

Kelly's Corner

BY JAN KELLY



BUILDING

LIVES

AT THE ACADEMY
OF ART, SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

WE ARE PREPARING FOR TENNIS FOR LIFE, a mixed-doubles round-robin tournament now in its sixth year. The tournament will be held

Saturday, June 15th at Bissell's Tennis Courts, red clay courts at the extreme west end of Provincetown by the Moors. The courts are graciously donated each year by Esther and Jon van Rider. The Provincetown Community Compact takes care of the administrative details. Three groups benefit from the tournament, H.O.W. (Helping Our Women), P.A.S.G. (Provincetown AIDS Support Group), and the Academy of Art, Science & Technology at the Provincetown High School.

Last year we raised \$6,000. Each of the three groups volunteers members to help the players through the planning and the mechanics of the day. H.O.W. volunteers tally the scores, assign players and keep the courts smoothly filling and emptying as the four games no-add system rotates the players. The H.O.W. volunteers also register the players.

The PASG sends volunteers to assist with the parking and registration and supplies water.

The Academy and the Honor Society prepare and serve breakfast for all involved: players, audience and other volunteers. The custodians deliver tables, bleachers, easel and other required equipment.

It's a reflection of Provincetown to see the three disparate groups work together for a magical morning of fun and support.

I have been out reminding people of their duties, but they are ahead of me, and are ready for Tournament #6. Then I hear what they did with the \$2,000 they received last year and I am sincerely thanked. Each year gets easier, better, and the funds received have



bettered so many lives.

Today I went to see Nancy Flasher, Academy coordinator. Trustingly, Nancy was ready for me, not only with a "Yes," for breakfast preparation and coordination of the props and the people, but with a, "Please look at what we've done with our \$2,000."

The Library Learning Center was buzzing active with students grabbing at those few minutes before classes to catch up and add on to their passions, their dreams, their experiments. I was lucky to be able to speak with three of them before they began to swirl through their young adult day.

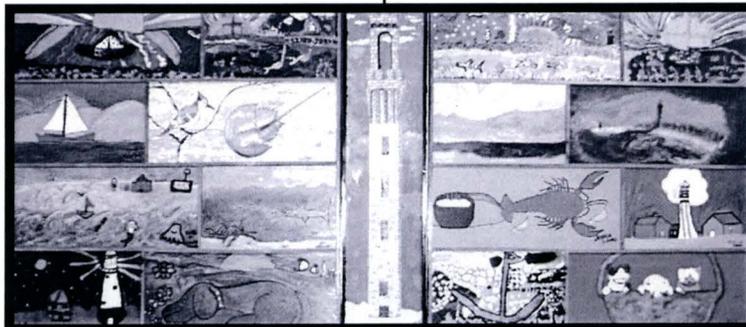
Stephanie Johnson graciously gave me of her precious time. Serious and analytical about her three years of academy efforts, Stephanie studied child development with Deborah Shell of Independence House

her first year. For the last two years, Stephanie has studied Photography with Mary Jane Dean of the Fine Arts Work Center.

"Last year I took tons of photos. This year I made a pointed effort to take fewer pictures. I took up an interest in editing which has also helped with my English class. My English teacher was able to carry the selection process, the editing process to my writing.

"I like what I do. This is a good part of high school [life]. You can choose your course, receive financial help and have a mentor to guide you. You can find something to grow with.

"I learned how to use a manual camera. I learned from my mentor to do all my own settings rather than use an automatic camera. Doing this changes the pictures. They're sharper, detailed, especially in black and white. I worked in black and white, in color, and I learned how to use a dark-room. I experimented with digital photography



too. I'm experimenting with that. I must explore it further; it's more technical. So much depends of the quality of the paper too.

"For my future, I'd like to have photography as a hobby. Maybe sell photos as well. Next year I'm going to the 4C's (Cape Cod Community College) to study accounting. I'll go to Suffolk for 2 years after that. I think about photography as a career, but I'm good at accounting and it's a steady job."

My next student is a student-mentor. **Cid Rodrigues** has been a mentor since the "After-School Program" which led to the Academy Program. He has two students, Billy Souza and Michael Vinagre. "We've

worked together since 1999 when I was in the 12th grade and they were in 7th."

