

# Opinion

SEND YOUR VIEWS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: [DON@NANTUCKETINDEPENDENT.COM](mailto:DON@NANTUCKETINDEPENDENT.COM)

## IT'S THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACE

Recently, in a meeting I attended with a number of folks, the question was raised: "If you had to leave Nantucket tomorrow — for some reason, you were forced to leave and could never come back — what would you miss the most?"

That recent meeting was attended by a diverse group, representing a good cross-section of the population of the island all of whom had the same singular, emphatic and instantaneous response to the thought of leaving this lovely place.

While very good answers came up in the conversation, the very first thing on the mind of everyone in that room was "the people."

## My View

By Michelle Whelan

And yet, "the people" we were each referring to are, to a large extent, different people! So, what is it about this island that creates this singularly positive experience of community?

Is it possible that all the items on the list of things we would miss, are all aspects of this island life that contribute to, and help to create the experience of community that is central to our lives here? And if that is the case, how can we preserve the elements that help to create that experience?

About nine years ago, some of the people who were thinking along these lines at the time, and who were worried about the effects of increased population and development pressures on the island, decided to get together and form a nonprofit to address that very question. The mission of this nonprofit, Sustainable Nantucket, is to "preserve the community character of

Nantucket while sustaining its economic and environmental vitality."

Since then, Sustainable Nantucket has done much to raise awareness around the need to develop a comprehensive vision for the future of Nantucket, and has developed programs and initiatives (such as the Nantucket Housing Office and the Nantucket Shellfish Association) that focus on individual aspects of that vision.

The current goals of Sustainable Nantucket include the following:

To encourage a strong island economy based on locally-owned, independent businesses.

To support traditional as well as new industries through initiatives and programs and by advocating for thoughtful, environmentally sound policies.

To assist in the reduction of our carbon emissions, development of our significant renewable energy resources and increases in our energy efficiency to safeguard our sensitive environment.

To assist in the creation of a sustainable alternative transportation system and reduce the density of traffic and traffic-related pollution.

When discussing the issue of preserving community character, many people often feel discouraged, and say things like: "Communities change. What can we do about it?" The mission of Sustainable Nantucket is to both create programs that help to strengthen the fabric of the community so we can weather those changes and remain intact, and also to raise awareness around the things all of us, as individuals, can do to help.

I've now been on the job as the new Executive Director of Sustainable Nantucket for an exciting and fulfilling four months. Much of that time I've spent talking with people — asking them to share their thoughts with me on what they see as the essential priorities for Nantucket. Many people are concerned about our future and there are quite a few organizations and individuals who are actively working to reduce the stresses on our infrastructure and to safeguard our environment.

There is much we can do, as individuals, to support and enhance our quality of life as a community on this beautiful island, and even more that we can accomplish by working together.

To sign up for our mailing list or to volunteer for one of our programs, please email us at [info@sustainablenantucket.org](mailto:info@sustainablenantucket.org) or visit us at [www.sustainablenantucket.org](http://www.sustainablenantucket.org).

## To the editor:

On behalf of the board of directors of the non-profit South Church Preservation Fund, I'd like to thank everyone in the community who supported our recent benefit concert featuring folk singers Holly Near and Emma's Revolution. The funds raised from this special occasion will go toward preserving, restoring and maintaining the historic South Church structure, which celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2009. The South Church Meeting House's golden dome and town clock have long served as a Nantucket landmark and beacon, welcoming visitors and residents to the island. Through our nonprofit organization's preservation and restoration efforts, we hope to make sure the building will continue to be a welcoming landmark for another 200 years.

Special thanks are in order to the following sponsors and supporters for making the concert successful: Mitchell's Book Corner, Bookworks, the Nantucket Arts Council, Yackon.com, Channel 17, Plum TV, WGBH/WCAI/WNAN Radio, Mahon About Town, Yesterday's Island, the Nantucket Independent, the Inquirer and Mirror, Annye's Whole Foods, Bartlett's Farm, The Islander Package Store, Ginger Andrews, Jonathan Thayer and Joan and Les Ottinger.

For more information about our preservation work, please visit [www.scpfund.org/](http://www.scpfund.org/).

Craig Spery  
Benefit Concert Chair  
South Church Preservation Fund board member

## To the editor:

Thirty years ago, during the Blizzard of 1978, Nantucket teacher Barbara White made it to the Massachusetts State Archives, but the archivist didn't. White was told to just go in and look around for herself. What she found was a box of uncatalogued documents including petitions sent to the General Court of Massachusetts from Nantucket in the mid-1840s. One petition was from black whaling captain and merchant, Edward J. Pompey, requesting legislation to racially integrate the Nantucket public schools. It was signed by over 100 members of Nantucket's black community. A second was a petition from 235 white Nantucketers supporting

