



THE NANTUCKET Independent

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

- News
- Front Page
- Other News
- Datebook
- The Arts
- Opinion
- Columns
- Classifieds
- Archive
- Nantucket Real Estate Guide
- 2009 Nantucket Wedding Planner Channels
- Advertise
- Subscribe
- Shopping Page
- Advertisers
- Index
- Classified
- Order
- Contact Us
- Copyright© 2004 - 2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Other News

September 9, 2009

Search Archives:

Salvager Joe Farrell's artificial reef idea draws interest

BY PETER B. BRACE INDEPENDENT WRITER



PHOTO BY PETER B. BRACE Joe Farrell has a plan that might save the island's shoreline.

Joe Farrell thinks he can help Nantucket with its erosion problems.

He is so sure that sinking steel barges just off the island's east and south shores will act as wave-breaking artificial shoals that he met with the Army Corps of Engineers at its northeast regional headquarters in Concord, Mass. on Aug. 26 along with representatives from the state's Department of Environmental Protection and Office of Coastal Zone Management to get their reaction and input.

According to Farrell, the meeting went so well, with all parties very interested in and supportive of his proposal, that he is moving forward and will be presenting his revised plan for feedback at the Oct. 5 regular meeting of the Nantucket Planning & Economic Development Commission.

"They said it was definitely a permissible project," said Farrell last Friday.

"They [the Corps] were very intrigued with it and they said it had merit and that they would possibly assist us through their 227 funding program for Massachusetts. They would like to stay in touch with me."

The Army Corps of Engineers Section 227 program of the U.S. Water Resources and Development Act of 1996 includes grants for research and installation of "innovative or nontraditional approaches to help prevent coastal erosion and to improve shoreline sediment retention," according to the Army Corps of Engineers Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory Web page.

Farrell, a rescuer of stranded ships from sand bars and other perilous situations at sea with his worldwide salvage company, Resolve Marine, is responsible for safeguarding 45 percent of all oil tankers entering U.S. waters, as an emergency firstresponder. He also handles hazardous material clean-ups such as oil spills. Thirty years of experiencing the effects of ocean currents on shoals and sand piqued Farrell's interest in testing his artificial sand bars in New England because of its challenging ocean conditions.

In the fall of 2006, Farrell joined his love of Madaket and his fascination with the movement of sand by water by installing two ocean currentmeasuring meters called the MAVS-3 off Smith's Point and began gathering data in a specially designed shed with computers wired to the meters. The meters, invented by engineers Sandy Williams and Todd Morrison of Nobska Engineering and coastal scientist Steve Elgar of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Woods Hole, Mass., measure the speed, direction and sand content of the water, using light beams. Analyzing the data from the meters, which Farrell situated at intervals of 290 and 490, 11 and 13 feet deep, respectively, just off New Hampshire Avenue, he determined that he could submerge steel tanks or decommissioned cargo barges off such erosion-imperiled locations as Smith's Point, the sewer beds at Surfside and between Sankaty and Codfish Park.

Originally, Farrell proposed to fund the placement of one or two, what he calls shoal modules, off Smith's Point to replace a shoal that a winter storm in 2002 obliterated to break the waves around 500 feet off the shore. Without this shoal, former Smith Point resident Tom Erichsen

Click ads below for larger version

The Camera's Coast: Historic Images of Ship and Shore in New England

A classic sample of images from Historic New England's extensive collection of historic photographs documenting New England's rich maritime history, including Maritime Inc. The exhibit will be on display through November 8, and includes photographs of many local historical occupations from Longfellow's Mill, Highland Ship, and many waterways.

Nantucket & Gay Head Library, 153 West Street

September 1 - October 12

80 Minute Walking Tours of Downtown Nantucket

Monday - Saturday 11:15 A.M., 2 P.M., 5 P.M.

You leave from the Whaling Museum.

Free for NHG members, \$15 adults, \$6 children ages 6-12, and may be purchased at the Whaling Museum admission desk.

Open Daily 10am-5pm

Nantucket Sailor's Valentine Kits

We are a premier manufacturer of beautiful Sailor's Valentine Kits.

The kits include everything you need to create our timeless designs. Please visit us at:

www.nantucketsailorsvalentinekits.com

SUN ISLAND FUEL

- Automatic Delivery
- Senior Citizen Discounts
- Call now for more information about our Fuel Assistance Program

508.325.0776

5 SUN ISLAND ROAD

Newspaper web site content management software and services

DMCA Notices

estimates that Smith's Point is losing about 50 feet of beach annually.

Farrell's revised plan is to encourage the formation of an island nonprofit consisting of coastal property owners who are at risk to help fund the placement of several steel 60-foot by 30-foot barges that he bought recently. He would fill the barges with seawater off Smith's Point, the sewer beds or Baxter Road, wherever the town wanted, to see if his theory proves to be a practical solution for erosion abatement.

"Andrew Vorce and I discussed the concept of [doing] a test project, most probably an area under tremendous threat, a shoal module project on Smith's Point," said Farrell. "The idea we have is we could we get the property owners who have a dog in the fight or horse in the race to support a test project on town property funded by a nonprofit group, but I'm not sure what vehicle that would be."

If the political will is not strong enough on Nantucket for Farrell's plan, he will take his shoal modules elsewhere on the Massachusetts coast, as the Army Corps appeared eager to see Farrell's idea in action, and Farrell is not interested in funding the entire project on his own.

"At this point, I'm to the point where I can't continue spending my money on this project," he said.

Throughout this fall and winter, Farrell said he hopes to test the waters of interest in his idea on Nantucket with the idea of applying for his permits within the next year. I

THEATRE WORKSHOP OF NANTUCKET
presents
JOHN CARIANI'S
Almost, Maine
A whimsical approach to the joys and perils of romance...
Directed by Jane Karakula
Sept 16-19, 23-26, 30-Oct 3
8:30 PM Curtain, Thursdays at 7:30 PM
Sunday Sept 20 at 3:00 PM
Sunday matinee is free to island residents & students thanks to a grant from the Tappan-O'Brien Foundation
Opening Night Party
Arroyo's 41 Main St. Sept 16 at 7PM
Tickets \$25.
at Box Office 4-8 daily, 508-226-4165
Downstairs, Methodist or Church
7 College Street, Nantucket, MA 01903
Or at www.theatreworkshop.com
Presented by special arrangement with Dramatica Play Service, Inc.
NANTUCKET IMPROV SUNDAYS AT 8:30
Tickets available at www.theatreworkshop.com 662-284061
10 Downside, Methodist Church, 7 College St., 01903
No. 1000
Independent

Want a beautiful driveway?
Let us create one for you.
TOSCANO
CONSTRUCTION
401-228-2222
toscano@tsc.com
As is what's possible.

Did you know...
that Yates Gas makes it easy for customers to pay early for cost savings! Simply pay within 15 days after the delivery date and Yates Gas will reward you with a 10-cent per gallon discount. Visit our website, www.yatesgas.com to sign up for online bill pay or auto-pay with a credit card on file with Yates. We can also email your invoice for early payment or, at your request, leave your invoice at your door with a return payment envelope.
Serving Nantucket Island Since 1975
20 Arrowhead Drive, 228-0725 • www.yatesgas.com