

Ralph's Next Venture

Winthrop author and musician Tufo set to release new children's CD

By Cary Shuman

Winthrop's Ralph Tufo was walking along Revere Beach Boulevard a few years ago when he stopped and noticed a large seagull.

"There was this gigantic seagull on the wall, just staring at me," recalled Tufo. "I said to myself, 'I'm a bird watcher and he's a people watcher – what does he think about people?' That

was the concept for my first book."

From that brief encounter sprung a whole new world for the professional musician, songwriter, playwright, and member of the Squeezebox Stompers, who has gone on from that day to author three children's books featuring Seemore the Seagull.

And now for his next act, Tufo, 75, is releasing his first children's CD, making

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it an even dozen albums total under his stewardship.

"My inspiration is that I had written three children's books and a sea shanty to complement the books when I performed at schools and libraries with my concertina and accordion," said Tufo. "I got the idea of expanding that concept and creating a whole CD of children's songs. The album has the flair of Irish traditional music and sea shanties."

The much-anticipated release of the new 10-song CD is part of a significant surge in interest in Tufo and his band. So much so that he has hired a marketing professional to assist him. East Boston resident Erica Dewart is now handling Tufo's publicity, marketing, and bookings.

In fact, Tufo and the Stompers will be performing locally at the Spring Bike Kickoff and Picnic on May 18 at the Winthrop Landing and at the "I Love Winthrop" event on June 21. A retired Winthrop teacher and college professor, Tufo has also been selected to be a judge in a worldwide book writing competition for El-

la's Way [Early Learning Leads To Acceptance], an organization that advances kindness and creates conversations in diversity and disability awareness.

Tufo said in addition to his own Winthrop connection to the entire CD project, Winthrop resident Jacques Raymond plays

acoustic bass guitar on the CD. Tufo and his group will be featured at a children's event at WCAT studios, and he hopes to visit schools in the next academic year. Last year, Tufo appeared at a For Kids Only Afterschool family fun-day, book-reading and music event in Winthrop.

Teaching Kindness

Tufo, who is a member of the Ella's Way writers' collaborative, said his books have a common theme, which is "teaching kindness, accepting diversity, supporting people with disabilities, and anti-bullying."

Tufo has been a musician since the age of 23 when he began performing in local bands.

"I love music and performing with the band," said Tufo. "It keeps me going. It keeps me out of trouble. It's what I do. This is my passion."

Tufo said his wife, Nancy Tufo, has been very supportive of his music career, often attending his shows.

Tufo also noted the continuing support of Deborah Kneeland Keegan's For Kids Only Afterschool, the Winthrop Public Library, the Winthrop Cultural Council, notably Joanne Hillman, along with Simon's Bookstore, The Book Depot, Robin's Nest, and Revere Beach Retail, where his books and new CD are available.

(Ralph Tufo's web site is SeemoretheSeagull.com)



Musician and author Ralph Tufo holds up the artwork for his new children's CD that is being released this month. The artwork for the cover was done by Andrew LoVoulo of Graphic Illusions Studios.