs and webbed feet, bright yellow eyes. The herring gulls back is velvety-pearly grey, the black-backed is sleek, raven-like and dramatic on his sandy background. The most interesting difference to me between the two is that the herring gull is so gregarious, chatty, and very busy in a crowd. The black-backed is solitary and quiet, does mingle with its own kind

and is in the same habitat, but those herring gulls seem to be at a non-stop cocktail party. Start to watch them. It's interesting and predictably patterned. Each morning they fly from the Bay to the backside with stops at the dump and then the ponds in the Beech Forest. They like fresh water after they eat. At dusk the flight from backside to Bay finishes the day. A storm approaching at any time of the day will trigger this flight. These are our two most common gulls but we also have the more agile and smaller ring-billed gull, the laughing gull, Bonaparte's gull, black-headed gull, occasional little gull, glaucous, Iceland, lesser black-backed, Kittiwake and occasional mew. Gulls are a world unto themselves in our world. A pair of binoculars, a bird book and beach walks will get you more in touch with their world. They are all around you, so why miss out? From there you will move on to shore birds and from there to pelagic or ocean-going birds.

Eric Noble of the Solar Branch of the Executive Office of Community Development will be here Tuesday to close out the Solar Grant for the Housing Authority's Elderly Housing. The grant was for \$98,000, and executed for a passive solar heating system, hot water and baseboard heat. The solar energy heats the hot water to the degree that the minimum of electricity will be needed to get the temperature to dishwashing and showering degree. The three rows of glass windows and doors fronting the building is fronting a sunspace and a series of vents and fans delivers the sun's trapped energy. It will be interesting to calculate our expenses through the first winter. We at the Housing Authority will spend the day with Eric Noble evaluating and speculating on our solar design. Open house and dedication will be soon. You will know the exact date as soon as plans are finalized.

Did you see Lynn Carter in a wheel chair for a few days? She wore herself out talking and that gave Lacey one more chore to do. Pushing her that is, so she could continue talking.

The Provincetown Art Association and Museum School is doing well. The planning was thorough, the teachers are excellent and reach the students by personality as well as experience and knowledge. For July the subjects are painting with Sherman Drexler, printmaking with Bill Behnken and sculpture with Richard Pepitone. For August, Bill Behnken will stay on with print making and Melissa Meyer will teach painting. We can see the results of these classes on August 19-22 and August 22-31 at student exhibitions. There are also life drawing sessions at the Art Association Museum School. These sessions are held Wed & Fri from 9:30 am to 11:30 am, free to students of the Museum School and \$3 for the public. This is a splendid opportunity for all artists as well as anyone with



John Bragdon, David Colburn, Jan Kelly, Heaton Vorse

a mild, self-teasing interest in developing their drawing skill. A live model is a luxury. The camaraderie of the event will feel good to you, also. You'll be welcomed at the class.

The Concert Series at the Art Association will begin July 26 at 8 pm with an evening of French music featuring Blair Resika, mezzo soprano, Elizabeth Rodgers on piano, and Eleanor Lawrence, flute. On July 29 the Outer Cape Chamber Music Society appears with guest artist James Felberg on cello. And on August 26, a flute and piano recital is scheduled, featuring the adult angel, Michael Horowitz, flute, Elizabeth Rodgers, piano, and Theodore Mook, cello. The Muse Series at 8:30 at the Universalist Meeting House begins July 19 with the Delos String Quartet. Then on Wed and Sat in August, such greats as the Boston Chamber Music Society, Odetta, Maxine Sullivan, and Bill Staines, Ronk, and Gritzbach will perform. On Sunday, August 17 you can hear Dave McKenna. We're fortunate to have so much live music of top quality available to us. I notice every year a few more people take advantage. Provincetown is organized so that you can have an enjoyable activity before a performance. A meal, a gallery tour, or even a walk in that thick thread of humanity on Commercial Street and afterwards to sit in one of the sidewalk cafes is a continuation of easy entertainment. Winter is long enough, spend your summer out and active.

And while you're out on the 26th of July, the Provincetown Tennis Club will be having a dance featuring reggae music of Earl de Pearl and Larry Dreadnaughts. The dance will start at 8 pm and you can dance til 1 am. There will be a cash bar. The dance is open to the public. Drop by, have some exercise and fun. It's a fundraiser so you'll be doing your civic duty as well as reggae.

Saturday's program at the Art Association was a highlight of the summer. *Beginnings* which was the first bill of plays performed by the Provincetown

Players in 1915 was presented for four nights and packed each night. The plays are *Constancy* by Neith Boyce, a play dealing with women's rights and free love and *Suppressed Desires* by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook, a play dealing humorously with psychoanalysis. The plays are seventy years old yet stand up very well and are as valid today as then. Heaton Vorse, 85 years old, said he was in short pants when he first saw them. Heaton, Joel O'Brien, Miriam DeWitt, Neith Souza, Sam Souza, and Lois Rudnick spun tales of informative and amusing data for us before each play. Adele and Lester Heller presented "The Family Album," an interesting series of photographs of those involved in the early Provincetown players. I'm sorry if any of you missed this evening.

After the performances, the Hellers gave a cast party for the Washington-based actors and the descendants of the first players. A delicious buffet, Mumms champagne, all the extras of a party and mostly good talk, exchange of information. Miriam DeWitt was a picture in her wide back brimmed Panama hat and sandals laced to the knee, but as the rain continued to pour she switched to fishing boots and a clever use of a garbage bag becoming a chic over-the-shoulder rain bag. Her niece Neith had travelled with her husband Sam from Teaneck, New Jersey for the event. Sam is remarkably pleasant and handsome, looks just like Clark Gable. Do you remember his cousin "Big He?" "Big He" also looked just like Clark Gable—both to the moustache—"Big He" lived at "Lomala" across from Grace Hall parking lot. He had that property trimmed and pruned as perfectly as his moustache. Doves and wisteria, it is a joy to look at. The same even temperament and pride of self is in Sam Souza. Joel O'Brien caught up on a lot of Provincetown families' history. His eloquent voice and sharp memory are a delight. Dick Baumgartner was his merry self and glad to see everybody. Dick has a wonderfully mobile face. If he is relating a bit of sadness, he looks so sad. Story over, he's back to his sunny self. A most enjoyable gathering. The gracious Hellers allowed all of us an extension of a good theatre experience. The gifted Washington thespians regretted having to leave our magic town at show's end. They were eager to start immediately setting up the next lap of the Provincetown Playhouse. I hope we can all get it started soon. As I looked around the room, I realized almost everyone in the room had acted at one time or another. Many had directed, produced, and written plays also. Here's a picture of some of us involved in the rehearsals of one of Connie Black's plays. That's Eleanor Meldahl, Heaton Vorse, Jan Kelly, David Colburn, and John Bragdon. We had a lot of fun working things out and I bet we'd all be willing to try again.