

MILESTONES



From left: District Court Judge James O'Neil, Samantha Pillion, Stephanie Norris, and Nantucket District Court Magistrate Roxana Viera

PILLION, NORRIS RECEIVE MACOMBER ESSAY AWARDS

Nantucket High School seniors **Samantha Pillion** and **Stephanie Norris** are this year's recipients of the Macomber Essay Awards.

Both were honored last Tuesday afternoon by District Court Judge James O'Neil in ceremonies held in the courtroom.

Now in its fourth year, the essay competition is named in honor of the late William Macomber, the former U. S. ambassador and president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and asks high school juniors and seniors to reflect on aspects of the United States Constitution. This year's theme was the second amendment, the right to bear arms.

Committee members are former school administrator Carol Crowell, former high school history teacher Jean Allen, former schools superintendent Dr. John O'Neill, Nantucket District Court Magistrate Roxana Viera and attorney and former school committee member Wayne Holmes.

The winning essays were selected by Judge O'Neill, Cynthia Cohen, associate justice of the Massachusetts Appeals Court, former high school English teacher Helene Blair and Dr. O'Neill.

Macomber Essay Award committee member

Holmes said the annual writing competition is one way to remember the work of Ambassador Macomber, who not only served the United States admirably, but who, in retirement, freely gave of his time as a teacher and football coach on Nantucket. "He was a mentor and trusted friend to many students," Holmes said.

Judge O'Neill lauded the efforts of both students, noting that their analyses of the controversial second amendment did not overlook the times in which the amendment was drafted.

"The second amendment was never designed to say gun companies can produce semi-automatic handguns," he said, admitting that lawmakers of his generation may have faltered in not passing legislation aimed at limiting the perceptions engendered by the amendment. "People sometimes don't have the courage," he said, urging the students to "act on the wisdom found in your essays."

For their efforts, Pillion was awarded with \$1,000 and Norris with \$500.

Pillion's essay appears on page 7.

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BIRTHS

Biliana Antonova Dountcheva was born at Nantucket Cottage Hospital on May 28, 2007 weighing 6 pounds and 10 ounces. She is the daughter of Anton and Valeriya Dountchevi of Nantucket. Her grandparents are Didi and Gueorgi Dountchevi and Dora and Stoyan Nikolovi of Bulgaria. Her great-grandparents are Penka and Dimitar Dimovi of Bulgaria.

Kirin Kristofer Feeney was born at Nantucket Cottage Hospital on May 29, 2007 weighing 7 pounds. He is the son of Kristofer and Daisy Hu Feeney and brother of Freysa Huckleberry Feeney

of Nantucket. His grandparents are Michael Feeney and Lisa Wendelken of Nantucket, and Hu Guisen and Chen Jo Ya of Beijing, China. His great-grandparents are Adele Wendelken of Nantucket and Martin Wendelken of West New York, N.J.

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FIRST BIRTHDAY

Zya Adina Tarr will celebrate her first birthday on June 7, 2007. She is the daughter of Aisha M. Hodge and David C. Tarr of Nantucket. She is the granddaughter of Anette Liburd and Andre Hodge of Nantucket and Alice Tarr of Dennis and the great-granddaughter of Meta Liburd of Nantucket, Adina Thomas Hodge of St. Martin and Heraldo Hodge of St. Thomas.



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At the recent Mass. Grand Lodge Session of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows held in Milford, Mass., **Neville Richen** was elected Grand Warden. **Barry Rector** was elected Deputy Grand Master. At the same session for the Mass. Rebekah Assembly **Kathy Richen** was elected Warden and **Maryanne Worth** was appointed Outside Guardian.

Email announcements and photos to: info@nantucketindependent.com

Two islands, one party | Nantucket celebrates Maui and its sister islands on Kamehameha Day

BY MARLI GUZZETTA
INDEPENDENT ARTS EDITOR

Nantucket and Hawaii have been sharing a clandestine love affair ever since the whaling days, which is why finally celebrating King Kamehameha I Day, June 11, on Nantucket is something like seeing Camilla out with the Royals. To this day, relics of the relationship remain.

"The Pacific Club at the bottom of Main was for captains who made their money whaling in the Pacific, and the Pacific National Bank at the top of main was where they put it," explained island historian Frances Kartunnen.

