

Nantucket named healthiest county

By Lindsay Pykosz
I&M Staff Writer

Nantucket County has been named the healthiest county in Massachusetts in the second annual County Health Rankings, coming in at the top out of 14 counties in the commonwealth.

The County Health Rankings are a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, according to the County Health rating website. Those counties having high rankings, number one or two, are considered the "healthiest," with rankings based on a series of methods that include health outcomes, mortality and morbidity, and health factors—health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic and physical environment.

Dukes and Middlesex counties came in at second and third, respectively, with Hampden County bringing up the rear at number 14.

The ranking came as somewhat of a surprise to Nantucket Cottage Hospital, according to communications officer Bill Ferrall, who stated that the area from the survey that most directly relates to the hospital is the clinical-care portion, which includes five sub-categories: Uninsured adults, primary-care providers, preventable hospital stays, diabetic screening and mammography screening.

Nantucket county actually ranked 13 out of 14 counties in terms of clinical care, a ranking that Ferrall said is attributed to the island's low general population.

"We're 13 out of 14, but within that 13 out of 14, two primary issues that caused that low ranking

HEALTHY, PAGE 3A

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Photo by Nicole Harnishfeger

PHOENIX RISING: The installation of the historic trusses from the original Dreamland building that was torn down in 2009, began Monday. The steel skeleton of the structure has been going up for over a week.

Meals on Wheels program running smoothly from Kitty's

By Lindsay Pykosz
I&M Staff Writer

It has been a little over three months since island restaurateurs John Keane and Caroline Montgomery, owners of restaurants Kitty Murtagh's, Queequeg's and Town, stepped forward and signed a three-year contract with the possibility of a two-year extension to save the jeopardized Meals on Wheels program and its affiliated senior-dining Congregate Lunch at the Saltmarsh Senior Center, and everything is running smoothly.

While there was some hesitation at first as to how well the turnover would go, all parties have settled into a comfortable routine and are thankful they are able to keep the programs alive.

"We're very pleased with it and the staff gets a lot of pleasure knowing they can help out the

MEALS, PAGE 5A



Photo by Mark Budaj

Participants in the Mayors for Meals program last Wednesday. Left to right in the front row are town manager Libby Gibson, selectman Whitey Willauer, volunteer Lee Gaw and volunteer Cheri Goulding. In the back row are volunteer Nancy Moylan, selectman Rick Atherton and John Keane, owner of Kitty Murtagh's which has the contract to prepare the meals, holding his daughter Grace on the porch of Kitty's.

Wendy Schmidt buying guest house for NCMC, community school use

By Joshua Balling
I&M Assistant Editor

The historic Harrison Gray House on Centre Street, for decades part of the Jared Coffin House Inn, could soon change hands and be converted into a downtown music school and community education hub.

ReMain Nantucket this week announced that founder Wendy Schmidt, wife of soon-to-be former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, head of the Schmidt Family Foundation and president of the Dreamland Foundation, is hoping to purchase the historic building at 56 Centre St. from Nantucket Island Resorts

SCHMIDT, PAGE 10A



Photo by Nicole Harnishfeger

The Harrison Gray House at 56 Centre St. has been on the market since last fall. It is owned by Nantucket Island Resorts.

Selectmen, Gibson create plan to get finances of town in order after critical audit

By Jason Graziadei
I&M Senior Writer

On the heels of the release of a scathing assessment of Nantucket's financial controls by its auditor, Powers & Sullivan, the town administration announced a plan this week to bring the firm to the island for more intensive reviews and a renewed push to get the town's fiscal house in order.

Representatives from Powers & Sullivan will regularly travel to Nantucket to meet with the staff of the Finance Department charged with cash reconciliations, and the firm will receive read-only access to Munis, the town's financial-accounting software system to monitor their progress.

Powers & Sullivan's starkly negative management letter to the town released last week highlighted a series of unresolved issues within the Finance Department, which it faulted for errors in cash reconciliations, inaccurate schedules and late financial entries. The report represented a major step backward for the department after significant progress over the last fiscal year, in which it caught up with overdue audit reports, received an unqualified management letter for FY2010, and implemented a number of recommendations from an independent consultant, Mark Abrahams.

