

**Smith-Taylor Cabin:
Shelter Island, NY**

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 “S. Gregory Taylor: Benefactor to Shelter Island”
(Patricia and Edward Shillingburg, 2006)

On April 21, 1937, S. Gregory Taylor purchased Cedar Island and a small adjacent lot at Shelter Island, New York from Shelter Island Developments, Inc. The deed was never recorded in Suffolk County, which was unusual.

Taylor was known as a totally engaging and charming man during the years that he summered on Shelter Island. According to Yuella VanRynback who did not know him, but learned of his legendary reputation a decade later, on the 15th of August every year, the day of Mary’s Ascension, he had a very big party at which he entertained everyone he knew, and “he knew everyone.” He brought his chefs out from the St. Moritz to feed the crowd.

According to Barbara “Buzz” Clark, whose husband Bucky knew Taylor, he was a lady’s man who always arrived on the Island with beautiful young women. He was always known as a thoroughly charming bachelor.

Speculating on how he discovered Cedar Island and made it his own, Buzz suggested that he knew the Foultes, fellow Greeks, who owned a house on Ram Island and were involved in the Ram’s Head Inn. They had a seafood restaurant in New York City.

In 1939, Taylor served on Mayor LaGuardia’s Committee for Fleet Week, which included many gala affairs including a grand dinner at the World’s Fair.

Also, in 1939, the St. Moritz is mentioned at least three times in Theodore Strauss’s News of Night Clubs in the New York Times. The Café de la Paix was enlarged and brightened and featured the “competent and presentable young songstress” Peggy Adams and the accordionist Angela Velez. Horatio Zito’s orchestra played for dancing and Collette and Barry offered dance lessons. The Sky Garden, with magnificent views of Central Park and all of uptown New York featured Yvonne Bouvier, singer, Basil Fomeen and his orchestra, and Collette and Barry demonstrating and teaching the latest dance steps. In the Fall, the Café de la Paix was featuring Inez Harvot, formerly of the St. Louis Municipal Opera Company, who was “not only good to listen to but good to look at.”

In 1940, Taylor led a movement to turn Sixth Avenue into New York’s Champs-Élysées. In early March they planted six trees beginning at 59th Street with a plan to plant a total of 292 trees down the avenue to 8th Street. Taylor even imagined an arch at

the Sixth Avenue entrance to Central Park, similar to the Arc de Triomphe.

In November, Spyros Skouras and Taylor led an effort to raise aid for Greece in the war in the form of munitions, medical supplies and food. The 200 Greek and Italian employees of the St. Moritz also joined in the effort, raising \$3,000.

According to the Orthodox Observer, Taylor founded the Greek War Relief in 1940 and placed his hotel at the disposal of refugees who left Greece and came to the United States. It further notes that at one time there were 500 Greeks in his employ.

On April 3, 1941 the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, inspected a model Athenian air-raid shelter and trench at the Greek War Relief headquarters at 730 Fifth Avenue. A large part of the \$10,000,000 now being raised would be used to purchase such shelters. Both Skouras and Taylor, along with starlet Judy Garland, had their pictures taken with Mrs. Roosevelt.

Later in April, Mayor LaGuardia presided over the presentation of the first of five mobile surgical operating units to the Greek War Relief Association. The Most Rev. Archbishop Athenagoras, Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church, blessed the vehicles. Taylor attended the ceremony.

On July 1, 1942, King George II of Greece attended a special service at Holy Trinity Cathedral, conducted by Archbishop Athenagoras. Following the service, Taylor hosted a luncheon at the St. Moritz. He was at the time the president of the Hellenic Cathedral and Federation of Hellenic Churches of the City of New York.

On November 7, 1943, the New York Times reported that a score of Greek merchant seamen were being detained at Ellis Island “despite indications of willingness to ship out aboard Greek or other United Nations’ vessels or as members of the Greek Navy.” Christopher S. Stephano, Taylor’s brother-in-law and chairman of the Greek Maritime Welfare Committee, was attempting to “have the matter straightened out.” The men had been detained in Federal hands for several months. In the meantime, it was suggested that “the new Greek Mariner Club, a joint enterprise of the Greek Government and the War Shipping Administration under the directorship of S. Gregory Taylor, would provide an ideal agency for handling custody cases such as these.”

A week later the Greek Mariners Club, located at 208 West 59th Street was dedicated. The chairman of the Board of Directors, Taylor, had invited Simon Diamantopoulos, the Greek Ambassador to the United States, Archbishop Athenagoras, and Mayor LaGuardia.

