

The Next Step Toward Restoration

Shack Ownership Problem Resolved, Permits Next Issue

After a two-year-long intensive forensic title search, Jersey Outdoor Media owner Chet Atkins has finally proven ownership and taken title of the land on which the beloved Causeway Shack still stands ... barely. This means an effort to restore the dilapidated edifice could move forward, though the question as to how remains a mystery.

Atkins' claim to the land began upon procuring ownership of the billboard adjacent to the Shack after purchasing Wes Outdoor Advertising in 2009. He said the search delved as far back as the 1600s, at which time an Eastern Jersey Land Company owned the land where the Shack stands today. The structure itself dates only as far back as the 1920s.

Atkins would not comment on a recent meeting he had with Stafford Administrator Jim Moran, Stafford Historical Society President Tim Hart and others regarding a possible Shack restoration.

"At this point and time I have no comment on that. I need to keep it as private as possible until we know what we're doing. The more notoriety we get, the harder it's going to get to do the things we want. We just don't want to ruin our opportunities that we might have to make it right. We just don't know at this point. If you do the wrong thing or say the wrong thing ... there are some people that, believe it or not, would rather the shack not be rebuilt. I'd rather just

say hang on for the ride and we'll call you when it's ready to take pictures of," Atkins said.

Moran did comment on the meeting, citing the next step in the Shack's possible restoration being acquiring necessary permits from the state Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be able to build on the wetlands. This process, according to Atkins, could take years.

"Stafford Township has made some informal inquiries as to the extent we would have to go to get permits, and I have let some individuals who are involved in this know that if in fact they're able to put forward the money to escrow for the engineering work, I would be happy to work with them on behalf of the township to try to get the permits, but the taxpayers could not fit the bill for the permits," Moran said.

In the past Atkins had mentioned the possibility of turning the title over to the township once proving ownership, which, according to Moran, has not and will not happen. "This is not a Stafford Township project. We are simply assisting those that want to do this and we're happy to do so, but it is not directly a Stafford Township project." That being said, no details of restoration plans are known to Moran.

What is known is that Atkins has asked Barnegat resident Jim Yuhas, who was not at the meeting, to take on the responsibility



Supplied

HAPPY PLACE: A weathered print of the Shack, circa 1977, from an original painting by Wellington Ward Jr.

"It was 11 o'clock at night with a three-quarter moon and I'm on a six-foot ladder trying to nail that thing by myself. I think I'm conducting this very secretive Navy Seals operation, sneaking through the weeds and all."

of fundraising for the restoration. Yuhas is responsible for putting up the reinforcements that have helped keep the building standing, as well as the holiday decorations adorning the Shack that were visible this past Halloween and Christmas.

Yuhas' most recent mission came around July 4th during which he attached a wall's worth of American flags to the Shack. He later added a banner that reads, "Please help me! What are you waiting for?"

"It was 11 o'clock at night with a three-quarter moon and I'm on a six-foot ladder trying to nail that thing by myself. I think I'm conducting this very secretive Navy Seals operation, sneaking through the weeds and all. Then I get to the Causeway, start running across and trip and fall down on my face, rip my pants up, bloody my leg up, then the spotlight goes on me and I hear, 'Drop the hammer ... drop the hammer,'" said Yuhas, describing being stopped by Stafford police. "They've been good about it all along. Every time I go out there I get caught."

The current look of the Shack has spawned critics, noted Yuhas, who

complain that its appearance takes away from a classic nostalgic visage people had come to adore.

"I hear all these people writing letters about how gaudy it looks. Well, I didn't do it for the aesthetics. I did it to draw attention to it, which worked. It got people acting, it got people talking about it, it got people interested in it again."

A sense of urgency remains following the Shack's survival of Hurricane Irene while a nearby billboard went down. According to Yuhas, there are issues with getting that billboard reconstructed on the wetlands similar to those the Shack's reconstruction may face. "If the Shack was to blow down, that's the end of it. There's no more discussion to be had."