Problems resurfaced toward the end of last year, leading town manager Libby Gibson to negotiate the departure of former Finance Department director Connie Voges. Candidates to fill the vacancy have been interviewed, and an interim manage-



Town manager Libby Gibson

"Should we have been monitoring this better? Absolutely. Were we occupied with other things? Yes. We should have been more on top of it."

— Libby Gibson
Town manager

ment team consisting of assistant town manager Gregg Tivnan, assistant finance director Irene Larivee and assessor Debbie Dilworth have assumed responsibility for decision-making within the troubled department.

By bringing in the town's auditing firm for additional monitor-

AUDIT, PAGE 6A



Photo by Nicole Harnishfeger

CHANGE OF COMMAND: Coast Guard Station Brant Point senior chief T.J. Malvesti was promoted to the rank of chief warrant officer Monday. His son Ryan, 5, placed his new officer's cover on him during the ceremony when he also announced he will be leaving Nantucket for a new assignment in Texas in June. Malvesti, who took charge of Station Brant Point in 2007, is headed to Freeport, Texas, and will hand over command of Brant Point to Matthew James, who is currently second-in-command at the Coast Guard station in Sandy Hook, N.J.

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News Notes

Car break-ins reported near new Police Dept.

Nantucket police are investigating a string of car break-ins that occurred early last Friday morning on a quiet street close to the new police department off Fairgrounds Road.

Small electronics, including iPods and other items were stolen from eight unlocked cars parked at residences on Ticcoma Way and Bayberry Lane sometime between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m., Det. Lt. Jerry Adams said. Two sets of footprints were discovered near homes in the area, and some of the items were dropped or discarded by the suspects on the ground, Adams said.

Dementia certificate program April 5 & 12

Alzheimer's Services of Cape Cod & the Islands will host its annual Dementia Certificate Program at the 4 Fairgrounds road public-safety facility from noon-4 p.m. April 5 and 12. Professional and family caregivers looking for more advanced education and tools for providing better care for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are encouraged to attend.

The tuition for the training is \$95 and includes materials fee and 8 continuing education credits. Tuition for family caregivers is \$50.

This professional training offered by Alzheimer's Services of Cape Cod & the Islands is designed to meet the state education criteria for dementia-care professionals. For more information or to register call (508) 775-5656 or e-mail info@alzcapecod.org

Selectmen looking for committee candidates

The Board of Selectmen is accepting applications to fill vacancies on the following committees for unexpired terms: Agricultural Committee, one seat, term ends 2012; Cultural Council, one seat, term ends 2012; Energy Study Committee, two seats, terms end 2012.

Interested individuals may obtain a "Committee Interest Form" from the Town Administration office in Town Hall, 16 Broad Street, Nantucket, MA 02554.

Property-tax bills to be issued tomorrow

Nantucket tax collector Elizabeth Brown has announced that the Fiscal Year 2011 real estate and personal property second-half tax bills will be issued April 1 and are due and payable May 2.

If you do not receive your bill, call the tax collector's office for copies at (508) 228-7270. Failure to receive a bill will not stay penalties or interest under state law. Be sure to update the tax collector's office if you have a new mailing address.

DeRensis back on advisory commission

Paul DeRensis, a seasonal resident and former Nantucket Town Counsel, has been reappointed by Gov. Deval Patrick to a third term as a member of the Massachusetts Local Government Advisory Commission. The LGAC meets regularly throughout the year with Patrick, Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray and senior members of the administration to discuss issues facing cities and towns.

"I am honored by the opportunity to serve as a member of this important commission, and will do my best to offer ideas and input to the governor and his team that will help all of the communities of Massachusetts," DeRensis said.

Voices of Nantucket

Q. Friday is the Red Sox opening day. How will they fare this year?



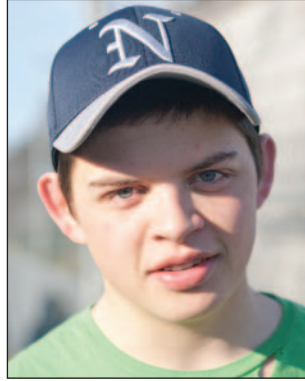
John Montgomery
"They are going to win the World Series because they have good pitching and lots of good new players."



Dennis Caron
"I think they will be a playoff team."



