

# Arts

## for the ARTS record

### UN-VALENTINE CABARET AT THE BOX

Seaside Shakespeare Company announces its “Un-Valentine Cabaret” Feb. 16 at the Chicken Box. Doors will open at 6 p.m. for cocktails and complimentary hors d’oeuvres with the performance beginning at 7 p.m.

“The idea with the “Un-Valentine Cabaret” is a cross between the true Cabaret of 1930s Berlin, an odd-ball talent show and a community party in the deep winter,” said Director Kate Splaine (whose most recent production was the one-act comedy “The Name of This Play is Talking Heads” in August 2006) “It’s close to Valentine’s Day, but a little off, which sums up the sensibility of the whole thing nicely.”

Fully-staged Shakespearean productions (like the bright comedy of their “Twelfth Night” production last summer at Children’s Beach) are just one of Seaside Shakespeare’s objectives. Company founder and producer Susan McGinnis explains that the looser cabaret series during the off-season is infinitely flexible.

As an alternative to more traditional Valentine’s Day celebrations, the “Un-Valentine Cabaret” provides an opportunity for a cross section of islanders to show off their talents. Performers who have already signed on run the gamut from the very silly (comedy routines, for example) to the simple and beautiful (there are some great singing voices on Nantucket.) Emcees Susan Burns and AT Wilce — seasoned pros and island favorites both — will ring lead, keeping the show moving with their unique patter. Christie Cure, known for her open mike series and alternative theater productions, has signed on as assistant director and stage manager. She explains that the staging will be very informal. “There’s a feel to this kind of show where it’s hard to know where the line between the audience ends and performance space begins ... it’s all very fluid” she says.

Given that it can be easier for islanders to get involved in this kind of activity during the off-season, Seaside Shakespeare hopes to draw even more talents to the show. Auditions are being kept open through Feb. 3. Interested tap dancers, ventriloquists, flame throwers and the like can contact McGinnis at [ssm-ginnis@hotmail.com](mailto:ssm-ginnis@hotmail.com) or 325-7735 to arrange an appointment or come to the open call on Super Bowl

Sunday (Feb. 3) from 2:30 - 4p.m. (well before the game!), at the South Wharf Gallery Studio (15 South Shore Rd.) Everyone is welcome to audition -- undiscovered stars and interplanetary visitors alike. All are included from the sublime to the ridiculous.

### RACE, FAITH AND FREEDOM

The video “Rock of Changes: Race, Faith, and Freedom on Nantucket” will be shown at the Food for Thought Series on Thursday, February 7, 2008, in the Whaling Museum, 13 Broad Street, at noon. Free admission; bring your lunch.

“Rock of Changes,” featuring Nantucket’s African Meeting House, presents the history of school desegregation on Nantucket and the efforts of the black community to bring it about through legislation.

The African Meeting House is the only public structure on the island that is central to the history of Nantucket’s African American community. The post-and-beam building dates from about 1827, when it was built as a school for the children who were prevented from attending the public schools. Following school desegregation in 1846, it served as a Baptist church and a social center, touching the lives of escaped slaves, Native Americans, Cape Verdeans, Quakers, educators, and abolitionists, and continued to be used as a meeting place well into the twentieth century.

### EXPLORE THE SCIENCE OF LITERATURE

The Nantucket Historical Association will host Exploring the Science of Literature: “The Marlin, the Mako, and Man” and “Sailing a River in the Ocean: Charting Santiago’s Deep Blue Journey,” as part of the One Book One Island collaborative program on Thursday, Feb. 7, at 1:30 p.m. in the Whaling Museum, 13 Broad Street. Free admission.

The One Book One Island program seeks to promote reading, literacy and community by encouraging the entire population of Nantucket to read, discuss and reflect on the same book. These two presentations, given by Dr. Robert Kennedy of the Maria Mitchell Association and Dr. Sarah Oktay of the University of Massachusetts Field Station, are part of this year’s collaboration — designed to foster the importance of lifelong learning for children and

adults. Three books are available this season: for adults and high school students, *The Old Man and the Sea*; middle-school students, *Young Man and the Sea*; and for elementary students, *Island Boy*.

Anyone interested in reading *The Old Man and the Sea* may pick up a copy of the book at the Whaling Museum, the Nantucket Cottage Hospital, the Atheneum, Annye’s Whole Foods, the Lighthouse School, Nantucket New School, Nantucket Public Schools, Salt Marsh Center or the Town Building. The Nantucket Historical Association is proud to be one of the sponsoring organizations for One Book One Island.

