



### WITH A SONG IN OUR HEARTS

Everyone who attended our Mid-Winter Festivity at Christine's should have gone home with happy feelings. As usual--Christine's food and drink were very good, the companionship was of the finest kind, and the Mid-Cape Chorus serenaded us with some beautiful love songs. At times there was hardly a dry eye in the house as the old memories came rushing in. Do you still remember your first kiss? A Life Membership Certificate was presented to Jim Carr, who also happens to be our newest DHS board member. The lucky door prize winners were: Nancy Day who selected two passes to the Sandwich Glass Museum, Lin Foss chose two luncheons at Christine's, Lilla Smith--the new Cape Playhouse book, Josh Crowell--a Pairpoint cup plate, and Paul Prue took home the lovely centerpiece from Positively Depot. Congratulations, all! Many thanks to Gertrude Lailey for planning such a lovely affair.

### AN IRISH LASSIE IN EAST DENNIS

Every morning when she awakened in her little room at the top of the home of Captain Prince Sears Crowell, Miss Mary McLaughlin surely felt very grateful for her good fortune. Ireland, her ancestral home, was fighting home rule against the opposition of the English Parliament. In the cities of America lived many immigrants who had fled the home land, looking to better their situation. Work was hard to find, and signs were beginning to appear in windows of shops seeking new employees saying "No Irish Need Apply". And here was Mary, in a comfortable home of one of the most prominent families in this quiet town, treated as a family member, with friends among the many other Irish nationals who made Dennis their home in the 1880's. Among those families was that of Thomas Connolly. Ann and Tom Connolly had come to the United States with a sea captain who had brought a shipload of corn and wheat to Ireland in the time of the great potato famine of the 1840's. Tom was a farmer, and the family lived just across the boundary line in West Brewster. They shopped and received mail in East Dennis and were sociable with the several displaced Irish families who lived and worked in that village. The four Connolly children attended school in the one-room district schoolhouse which stood across from the store of Kelley and Sears. The boys, Michael and James, had grown to manhood here and gone to sea, both of them now Master Mariners. Michael had settled in San Francisco, but James made regular visits to his father whenever he returned to Boston from his voyages around the world. On one of these visits, Captian Connolly was introduced to the fine young Irish girl who lived with Capt. Prince's family. Now, we don't know if it was love at first sight, or how the romance developed, but soon the Crowells were helping young Mary McLaughlin to plan for her wedding and a honeymoon trip around the world with her husband on his fine ship, the South American. In the next few years the Connollys circumnavigated the world several times, until they met with disaster off the coast of Africa in the spring of 1889. The South American and its crew of 26 had set sail from England for the Phillipines in April that year. After rounding the Cape of Good Hope with all sails set, they struck an uncharted reef and found themselves in a desperate situation.

Mary was the only woman aboard, and as a precaution she was lashed to the mizzen mast while the crew attempted to launch the boats to abandon ship. But the huge seas tore the boats away as they were launched. Now they must try to stay alive until morning, when they would have light enough to attempt to improvise a raft and get to the west African shore. As the breakers pounded at the ship, Mary was moved from place to place, lashed to the weather pin rail, and eventually to the rigging. As night fell, the entire crew lashed themselves in the rigging as well, praying that they could survive through the cold blackness of the night. Not once throughout that time did any of the crew hear a word of complaint or expression of terror from the Captain's lady. On the contrary, it was she who encouraged the crew to hang on, and to hope and trust that they would all make it until morning. And they did, though soaked and chilled by the battering waves. The Captain and the carpenter managed to fashion a crude and somewhat unseaworthy raft, and they transferred the crew and the lady to that, lashing Mary to the bottom, and set out for the shore. But the raft upset and nearly cost Mary her life, before her husband was able to go under the water and release her. After that she was not tied, and luckily so, for the raft turned over five times as they paddled the distance from the fatal reef to the beach. It must have appeared to the weary crew that their troubles had only begun, for they were met at the shore by a group of Hottentots, native to the place, and several ragged men who had previously been shipwrecked and had remained with the natives. They were pleasantly surprised to find the group hospitable, however. Soon a fire had been kindled and all--the South America's crew, native Africans, and derelict sailors alike--walked away from the shore to give Mary privacy while she removed her soaked clothing and replaced them with a shirt donated by an old German seaman. "Lord, Missus", he is said to have remarked to her admiringly, "You must have the heart of a lion." The natives ran to the nearest community to fetch blankets and food and to start the slow process of getting word of the disaster to some seaport which could send help to the stranded. How welcome was the sight of the sturdy ship offshore, which lowered boats and rowed in to pick up the stranded Americans.

