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#### ART CENTER TAKING SHAPE IN A RETIRED NAVY BARGE

Amagansett--It was just an old weatherbeaten retired Navy barge a month ago, but by July 2 it will be a spacious art center with skylights, studios and whatnot. And to make the conversion complete, the 250-ton barge has been plunked on land, never to rock with the waves again.

The novel transformation is the brainchild of the Institute of Modern Art, a nonprofit educational arm of Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art. Institute President Victor D'Amico explained yesterday that the purchase and conversion of the 110-foot barge was the best suggestion received during his search for a permanent home to house the institute's Summer Art Center at Napeague Harbor.

The Napeague Harbor area, which is on the bay side of Suffolk's South Fork east of Amagansett, has been the home of the museum's summer art courses for the last six years, but always in rented quarters. The center gives day and evening art classes for adults and symposia on contemporary art for the general public.

For D'Amico, who thought up the idea of buying a barge, the old warhorse (it carried grain during World War II) is the answer to a dream. Said he: "An art center made from a houseboat and set in the stimulating and everchanging environment of the sea, sky and undulating dunes presents an ideal background for creative activities." The whole kit and caboodle will cost somewhere around \$40,000. But when the center opens for the season July 2, D'Amico is sure it will have cost a quarter of the price that would have been charged for comparable quarters.

The barge was towed to Napeague Harbor from New Jersey early in May and then beached 50 feet from the water's edge. It took three weeks, two bulldozers and five winch trucks to pull the vessel from its natural habitat.

The remodeling, which is about half-finished at present, includes a new superstructure added to the existing 25-by-86-foot deck housing, new decks and complete refurbishing of the interior. A 1,000-foot road has been built leading from a parking lot at the barge out to Montauk Highway. The Institute-owned grounds are to be landscaped with native pine, beach grass and dusty miller.