Zach Moran
"I think they will do pretty well, especially with their new players, but they will lose to the Phillies in the World Series."



Kramer Johnson
"I think they will make it to the playoffs this year. The new pickups will help."



Tiffany Vittorini
"They won't do as well as the Yankees."



Bill Manchester
"I think they will win the American League East."

Healthy: More uninsured on Nantucket

(Continued from page 1A)

are the number of primary care providers within the county, which is 1,252-to-one, whereas the state is 656-to-one and the national benchmark is 631-to-one," Ferrall said. "We have half the number of primary-care providers to general-population ration that they would like to see. This is clearly skewing our low ranking under the category of clinical care."

Another aspect from this category that is dragging Nantucket County down to the bottom of the list is the number of adults under 65 on Nantucket who do not have health insurance, 18 percent as opposed to 9 percent statewide or twice the state's population of uninsured adults.

Ferrall said that within the clinical-care category are two very positive results for the hospital that are on par or above state averages: Diabetic screening and mammography screening. According to the website, percentages for diabetic screenings are based on "Medicare patients whose blood-sugar control was screened in the

past year using a test of their glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) levels" and mammography screening results are gathered from "the percent of female Medicare enrollees age 67-69 that had at least one mammogram over a two-year period."

"We're ahead of mammography screenings at 85 percent compared to 72 percent (in the state) and with diabetic screening we're at 80 percent versus 86 percent (in the state)," Ferrall continued.

Ferrall added that these two factors are most likely what contributed to Nantucket county coming in at number one in terms of morbidity.

"We're high in those areas and I would argue that those are what attribute to our number-one ranking in morbidity. With low birth-weights, we're better than the state average of 7.7 percent, and for poor or fair health we're at 6 percent versus 12 percent statewide. Since Nantucket Cottage Hospital is the primary-care provider, I think that it's clear that the quality of care people get here is high."

Ferrall said Nantucket Cottage Hospital's prenatal care program may contribute to the fact that there are healthy babies continuously being born on Nantucket.

Dr. Tim Lepore, who has worked in the healthcare industry on Nantucket for over 20 years, said on Wednesday that he was trying to figure out what the results mean and compared Nantucket's standings to "being the tallest midget."

"My response to being number one in health rankings would be because we have excellent physicians, even though there are very few of us compared to the rest of

HEALTHY, PAGE 9A

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Thanks to Nantucket Cottage Hospital for its commitment to Light It Up Blue for World Autism Awareness on April 1 & 2

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The Road to Town Meeting 2011

Rental tax sure to generate fiery debate

By Jason Graziadei
I&M Senior Writer

Town Meeting voters will again have the opportunity to debate an expansion of the rooms-occupancy tax to seasonal vacation rental homes on Nantucket, a controversial proposal which was shot down last year.

If approved, the town would seek permission from the state legislature to impose a 6 percent occupancy tax on short-term vacation rentals of less than 60 days, extending the same tax structure that currently exists for hotels and inns, as well as bed and breakfast operations, to Nantucket's sizable stock of seasonal rental homes.

Calling it a new and unnecessary tax that could hurt island homeowners and stifle real estate transactions, opponents have renewed their criticism of the home rule petition, Article 31 on this year's warrant.

Proponents, including selectman Michael Kopko, have called the absence of a tax on seasonal rentals a loophole, and said the proposal would level the playing field for lodging businesses and could yield the town as much as \$1.5 million in additional revenue each year.

"There's an unfair advantage for short-term vacation rentals on the island," said Kopko, calling them the largest sector of Nantucket's lodging industry. "By clos-

ing this loophole, it's not creating a new tax, it's taxing a business that's already there and already in the lodging sector of the economy."

The Finance Committee issued a positive recommendation to island voters on the warrant article, leaving little doubt the proposal will be called for debate at Town Meeting this year.

Opponents, including Cynthia Lenhart, the principal broker at Compass Rose Real Estate, who spoke out against the proposal during last weekend's Meet the Articles forum, will counter the push for the expansion of the rooms-occupancy tax. She said voters had already defeated similar proposals on at least five occasions at previous Town Meetings.

"The town has spoken, so how many times do the people have to vote this down?" she asked on Saturday. "Private residences are not commercial businesses. The renting of private homes cannot be compared to the operation of a commercial hotel, bed and breakfast, or inn. I can't think of one home that is renting as a profitable business. It only helps defray the high cost of home-ownership. This tax will be an additional burden."