Yuhas believes the plan for restoring the Shack most likely will follow

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Brown Goes Green: LBI A Fitting Route for Two Hybrid Electric Vehicles

At the start of the summer, two UPS vehicles responsible for year-round deliveries on Long Beach Island were replaced with low-emission, hybrid electric vehicles. The HEVs are two of 130 UPS deployed this year – 30 in New York and New Jersey, 100 in California – saving roughly 60,000 gallons of fuel and 600 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, or the equivalent of taking 128 passenger cars off the road, according to UPS estimates. The HEVs are estimated 35 percent more fuel-efficient than conventional "package cars," as they're called.

Drivers John Kelly of Pitman and Charles "Chick" Veasey of Riverton share the Island territory, with Kelly on the north end, Veasey the south. The men said the new vehicles took a little (but only a little) getting used to. After Kelly's 29 years with the company and Veasey's 26, mostly they have been as excited as kids with new toys, according to Jill Hayes, business manager at the Chesapeake District's Lawnside center.

For one thing, the new package cars are totally keyless. "For 25 years I wore a key on my pinky," Kelly said. When

he started driving his new vehicle in June, his hand felt naked for the first few days. They're also equipped with remote starters, remote-controlled bulkhead doors and a no-idling feature, whereby the vehicle's engine automatically shuts off when the vehicle has come to a stop with the brake engaged for three seconds.

The HEV is supported by a Freightliner custom chassis and a hybrid power system by Eaton Corp. that combines a conventional diesel engine, a battery pack and "regenerative braking," whereby the energy generated by depressing the brake pedal is captured and returned to the battery as usable electricity. The external truck body, made exclusively for UPS, is identical to the rest in the signature brown fleet but is labeled as a hybrid electric vehicle on the side.

"It's been pretty cool to watch the evolution of our vehicles," Kelly said. The old trucks had holes in the floor for the clutch pedal, and the cold winter air would just come billowing up from the floorboards. Of course, back then the whole system was on paper, and now everything is computerized.

But even more than the vehicles,



Ryan Morrill

ROAD TEST: Driver 'Chick' Veasey (left) covers the south end of the Island, and John Kelly handles the north. Both are well known and well liked in the communities they serve. This summer they made the switch to hybrid trucks.

Hayes said, she is proud of the drivers. "Pretty much the truck is the truck, and we deliver the packages," but the drivers add the personal touch that means the difference between protocol and a pleasant experience. Kelly admitted a personable attitude is just as useful to the job as strong memorization

skills and physical strength. Through the years he has gotten to know the residents and businesspeople on his route, watched children grow up and made countless personal connections and lasting friendships.

"We believe in sustainability," UPS spokesman Tom Farrell said, a concept

that applies not only to environmentally friendly vehicles but also to the drivers – "They're the face of our company," he noted – and to their dedication to the communities they serve, by way of charity and volunteerism. Each year Veasey, also affectionately known

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CURRENTS

Barnegat Police Bidding Adieu To a Stalwart

Police Clerk Held Her Job Since the Mid-1970s

At the end of the month, the longest tenured employee for Barnegat Township will be calling it a career.

Nancy Maloney joined the department in 1975 as a dispatcher back when the municipal building was located on the corner of West Bay Avenue and Route 9. At the time, William Brazzel was the chief. He was appointed to that position in 1973 when Barnegat became a full-time police department. At that time, the department had only three officers.

"This was a long way from the computerized systems we have now," said Maloney. "When a call came in, we had to write everything down by hand."

When the municipal building moved to its current site on West Bay Avenue in 1981, Maloney became the police clerk. Edward Smith was then the chief of police.

"The clerk's job was mostly serving as the secretary to the chief," she said.

By that time, Barnegat Township's population was close to 10,000. It has since doubled to nearly 21,000, according to the 2010 census.

"When we moved to the new municipal building, we probably had at most a dozen officers," she said. "Often, there might have been just one or two officers working the overnight shift. There were no adult communities back then. Now we have 47 officers, which shows you how much this town has grown over the years."

After Smith retired in 2005, Joseph Manager was named chief. A little more than a year later, the current chief, Arthur Drexler, was appointed.

Besides all the modernization of equipment, Maloney was on hand to see the department hire its first female officer, Sarah Girgenti, in 2002. In the next two years, three more women joined the force, giving the department the highest percentage of female officers at that time in the county.

