



"If you would like wonderful memories tomorrow do wonderful things today" ~Joe Proto



The Guidetti boys, Easter Sunday, 1974

When we bought our shore house many years ago, my husband still had a full time job and our sons were very young. We could not spend as much time at the shore as we wished, so we sparsely furnished and decorated it then rented it out. We loved the Jersey shore so much that when our circumstances changed we decided to use the house ourselves. The house endured many changes. We put on additions so we could rent part of it. We kept changing which bedrooms we used to accommodate a growing family. We moved beds, bought bunk beds, hide-a-beds, etc. There was a time when my husband and I slept on a sofa bed in the living room. Now I know many people do that, but we shared the room with a moped. My oldest son had a summer job and needed transportation. We did not have a garage or shed and the yard was not fenced in, so my husband built a little ramp and each evening after work my son parked the "bike" in the living room. Then we built a shed so finally the moped had a storage place. We got rid of the pull-down attic stairs and put in a staircase to the "second floor", but if anyone was more than five and a half feet tall they had to duck down so as not to hit their head on the ceiling. But the boys loved it, we decorated the space and they each had their own sleeping-area. Finally I had a private master bedroom. Many of my son's friends from North Jersey joined them as summer police officers. Since the training started before the season, some of them bunked at the house until they could rent rooms. Other friends just dropped over for the night if they came to the shore late. My mother-in-law tells a story about going to sleep one night with just the family at home, then waking up to find wall to wall friends on sleeping bags. Then the boys became men, girlfriends became wives,

This Old Shore House

by Marilyn Guidetti



Bob & Marilyn Guidetti dining on their porch, 2013



The original house with new porch addition, 1976

and grandchildren came along, we needed more space again. This time we hired a contractor because it was a major renovation, but of course my "handyman" husband contracted him to stop after installing the sheetrock. Then we took over with the rest of the work. The Shore house was my husband's hobby. He did all the maintenance he opened and closed it at the beginning and end of the seasons. It would be very rare for him to call an electrician or plumber, let alone a carpenter. That was until this year. This Spring he had a medical procedure and the doctors told him to take it easy. Our sons and their families were worried and did not want him to exert himself. Plans were made for all of us to get together Memorial weekend and ready the house for the summer. The boys took over, one family hired a pool service to open the pool, another son brought over his power washer and cleaned the whole exterior of the house. The deck and some rooms were painted. The girls did major cleaning inside, while I cooked for the gang. Now this all sounds great, but not to a do-it-yourselfer. He was not happy with the pool service opening the pool, he knew he could do better. Then he asked why were they taking so much time with the power washer, the house is not that dirty? (Did you see the runoff water?) "Oops" the new paint does not match the leftover deck paint, we did not see it till half the deck was painted. Okay, the screens have to be cleaned, but the power washer will take care of that, then the windows by hand. With a number of people trying to coordinate things and keep Dad happy we did have a few mishaps, which we will probably laugh at later on. It reminded me of an incident many years ago when my brothers bought a fixer-upper to rent out. The family came out one weekend to help. One brother just finished painting the front door when my other brother came around the



Bob, Fran, Mike, Andrea, & Ray Guidetti, Memorial Weekend 2013



The shore house after a major renovation,

corner pushing a lawn mower, minus the grass catcher, you can just imagine what the door looked like. I know even though he felt he could do things better his way, my husband soon realized his family really loves him and wants him around for a long time. When the weekend was over everyone left feeling very tired but I think the boys felt they had to show their appreciation for the "shore house" and the love for the man behind it, who gave them and their families and friends so many years of fun and memories.

Now that most of the heavy lifting has been done, I look around and there is a memory surrounding even the smallest item in the house. I may be a little bit of a hoarder (which the family makes fun of) but the grandchildren love to see the old treasures and hear the stories about them. Many of the items belonged to their fathers while they were growing up in this house. We did quite a bit of entertaining over the years, and always told people not to bring any food when they asked, "what can I bring?". Not to come "empty handed" they always brought a small gift and of course since it is a shore house they brought something nautical. Mermaids, fish, boats, anchors, shells, etc. cover so many dishes, candles, wind chimes, pillows and more all though the house. I always tried to be a good hostess and found a way to incorporate the gifts in my décor. Those things too, have memories about the people (some gone) that gave them to us.

I think my husband realizes he did a wonderful job of building not only this old house but also the memories it surrounds. The house may be built of wood and stone on the outside but it is filled with love and caring inside. Our wish is that it will never be too small to welcome all our families and friends and that we will always have a good story to tell.