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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

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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**.

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NEWS

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

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

ON VACATION

Early Monday evening, driving along Cliff Road, a red tail hawk glided across the road, not much above windshield height and maybe 200 feet in front of the car. Even in the steely gray of the pre-rain sky, its russet tail stood out dramatically as it honed in on a fencepost and slid in to a perfect landing with hardly a flap of its wings.

The bird turned and fixed me with a glare as I drove slowly by. I couldn't resist the temptation to find out if it was Hawkeye so I pulled off the road and walked back to where the bird continued to stare at me as it settled in on the post.

"Hawkeye?"

"Indeed," the bird replied. "I am glad you stopped. How are you?"

"I am great, thanks," I said. "But aren't you a bit off your beat?"

"Yes, a bit. But I actually took a couple of days off and I am on my way home now."

"I don't understand," I answered. "What do you mean that you took a couple of days off? I wasn't aware that you ever went on vacation."

"Well, just like you, I like a good time. And I heard that it was going to be good weather for Daffodil Weekend, so I decided to fly on over and see what it was all about."

He continued. "I love those old cars. They are so bright, they almost look new. I sat in one of those big old trees on Main Street and watched them congregate for the parade and then I flew part way along the parade route until I got tired and went into the State Forest for a little nap. When I woke up was when the fun began."

"I don't get it," I said. "By the time you woke up, the parade was probably over and everyone had gone home."

"Exactly," Hawkeye replied. "Did you see all those people settled in along the road to watch to watch the car parade?"

"I did," I answered. "And before you go on, I just wanted to say that I find that parade more depressing every year. Well, not the parade itself. The parade is great. But the cars that are in it keep getting younger – and I keep getting older. I am a lot more antique than most of those cars."

"Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Just be thankful that cars have gotten more modern and you don't have to be out there cranking yours to start it in the morning. And don't interrupt."

"I take your point," I said. "And you were saying about the people watching the parade along the road?"

"Well, I am sure you noticed that most of them had picnics, or at least some snacks for the kids. And, of course some of the food got dropped."

"Surely you are not telling me you went all that way to scrounge for chips and Cheez-Its, are you?" I asked with a note of concern in my voice.

Hawkeye fixed me with a beady eye and didn't hold back his contempt. "You think I eat that junk?" he sneered. Do you really think I would jeopardize my health with the stuff that humans call food?"

After a moment he continued, more quietly.



By DANIEL W. DRAKE
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

"No, I don't eat that stuff, but my furry friends couldn't resist the temptation to scavenge, and right there along the edge of the road where the grass is short, I had, as it were, a field day. I must say, some of the things you people eat are pretty disgusting, but it does attract a certain element that I, ah, find very appealing. It was like being at a resort. I haven't had so much fun – and eaten so well – in a long time."

"Well, I am glad you enjoyed yourself and were able to take advantage of the situation," I said. "There were lots of people out and about for the parade, and not all that many familiar faces. In fact, one friend remarked that it was probably a good thing that she didn't know all that many people, meaning that these people were doing good things for Nantucket's economy."

I went on. "You used the term 'take advantage of the situation' a minute ago, in reasonably positive context, but I think that we have to be careful that merchants and other purveyors of services here don't take advantage of our visitors – well, at least not too much."

"Do you have an example?" Hawkeye asked.

"I do," I said with a sense of relief, because when pressed it is often hard to come up with an illustration. "I needed a bottle of my favorite Tennessee sipping whiskey. Well, I wasn't near the store where I usually buy it, so I went into another store that was convenient. When the clerk told me the price, I was incredulous. It was \$17 more for the 1.75 liter bottle than it is at the place I usually get it. Can you imagine? That is 40 percent higher."

"Actually, no, I can't," the bird said. "I have never tasted whiskey, although I have heard that moonshine and squirrel stew is a great combination. But, I do understand what you are trying to say. "Maybe a merchant can charge a little more for the convenience factor, but, I agree, 40 percent is a huge convenience charge."

"On the other hand, maybe the moral is you shouldn't drink."

"You are the one who usually tells me not to be self-righteous," I said indignantly.

"What do you want me to do? Haul a sign behind me like one of those airplanes?" the hawk asked. "GOUGING IS NOT THE NANTUCKET WAY."

"No." I answered. "You asked for an example and I gave it to you. My point is that we shouldn't spoil a person's good time here by taking advantage of him or her. How would you have felt if, after going all that distance to the Milestone Road, getting away from your day-to-day world, you had been charged a landing fee for every rodent you ate?"

"I would have taken off," Hawkeye said, disgustedly, as he spread his wings and continued his journey back to Madaket. ■

The "Lighthouse Keeper" reflects the views of the author and does not necessarily represent the editorial position of The Nantucket Independent. Please send any ideas or comments to drake@nantucketindependent.com.



Miss Mia Dew

July 13, 2001 ~ April 12, 2008

"What a wonderful world."
— Louis Armstrong

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