

KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

Though we think it is the height of summer and that summer is eternal, the birds know there is a chill behind the sun. The shore birds are forerunners. In July they sense that that it is time to move and begin a leisurely flight from the tundra to South America. Our area is the middle part of the flight, a rest and feeding station providing a good opportunity for us to study this highly migratory group. The low tide stretches the flats out for the dining pleasure of gulls: herring, backpacked, ring-billed, and occasional, for sandpipers and semi-palmated plovers, yellowlegs, lesser and greater, but mostly lesser: for ruddy turnstones, red knots, the solitary sandpiper, and dunlins. Phalaropes, dowitchers, piping plovers, willets, whimbrels, and curlews are more common at other beaches. Monomoy is a "hot spot" for all of these and so many more, oystercatchers and avocets, etc.

On the flats of our bay, it was the lesser yellowlegs that I spent the most time observing. Their clear and plaintive call reminded me of the flicker, a bird so different, shy, and skittish attempting cover in the deep woods. Here were the yellowlegs joining in with several species of shore birds: eating, noising, strutting—a lawn party on sand. Each time you go for a bird watch, some item in particular will emphasize itself to you.

This day it was the use of feet in feeding. The gulls were in shallow pools, heavily treading the bottom, a rocking motion of their stout bodies was the evidence. They were dredging up edibles, worms, sand eels, or any tasty crustacean. The lighter shore birds minimized the dredging and maximized the chasing, plovers, and sanderlings on sand, the yellowlegs in the water. Watching the yellowlegs reminded me of an even more dramatic use of the feet by feeding birds. The snowy egret, which is a heron, a wading bird, also stalks its food in shallow waters. The peculiarity of this bird is that its long black legs end where bright yellow feet begin. It's curious to see black legs and yellow feet, but the feeding system is even more curious. The snowy egret slaps these feet along the water scaring up minnows which it jabs and scoops with its long bill. It is thought that the yellow feet also

attract fish. Yellow is the most common color used in fish lures. It's a sight comedy and adaptability.

Besides observing the usefulness of feet in feeding, I noticed that the West End flats have many more hermit crabs and more "patches" of gemma gemma. Gemma gemma is a small triangular clam, greyish purple and is considered delicious by the inhabitants of the tidal flats. It is tiny, so look for purplish patches of tiny shells to observe it.

The walls of the galleries of Provincetown are heavy with good art. Any night of the week you can stroll from one end to the other gaining information, perspective, and eye pleasure. Novice viewers shun the abstract for the more traditional and representational art. The more it looks like the "real thing," the more they like it. Gradually, as the eye becomes more used to creative interpretation to paintings, it accepts variations and does not need an almost photographic representation. The Ephesian School of Painting, 5th Century B.C., is supposed to have been champion of the perfect imitation of objects, even more so than the Dutch, still lives or portrait painters of any age.

The classic story is that Zeuxis was considered the finest practitioner of this style of painting. He was well paid and secure to boastful of his position. He did, however, have an art rival, Parrhasius. Vanity and competitiveness drew the two artists into a trial of skill. Which of the two, Zeuxis or Parrhasius, could more perfectly imitate inanimate objects? They both set to work; the public waited. On the appointed day, the masters arrived with their paintings. Zeuxis had painted a bunch of grapes so graphically correct that birds descended and started to peck at the canvas. Pleased to arrogance, Zeuxis turned to Parrhasius and insisted that he now draw away the curtain to compare the realism. Parrhasius answered that he could not draw the curtain as it was a painted one and not a piece of cloth as it looked. Zeuxis admitted defeat, and with great humility and generosity, pointed out that he had only fooled the birds, but Parrhasius had fooled an artist.

Who visits Provincetown in the Summer? Tourists, workers, family members, friends, A.B.C.,



the Ashby family

F.B.I., C.I.A., and a boatload a day! When you are preoccupied, you may lump tourists together as an alike group. When you have a little time to spend, you see and learn that each of them is different. For instance, here is the Ashby family, grandmother Lillian, son Stanley, daughter-in-law Vivian, and grandson Kevin. Lillian Ashby is from Harlow, Essex, England, and is visiting her son and his family in Mississauga, near Toronto, Canada. They are visiting Provincetown for the first time, Lillian to see where the "British first landed," and they all came "for the beaches." It's a nice place for a holiday. Stanley works for Honeywell Corporation as a specialist in computers. The computer in the basement is the entertainment focus of the family. Kevin, a 7th grader, lights up at the word computer. The Ashbys were off, rain and all, for shopping, chowder, t-shirts, and promise of a beach tomorrow.

And, here is Amiee. Amiee has been here for one month, has come from San Francisco and has come for money. She works at Nelson's Bike Shop, where she rents bikes to the sporty set. She also works at the Boatslip, "trying to make a living." "You call this a living?" Amiee asked. Oh, work; Amiee used to work at a recycling center and also for a woman who made miniature fruits and vegetables. Some of the items in the outlandish perfectionist's trade were a chess set, the fruits vs. the vegetables, a 14-carrot necklace, or she would make ratatouille and string it! I'm sure you've noticed Amiee's "hair," a porcupine look which is stunning. Amiee wears her hair in this fashion for political reasons. "Women are not supposed to shave their heads or cut their hair. Some people write or draw; I f— with my hair. We're living in



Amiee and her political hairdo

a death culture. Bury people?! Ugh. How much land do we have?"

"When I've got my head under the faucet, I'm having fun. My dad is there shaking his head, 'do you know how many chemicals you're putting in your hair!?!' "Yeh, Dad, but I'm having fun."

"Look, I've got double pierced ears, a nose pierce, I'm a dyke, a jew, I'm fat, a Scorpio; what a load of contradictions!"

"I'm going to Europe in the fall; that's why I'm saving my money. I want to see what the U.S. implements. I've met women from all other the world; now I want to see them in their own setting. I'm going to Grenham Common in England, the peace encampment. Do you know they shelter these bombs in upstate New York at a completely self-sufficient military depot of 19 miles and 11,000 acres? The they ship them to Grenham Common. Well, there's a women's encampment in each place. How dare they jeopardize us with bombs, and how dare we ship them to England?"

Amiee will spend most of her time in England and Scandinavia, avoiding the politics, sexism, and languages of France and Italy. "I'm going to learn to sign. That will be my language. I don't know French or Italian, so I'm going to sign. I know women who do it for political rallies and speeches. It's fascinating."

Amiee misses the diversity of San Francisco. Provincetown is beautiful, but a bit too uniform for her. I explained that we are only 3,500 in winter and a remote spot on the continent. But Amiee is on the move, coast to coast, and now to Europe. This summer Provincetown was the draw.

Who comes to Provincetown? The Ashbys and Amiee and a lot in between.