

DENNIS IS SPECIAL

Most of us who live here all year round know without consulting the calendar that Labor Day is almost here. We know it from the growing frustration when standing in line at the check-out, or sitting in line at the gas pumps, and perhaps most of all while in captivity in our own driveway, waiting while long lines of traffic stream past our homes. It is becoming harder, as the summer wanes, to think kindly of these invaders who have taken the peace from our lives and caused intolerable traffic in our quiet streets. It may help you through this last week and the hectic weekends of September to look at every car full of tourists as Cape Cod's bread and butter. We must face it, those of us who live here permanently. Survival through the long, quiet winter would be decidedly more difficult if these same frustrating carfulls didn't come here. They are our bread and butter. Tourism is Dennis's biggest industry, the life blood of all of the Cape Cod towns. And Dennis and all of the Cape competes most actively to keep these tourists coming here -- and not to a hundred other tempting vacation spots within easy drive of the East Coast cities. The Dennis Chamber of Commerce is doing just that by sponsoring Dennis Festival Days. And our Society is helping in a small way by sponsoring three events which emphasize our town's history. It is your editor's opinion that the more such events which point out our town's unique heritage, the better. Those of us interested in preservation, in maintaining the historic centers, and also those interested in the economic benefits of tourism must unite in attracting vacationers here -- not just as another vacation spot, but as a special spot. In spite of its growth, Dennis has remained a small town. In spite of many changes, the flavor of the sea remains. Let's all work together to preserve this unique heritage, and to use it to advantage by convincing the tourist population to visit Dennis. Dennis is special.

Now, have patience, folks, the lines won't last forever. Those of us who survive will be rewarded with October on Cape Cod. "The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places. Yea, we have a goodly heritage."

ORGAN AND OBOE CONCERT

D.H.S. is following its annual custom of sponsoring events of interest to the general public as part of Dennis Festival Week. This year's major event will be an organ and oboe concert on Thursday, September 3rd at 7:30 P.M. at the historic South Dennis Congregational Church, known as The Captains' Church. Featured artists will be Donald Enos, organist of the church and Elizabeth Dorriss, oboist, two very well known and respected artists in Cape musical circles. The organ we will hear is said to be the oldest pipe organ in regular use in the country. It was built in 1762 by a well known German organ builder, John Snetzler, and was purchased for this church perhaps second or third hand by a deputation consisting of Miller T.T. Nickerson and Alvin Small, around 1855. They were allowed \$600 for the purchase, and I'd say they did very well by their money. The mellow tones of this remarkable instrument are admired by organ lovers all over the country, who come to this church expressly to hear this fine instrument.

The organ is also visually beautiful, encased in a free-standing rosewood cabinet, with decorative pewter pipes across the front. It has but one keyboard and an octave of pedals. It was originally designed to have its bellows filled by hand pumping, by means of a handle which protrudes from its left side, and was not electrified until the 1930s. This is a remarkable opportunity both historically and musically to visit this beautiful old church, built in 1836, and to hear a fine concert played by two of the Cape's finest musicians. You will be amazed at the variety of music Mr. Enos can create on this ancient pipe organ. Admission is \$2.00 to the general public, \$1.50 to D.H.S. members with your membership card.

TAKE A BIKE RIDE THROUGH HISTORY

There's not a corner of our little town that can't reveal some interesting tales of yesteryear. Over the past four years the Bike Tour Committee has mapped out some historic sites and events. These maps are available at the Chamber of Commerce or by request from Box 607, So. Dennis, 02660-0607. During Festival Week a guided tour will be led in South Dennis beginning and ending at the town hall parking lot, at 10 A.M. on Tuesday, September 1st. The stories of bridging the river, Keziah's Mill, the history of Liberty Hall and the Gingerbread Library, the Indian reservation and the possibility of Viking exploration will all be included. No charge, all welcome. If you cannot accompany the group, ask for a map and explore South Dennis on your own. You may also follow the route by car.

