



The TEN For 2007

By Barry Fain and Steve Friedman
 Photographs by jonathanbeller.com & Kate Kelley

Our "Ten People You Don't Know Now" selections mark the sixth annual edition of the story, in what has rapidly become one of our most popular issues of the year. In the beginning, we had to dig hard to find candidates. Now we get more suggestions than we can handle. Then, we had to explain to winners why they were being honored. Now, the people selected are quite excited - without any prodding from us. For our part, the selection process is very uplifting. As we try to narrow down the nominees (and find out how difficult that

process is, since every candidate was nominated by at least two people), we come away with the exhilarating feeling that the future of our city-state is a bright one indeed. Some of this year's winners are locals who have stayed here to do some remarkable things. Others came by way of marriage, college or dumb luck and have fallen in love with the place. Still others left, succeeded elsewhere, and still came back. How fortunate we are as a community to have them!

So here's this year's class of future local celebrities. We hope you enjoy getting to know them as much as we did. And don't forget, it's never too early to submit your suggestions for next year.

Jenny Peek

Government/Arts

Although a relatively new resident of Providence, having arrived just five years ago, Jenny Peek is already spreading her energy and creativity all around Providence. Her current day job is as the Cultural Affairs and Film Manager for the City's Department of Art, Culture & Tourism. Translation: She works with film companies to help smooth out logistical problems with residents while also acting as stage manager for outdoor productions at Waterplace Park for projects like last summer's successful FirstWorksProv.

But her real love is, and always has been, working with disadvantaged kids in a creative theatre program. After graduating Penn with a major in Anthropology, she lived in New York City working as an assistant director for indie movies and TV shows like Law and Order. She also worked at the very successful "52nd Street Project" for ten years as a volunteer stage manager. It is this experience that serves as the model for her own Manton Avenue Project (MAP), which works with kids in the Olneyville area.

"The concept behind both programs is that the children, starting as young as the third grade, write plays which are then performed and directed by adult theatre professionals. The results are amazing," Jenny reports. "It's less about theatre itself and more about what the theatre can do for kids."

Her Manton Avenue Project has already produced seven shows and is now up to its fourth class. Each child writes a play and is then paired with three adults - two actors and a director. The group next prepares the actual play. Jenny is now working on their first major fundraiser, scheduled for May, that she hopes will help put MAP quite literally on the map. Given her charisma and energy, we wouldn't bet against her.



photo by: Jonathan Beller