

# MOORE'S INLET 1912-2005

~A Series of old Wildwood Bar Stories~

## MOORE THAN JUST A BARTENDER

By Josh Kinney



Moore's owners, Mike Guadagno & Joe Bilbee with Al Trottnow in the fall of 2005, preparing for the demolition



Al Trottnow wearing his Harley Cap

Lounging on the deck just outside his home overlooking the Hereford Inlet, Al Trottnow enjoys the peace of the ocean, while people walk by on the seawall for it. Every so often someone will wave over. "Hi Al, how are you?" they will say in passing. Al's wife Mary Lou will turn to him and ask, "Well who was that?" Al scratches the side of his Harley Davidson cap, "I'm not sure," he replies, "but I know his wife likes gin and tonic."

For over 20 years Al Trottnow bartended at the legendary Moore's. Taking up two thirds of the block in the Anglesea section of North Wildwood, rich in history, was Moore's Inlet Hotel Bar and Café. It was built by Johnny Moore in 1912 and was an integral part of the bustling fishing village and wharf on Hereford Inlet, which included Mace's Pier and Olsen's Boatyard. According to the Polk Directory of 1924, Robert and Lavinia Moore are listed there, and ownership was passed to Johnny's brother, Bob. According to other Polk information in the 1928-29 edition, a liquor license was granted to the bar. Then it seems by 1946 Bud (Robert, Jr.) became a partner, and it became Bud and Doris Moore's Inlet Club and was popular for entertainment such as Bonnie & Clyde, Tony Mascara and Charlie Gracie, though it's the later part of the history that became part of Al Trottnow's story. Mike Guadagno purchased from Bud in 1976 with a partner Joe Carideo. Joe Bilbee later partnered

with Mike in 1992, and it was Mike & Joe Bilbee who became best of friends up until the end.

Before he worked at Moore's, in the late 1960's Al bartended at Joe Ellis' Gourmet Restaurant on Walnut Avenue. The restaurant then became the D'Continental, which is now Echos. (a future story)

One winter, Al worked at the infamous doo-wop Thunderbird Inn on Surf Ave. between 24th & 25th. In the summer of 1983 Chip Kaisinger who worked with Al behind the bar, helped get him his job at Moore's. Al took great pride in his work and enjoyed getting to know the same customers who would frequent Moore's every week. He worked alongside other popular bartenders such as Sticks, Boob, Paul Haggerty and the well-known Dave Snyder as Moore's lovable, yet formidable bouncer.

The Harley Davidson bike riders who frequented Moore's twice a season developed a great deal of respect for Al. He was a familiar face who purposely went out of his way to serve them and get to know them. With a great nostalgic enthusiasm Al said that Moore's was the "greatest spot in the world to work," describing the staff and the customers as one big family, living in a great era. "You'd have to kill someone to get fired from there," said Mary Lou. Moore's was



Joe Bilbee and Bobby Hall



Mike Guadagno with Doris Moore

a lazy place to hang out on a late summer afternoon. The people were fun to be around and great tippers. Here, it wasn't uncommon for customers to become close friends. The young people would crowd the deck until the early morning hours, dancing and overlooking the inlet.

Al didn't like being forced into retirement, but in 2005 he had no choice. That summer, to the dismay of many loyal customers, Mike Guadagno & Joe Bilbee announced 'last call' would be October 1st. They were selling the property to make way for condos that had been popping up all over the island then. "It was all good times," Al said. Having loved his work, Al believes that if Moore's were still around, he would still be working. "I miss the people," he said, "the ones I worked with and the customers."

Sadly, Mike passed away suddenly in the summer of 2010, shortly after his retirement. Joe, however, still resides in the area.

One day after the Harley Davidson crew rolled out for the season, they placed one of their hats on Al's head and told him not to take it off until he got home. Inside was a generous birthday gift, because he wasn't just their bartender, he was one of their genuine friends.



An advertisement for Bud and Doris Moore's Inlet Club



Moore's in the 1940s



Boob



Dave Snyder



Sticks



Paul Haggerty



Crowd gathered in front of Moore's in the 1940s  
Old photos courtesy of the Wildwood Museum