Other changes Maloney has seen include creation of a traffic safety unit, expansion of the school resource officer program and a greater emphasis on community policing programs.

"I'm looking forward to doing some traveling and spending a lot of time with my four grandchildren," she said. "But I've had a nice time here."

Barnegat Lauded By NJ Magazine

In the September issue in which it lists the best towns in the Garden State, *New Jersey Monthly* ranked Barnegat Township fourth out of 566 municipalities in the category of having the highest overall tax reduction since 2007.

The Barnegat 2010 median tax bill was \$4,266, representing a 9.90 percent reduction in the tax bill from three years ago. The top-ranked town in this category was Blairstown, with a reduction of 15.10 percent during the same period.

Township Administrator David Breeden said the bill includes municipal, school and county taxes.

"We've done what we could to reduce expenses," said Breeden. "We've cut our work force significantly while still delivering acceptable services to the community. We're proud of this ranking, but we still have to try to do better."

In overall top towns, Barnegat ranked 201st.

The magazine said that in compiling the top-towns list, researchers at Leflein Associates, an independent research firm based in Ringwood, considered five categories to represent the quality of life in New Jersey's municipalities: home values, property taxes, crime rate, school performance and lifestyle factor.

The categories were broken down to the following indicators: change in median property tax bill, change in median home sales price, total crime rate combined with violent crime rate, student proficiency on state-mandated standardized tests, and a lifestyle factor that considers the number of acute-care hospitals, performing arts theaters and full-service restaurants within 10 miles of the municipality's main ZIP Code and average commute time for those who travel to work. The final rankings were based on each municipality's combined rankings on all five indicators.

The following sources were used: N.J. State Data Center, N.J. Division of Taxation, N.J. State Police, N.J. Department of Education, N.J. Council for the Arts, *New Jersey Monthly* dining database and U.S. Census/American community survey.

In a press release, Michael Greenberg, a professor at the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, said the results "correspond closely to the distribution of wealth to the advantaged and less advantaged – and the resources and services that go along with that." —E.E.

Township committee members announced her retirement at the Sept. 19 meeting.

"She was very friendly to everyone," said Deputy Mayor Al Cirulli. "It certainly isn't the same little town back when she started in the 1970s."

— Eric Englund
ericenglund@thesandpaper.net

School Bullies

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successful in developing immunities to those outlying behaviors."

Paula Rodriguez Rust is a professional development provider with a background in sociology; she has been speaking at schools throughout New Jersey regarding the new law. She worries about misconceptions schools have, including that the extended, layered response to an act of bullying would slow down results or that personnel would expect to wait for an investigation to respond to incidents.

"I am concerned the schools are misunderstanding the law in that way," said Rust. "They can and should – as they always should have – respond immediately. There is nothing in the new law that should slow that down. Now because of the new law, they should also report it, and the principal and the superintendent and the board might give some additional recommendations on what could be done to prevent it from occurring again."

"It doesn't slow down the layer which is already there, which is the teacher. Teachers need to feel empowered to address bullying, and administrators in schools should empower their teachers to address bullying seriously and back the teachers up when they do."

Rust will be speaking at the Barnegat branch of the Ocean County Library on Sept. 27 at 6:30 p.m., showing that the new anti-bullying campaign in the state goes beyond the classroom and into the community. Her workshop there will give parents and students a chance to gain a better understanding of the law and what it defines as bullying today.

Occasionally, Rust said, someone – typically an adult – will say that bullying is a part of growing up because perhaps he or she had gone through it, and that kids today should have to deal with it. She called that an old and outdated point of view. She reminds such people that today, bullying is much more severe, and it's about saving lives.

"There's a very big difference between passing a written note to someone in the back of English class versus broadcasting something to an entire school online. What students are doing to each other today is much more damaging than what happened in previous generations. It's because people don't take this seriously and because they say things like 'develop a tougher skin' or 'shrug it off' – that's why we've had children die because of

this. It's the adults that need to learn to take it seriously."

