

Al Barker

Artist Profile

Al Barker of Bordentown, New Jersey created the official artwork for the 2023 Old Time Barnegat Bay Decoy & Gunning Show. The commissioned work focuses on the iconic Sandy Island Gun Club. Mr. Barker faced a creative challenge of placing the bird of the year, Long-tail (Oldsquaw) duck in the image because the species generally avoids buildings. Mr. Barker succeeded in incorporating the species as decoys hanging on the wall of the structure.



Photo Credit: Al Barker

The Sandy Island Gun Club was incorporated in 1922 and rebuilt after a fire on February 9, 1994. The Club was originally an ice barge from New York City before it settled in Barnegat Bay, off the coast of Long Beach Island. Among the notable people associated with the club were decoy carver Bill Cranmer, hunting guides Mary and Bill Inman, and former owner Dick Shackleton. The Club is presently owned by Forest Shackleton of Long Beach Island.

The artist, Al Barker, was born in New Jersey and raised within the New York Metropolitan area where he learned to appreciate the outdoors by spending a great deal of time hunting and fishing.

These activities, no doubt, influenced his decision to pursue academic studies in Environmental Science where he earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in forestry and later received a National Fellowship for Doctorate work. After these academic studies, Al became a Forestry educator and worked in private industry and eventually taught his trade on the post-secondary level.

Without formal art training, he began drawing and painting wildlife scenes to assist with his teaching curricula and has been influenced by the works of Milton Weiler and Don Stone, N.A. Presently, as a full-time professional artist, Al specializes in smaller sized paintings, completing works in both oil and watercolor, as well as rendering many small editions of etchings.

Al Barker is the only professional artist that has exhibited continuously at the Easton Waterfowl Festival in Easton, Maryland, since its inception over fifty years ago. Al has won over fifty major awards in premier art competitions and principal exhibitions such as the Grand National American Artists Professional League, New York; Greenwich Workshop Galleries, Connecticut and California; Settlers West, Arizona; Gallery One, Ohio; and the prestigious Salmagundi Club (Emeritus status) in New York City. Al's work is displayed in many National Miniature Exhibitions in the continental United States. Al's work has been purchased for permanent and private collections, as well as the White House fine arts collections.

Visitors may head up to the newly renovated Tip Seaman Community Center for an updated exhibit gallery featuring all of the past Decoy show prints, a collection of decoys and other items, and a TV for viewing short videos on the Decoy show and folklife documentaries.



**2023 Show Cover Art Painted
by Al Barker
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On Display at Tip Seaman Community Center