On January 29, 1944 Taylor signed his last will and testament in which he laid out his wishes for the disposal of Taylor’s Island. His nephew, Stephen Stephano, and Stephen’s son if he had one before Taylor died (Stephen did not; he was no more than 15 when Taylor died.) would have the use of the Island for the remainder of their lives, and thereafter, if accepted, it was to be given to the Town of Shelter Island. He also set up a Trust of \$10,000 to maintain the Island. He also directed that his remains be buried on the

Eastern slope of the Island.

In August, the Pequot Club of Southport, Connecticut ran the junior girls' sailing championship, with the S. Gregory Taylor Trophy the award. The award was also given in 1946.

Also, in 1946, Taylor was chairman of the 26th Annual National Boys and Girls Week in late April and early May. That year two Bronx children were named "Typical American Girl" and "Typical American Boy," Joan De Paite and Frank Golden.

On May 12, 1947, Noel Straus of the New York Times, reported on a concert given by the contralto from Greece Sophia Vembo (1912-1978), a symbol of the Greek resistance during the war, at Carnegie Hall on behalf of the Greek War Relief Association. Taylor, as chairman of the relief committee, was the host.

On Sunday, February 22, 1948, while visiting the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Florida, Taylor died of a heart attack. He was 59 years old. He was survived by his brother Charles, his wife Ioane (Zographidis), and his sister Martha Taylor Stephano. (The *Suffolk Times* reported at the time that his motor boat was at Hanff's Shipyard in Greenport.) The funeral service was held on Saturday, February 28 at the Hellenic Cathedral, Holy Trinity Church, at 319 East 74th Street. One of the organizations announcing his death was the National Democratic Club.

He was buried at Shelter Island on Taylor's Island. Apparently, the weather was, as one would expect in February, miserable. The South Ferry Company brought his coffin to Taylor's Island from North Haven, but the family was not so fortunate. Along with the Archbishop, they trudged from Miss Annie Nicoll's house on a rustic path to the causeway to the Island.

His estate was estimated at \$1,514,361. His brother Charles who was president and managing director of the Hotel Buckingham became the president of St. Moritz-on-the-Park, Inc. on April 14, 1948. Spyros Skouras, president of 20th Century Fox Film Corporation was elected as a director. In recent years, the St. Moritz was gutted and nothing remains of the original 1930 hotel except its façade.

The transfer of Taylor's Island to Shelter Island took place in 1997.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America continues to award S. Gregory Taylor Scholarships to individuals doing post-graduate work in religious, theological, and pastoral programs at universities and seminaries in America and Greece. In 2001, it awarded over \$250,000 to 30 recipients. The endowment is now valued at over \$7,000,000.

**6.2 “S. Gregory Taylor: 1888 - 1948
A Greek Patriot and Hotel Magnate”**
(Patricia and Edward Shillingburg, 2006)

In 1997, the Shelter Island Town Board accepted the gift of Taylor’s Island from the estate of S, Gregory Taylor who had died in 1948, nearly 50 years before. Who was this man for whom there was little local memory?

According to the February 1963 Orthodox Observer, the official periodical of the Greek Orthodox Church in American, Taylor’s name at his christening was Soterios Gregorios Tavoulares. He was born in 1888 on the Greek Island of Prikonnesos, Marmara where his family was well known, and where during the Turkish occupation, his grandfather Tavoulares was the ethnic leader of the Greek community. Among the members of his family were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Sophronis and Nicholas Kyriakides, who was a member of the Patriarchal Council and the founder of the local school that bears his name. He attended the local elementary school and went to the gymnasium for high school at Raidestos, Thrace.

Taylor was 20 years old when he came to the United States. He learned the hotel business from bellhop to manager with the Manger chain of hotels, one of the largest in the country in 1928 when the principle of the company, William Manger, died.

In April 1925, Taylor leased a fifteen-story residential hotel, the Buckingham, at the corner of 57th Street and Sixth Avenue from the developers Harris H. and Percy Uris. The lease was for \$200,000 a year for 21 years. The building was scheduled to open on September 1. Almost immediately he was in trouble with the law for his flamboyant advertising. He erected a 100-foot long by eight foot high sign on the bridge over the sidewalk advertising the hotel and its room rates. The Bureau of Highways was ordered to remove the sign by Borough President Julius Miller. “I notified the people at the Hotel Buckingham three weeks ago that they were violating the [sign] ordinance by displaying the sign. They changed two or three words in the advertising matter. The gigantic sign was still in front of the hotel Friday night when I passed there, so I instructed the Bureau of Highways to cause its removal.” An advertisement appeared in the New York Times on May 17 announcing the residential hotel with 1, 2, 3, or more rooms with a serving pantry and automatic refrigeration in each apartment.

