

THE ARTS

Nantucket Arts Council awards \$13,000 in grants

BY MARLI GUZZETTA
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The Nantucket Arts Council recently announced the nine organizations benefiting from its annual arts grants, which totaled \$13,500 this year.

Speaking on behalf of the NAC Grants Committee, committee chair Peter Greenhalgh said the group “remains hopeful that grants money will continue to grow through awareness and additional donations, so that we may adequately meet all the requests of the various island organizations.”

The number of applicants and the number of awards are down from last year, while the total amount of monies awarded is up \$1,500.

In 2006, 17 applicants requested \$49,000, and the NAC was able to award \$12,000 to 11 organizations. This year, 12 requests exceeded \$38,000, and the NAC was able to award \$13,500 to nine organizations. (See below)

Dr. Walter Boyd and the Boyd family underwrite the NAC grants. In general, the NAC awards money to organizations and projects certain to reach the largest number of people on island. The NCMC/Nantucket School of Music, Theatre Workshop of Nantucket, Women’s Chorus of Nantucket, Nantucket Atheneum, Nantucket New School and Nantucket Lighthouse School are all repeat recipients, with the New School, the

Lighthouse School and the Atheneum receiving grants for the same projects as they received money for last year.

(Individual artists requesting money without the aegis of a community organization generally fare better with the Nantucket Cultural Council, which requires grant applications to be submitted by mid-October. For more information on NCC, call 228-7255 or email acornhp@yahoo.com.)

“Each year, we receive so many worthy requests, and this year the committee had some difficult choices to make,” said NAC President Reggie Levine. “We are delighted to be able to offer these grants and are now working on the high school scholarship requests. There is such a need to help those interested in the arts. We wish we could honor all the requests, but are delighted to be able to help in this small way.”

Grants are awarded each spring. For information on applying for a 2008 grant, contact the NAC office at 325-8588.

Nantucket Boys and Girls Club - \$2,000

To help with the funding of “Shooting Stars,” a musical drama camp to be held in August.

NCMC/ Nantucket School of Music - \$2,000

To aid in the cost of their April concert, featuring the Jubilee Gospel choir

Artists’ Association of Nantucket - \$1,500

To help underwrite the restoration of artwork in their permanent collection

Theatre Workshop of Nantucket - \$2,000

To help fund two Equity actresses for the summer production of “Lone Star Grace”

Women’s Chorus of Nantucket - \$400

To assist in buying sheet music and books of printed music.

Nantucket Lighthouse School - \$1,000

To help support and expand their Sixth Annual Storytelling Festival

Nantucket New School - \$1,000

To complete the new lighting in their Visual Arts Gallery, which hosts up to three exhibitions each year

A Safe Place, Inc.- \$1,600

Towards an ongoing art project for children: “Build a Safe House”

Nantucket Atheneum - \$2,000

To assist with the 2007 Children’s Summer Reading Program: “Catch the beat @ your library.” ■

LIL’ BUSH

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where other than Nantucket until four months ago — has a family unit out on the West Coast, where they keep Nantucket alive in spirit.

“We still carry a lot of Whaler pride,” Martha said. “We play ‘Eye of the Tiger’ every morning as we run in and then have a quick Nantucket session.”

It’s good that they have that fighting, family spirit, because the staff expects the show to kick up some dust once it airs. Donick has already appeared on CNN opposite Rick Sanchez, who posed the grave question: *Does Lil’ Bush go too far?*

Comedy is serious business for Donick, according to Mara. “He worked hard at it all his life. He was always the class clown, with that wry sense of humor. I was playing Puck in ‘A Mid-summer Night’s Dream’ when Donick was conceived and I think it definitely affected his personality.”

What also affected his personality, of course, was growing up on Nantucket. “I think it’s good to be a big frog in a small puddle,” Mara said. “You learn a lot that way. You get to know all kinds of people, and they know you, so you bounce through that system and see yourself growing.”

