

## MITCHELL'S

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sion to preserve historic structures and increase environmentally healthy practices. In October, the Schmidt Family Foundation, through Greenhound LLC, purchased 10 and 12 Washington St. with the idea of converting the former liquor store property into a central shuttle bus hub.

Wendy Schmidt is married to Eric Schmidt, chairman and CEO of Google, Inc.

Reasons behind the purchase of the Mitchell building included providing the means to fund renovations of the brick structure that went up shortly after the devastating fire of 1846, as well as to ensure the viability of the book store that opened at the corner of Main and Orange Streets in 1968.

Schmidt was in Asia at the time of the closing, but in a press release about the transaction she said, "Nantucket is fortunate to have many vibrant local businesses. Local opinion leaders have pointed out the importance of buying local. They have noted that a dollar spent at a Nantucket business like Mitchell's returns about 45 cents to the island's economy and benefits the community through a multiplier effect. We are pleased to help make sure a successful, established business like Mitchell's has a home on Main Street where it will continue to contribute to our community and Nantucket's downtown retail environment."

By mid-afternoon on Friday, customers who had read the breaking news on the Internet stopped by the store to congratulate Jennings and Voigt, who along with Beman could not be more satisfied with the arrangement. Beman, who has run Mitchell's since 1978, placed the property on the market two years ago hoping that somehow the book shop would survive.

"I am so pleased that the bookstore can stay," Beman said Friday evening. "Being in that spot so long and being so successful there worked against me for selling the building. To see the building go to other than the bookstore made [potential] buyers of the building reluctant because they'd have to kick the bookstore out to put in another business. It was such an anchor on Main Street.

"I'll be there for a year and a half helping [Jennings and Voigt] buying and with the protocols and the bazillion quirks of selling," Beman added. "It's a business with hundreds of vendors. I was facing giant repairs and the bookstore doesn't make enough, so this is ideal because you still have the bookstore with the same mission and you have someone treating the building with tender loving care, bringing it into the 21st century and preserving the character of Nantucket architecture.

"I'll be reading more than ever and sharing my discoveries with customers and friends. This is all good stuff for everybody. These women will usher in the new technology to the store — I'm a tech dinosaur. The irony after all these years is I don't have a key anymore."



### WITHIN REACH

MICHAEL GALVIN/The Independent

*Nantucket fans look up to Harlem Rockets star Ron "Rocket" Christy who obliges with his autograph, a high five and a smile. The Harlem Rockets made their annual trek to the island Friday night in support of the NHS girls' basketball team.*

Jennings, 30, began spending summers on the island when she was a baby and began working for Beman 10 years ago. She moved permanently to Nantucket four years ago.

"Having the support of the community means so much to us. It's an incredible opportunity. It's so important that Main Street keep its backbones that are so important to the community. It would have been a shame if something had happened to Mitchell's," Jennings said after Friday's closing. "Nantucket is lucky in a sense; independent bookstores are a dying breed all over the country. It's very important that they stick around, discovering new authors, keeping the quality of literature high and keeping people reading.

"I recall a time I worked in a chain bookstore in Virginia and a customer came in and asked, 'Where is Charles Dickens?' The clerk said, 'Charles Dickens doesn't work here.' It's funny but it's scary. When the independents go you see the loss of stimulation people need, especially out here in the wintertime. You read your customer and give them what they want. Interests are different, moods are different; you need a variety. It's on a personal level. People don't all like the same things."

Voigt, 43, and her husband, Mark, have lived year-round on Nantucket for eight years and have sons Cooper, 12, and Holbrook, two. From 2004 to 2006 she owned and ran Brant Point Books, a used bookstore on North Beach Street that she closed

because of family demands. She thrives on books and the atmosphere of bookstores and was happy to be able to start working for Beman last April.

"I've always loved Mitchell's and I've always loved how Mimi has sold books," said Voigt, explaining that store patrons will witness little difference in the shop's environment. "[Now] we own the books but we're leasing the property. You will see a lot of the same faces when you come into Mitchell's to buy your books. We want the front of the store (inside) to stay the same. We're going to work on doing some things on the Web site and Mimi's going to be there nearly every day.

"Mary and I keep pinching ourselves because there is no other way this could have happened," Voigt said. "I'm just happy that this deal has gone through the way it has because it's a way to keep a bookstore on Main Street, and I'm pleased to be part of it. It's spectacular. I'm in shock a little bit."

Mitchell's was opened 40 years ago by Beman's parents, Henry "Mitch" Mitchell and Mary Allen Havemeyer, and was named for Mitchell's great aunt, island astronomer Maria Mitchell. Beman took over the business three decades ago, but two years ago recognized how Internet competition was hurting her sales and decided to put the property and business on the market. Although at that time she contemplated retirement, the recent arrangement allows Beman to maintain a connection between the world of literature and the reading public while also reducing her busi-

## REIS PROPOSAL

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landfill," he said, later noting that if his facility is unsuccessful its failure would not be a cost burden to the town. "The people will go where the best market is. Competition is a great thing in the United States."

That position was echoed by Philip Marks III, owner of Atlantic AEolus, who is the third major hauler taking his own c & d to the mainland. Marks also testified in support of Reis's proposal on Thursday, Jan. 3.

"I've been taking my stuff off for about a year. Competition is good. The people of Nantucket will benefit from competition," he said. "As for the location, it's better than on Long Pond (adjacent to the landfill). That's never been good. I think Bunker Road is a better place. It's all about the environment. The health department is supposed to be dealing with it that way."

Principals of Waste Options want the board to take a broader view of the proposal and how it could affect the company's obligations to the town. Hall gave the

Board of Selectmen a presentation on gasification at a September meeting, after which it was to be a continuing topic of discussion. Recently, the town approved a contract for a consultant to explore the feasibility of gasification at the landfill and options for its operation and financing.

In his letter, Hall emphasized that a private facility would be in direct competition with the town which reaps monies in excess of expenses for trash handling. Noting that commercial customers brought more than 11,000 tons of c & d to the landfill in FY07, Hall's figures are based on the assumption that all commercial c & d will become diverted to the private station. If that happens, Hall wrote, it would cost the town roughly \$955,000, or \$330,000 more per year to dispose of c & d if the landfill only received small resident loads which are not charged a tipping fee.

Addressing gasification, Hall pointed out that the island's waste stream is already too limited for many waste to energy systems, a situation that would be affected detrimentally if the majority of the c & d is

eliminated. He noted that financing for a gasification plant would hinge on a guaranteed revenue from tipping fees, which would not be possible with a competing facility in operation. Hall also stated that the town has the legal authority to require that all c & d be brought to the landfill, something that would be necessary if a gasification system is built. Going one step further, Hall said if the town requires that all c & d go to the landfill, Waste Options will waive the tipping fee paid to it for the first 2,000 tons of c & d per year in excess of 13,000 tons.

"We are going to do everything in our power legally to stop them — of course we are," Waste Options co-owner Gifford said of the private proposal. "We've worked very hard. We have an integrated waste management system that's going to be destroyed. I have an obligation to defend the 20 million dollars spent at that facility by the town and Waste Options. Any businessman has an obligation to do what he can to defend his business legitimately, and I also have a contract with the Town of Nantucket to defend this enterprise." ■