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Provincetown, Massachusetts – The town celebrates special weekends all summer. The one following the Fourth of July is Portuguese festival, honoring the early settlers from Portugal.

Big attraction is the food. The restaurants take special care to prepare delicious seafood stews, somewhat similar to the Italian cioppino from San Francisco. The chefs perform marvelous tricks with mussels, lobsters and shrimp recipes. Some mighty good hands work in the kitchens.

Thirty-five to 40 thousand visitors come across the bay on ferries and by roadways up the Cape from the mainland of Boston. This morning, a lady down the street from the Bed and No Breakfast saves a copy of the *Boston Globe* from her news rack.

Our transaction is "Northeastern cool," a brisk good morning with an abbreviated "how are you," like "how you" maybe. Depends on the lottery traffic how long the address. Two or three old sisters spend wads of 20-dollar bills every morning on lottery tickets.

By midmorning she will put up a sign on her door the kind of tickets sold out. By the time my walk is over, she may be out two or three series. Those ol' gals load up to

go to one side to check the ticket numbers. Ones of us immune to such a sucker's game are waited on plenty fast. The way the newspaper game demises, there's no possibility to sell enough *Globes* or advertising to match the lottery swindle.

The benches on the main dock are the next stop, about a six-block walk. Pedestrian traffic, by now, thickens from passengers going to and from the ferries. Right away, you develop a sprawl to hold space enough to properly unfold a newspaper.

Spanish, Portuguese, and French-speaking people pass back and forth. Those cowboys aren't space-conscience on benches or respectful of old age. I insist on occupying 18 inches of seating from riding airplanes.

This morning seven goober-headed, gibberish-speaking foreigners tried to take over a five-place bench with four vacant spaces. What they didn't realize was how much strength a West Texas dance floor on a Saturday night adds to your left elbow jab.

The mother alone was too big to sit on part of the bench, much less adding her brood. You sure can't defend my previous record of eight kids with a Planned Parenthood case, but at least we were too poor to go anywhere seating space was in short supply. All our vacation spots had

plenty of room to set up chairs and drive tent stakes. Only way I'd ever have been able to take that mob that far away from home was as stowaways on a merchant ship. Even then, the lifeboat to hide in would have to have been extra large.

One important pointer – don't try to compete with fishermen here in Provincetown. In the morning market report I read right on this bench awhile ago, lobster claws (culls) brought \$5.99 a pound. Back home, we'd never match that deal with hamburger, much less hooves.

Winds off the Atlantic pick up about time for the tickets to sell on a whale-watching craft off the docks 200 yards from here. The best judgment says to wait and see how many tickets are sold and how soon they start giving out free seasickness pills. You don't have to be a sailor to know how rough the Atlantic can become. The line has reached a decent length, so I'll buy a ticket.

Out about four miles, we begin to see lots of humpback whales up close, blowing up spouts of water several feet high. Small minke whales rolled over off the bow. Books say whales connect with humans. They know, for example, that we no longer carry harpoons. And I know no one has sneaked one on board, as harpoons are impossible to conceal. Of all

weapons, harpoons are the hardest to hide on your body, or in your backpack.

On the trip to the Arctic via Hudson Bay, an Inuit greybeard exhibited a harpoon throw with grace and accuracy. Not just for show, however; Ol' Grand-Pop speared a huge whale to eat the week before.

Thinking back, he would have been handy killing hogs for the Big Boss. The way the Boss wanted to render the lard would have fitted in perfectly with the way "Ol' GP" handled whale blubber. (Memory says it took a hundred Inuits to beach a big whale from Hudson Bay.)

This whale watch is the only time I've been to sea off Cape Cod. The trip was smooth for an Atlantic Ocean venture.

Back on shore, I read the rest of the newspaper in peace over a late lunch. It's not like me to say ugly things about foreigners. Please forgive the outburst.