When Donick was small, Mara worked as the Nantucket Elementary School librarian and did puppet shows, with which Donick often assisted.

“Bucky Fuller came to speak at NISDA, and Donick had this puppet called Hugo that he would take with him everywhere. The puppet could say things that Donick couldn’t. He and

Bucky hit it off, and the three of them — Bucky, Donick and Hugo — talked for hours,” remembered Mara of ‘Lil Donick.’ “I could rave on about him forever, because he was a charming wonderful, funny child to raise. ... He was the kind of kid that when he set out to do something, he did it.”

Before graduating from Nantucket High School in 1986, Donick left a small flood of practical jokes in his wake. When the Downyflake burned, and they put plywood all over the windows, Donick wrote, “McDonald’s Coming Soon, Now Hiring” on them. Another time, he planted signs all over downtown that said ‘Bridge to Hyannis’ with arrows.

“He was always like this,” said Susan, who’s known Donick since he was 9 years old. “If you talk to some of his teachers, they’ll tell you he was always getting in trouble.”

After high school, Donick attended college, but left early to intern for David Letterman. After that, Donick moved to Florida to work for Nickelodeon before being re-hired by Letterman, this time to be a writer for the show. From there, he went to “The Simpsons,” NBC’s “Just Shoot Me,” “Earth to America” and, most recently, Comedy Central’s “Naked Trucker and T-Bones.”

While working on “Naked Trucker,” Donick was also creating six, five-minute animated “Lil’ Bush” shorts for Amp’d Mobile. (You can find them on Youtube.com) For the animation, Donick hired Nantucketer Alex Stancioff, who was doing software design in Bulgaria.

“The general public response to the Amp’d Mobile cartoons was huge,”

Donick said. “It was the highest rated programming with Amp’d subscribers.”

The day the first short came out last summer, Donick was on the set of “Naked Trucker and T-Bones,” along with a Comedy Central executive, who watched the short and wanted immediately to produce it for television.

Currently, the show is produced by a small staff, with 10 total people state-side, and 150 animators in Bulgaria, overseen by Stancioff, whom Mara called “one of Donick’s cronies from third grade.”

Mara lived on Nantucket until two years ago, when she moved to Los Angeles to be closer to Donick and his wife, who’d recently had their first child.

No longer financially responsible for anyone but herself, she also went out to L.A. to pursue acting, which she practiced on Nantucket, performing for both Theatre Workshop of Nantucket and Actors’ Theatre, but had to limit after Donick was born.

In addition to her role on “Lil’ Bush,” Mara was also recently cast in “Diagnosis X” on the Learning Channel.

“It’s been a part of me all my life to want to be a good actress,” Mara said. “Now, it’s unthinkable. It’s just a miracle to be on this show. I am so deeply honored and grateful to my son that this could happen. I have tons of gratitude, and I’m working really hard to make sure I warrant this.”

It’s an odd but remarkable thing, Donick said, to see one’s mother in the same studio as Iggy Pop, who provides the voice for Lil’ Rumsfeld and is the only cast member who records shirtless.



COURTESY MARA CARY

‘Lil’ Donick’ performing on Nantucket

Taking a page out of wiseacre cartoon playbook, Donick relied on musicians to voice a dozen characters for the first season. Indie kids: Amen, I say unto thee — Jeff Tweedy is doing voice of God. Frank Black is doing the voice of Satan, during an episode when Cheney has a heart attack and goes to hell. The Foo Fighters and the Red Hot Chili Peppers are playing themselves in a show with a “lil” Live Earth concert, hosted by Lil’ Al Gore. Collin Molloy from The Decembrists is doing the voice of many other people. And Henry Rollins is voicing a vet at Walter Reed.

“Not only do I get to do a silly cartoon and exorcise the demons of the last eight years,” Donick said. “On top of that, I get to work with my family. And Iggy Pop, who I was watching on TV from Nantucket when I was 13. It’s not a bad job at all.” ■