DEERFIELD AND FOLIAGE

Please note in the calendar the dates of an overnight bus tour to Deerfield. Paula Bacon runs exceptional tours and this promises to be one of her best. For complete information, call Paula at 394-5739.

CALENDAR

Sept. 1, 10 A.M., Town Hall Parking Lot Bike Ride through S. Dennis
Sept. 3, 7:30 P.M., S. Dennis Congregational Church Organ and Oboe Concert
Sept. 4, 4 P.M., Jericho House Chanty Singing -- see articles for details
Sept. 14, 7:30 P.M., Dennis Historical Society, Liberty Hall ANNUAL MEETING
Brief program to follow on history of Ezra Baker School
Oct. 20 - 21 Bus Tour to Historic Deerfield -- call Paula Bacon, 394-5739

HAUL ON THE BOWLINE

On Friday, Sept. 4th, at 4 P.M., you and your guests will have a chance to join in some sea chanty singing at Jericho House. Chanties are a meaningful part of the past of an area so rich in maritime history. The chanty leader was a valuable crew member, for by his leadership the tedious work of running a great sailing vessel was accomplished. Quick chanties, with short meter, were used for the short-haul jobs, like raising a small jib. Chanties with longer lines were used to accompany jobs requiring long pulls and rests between pulls, like raising the large sails on a schooner or Bark. And the capstan chanties accompanied the back-breaking jobs of raising the huge anchors, or pumping water from the hold of the ever-leaking wooden ships. You will hear examples of each, and perhaps a fo'castle song as well, just for fun. Join us, and sing along, if you like.

IN THE FUN OF FESTIVAL DAYS, DON'T FORGET...

The annual meeting of D.H.S. will be held on Sept. 14 at 7:30 P.M. at Liberty Hall. See last edition for the official call. After the business meeting, we will hear a little about the history of the Ezra H. Baker School, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year with appropriate ceremonies, and about the progress of the restoration of the old school house at the Manse.

Also remember: Dues are due! Pay at the annual meeting, or by mail with a stamped/addressed envelope to Elinor Slade, Box 607, So. Dennis 02660-0607.

Also: if you are not a member and wish to become one, send dues at \$3.00 per individual or \$5.00 per family, to Elinor at the above address. You will be welcome.

Also remember: new committees are being formed. If interested in house dating, bike tours, newsletter, or other activities, PLEASE volunteer!

THE STREETS OF OUR TOWN

On the top of Signal Hill in Dennis is a short, pleasant street named Bismark Way. Signal Hill has an important place in our town's past. From the highest point it was possible to see NobsCUSSETT Harbor at the end of Corporation Road, so it is said. If you are skeptical, remember that in early days, much of the tree cover had been removed for fuel and buildings. The story is that a watchman was stationed on the hill to gaze across the bay and spot the packet as it approached the harbor. He would then run a signal flag up a tall pole to announce its arrival. Those expecting passengers or freight would hustle down to the wharf to meet the Sally or the North as she docked. When the packet prepared to leave for Boston, the watchman would run up a Blackball, or Barrel to announce its departure. So at the top of this hill we find such streets as Watchman Rd., Black Ball Hill Dr. and Packet Dr., all reminiscent of its past. But what of Bismark Way? Certainly it is an historic name, but not connected with our marine history in any imaginable way. The Chancellor Bismark never vacationed in our town, nor had our packet ship anything to do with "Sinking the Bismark." No, the source of this name is not dramatic, but rather a gentle reminder that the small pleasures of life are often most important of all. When the developer of this area began the process of choosing a name for this particular street, he found that all of the historically interesting names from which he could choose were already used. So he named the way Bismark in honor of his much beloved Boxer dog. A simple story, and thus man's best friend has become a part of our town's history, by giving his name to Bismark Way, one of the Streets of our Town.

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

Postal Permit No. 2 South Dennis Mass. 02660