On November 1, 1928, Taylor opened another hotel, the Montclair, between 49th and 50th streets on Lexington Avenue. It was designed by Emory Roth with a façade in Spanish style and built by the Harper organization. Taylor was president, Oscar W. Richardson, resident manager and Gaston Laurysen, associate manager. Harris H. and Percy Uris were also the developers, and the mortgage was for \$2,500,000.

By December, another deal was in the offing. The New York Athletic Club was moving into its new clubhouse, a 21 story structure on the East side of Seventh Avenue between 58th Street and Central Park South (where it remains today), and the Uris brothers contracted to buy the old clubhouse at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Central

Park South for \$2,500,000. They planned to build a 35 story 900 room hotel at a cost of \$10,000,000. The hotel was to be managed by S. Gregory Taylor, who would now have a chain of three hotels.

In 1930, Taylor was living at the Buckingham Hotel at 101 West 57th Street with his sister Martha, age 21. According to the Census, both were born in Turkey. However, it was actually Greece, as Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) before World War I.

On the Fourth of July, at 9 pm on WGBS radio, Taylor spoke on “America’s Contribution to Greek Independence.”

In August, he announced the new Hotel Dixie between 42nd and 43rd Streets between Broadway and Eighth Avenue. “No Finer Food Anywhere.” On October 16, Taylor opened the Hotel St. Moritz, at Central Park South and Sixth Avenue, under construction for two years, with great fanfare. The hotel was 38 stories with 1,000 rooms in units of one room to large suites, with many terrace apartments, and three penthouses. A dinner and dancing salon was on the 31st floor, with Omar Khayyam murals done by David Karfunkel, as well as commanding panoramic views of New York City. Emory Roth was the architect and Laurence Emmons designed the interior. The Rumpelmayer pastry and tea shop was on the 59th Street side of the building.

Of special occasion was the presentation of a huge painting of the city of St. Moritz in Switzerland, to hang in the lobby, a special gift from that city to the hotel named after it. The mayor of St. Moritz, Carl Nater, presented the painting. It was painted by the contemporary Swiss painter Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933).

Much of Central Park South, as we know it today, was built during this period. In October 1931, the Hotel Dixie and the St. Moritz, both owned by the Uris brothers, were in receivership. Taylor reassured the public, “The foreclosure will clarify situations which confronted the real estate corporation and the hotels will continue to operate as before.” In January 1932, in the Continental Grill the Carltons, in” modern dance interpretations,” and Harold Stern’s St. Moritz Orchestra were appearing nightly.

On January 13, 1932, the New York Times reported that a company headed by S. Gregory Taylor had taken over the St. Moritz. Philadelphia interests were said to be associated with him in the new company, the Engadine Holding Corporation, which was slated to acquire the property from the Bowery Saving Bank. The sale actually took place in June for about \$4,000,000. Partners in the venture included his brother Charles Taylor, Jean G. Venetos, Christopher Stephano, and Spyros Skouras.

Skouras had arrived in the United States in 1910 with his brothers Charles and George. They worked in a large hotel in St. Louis as busboys until they had scraped together \$4,000 to invest in part of a local movie house. Soon they owned all of the movie theaters in St. Louis, which they sold to Warner Brothers in the late 20’s and soon Skouras was managing all of their exhibition houses. Between 1930 and 1932, he worked

for Paramount. In 1932, the Skouras brothers took over the management of over 500 Fox-West Coast theaters. He helped merge Fox with 20th Century films in the 1930s and served as President from 1942 until 1962. 20th Century Fox's slogan Movies are Better than Ever was enhanced with the Skouras's introduction of Cinemascope with the film, *The Robe*, in 1953, which is credited with saving the movie industry from its newly introduced competitor, television.