The state currently imposes a 5.7 percent rooms-occupancy tax on lodging establishments, while Nantucket has opted to tax them at the full 6 percent allowed under

DEBATE, PAGE 12A

Article would shift counsel-appointing power

By Jason Graziadei
I&M Senior Writer

For months the Selectmen have squabbled over a warrant article that would shift the power to appoint Nantucket's town counsel from the five-member board to the town manager.

On Monday, voters will have a chance to weigh in on the debate themselves if Article 88 is called on Town Meeting floor. As it stands, with a negative recommendation from the Finance Committee and its original proponents indicating a reluctance to pursue it at Town Meeting, the article may simply go away. But both sides are primed

for the debate if it happens.

The proposed home rule petition, which appears on the warrant in the form of a town charter amendment, would not only make the town manager the appointing authority for town counsel, it would also require a four-fifths vote of the selectmen to disapprove the selection.

On the heels of the controversial decision to cut ties with former town counsel Paul DeRensis and his firm Deutsch Williams in December, selectmen Michael Kopko and Rick Atherton had criticized the warrant article as a back-door method to protect the decision to hire the town's new law firm,

Kopelman and Paige, by the slim majority that voted it in. Having a town manager appoint town counsel, rather than the elected Board of Selectmen, as well as the provision requiring a super-majority of the board to overrule the town manager's selection, was described by Kopko as highly unusual.

Selectmen chairman Patty Roggeveen stated weeks ago that the four-fifths language had come from Kopelman & Paige, but Brian Chadwick told the Finance Committee earlier this month that he had requested the provision "because of the extreme emotion tied to the article and my fear that there would be retaliation by the

board."

The Finance Committee's motion on Article 88 is to "take no action," so if it is not called at Town Meeting, no change would occur. Still, Chadwick said he was prepared to take his argument to the voters if the proposal is called for debate.

"It will take the politics out of the position, and will stop the board from making decisions at the Brotherhood (of Thieves)," Chadwick said. "It will do away with the good ol' boy network and put the hiring authority in the town manager's hands. Ninety-

COUNSEL, PAGE 12A

Healthy: Dukes County ranked second behind Nantucket

(Continued from page 3A)

the state," Lepore said. "On a more serious note, I think that there are obviously lies in statistics, and this is probably evidence of this. While we, the hospital and the physicians do provide excellent care, there are many things that aren't mentioned here."

For example, Lepore said Lyme disease and other tick-borne infections statistics weren't examined in the survey. He stated that those statistics were slanted because many people who contract these diseases move off-island or are only on Nantucket during the summer.

Examining the morbidity category of the survey, Lepore said he

wasn't sure what the sub-category "poor mental health days" constituted, but "funding of mental health in Massachusetts, and Nantucket in particular, is really, really criminal. I don't think that's all taken care of."

"I mean, I'm not sure what this all means," Lepore continued. "I think it does show the problems we do have in terms of number of physicians, but apparently we are doing a wonderful job and we do have access to healthy foods and recreational components. We do have pretty good air to breathe, but a lot of these other factors seem to be to me quite smoky. I would say we seem to have a lot of high-school graduates compared to

Massachusetts, but I am concerned that some of this is skewed by small numbers."

Another aspect that Lepore said he doesn't quite understand is the fact that Nantucket doesn't register on the scale in terms of excessive drinking.

"I don't quite understand that. I just have some problems with this, but I think, you know, congrats to us, but I'm not sure what it means."

Other sub-categories that Nantucket ranked better than the state average in were premature deaths; unemployment, at 6.9 percent versus 8.4 percent; and children in poverty, at 6 percent versus 12 percent.

To see the full results of how Nantucket ranked compared to the rest of the state, visit www.county-healthrankings.org/massachusetts/nantucket

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 - The Nantucket Police Department
 - The Nantucket Suicide Prevention Coalition

This forum was funded and developed with a federal Drug Free Communities Support Program Grant awarded through the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The views, policies and opinions expressed are those of the presenters and sponsors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ONDCP, SAMHSA or HHS.

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Discussion: Attorney Mark Hoover and Chief William Pittman, Nantucket Police Department

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