

# Opinion

## EDITORIAL

### Nantucket Cottage Hospital: Something to Celebrate

Life 30 miles at sea can be challenging, and there are some local institutions that quite literally make life possible here. Nantucket Cottage Hospital is at the very top of that list. Our geographical remoteness has required a combination of self-reliance among hearty island souls who care for one another along with financial support from friends here and afar. Our community is truly blessed to have an institution which offers year-round quality healthcare for every individual who steps on this island. We are grateful for the efforts of the hospital's board of trustees, volunteers and employees who work to provide the best delivery of care. And we are blessed by so many who support the good works of Nantucket Cottage Hospital through their commitment and devotion and, yes, philanthropy.

The challenges facing any health care institution are daunting, with rising medical costs and dwindling reimbursements. Statewide, the number of hospitals running operating deficits has ballooned from 20 percent last year to 51 percent this year. Just this week, Cape Cod Health Care – which operates Cape Cod and

Falmouth hospitals – announced its largest layoff of employees ever – 169 jobs, including 91 at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis, to stave off a \$25-million operating shortfall. With the Cape's largest employer and provider of health care services finding itself in such a financial crisis, it is a sobering reminder of how fortunate we are for having the 97-year-old Nantucket Cottage Hospital, and how important is its continued financial support through annual and planned giving and fundraising events.

This Saturday, the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra and conductor Keith Lockhart present the 12th annual Pops at Jetties concert to benefit the Nantucket Cottage Hospital. The concert raises almost \$1 million a year, which helps to offset the hospital's operating expenses not covered by insurance. Come to the concert, show your support and hear great music. CBS news managing editor and anchor Katie Couric hosts, with a special performance by Tony and Academy Award winning actor and singer Joel Grey, topped off by fireworks. Nantucket Cottage Hospital is something to sing about! ■

### Grey Matter by James Cennamo



## VIEWPOINT

As a community, Nantucket cherishes its youth. We cater to their needs, providing myriad year round and summer



recreational and educational programs and activities. Unfortunately, it is also the adult community that often provides alcohol to youth as well, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Youth drink alcohol within the context of a society and culture where alcohol use is the norm, and images about alcohol are pervasive. Known worldwide as a tourist destination, Nantucket's influx of vacationers promotes a "party culture" atmosphere that sustains favorable alcohol use attitudes throughout the year, including underage use. Any initiatives to reduce underage drinking and to change that normative behavior must therefore focus on adults as well as youth, and must engage the whole community, including our extended summer families and visitors.

To that end, the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention, Inc. has made measured progress over the last several years. ASAP, a non-profit 501(c)(3) formed in 1995, is a cross-sector collaborative of various local organizations, committees, town departments, and the public at-large, which together serve as a community-wide prevention coalition. ASAP's mission is to provide leadership, education and support in the community for the prevention and treatment of alcoholism, addiction, substance abuse and related problems. In 2006-2007, a comprehensive strategic planning process engaged many community partners to create a Nantucket Substance Abuse Prevention Plan for Youth (to view the plan and connect to links on underage drinking visit [www.asapnantucket.org](http://www.asapnantucket.org)).

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey, implemented in Nantucket High School in 2006, 2007 and 2008, identified alcohol as the drug most commonly used by NHS students in both 2006 and 2007 (results are pending for the 2008

YRBS), with 2007 results as follows:

Fifty-five percent of students reported current use, higher than that of Massachusetts (48%) and

of the U.S. (43%);

The rate of high-risk (binge) drinking among NHS students (38%) is also higher than that of their state (27%) and national (26%) peers. High-risk drinking behavior is defined as five or more drinks in a row within a couple of hours, at least once within the last month;

The average age of first use of alcohol among NHS students (who have reported alcohol use) is 13.46 years;

Forty-three percent of NHS students reported riding in a car with a driver who had been drinking (within the past 30 days), higher than that of Massachusetts (27%) and the U.S. (28%);

Sixteen percent of NHS students reported driving a car (within the past 30 days) when they had been drinking, higher than that of Massachusetts (11%) and the U.S. (10%);

Sixty-eight percent of NHS students responded that there are times when his/her parent(s) allow him/her to drink alcohol;

Eighty-one percent of students believe that alcohol is "easy to get";

When asked, "how wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to drink regularly," 52 percent of NHS students perceive that their parents believe regular alcohol use is "NOT very wrong";

Many parents are ambivalent about underage alcohol use, with strongly held "underage drinking is a rite of passage" beliefs ("I did it, and I'm okay" or "its only beer"), a norm that leads to a low perception of harm and promotes a perception that parents approve of youth use.

While they may not realize it, parents have the most influence on whether or not their child will drink alcohol. Youth report that parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink.

Underage alcohol use is not a 'rite of

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

Nantucket's long history of supporting its craftspeople, farmers and growers is alive and well. Through the vision and efforts of Sustainable Nantucket, the Nantucket Farmers' and Artisans' Market not only gives the island's traditional small businesses an outlet, it serves as a reminder to islanders and visitors alike of the rich variety of products grown or crafted here.

As a handweaver, I know the challenges of running a small business on Nantucket. Thanks to the Farmers'

and Artisans' Market, hundreds of people have been introduced to my business, as well as to the businesses of the other 25 or so vendors who set up shop every Saturday morning.

As you can imagine, the Farmers' and Artisans' Market could not exist without help. Thanks to the generosity of the Dreamland Foundation, we have been able to use the movie theater's back lot for our market since June 28. This Saturday, August 9, the market will move back

See LETTERS, page 7

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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.

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