Charles Taylor remained president and managing director of the Hotel Buckingham. On May 1, Taylor opened the "sky garden," an outdoor terrace, on the 31st floor of the St. Moritz with murals and other decorations under the direction of the American painter Dean Dietrich. On August 7, 1932 the New York Times reported the engagement of Taylor's sister Martha to Constantine S. Stephano of Athens, Greece and Philadelphia. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Stephano of Elkins Park in Philadelphia. She had attended the Constantinople Women's College and Miss Bredlinger's Hillside School in Norwalk, Connecticut and the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts. He was graduated from the Colorado School of Mines and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The wedding took place in December at the St. Moritz with five children of Spyros and George Skouras attending. The couple's wedding trip was to the Orient.

In December, Greece rewarded the Rockefeller Foundation, at 61 Broadway, with a sculptured head of the goddess Hygeia for its service to public health in Greece. The sculpture by Constantin Dimitriadis was a copy in Pentelic marble of an antique head in the Museum of Athens. Taylor attended the ceremony.

In April 1933, Taylor hosted a 49th birthday party at the St. Moritz for Auguste Piccard, the Swiss scientist, who in his studies of the stratosphere has ascended higher than any man in a hot air balloon. The plan was for a dirigible to fly over the hotel after lunch and pick up Piccard and his companions on the roof for a flight over the city. High winds prevented the dangerous adventure.

In January 1934, a new polo club was formed at the St. Moritz, with Taylor as chairman. The St. Moritz Polo Club joined the Indoor Polo Association of America and the United States Polo Association, playing indoors at the 105th Field Artillery Armory on Saturdays, and outdoors on Sundays at Berkshire, where three fields were available.

At the end of March, alterations began at the northwest corner of the St. Moritz for an open-air café in the Parisian style to be known as the Café Continental. In October, Park Commissioner Robert Moses met with a group of men concerned about the poor condition of the bridle paths in Central Park, with Taylor among them.

In November 1936, a gala matinee of the Opera *Carmen* was held to raise funds for six American colleges in the near east, including the American University of Beirut, Syria; the International College in Beirut; the American College in Sophia, Bulgaria; Athens College in Greece; Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey; and the Istanbul Women's College. Taylor was one of the very distinguished guests who had purchased boxes.

6.3 **“Recollections”** (Jim Nestor)

“I have been delighted to be able to read a bit about Taylor's Island, where my parents and I enjoyed several summers in the late 1940s. My father was a Greek employee, and I believe a distant relative of Gregory Taylor, who gave my father his first job in the USA working in the kitchen of the St. Moritz Hotel during the 1930s. During the late 1930s and into the 1940s my father worked summers on the island for Gregory Taylor, which included helping to build the sea wall. My father had put his initials, "AN" for Alex Nestor, on the top of the seawall using either pebbles or seashells, I don't recall which.

In the big hurricane of 1938, when the island was badly flooded and heavily damaged, my father was alone on the island and very nearly had to use one of the doors in the main house as a raft to survive... Fortunately, the storm subsided before that was necessary. If I recall his story correctly, the water flooded the whole island, including the main house.

During our summers on the island, we stayed in one of the two bungalows that were on the southwest side of the island, near the dock. Both bungalows are now, of course, gone, although I noticed on an earlier visit to the island, their foundations are still apparent...

I have wonderful memories, and some film, of great fishing in the waters there, and row boats whose bottoms were filled with blue claw crabs when we went crabbing there.

I was saddened to read in an article by Andrew Arkin about the passing of Steve ('Naki', as we knew him) Stefano, whom I knew as a young boy while we were on the island. I also remember his young sister Penny. And, I have a recollection of a young boy nicknamed "Brooks", who used to motor around in the bay there... He lived in a house on the other side of the causeway, opposite Taylor's Island dock... If anyone knows how I might get in touch with Penny (Penelope) Stefano, Steve's younger sister, please let me know.

Best regards with fond memories... ”

6.4 “Taylor’s Island History” (Andrew Arkin)

I Seaplaned out to search for a summer house on Dering Harbor side of the Island (about 1958)

I found nothing of interest. On taking off we passed over Taylor's Island (Map Name: Cedar Island) in middle of Coecles Harbor. Intrigued. Gave the pilot a Baron Von Richtoffen signal--down. We pontooned on Island's shore I walked around the house, with its Widow's Walk-- saw all in a state of disorder.

I reached in a broken window, opened the door and entered. Found table set with breakfast dishes and a newspaper from three years before.

I found Greg Price, capable, blind realtor, assisted by his wife. He researched and reported the Island's status: It had long been owned by J. Gregory Taylor, a Greek-American who had built the St. Moritz Hotel in New York. He owned the Island for many years, loved it, and planned to be buried there. He had willed it upon his demise to his young nephew, Steve Stephano, his sister's son, for Steve's lifetime and then to Shelter Island. He had arranged a trust fund to keep up his grave, but a few months before his death had moved the funds into a share of a Greek tanker and never replaced them. During the ensuing years the Island had fallen into severe disrepair.