Capt. James and Mary Connolly returned to East Dennis after that adventure. Capt. Connolly wrote of his experiences and was a speaker at the East Dennis Lyceum in Worden Hall. Mary was welcomed as a daughter by her adopted family on Pleasant Street. But her lion's heart was broken when the child she had yearned for was still-born. James and Mary went to live in California after that tragedy and Mary died soon thereafter. No children survived to hear and retell their exciting adventure. But as long as old Tom Connolly survived he delighted in relating the tales of adventure and misadventure of both his Master Mariner sons. And as long as members of the family of Captain Prince S. Crowell live in this town, the memory of Mary McLaughlin Connolly will endure.

## CALENDAR

Mar. 11 7:30 P.M. Board meets at the Manse.  
Mar. 17 Happy St. Patrick's Day to all you O'Cape Codders.  
Apr. 26 2:00 P.M. Bob Prescott, Director of the Audubon Sanctuary at Wellfleet will present a program on Whales and Turtles at Carleton Hall, Dennis

### BIRD WATCHERS ALERT

March 17th is St. Patrick's day, but a lesser known saint's Day is a part of the bird watcher's almanac, especially those who watch our feathered friends on the West Coast. March 16th is St. Joseph's Day and it is traditionally the day when the swallows come back to Capistrano. Annually, hundreds of devoted bird watchers assemble at that old Spanish Mission in California to observe this mass migration and the birds very seldom disappoint them. Cape Cod bird watchers have a similar gathering, but just a little later in the spring. On April 1st, almost without fail, the buzzards return to Buzzards Bay. A group of us who are devoted to such sightings gather at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and trek to the shores of the Bay to watch this phenomena. Any of you who are interested are most welcome to join us, whether or not you have been before. You don't need to call anyone. Just be there about 8 A.M. Dress warmly and bring your binoculars.

### BICENTENNIAL BIT

Birthdays plans are coming along well. But everyone knows that parties cost money. The bicentennial committee has examined many sources of funding. Soon tiny replicas of the Scargo tower will appear around town, actually coffee cans with printed labels that look like Scargo tower. The cans have been prepared by the Cub Scouts of Pack 82 Den 3 and the Junior Girl Scouts, Troop 1515. The committee is very grateful for the help of these young people. Now we encourage everyone to deposit change--or bills--in these cans, to help pay for the events of our anniversary year. Another project of the committee is asking those who are able to do so to send a donation to town treasurer Elinor Slade, P. O. Box D, South Dennis, MA 02660, clearly marked Bicentennial Fund. We suggest 200 dimes, but 200 pennies, 200 nickels, or 200 quarters will be equally acceptable. Several souvenir items will also be for sale, and we hope many of you will buy some of them. In this time of tight economy we are trying to have a spectacular celebration for our town and its citizens with as economical a budget as we can. Will you help make our once-in-a-lifetime birthday gala a success?

### THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF DENNIS

I am getting more and more questions about how the history of the town is coming along. Perhaps I can answer some of the questions all at once by giving you all an update. I answer the question "How is the book coming?" differently each time it is asked, depending upon the particular problem I am working on that day. But on the whole it is coming very well, and it is so interesting I can't wait to finish it! So far, we can not give you a cost for the book, as we still have not come up with a definite number of pages, pictures, or number to be printed. You will soon be asked to commit to buying a book, and when we know how many are definitely interested, we can begin to plan for the cost of publication. We plan to have the book in print in time for the Annual Town Meeting of May, 1993. As of right now, that is doable. And barring unforeseen complications, it will be ready on that date. So, please be prepared to order your book and let the Board know how many copies we can afford to print sometime in the next few months.

### WELCOME ABOARD

It's time to catch up on some of the new members who have joined us in recent months. A big welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pelletier, Mr. and Mrs. Charles L Howes, Jr., Alison Stone Kennedy, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Soha, Myrtle W. Hutton, Mrs. Natalie H. Ross, John F. Curran, Jr., Jean Bingham, Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Marsh, Lorraine Clarke, Kenneth H. Snow, Mr. and Mrs. Bartlett F. Sears, and Mrs. M. G. Adler. We're happy to have you all with us!

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