Rust refers to suicides in response to bullying, most notably the death of Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi last September, apparently in response to a live video webcast on the Internet outing him as gay. It is another misconception, however, that the new law was drafted in response to his death. As Rust explained that around that time, Clementi's was only one of at least 10 suicides related to bullying around the country, some of which involved students only 13 years of age.

"It may have passed more quickly because of his death, but this law was being planned for some time before that. This law was being planned because schools had not previously taken bullying seriously," said Rust.

Someone who is taking bullying and his school's subsequent new policy seriously is Pinelands Regional High School Principal Thomas Normile.

"If you look statistically across the United States, the numbers of people that said that at one point or another they felt that they had been bullied by someone, ... at some point you can point a finger at somebody in high school and say that guy was a bully. I think we all can," Normile said.

"The unfortunate reality to the whole situation is that it took the death of Tyler Clementi for us to all realize how widespread this problem is really getting. You're talking about college, for goodness sakes."

"The potential for public humiliation is much greater" than in the past, said Normile. "When I was growing up, in order to have contact with somebody you had to be face-to-face with somebody. Now you can be miles and miles away and it's immediately sent to the victims. That's just text messaging. When you bring in the Internet and Facebook, you talk about the potential for hundreds or thousands of people to be able to see you being humiliated by someone. Not only has it made it easier, because you can be a 'keyboard tough guy' and be in your home and tell someone how you're going to fight someone, but now you can do that and have an audience of a thousand."

Despite the added work that will be a result of the new law, Normile sees it as a necessity. "The policy lends itself to be more in tune with taking care of the victim and providing counseling as well as provided counseling to the bully. Anytime you can keep things safe and feeling comfortable at school, it's a great thing, and it's gotten out of hand, it really has."

— michaelmolinaro@thesandpaper.net

The Shack

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the architectural rendering created last fall by Manhattan-based architect and longtime LBI summer resident Joseph Tarella. He believes the permits will require the structure to maintain an older, historic facade similar to how it appeared in the 1970s. "I told them they should treat it like an archaeological dig where you can sift through the pilings, the floor joists, to try to keep as much of the old material that is salvageable as possible."

Yuhais is waiting to make a large push for fundraising until it is known for sure whether the restoration can proceed. He does encourage people interested to log onto savetheshack.com that sprang up in January, where donations can be made that accumulate directly with the Stafford Township Historical Society.

Tim Hart has worked on plenty of historical restoration projects during his tenure as society president and, though the details of a possible restoration remain a mystery, he gave his thoughts on the possible cost.

"If you went out and hired somebody to do it, like you were a business person, it's hard to believe but it could be \$100,000 or more. I think the concept is to try to get people to donate as much as you can," said Hart.

Hart said a previous project in Stafford to move and restore the old railroad station cost approximately \$100,000, \$40,000 of which was raised and the rest donated. Another project to paint and refurbish an old railroad car (see story) cost about \$70,000, of which \$25,000 was raised and many services and materials were donated.

For now, savetheshack.com has raised only

\$60, says Hart, including \$30 from a group of young people who held a lemonade sale in support of the Shack's eventual restoration. Hart remains confident that donations in the form of money, materials and services would abound once a definitive plan of action was made after acquiring all required permits.

"Usually what happens is that once it crystallizes, especially something like this that has such widespread public interest, I think they'll raise the money very quickly to put the resources together. The biggest problem will probably be sorting out all the people that want to donate things."

Hart attributes this to the unavoidable attention the Shack has received since it was moved to its current location in 1957. "Prior to that it was just one of many shacks, but this Shack has really caught people's attention. I think it's a great thing and anything that keeps people connected with their sense of place and their sense of time, wherever you are in the country, I think that just adds to the quality of life of the whole community."

"The people that want to restore the Shack are still there in great numbers and the title has been cleared so that obviously is a significant achievement," said Moran. "Stafford's happy to be a part of it. We look forward to working with the various groups to try to finally actually make it happen."

"We have the people behind us that are supportive; the town supports us. There are people that would work behind the scenes to stop it. We would rather just get your support and be hopeful that one day we'll see the Shack return in the near future," Atkins said.

— Michael Molinaro
michaelmolinaro@thesandpaper.net

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