The story of Taylor's death and burial: The funeral cortege, led by the Greek Orthodox bishop, had started from Philadelphia. The winter's day was waning as they approached Shelter Island. As custom insisted on burial that day the bishop admonished the group: "We must hurry or I'll take him." (and bury him by the side of the road) At twilight, they finally reach the Island where a group of Taylor's friends had prepared the grave-site in the frozen earth and there he rests today.

Through Greg Price, I contacted nephew, Steve, from a well-known Philadelphia specialty cigarette making family. I secured a five year lease on the property for zero dollars--with two provisos: I would restore the Cape Cod house and the small generator house- also, Steve's mother, Taylor's sister, could visit the her brother's grave when she wished. Thus began my twenty-two years of stewardship and warm contact with Steve, his wife and, later, his sons John and Dan.

With the house restored and the Widow's Walk safely reachable, I now became a Shelter Islander.

That first summer, guests and I were lunching outdoors when Mrs. Stephano phoned, asking permission to visit her brother's grave. On this windy day I muscled my Century speed boat to the shore (and my good neighbor Bucky Clark's dock) to carry this elegant woman and her lady friend to the Island. I introduced them to my group and carried two chairs and cups of tea to. graveside for their visit, then ferried them back to

shore and saw them to their car. Next day, Steve called thanking me for his mother's visit. She had told him "That's the man Gregory would have chosen to have the Island"

I enjoyed every bit of Shelter Island and its native Hare-leggers and their hospitality and humor. I joined Gardener's Bay Golf Club the year Bob DeStephano and Anne began their long association.. I made wonderful friends on the Island--my neighbors, the Clarks and their kids, Ray Davis, Sid Beckwith, Johnny Picozzi, Gene Case, Bob Clark and many others. I was then 34 years old. Thus began an important twenty-two year phase of my life with many experiences and stories. A few of these follow:

I had several years as a bachelor on the Island. (Friends claimed I only invited girls who couldn't swim) I played golf with local Hare-leggers, who liked nothing better than to win a couple of bucks from a city fellow--which they usually did. This past summer I saw Sid Beckwith and recalled a story of Gardener's Bay eighth hole: I hit a good drive, an excellent iron across the dog-leg to the back of the green and was putting for a key birdie. What do you think I scored? Well, my long putt for birdie kept rolling, finally into the trap. I left one in the trap, blasted out, then three putted.-- seeking a three I had scored an eight. I took each shot seriously. I walked off the green and then doubled over with laughter at myself. Only then did the courteous opponents permit themselves their laughter. Sid said he tells the story of the " three that became an eight " more often than I do.

A few years later, at 38, I married Joan, much younger than I. I was 46 when we adopted Jason, at 13 days. He grew up on the Island. Running around naked, cutting his feet on the shells of the causeway, fighting to reach the island in stormy weather all kept him from being a sheltered city kid. As Jason began to speak we would use the drive out from the city to practice words: I would point and he would answer: "Dog", "house", "bus" etc. Finally he was stumped I pointed to a bull tethered in a farmer's yard. He struggled to find the word. He finally found his answer- " A moo with sticks." (he's now 32 and a Columbia degreed Social Worker. He has married Lori, a fellow adventurer.)

Last Jason story: We could reach Taylor's Island by jeep across the causeway during a couple of hours of lowest tide. One Friday evening after the (even then) horrors of the LIE we had guests with young twins. We were running late when we reached the shoreline and transferred everyone into my jeep. Water was already lapping over the causeway. My speedboat was moored Island-side and it was beginning to rain. I turned to Jason, six years old, for his advice: "Do you think we can make it across in the jeep?" I asked. He considered it carefully and said "No, too late." But I decided to give it a go. I revved up the jeep, raced along the beach, and turned onto the causeway. With the tide rising I missed the center of the causeway and a few yards from the Island wetted out the jeep (which never recovered) We all waded the last few yards to the Island carrying our luggage. I turned to Jason and said: "You were right and I was wrong. I made a mistake." The six year old considered the events and his father's blunder. His observation: "You did make a mistake. But I still love you."

I was a good water skier. One weekend, I hosted Bono Bonatti, the Mexican water ski champion. He observed the protected stretch from the mouth of Coecles harbor to the Boat Yard. He commented "You could hold the World Championships here."