Continued on next page

# THE NANTUCKET Independent

The Island's most trusted weekly source for news, business and the arts

**DON COSTANZO**  
Editor & Publisher

**DANIEL W. DRAKE**  
Associate Publisher

### Writers

PETER B. BRACE  
News

PETER A. SUTTERS JR.  
News

MARY LANCASTER  
Arts/Features/News

### Ad Production

KADY DECKER

### A&E Calendar

GENE MAHON

### Cartoonist

JAMES CENAMO

### Sales

GENNIFER COSTANZO  
HADLEY ST. JOHN DUTRA

### Photographers

ROB BENCHLEY  
MICHAEL GALVIN

### Contributors

KEN BLACKSHAW  
JAN JAEGER  
LESLIE ANN SHEPPARD  
ANDREW SPENCER  
LUCRETIA VOIGT

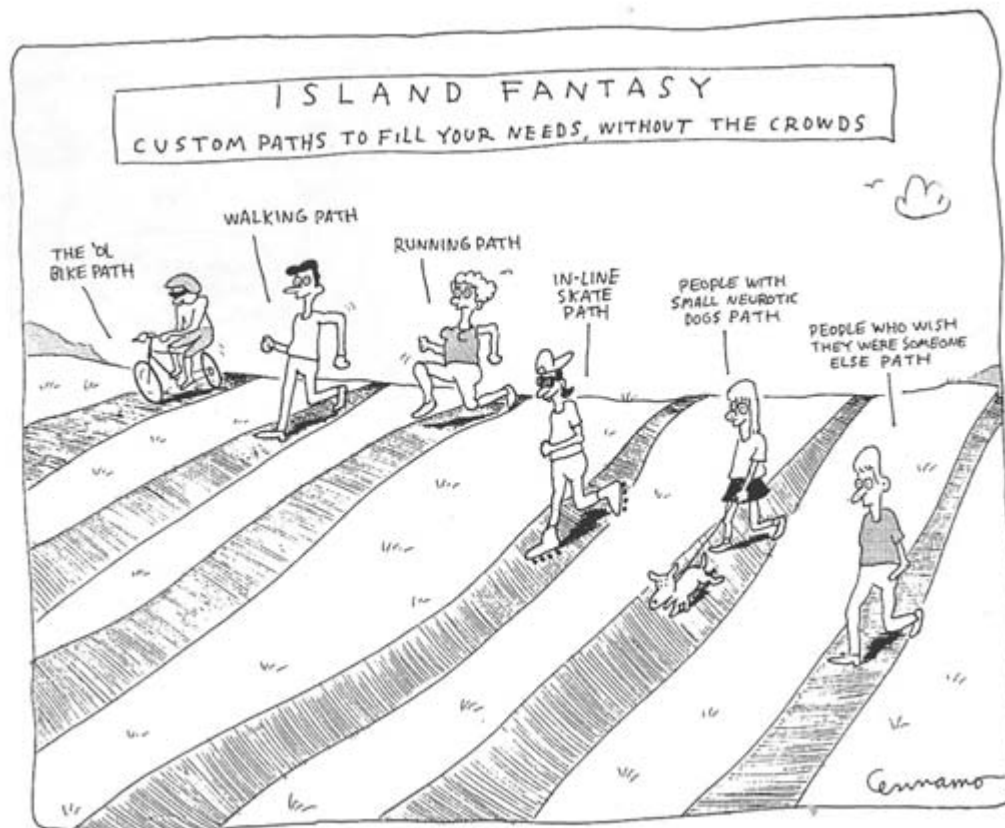
### Intern

SAM TOOLE

### Distribution

NANTUCKET AIR FREIGHT  
DELIVERY SERVICE, INC.

## GREY MATTER by James Cennamo



© Copyright 2008 GateHouse Media, Inc. All rights reserved. The Nantucket Independent is published weekly on Wednesdays by GateHouse Media, Inc., 15 North Beach Street, Nantucket, MA 02554-2114. Standard postage paid at Nantucket, MA 02554-0000 (permit #110) and additional entry office. ISSN# 1550-6800. Mailed to all active addresses on Nantucket Island (Zip Codes 02554, 02564 and 02584.)

Member  
New England  
Press Association



Off-island subscription rates are \$45.00 for 12 months or \$35.00 for nine months by Standard Mail (No forwarding or change of address service available); \$25.00 for full-time students. First class mailing to U.S. subscribers off-island is \$100.00 per year. Back issues (subject to availability) are \$5.00 to cover postage and handling.

To place a subscription order, change an address, or for back issues, call 508-228-1654, fax 508-228-4858 or, for print subscription orders only, go to [www.acknews.com](http://www.acknews.com). For correspondence, Email [info@nantucketindependent.com](mailto:info@nantucketindependent.com) or write The Nantucket Independent, 15 North Beach Street, Nantucket, MA 02554-2114.

The Nantucket Independent is the island's weekly newspaper for all segments of the community. Its main focus is to provide relevant and current environmental, economic, real estate, political and development news. The Independent's in-depth journalism explores trends and issues affecting the island in all segments of community life. It profiles businesses and individuals, and celebrates successes. At heart, The Independent is dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of Nantucket's character. Our mission is to be the best, most reliable and relevant weekly newspaper for Nantucket and its residents.