



Photographs by Trish Craig

SHACK SCENE: Not that far back in the day, the famed Clam Shack was a hot spot to hang and make merry. When the last tenants departed, so, seemingly, did the landmark's future.

Historic Society Readying To Rally for Clam Shack

It was an easy decision for Tim Hart, president of the Stafford Township Historical Society, to get on board as a donation collector for savetheshack.com, the latest volunteer effort to restore the Causeway Shack on Cedar Bonnet Island.

"We've done many cooperative programs over the years with the environmental commission and the Stafford administration. It's kind of natural for us to be involved," Hart said.

Savetheshack.com will not have to register as its own nonprofit organization with the backing of the Historical Society, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, making all donations tax-deductible.

Total estimated costs to restore the shack and plans on how to do so are premature, as a property title issue remains unresolved.

Hart said the project seems to be moving in a direction that finds the right balance among a private owner, a local government, and a nonprofit willing to work together.

Stafford Township's dedication to the Shack was made evident when a new photo of the dilapidated structure was used as the cover for its official 2011 calendar, and an award-winning essay from fourth-grader Dominic Bates was featured inside.

All donations should be in made in check form with "Shack" written in the memo line

to ensure that they are put in a separate fund. The Historical Society address can be found at savetheshack.com. Hart said all donations will be accounted for and that should the project fail to restore the Shack, all contributors would have a choice to either have their money returned or kept by the society for use in other projects.

The web site, run by Linda Bonvie of Tuckerton, has recently added a new focus to savetheshack.com among its already growing array of photos and articles – the Causeway Bridge. Hart explained how the Shack and Causeway go hand in hand.

"The interesting thing is it seems like the tourists are the people that have greatest affection for it. For people going to LBI it was always that symbol that they finally made it," Hart said.

The Historical Society recently donated photos of the Causeway in various stages of construction and development that can be viewed on the web site. Bonvie is hoping more artists and photographers upload photos to the site by following the links provided.

"I've been pleased with the response so far in terms of what people are sending in. I'd be thrilled to see some more vintage Shack or now even Causeway pictures," said Bonvie.

Continued on Page 28

Save the Shack

Continued from Page 24

As the Shack will not be restored as any kind of commercial site, the incentives to resolve the title issue become purely historical and artistic; the collection of articles, photos, drawings and paintings featured on the web site then become the lifeblood on which the project depends.

Savetheshack.com recently added a link to the web site for the Pine Shores Art Association, which recently added as one of its three New Year's resolutions that its members make a donation to save the Shack.

"Anyone who contributes art or photos that has a relevant link to their work or things they're selling, I will put that up as well," said Bonvie.

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