

Put your information in The Independent

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters must be received **by noon Tuesday** for publication in that week's paper. Letters may be handwritten, typed or emailed to don@nantucketindependent.com. Be sure to include an address and phone number. All letters are printed at the editor's discretion and may be edited.

CALENDAR

The calendar section includes free listings and photos of island events. Email your event listing to Gene Mahon, events@nantucketindependent.com. Fax: 508-228-4858. Listings and photos for consideration must be received **by 5 p.m. Friday**.

ENGAGEMENTS & WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Provide either your own pre-written announcement or fill out one of our forms and we will write it for you. Announcements and photos are printed free of charge. Forms are available at The Independent, and may be faxed or emailed. Call 508.228.1654, or email sharon@nantucketindependent.com. Announcements and photos must be received **by 5 p.m. Friday**.

BIRTHS AND FIRST BIRTHDAYS

Provide us with your child's name, date of birth, name of parents, siblings and grandparents. You may submit a photo or drop by the office anytime during normal business hours and we will take the photo for you. Must be received **by 5 p.m. Friday**. Email: don@nantucketindependent.com

OBITUARIES

Provide either your own pre-written obituary or fill out one of our forms and we will write it for you. Obituaries and photos are printed free of charge. Forms are available at The Independent, and may be faxed or emailed. Call 508.228.1654, or email sharon@nantucketindependent.com. Obituaries and photos must be received **by 5 p.m. Monday**.

ADVERTISING

For rates and information about advertising in The Independent or one of our special publications: Jennifer Costanzo or Hadley St. John Dutra, 508.228.1654, jennifer@nantucketindependent.com hadley@nantucketindependent.com.

NEWS

Direct news tips, information and questions to: Don Costanzo, Editor, 508.228.1654, don@nantucketindependent.com.

ARTS

Direct arts-related information and questions to: Don Costanzo, Editor, 508.228.1654, don@nantucketindependent.com.

SPORTS

Direct sports-related information and questions to: Steve Sheppard, Sports Editor, 508.228.1654, shep@nantucketindependent.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please direct orders and address changes to: Sharon Liburd or Dan Drake, 508.228.1654, sharon@nantucketindependent.com, drake@nantucketindependent.com

THE NANTUCKET INDEPENDENT

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WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE...

A bunch of Nantucketers happened upon each other at Snook Haven, Fla. on Feb. 7, 2008 and listened to banjo players play all the 'Golden Oldies.' In the back row (left to right): Ozzie Small, Nan Small, Nate Thurston and Roger Marcilio. In the middle are Ernie Oliver, Berett Oliver, Joe Rezendes and Denny Dias. In the front row (left to right) are: Linda Rezendes, Nancy Rezendes and Ida Dias.

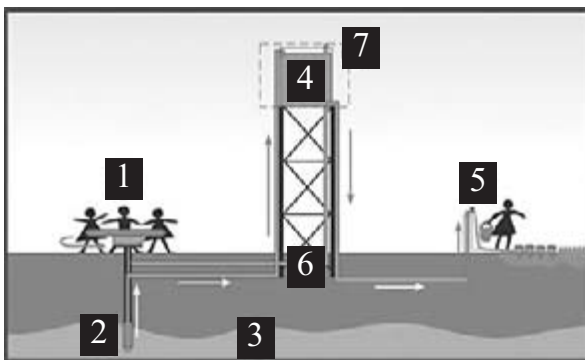
BENNETT

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people being honored for his efforts in helping to bring clean water to a small African town.

Learning from a family friend about the design of a human-propelled merry-go-round that doubles as an innovative water well pump, Bennett discovered through online research that the playground-style water pump is the brainchild of Playpumps.org, a nonprofit organization that provides pumps to small towns in Sub-Saharan Africa that lack clean sources of water.

PLAYPUMP: HOW IT WORKS



"It was a really cool organization and I got a good feeling about it. When I found out about it, I wanted to do something to help," said Bennett.

To date, Playpumps has installed more than 1,000 pumps in South Africa, with a goal of 4,000 pumps that will bring clean water to an estimated 10 million people in 10 African countries by 2010. The device can pump 270 gallons of water per hour from as deep as 300 feet, and fill a 660-gallon tank standing 23 feet off the ground. Water is drawn from the tank by a nearby tap connected to the tank. Excess water pumped from the well when the tank is full is diverted back into the ground.

The four sides of the water tank are used for advertising billboards; two sides donated to nonprofits for health and educational messages, and two sold to local businesses, with the proceeds used to maintain the pump and, if need be, replace it.

Inspired by Playpumps' concept and the desire to learn more about the world outside of Nantucket, and do what he could to help people less fortunate than himself, Bennett embarked on a fundraising effort at the start of school in September to pay for one pump to be manufactured and installed.

"It's hard to find kids these days who are interested in taking action and I think it's important that

people understand what's going on in the world so they not only appreciate what they have, but try to get involved in reaching out to others," he said.

Bennett needed to raise \$14,000 to pay for the pump and its installation. On its Web site, Playpumps provides a list of 100 ways to raise the money and spread awareness, none of which appealed to Bennett who came up with his own fundraising ideas.

First, he organized a swim-a-thon with the help of Nantucket High School Dolphins' swim coach Jim Pignato. Like a walk-a-thon, swimmers on the team found sponsors and swam laps. River split the donations with the team.

He also appealed to individual islanders and organizations, a feat he was equal to with a little coaching from his parents, Andrew and Suzanne Bennett.

"They definitely gave me some help because it's not an easy thing to ask for money, especially for \$1,000," said Bennett. "They definitely helped me with the personal aspect of it, how to ask people for the money."

Getting his pitch straight, Bennett began by approaching friends and acquaintances his father knew from his carpentry business. He networked and set up all the interviews and presentations on his own from there.

Bennett aimed high with suggested \$1,000-donations but also accepted lower amounts, including, \$100, \$250 and \$500. His contributions came from a long and varied list of islanders too numerous to list here, but one that included the likes of the Nantucket Plantsman (John Betar), Nantucket Yacht Club, Greg Raith Landscaping, Waterworks (Seth Rutherford) and Nantucket Golf Club.

"A lot of people were like, 'I don't know if I can donate \$1,000,' but anything made me happy," he said. "I still can't believe people were able to trust me with their money. I'm just happy they trusted me, it opened up my eyes a little bit."

To date, Bennett has raised \$11,180 and needs just under \$3,000 to meet his goal.

Tonight, at the Washington, D.C. home of AOL founder Steve Case and his wife, Joan — of the Case Foundation, one of Playpumps' larger private donors — Playpumps will give its Hero Award to five recipients for raising awareness of the world water crisis. Along with Bennett, awards will go to a teacher from Connecticut, the nonprofit Save the Children, Duncan Goose, founder of One Foundation in the U.K., and Alex Cummings, president and CEO of Coca-Cola in Africa. ■