

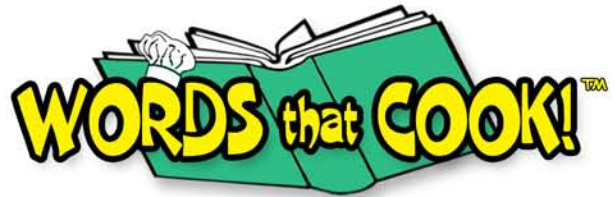
NATICK DUO'S SHOW WINS AWARD — When the husband-wife team of **Monty** and **Laurie Haas** of **Natick** began their foray into the world of television, they had a dream and a gut feeling they were onto something.

Three years later, their television series "Words that Cook!" — edited and produced in a 1,400-square-foot space in a Framingham industrial complex — would pull in the International Reading Association 2005 Broadcast Media Award. Past recipients include the popular television shows "Reading Rainbow," "Between the Lions," and "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

"We have no budget for this show," said **Todd DeBonis** of Natick, senior producer and director, "and we beat [the national shows] because of the content and the concept."

Since the early '90s, the Haases have been

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www.wordsthatcook.org

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE

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SUSAN CHAITYN LEBOVITZ

International honors go to local show

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developing educational materials for parents and teachers. Their book, "Reading Railroad," offers tips for encouraging literacy through games, storytelling, and wordplay.

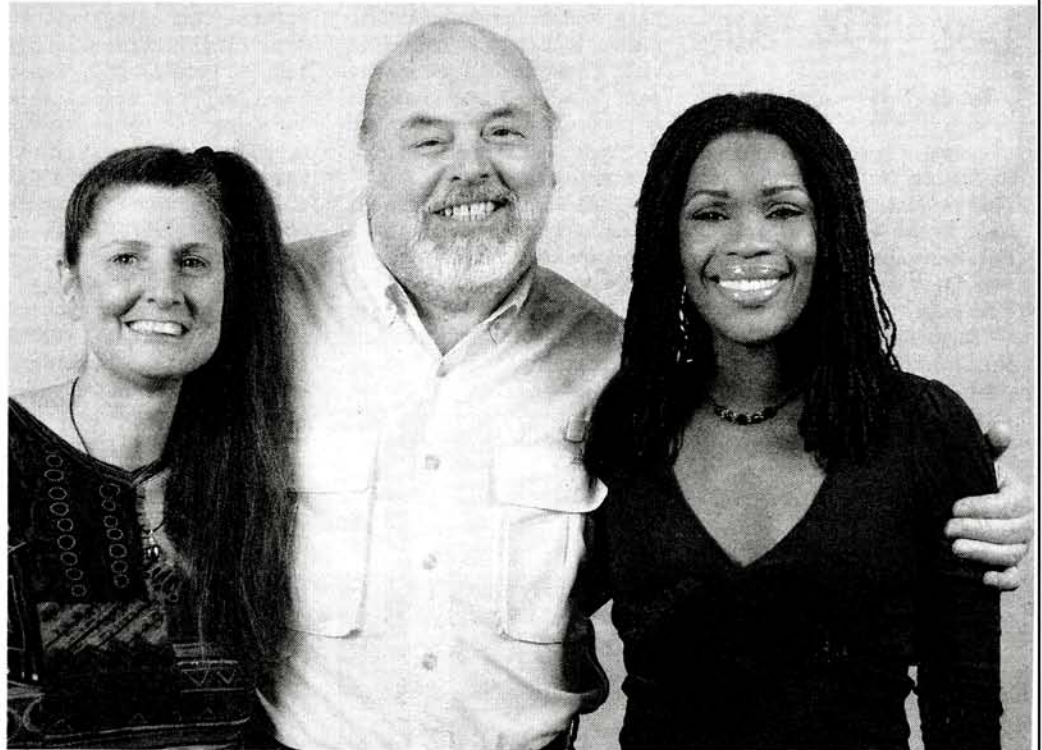
Each 30-minute episode of "Words that Cook!" features an educational expert, learning tips (called "recipes for success"), and children engaged in an activity. It is targeted at parents, educators, and children 12 and younger.

Currently the show airs primarily on cable access stations locally and nationwide and has been picked up by some PBS affiliates. It can be seen on: channel 8, Bellingham; channel 8, Marlborough; and channels 3, 9, 10, 13, 15, and 26 in Natick, according to the website, www.wordsthatcook.org.

Sites throughout the state where episodes have been filmed include The Center for Arts in Natick, the Carroll School in **Lincoln**, the Morse Institute Library in Natick, and the Woodrow Wilson School in **Framingham**, where students were challenged with tongue twisters.

"Since the audience cuts across all cultural and economic levels, we feel it's important to bring in experts and parents sharing ideas from as many cultures as possible," said Laurie Haas, who is co-executive producer with her husband. Poet Steven Ratiner, African-American storyteller Eshu Bumpus, and Japanese storyteller Motoko have appeared on the show.

Monty Haas, who hosts the program with Haitian-born jazz



Laurie Haas (left) with her husband, **Monty**, and **Martine Bernard** of the show "Words that Cook." Their show recently won an award from the International Reading Association.

singer **Martine Bernard**, has a 25-year background in radio, most recently as a news anchor for WBUR in Boston.

Haas credits the revolution in video technology with helping to make the show possible on a shoestring budget with a crew of four. It takes about a month — from script to final edit — to produce a show.

"We don't have money for sets, so we create our own out of cartoons and 3-D stuff and put our people in it," said DeBonis, a vet-

eran of network television who was brought in for his expertise in animation and film production. "It flavors the show and still allows for the message of each piece. We connect a theme throughout the show and this way we can put our hosts anywhere we want, doing anything."

People news may be sent to slebovits@globe.com.