Cid is now a student at the 4C's and has yet to decided on a career. His sister Adi has graduated from Brown University and sister Ailine is at

Brandeis. Classes, working at Flyer's Boat Yard and mentoring currently make up Cid's life. Nancy Flasher appreciates Cid's gifts. "He makes great contributions to the program, more than he realizes."

Cid tells me his students have made great strides. With funding they can spend more valuable time in the academy. You need specific times because some people work faster than others and he feels he can be bold in building and teaching.

"I'm constructing a racer myself—a tunnel hull racer, a catamaran. The students will do a basic hull, a semi V, a planing boat. We use web sites and catalogues for ideas and materials and we go to the dock.

"The program is good. Students can benefit. They can go into an area of interest and improve upon it. You get to explain yourself clearer and broader. Some learn faster than others. Teaching makes you remember more.

"There are certain steps in boat [building].

Sequence is important. We use artificial intelligence like computer basics. We've learned a lot and teaching makes you learn even more."

Cid was off to do his own homework. After that he would report to Flyer's Boat Yard to work his job on boats and motors. Cid and his students come from fishing families, love the sea and boats and are exploring their 21st century possibilities in this world.

My third student, **Michael Santos**, is deeply involved in photography. We laughed when I called him "Barshie," his family nickname for generations. Michael is in his second year with the Academy, studying with his mentor, Mark Adams.

"I love sunrises and sunsets."

"Maybe horizons?" I asked as I studied his work.

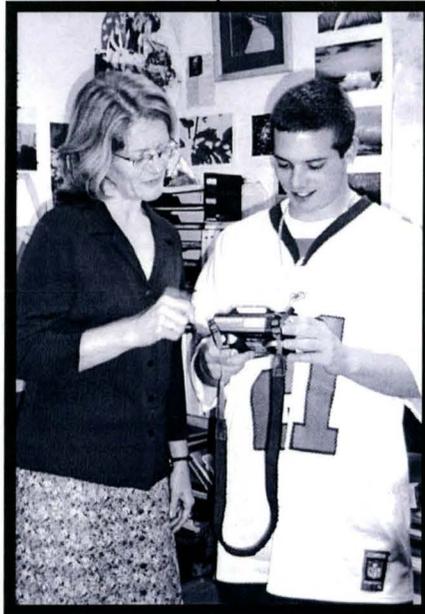
"Yea, I go fishing with my Dad a lot—tuna fishing. His boat is the *Melissa-Michael* (named) for me and my sister. It's so pretty on the boat. You've gotta have a camera while you're fishing."

Excitedly, Michael showed me a photo of a dragger moving through the setting sun.

"I used a Nikon 50 for this. It's not digital, so it's not as clean. Here's the Moors sluiceway and Ballston Beach. My friend Valentino Davoli—who was in the Academy in 2000—was taking digitals of sunsets. I was [photographing] trees and leaves which I love, but I have since moved to sunsets. I love the colors. Every day the skies are different. That's good.

"I'm going to Florida when I graduate, Lake Worth, West Palm Beach. I have a friend there. Hopefully in five years I'll open my own gallery. I'll sell Cape Cod work and Florida work too. I'm going to try to be a professional photographer. I go most every day. It costs a lot of money, but that's OK. It's important to me."

Everybody was off to class. The library faces changed and the time had come to talk with Nancy Flasher. Nancy is so enthusiastic about the program



and her individual students. "This is a big program. We are maxed out moneywise, spacewise and my time. We can only work with so many people, so we developed teams. Some mentors have two students. The mentor gets a stipend of \$25 per hour. It's important to pay people for their time and energy. More than half the mentors don't collect, but put their money back into the program. They love what they do. This is of great benefit to the students, exposing them to people who create art and love it. The students also get experience, content and structure.

"A large group learned about G.P.S.—Geographic Positioning System—with Mark Adams. They tracked street children in India and viewed Georgia, Russia. They also tracked them-

selves in town where they 'Hang out.' With digital photos they tracked and gathered evidence also. A shingle from the Heritage Museum was not only tracked them, but gave them evidence on the condition of the building.

