

FIRST PERSON

So not vain

The Vineyard's Carly Simon, 66, island-hops for a most worthy cause.

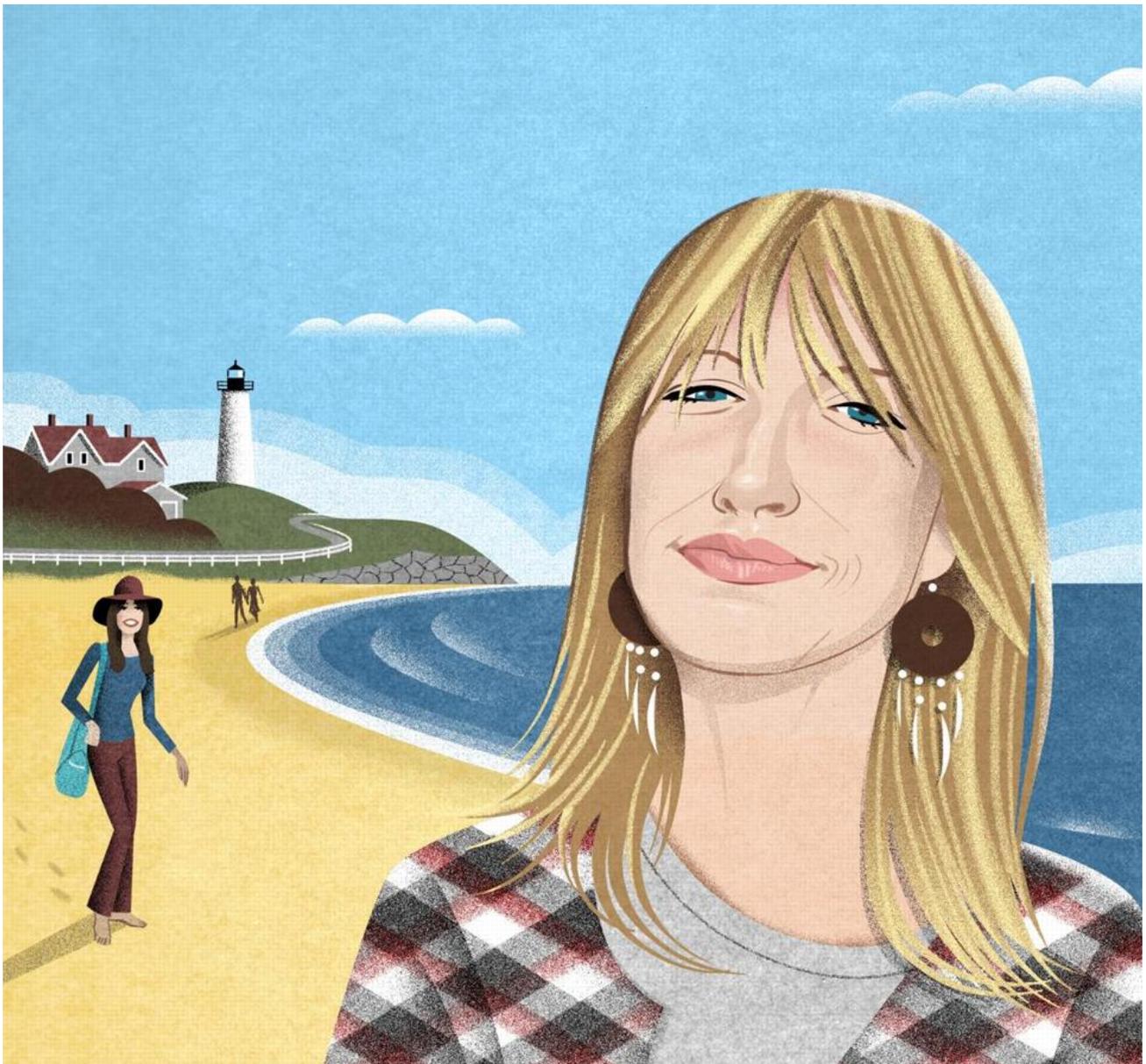


ILLUSTRATION BY BEN KIRCHNER

As a longtime Martha's Vineyard resident, how did you end up at a Boston Pops benefit for Nantucket Cottage Hospital this month?

People on Martha's Vineyard say, "You're defecting," but I'm not. I've been involved with Martha's Vineyard Hospital for years and years, but Nantucket Hospital is in more of a bind. It's further out to sea, so it's more difficult to get to the mainland [for care]. There are great doctors out there, but there should be more.

Have you played with the Pops before?

Yes, four summers ago, I sang with my wonderful sister-in-law, Kate Taylor, and her daughter. We sang Patti Page's "Old Cape Cod" about lobster stew and ocean views. [Singing] "If you're fond of sand dunes and salty air ... you're sure to fall in love with old Cape Cod."

You also recently collaborated with playwright Ernest Thompson on a new song, "The Father Daughter Dance," for a revival of On Golden Pond in Holderness, New Hampshire. What made you sing so movingly?

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I never had a father-daughter dance in my life, but I imagined one. Ernest's words have an emotional energy that's easy to pick up on. When I wrote the music, I was very unself-conscious. I wrote it on the piano, very unintellectually, sitting on it like a bird sits on its eggs; then it hatched.

An unauthorized biography on you comes out in January. Are you OK with it?

I know the author [Stephen Davis], so there's some integrity. He's interviewed me over the years; he knows my family. He's a good guy. He has written many books about rock and rollers.

At age 66, any thoughts of retiring? I want to make the most of my time. I'm really into writing poetry and piano concertos. My weakness is my tendency for laziness. I realize laziness is more a habit. If you're used to staying still, you will. I'm determined to be a body in motion. I want to rev up!

Your voice still sounds so strong. What's your secret?

Letting love come into my life. Feeling loved makes me feel like I want to shine.

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