

Every Square Inch Counts

New Architectural Rendering of Shack Offers Vision of Possible Restoration

Jim Yuhas of Barnegat is hoping a new realistic architectural rendering of what would be a refurbished Shack on Cedar Bonnet Island will add inspiration toward its restoration. "I'm out to save the Shack," he said.

After taking accurate measurements of the Shack, Yuhas enlisted Diane Coppola-Fritz, owner of Island Arts in Ship Bottom, for help with his idea to create an architectural rendering. "His passion for the Shack is overwhelming. I think it's great," said Coppola-Fritz.

Coppola-Fritz contacted business associate and friend Joseph Tarella, a Manhattan-based architect and longtime summer visitor of LBI. He agreed to take measurements and specifications and draw up the rendering for free.

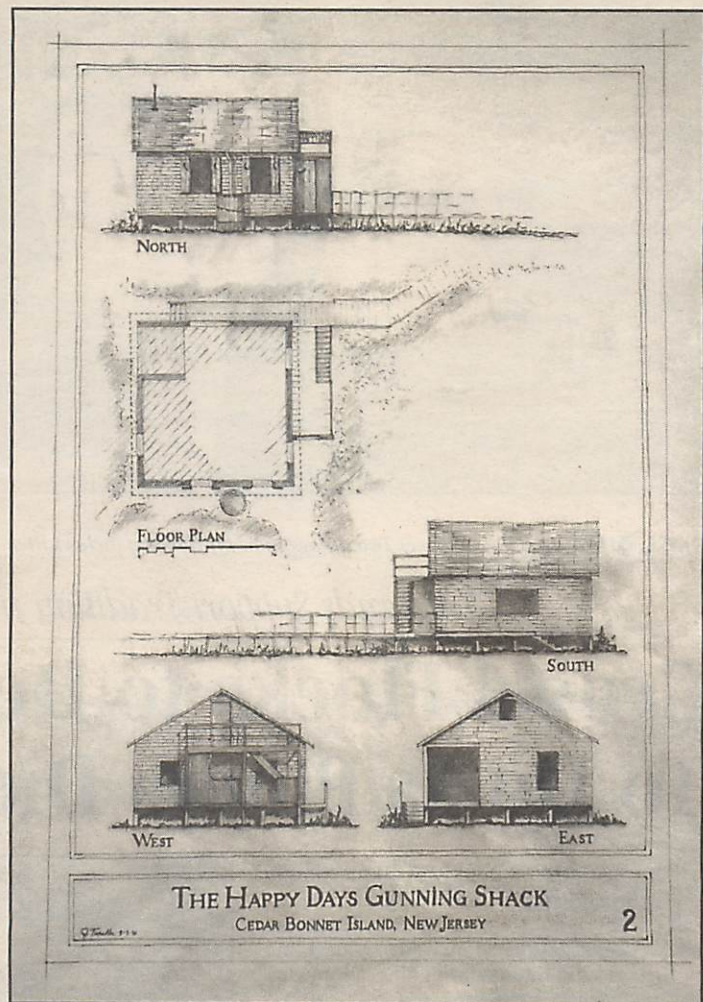
Tarella was previously inspired by the changing contours of LBI and his love of maps, which led him to create an original ink and watercolor rendering titled "A General View of Long Beach Island 2001." Tarella also designed his own home in Barnegat Light that he frequents often.

"I was able to help Jim Yuhas visualize what needed to be done," said Tarella. That visualization takes the Shack back to the two-story Happy Days gunning club it once was. The architectural rendering includes a floor plan and views from the north, south, east and west. An aerial view also reveals a cistern for collecting water and a wooden walkway leading to a garvey that awaits in Barnegat Bay. "It's the last of its kind. It explains a lot, (such as) why they had to develop the garvey," said Yuhas.

Part of the reason for the rendering is to express an agreement on what the Shack should look like among Yuhas and his constituents. He wants to make sure it maintains its olden charm and incorporates pieces from the original structure including storm shutters with quarter moon-shaped openings that he and others have collected.

Currently, landowner Chet Atkins and his lawyers are continuing the process to prove clear title to the land on which the Shack sits, which must be done before any renovations can be made. "We're hoping to have it done by the end of the year," said Atkins.

After the title issue is resolved, Atkins may then hold a party this fall to set up a non-profit for repair funds, work with Stafford Township to decide how to preserve the



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SHACK-A-DOODLE-DO: Locals enlisted Manhattan architect Joe Tarella to create a rendition of a possible restoration based on actual measurements and evocative of the Happy Days gun club it once was.

Shack, or hand over the title to Stafford Township outright, though no definitive plans have been made at this time.

Yuhas has shown the rendering to Tim Hart, president of the Stafford Township Historical Society. He hopes Hart will present it to Stafford Administrator Jim Moran once the title issue is settled to possibly help secure a grant for the project if the Historical Society is able to get involved.

The Shack is still widely regarded as the second most recognizable landmark of Long Beach Island, with various artists painting and photographing it throughout the years. "It's a part of the fabric of Long Beach Island, that little pile of sticks," Yuhas said.

Coppola-Fritz will sell copies of the architectural rendering at Island Arts and both she and Yuhas

stressed how much the Shack has especially captivated artists over the years. Many people do not wish to see it simply slip into decay. "Everybody wants to do a little something to preserve it, but are we too late?"

As title issues continue, the coming cold months loom, and the question as to whether the now very much dilapidated Shack can make it through another winter remains. The architectural rendering is the last-ditch effort of Yuhas, who has met with Atkins and continues to send him any information that stresses the importance of restoring the Shack and the love that so many have for it.

"This is pretty much the last thing I can do. I can't do anything else," said Yuhas.

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