"We had a group field trip to the Art Association. We have five groups so this was a good chance to pull them together. The exhibition of the Academy work was the project. They studied the space before they mounted their work. Among themselves, they discussed what mattered most and they came to decisions. It's exploration and growth. A process. The students learn about learning. They find the core of Academy work when they realize the composition of a photograph, understand how they were using geometry. When the staff and other teachers point out how multiple skills come into play, they develop in those classes as well.

"The staff has been very supportive. For their fifteen-minute presentations, each student invites a family member, a staff member, another student of choice, the mentor and the academic coordinator. This way, all can contribute to the growth of the Academy student.

"Every year the interests change. This year there is much interest in remote-control boats and planes. They've used them recreationally since childhood, but now they are taking the interest to another step. They must consider problem-solving, geometry, physics, flight and the weather. They further their skills as they begin to realize how much technology, science and art is involved.

"They practice language skills through a written and an oral presentation twice a year. The Art Association show is a visible presentation. That's an awesome task. The students made cognitive leaps, moving from a concept to explaining an idea.

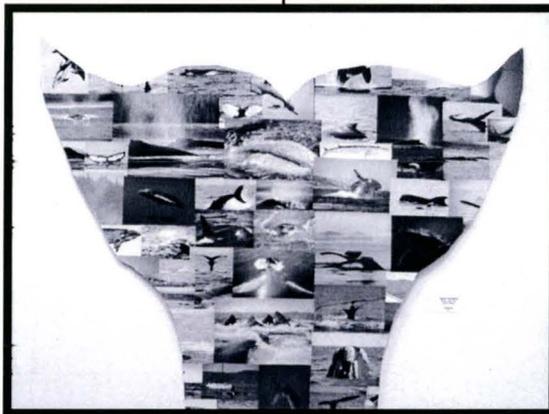
"All of this is highly organized. They sign a course contract and must follow it. For groundwork they map out their interests and look to themselves for strengths. They look at individuals working in their field of interest; then they must translate into a resume a project proposal and they are guided through it.

"Independence in creases as the year goes on. They must focus from process to product, account for their time and be able to sign themselves in and out. If they get lazy or are late, they lose privileges. More and more they realize their role in the project and they come to know what they want from their mentors."

Nancy Flasher must keep within the limits of the budget. "There are 25-30 students and with the help of grants and other financial aid, the large variety of learners will be able to access learning in a variety of ways. In the traditional schooling, there are some very bright students. The mentor can identify how a student learns. The students become advocates for themselves. One size does not fit all. That is the strength of the program.

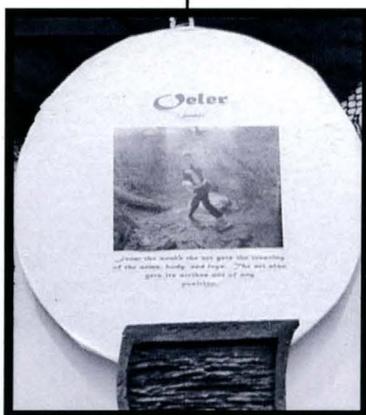
"I continually learn. I tell the students about life-long learning and they laugh, but I took my

first painting class this summer. You must keep learning, be curious and stay interested. I tell them: what do artists understand by painting?



Mentors are good examples for the students. They take healthy risks.

"I'm really happy with what I'm doing. I am honored to be part of a system which values what we are doing. Tennis For Life is responsible for many benefits received in this program. Every little bit helps. It's padding. Within reason, they can explore their ideas and dreams.



"And our mentors form such a good pool of people. If you have a talent and are interested in sharing, teaching, call 487-5050 and speak with me. The renovation of the high school will include a room set aside for this program. The library here is a patchwork. With our own room, there will be fewer distractions and the students will be able to leave a project out—no clean-up!"

Most Provincetowners desire this.

How great to have it as part of our high school curriculum. The exhibition of the Academy projects at the Art Association ran for a month between April 12th and May 12th and presented a fine collection and a tribute to the learning experience of all Ostudents.

Don't forget to support Tennis For Life by playing, volunteering or by donating and showing your community interest. Tee shirts this year will be donated by Tim Willis of Merrill-Lynch investments in Hyannis. The day is open to everyone—Saturday, June 15, 2002 beginning at 8:30 AM at Bissell's Tennis Courts behind the old Moors Restaurant. In case of foul weather, the rain date will be the following day, Sunday.