Another time, I had guests delivered by seaplane. When the plane was leaving I arranged that I would mono water ski with rope attached behind the speeding plane I arranged for my motor boat to try and keep up as the plane reach its takeoff speed of about 65 miles an hour. I then let go of the rope and glided silently for what seemed a long time. When the boat picked me up and returned me to Taylor's Island, my wife said "I think you're too crazy for me." (we were divorced shortly thereafter.)

Ray Davis and I often played golf often with Stanley Blaugrund, a New York physician and an outstanding golfer. I always felt Stanley's attention kept Ray alive longer than his throat condition should have permitted. When he passed, Stanley and I planted a tree on the 17th hole of Gardener's Bay CC in Ray's honor. I had often dropped in on Ray's Irish mother, then in her eighties. On the mantel was a photo of her in her late teens. I remarked how beautiful she was. She responded in her rich Irish brogue: "They never told me."

Of all the parties and gatherings on Taylor's Island the one I remember best was a sit-down outdoor clambake for 60 guests, many from the fancy Hampton villages. All went well until a torrential rain and windstorm hit about 9 p.m. After most had scrambled across the rising causeway we slept 18 on our living room floor that night.

Another time, I was jeeping through the woods to my shore with fancy European Fashion Business guests. Nancy Palmer, who then headed Lanvin, Paris, in the USA, recalls a 30- point buck deer majestically leaping across the rough road just in front of us-- an astounding sight. She quotes me as calling after it "Send the bill to the office Monday."

I'm a great believer in Randomness-- you never know whether a path will end tomorrow or last a lifetime. After 22 years on Shelter Island my road took me elsewhere but islands remained an important part of my life--Martha's Vineyard, off Cape Cod and 100 acre muskingham Island (part of a small oil company I owned) in the Ohio River off West Virginia. My son, Jason and my wife, Amy, a true conservationist, and I had the fun of gifting muskingham to the Fish and Wildlife Service to remain "forever green."

After 22 years it came the moment to vacate Taylor's Island. I had requested permission to remove my belongings on Memorial Day (though my leases were Dec 31 to Dec 31) I especially wanted to hold on to a wonderful batch of antique furniture which Buffy Cobb had presented to me after her Grandfather Irwin S. Cobb and Grandmother,

Moy, had passed. I offered the new, young tenants everything else for \$1,000. The response was "My husband says that's not the price for used furniture." (that stuff later sold at auction for 5K.) So I arranged with Jernick, who had moved me onto the Island to move me off. We showed up at the right tide on Memorial day. Now the young couple,

with guests visiting, wanted to renegotiate but I stuck to the evacuation plan. We loaded everything-- lamps, tables, silverware, chairs onto Tom Jernick's truck.

As we left, I called out cheerily to the new Islanders and their guests: "I'll be back next week as a house guest." The glum response: "When you come, bring a chair."

The years to the present have brought some funny coincidences. I became a good friend of a marvelous young woman, Aphrodite Savalas and her husband, Dan Schiff. Aphrodite is the late Telly Savalas' (Kojak) niece, and her paternal grandparents owned and ran the Ram's Head Inn in the 1940's. There are marvelous stories of Grandmother Savalas, a painter, going across to Sag Harbor to visit with Picasso the summer he was there. Aphrodite and Dan are just now finishing the beautiful mansion at the Sag Harbor turnoff onto South Ferry road.

I came out last summer to show them Taylor's Island and talk with the neighboring Mashomack Conservancy. I found Shelter Island as beautiful as ever, although more "fashionable" than in my day.

With Steve Stephano, Taylor's nephew, passing a couple of years ago, Taylor's Island now reverted to Shelter Island. I've been following the transition of the Mashomack Preserve from a private club to the care of the Nature Conservancy. (The Conservancy was lucky enough to get Mike Laspia as part of the deal.)

Now have come the discussions of the Town fathers and the Conservancy on how best to implement Gregory Taylor's will and wishes: the Island will go to the benefit of the people of Shelter Island. Taylor's Island is again in some disrepair and needs much work and constant care to meet Taylor's goal. I am confident the combination of the Nature Conservancy and the officials of Shelter Island will arrive at a practical solution. But boating visitors, beware-Rocky shoals off the Island used to ensnare are many unwary boats a summer.

The realization of Taylor's goal will take some financing for restoration and maintenance. I'm going to help.