King Kamehameha I unified the Hawaiian islands under his control around 1800. He ended human sacrifice, instituted humane civil rights policies and also protected the land-owning sovereignty of Hawaii's native people. Sixty years later, Kamehameha V declared June 11 "Kamehameha Day." Today, it is the Hawaiian equivalent of Cinco de Mayo.

Located on the island of Maui, Lahaina is Nantucket's sister port — a holdover from the whaling era. The Nantucket whaleships beat the missionaries to Lahaina, arriving there first in the fall of 1819, during the rule of Kamehameha I, according to Kartunnen.

Afterwards, Nantucket whalers in the Pacific would stop in Lahaina to restock their supplies and, often, their crew, said Kartunnen, who included a chapter on Hawaiians on Nantucket in her book, "The Other Islanders."

Kartunnen believes Hawaiian crewmembers who joined Nantucket whaleships would return with the boat to Nantucket in order to get a higher percentage of the lay.

"Or maybe it was curiosity," she said.

This resulted in reports of Hawaiians on island (called "kanakas") as early as 1822, when Nantucket

newspapers began referring to the "heathen youth" on island.

"At this time, Hawaiians and other Pacific islanders were relegated to Nantucket's black neighborhood, New Guinea," Kartunnen explained. "They lived in a special house called the 'Kanacka House' and there were Sunday school classes set up here to Christianize them."

"Canacka" was an anglicized misspelling of the word "kanaka" — Polynesian for "guy."

In addition to actual Hawaiians, whaling captains also often brought back souvenirs from Hawaii, which were displayed publicly at the Atheneum at the time. Today, the Nantucket Historical Association has possession of several of these artifacts. In the winter issue of its publication, "Historic Nantucket," the NHA even ran an article on Hawaiian whalers on island, who stopped relocating to Nantucket when whaling ended.

What began as a shared whaling culture between Hawaii and Nantucket in the 19th century was rekindled by surfers and artists, years after the whaling industry went bust.

Artist Greg Hill and his wife Judi lived in Lahaina for several years. Last year, they even released a series of paintings Greg created while the couple was living there; the images include relics of New England's Quaker whaling culture — including the whaleship *Carthaginian* and the white spires of churches erected by New England missionaries.

When surf legend Laird Hamilton premiered "Riding Giants" at the Nantucket Film Festival in 2004, the ocean of theatre darkness was specked with whitecaps of Hawaiian-themed T-shirts.

In fact, it was a surfer from Hawaii who brought Kamehameha celebrations to Nantucket three years ago, hoping to recognize the connection between the islands.

Chris Morris at Arno's was the first place of business to commemorate King Kamehameha I Day three years

ago — with a surfboard near the door, Hawaiian shirts on the staff and a menu that included Hawaiian fare.

The Rose and Crown raised the stakes by razing the stakes — hiring fire dancers, encouraging Hawaiian shirts and creating Hawaiian drink specials.

Last year, Harpo at the Fragrance Bar even brewed little gardenia fragrance.

This year, the Haulover and Bamboo are new to the party, while Arno's and the Rose and Crown will again celebrate Kamehameha I Day on June 9 at 10 p.m. with an island-to-island fete.

Aside from the fact that it's a nice opportunity to toast our faraway friends on the other side of the country, Kamehameha Day is also a nice way to honor a few of the ghosts left here by the traders during the whaling days.

"When the Hawaiian whalers got to Nantucket, at least nine or 10 of them had the misfortune of dying here," Kartunnen said. "Some had TB or typhus, and some froze to death. In February of 1832, a man from Hawaii was found frozen to death under Coffin's barn on the North Shore. Another year, the papers contained another death notice for a Hawaiian who also froze to death."

These Hawaiians were buried in unmarked graves in the small cemetery behind Mill Hill, known only as the "colored cemetery."

In 2001, when Mary Gulick, a descendant of Hawaiian missionaries who settled on Nantucket, passed away, several Hawaiians came to Nantucket to perform funeral chants for all the Hawaiians who'd died here.

"It was really beautiful," said Kartunnen, who was there. "It's fascinating that we had these people here, and then, when whaling collapsed, we forgot about them."

On June 11, however, the process of forgetting is reversed, if only for the day. ■