For more information about this special afternoon program, please call 228-1894, ext. 0

### POLO SALUTES FOUNDATION

Celebrating the continued efforts of the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, the Main Street Ralph Lauren store will feature a special exhibit of photographs in their windows this winter. The images, by local photographer Daniel Sutherland, depict scenes that reflect the natural beauty of the island and signify the important work of the Foundation and its mission of conserving and maintaining the island’s treasured landscape for over 45 years.

“This exhibit is really a visual celebration of Nantucket; Polo Ralph Lauren is proud to partner with the Nantucket Conservation Foundation in bringing further awareness to the importance of land conservation and recognizing the amazing support and efforts from the Nantucket community,” said Charles Fagan, Executive Vice President of Global Retail Brand Development.

The images will remain in the windows of the store through the winter months for residents and visitors to the island to discover and enjoy. After the exhibition, the photographs will be donated to the Nantucket Conservation Foundation.

“Throughout the past decade I have granted my images to the Nantucket Conservation Foundation,” said Sutherland “Their commitment to island conservation and my interest in the natural landscape of Nantucket make them an obvious choice as a beneficiary of my passion.” ■

## SQUID

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even a “squideo,” a documentary of the only live giant squid captured on film in their deep sea environment.

This exhibit, running from Feb. 1 through April 20, comes from the Smithsonian Institution as part of its national traveling exhibition service and represents the Nantucket Historical Association’s first traveling exhibition to be shown here with many anticipated for the future.

“We will be serving calamari at the opening,” said NHA curator Ben Simons, with a bit of a wry smile. He is thrilled about the premiere event. “The museum has only been open as a year-round museum since the new building [opened last year]. To have a traveling exhibit in the middle of February is very exciting.”

There are lots of facts to learn about this notorious creature that has played leading monster roles in movies, including “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea,” the 1954 Kirk Douglas classic that will be shown at 7 p.m. at the museum the night of the opening. Some of the facts include the size of a giant squid’s eyes, which are as big as a man’s head; that the average weight of a giant squid is 1,000 pounds but some are known to have weighed nearly a ton; that the average male ranges between 10 to 26 feet long and the average female 30

to 43 feet long; that giant squid only live two or three years and that the females produce up to 10 million eggs in their single reproductive cycle.

The gallery specimens span a water-filled cube of tentacle suction cups. Though small, they show that the cups are surrounded by teeth that provide a second way to retain the capture of prey. Another cube holds a razor-sharp beak, technically called a mandible, that the squid uses to tear his meal into bite-sized pieces. The beaks, made of a fingernail-type matter, cannot be digested by whales, which often feed on squid. In the 19th century whaling era fishermen capturing sperm whales found the ambergris, a waxy, amber colored substance produced in the whale’s intestines in reaction to not being able to digest the beaks, a profitable commodity used as a perfume fixative base.

On March 7, Dr. Clyde Roper, known as “Mr. Squid,” and who is the world’s leading squid expert, will address museum visitors during a weekend when the NHA hosts its “Giant Squid Festival.” The weekend will feature an entire day of children’s activities besides Dr. Roper’s talks.

Simons explained that the NHA’s previous curator, Niles Parker, found out that giant squid are the natural enemy of the whale, and decided that the Smithsonian exhibit would appeal to all ages, espe-

## GIANT SQUID FACTS

- Giant squid, the world’s largest invertebrates, reach up to 60 feet in length and weigh 1,000 lb. or more.
- They have the world’s largest eyes. Giant squid eyes are as big as a human head.
- They’re fast growing. Giant squid may grow as much as 25 feet in their first year.
- Giant squid live at a depth of between 650 and 2,600 feet.
- All squids have clear blue blood, based on copper rather than iron.
- Instead of saline, a giant squid’s muscles are filled with ammonia.
- They’re tough. Large sucker marks found on sperm whales, the adult giant squid’s only predator, prove that although they often lose the battle, giant squid don’t give up without a fight.

cially children. This exhibit is supported, in part, by Nantucket’s Egan Maritime Foundation and by Novation Media. In the fall of 2009, Simons said the Whaling Museum will host “Cameras Coast,” a traveling exhibit from the Historic New England Association at the same time it will present “Keeping Time in Sag Harbor.” Another idea in the works is to hold an exhibit showing where Nantucketers traveled around the world during the whaling years. ■