



Illustration by
Dennis Puleston

Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring 2015

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

A Brief History of Old Inlet/Smith's Inlet

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Smith's Inlet is back with us. Reopened during Superstorm Sandy after 175 years of lying dormant, Smith's Inlet is Old Inlet's original name. The inlet is located directly south of Brookhaven hamlet on Fire Island about a mile west of Smith Point County Park.

Since its first recorded existence, Smith's Inlet has had a long and fascinating history. During the early 1770s, shortly before the American Revolution, a storm created

was a blessing for fishing and commercial vessels in the settlement of Fire Place, the colonial name of Bellport, Brookhaven and South Haven. But it became a curse once the war started and the British blockaded the inlet, using it to supply their troops. They built Fort St. George adjacent to Judge Smith's home across from the inlet to guard it. (The Tangier Smith's Manor of St. George is a museum today and is open to the public.) During the War of 1812, the British once again blockaded Smith's Inlet, and it is said there were many skirmishes there.

When Smith's Inlet first opened it may have been a mile or two east of where it ended some 60 years later (inlets move westward over time). In an 1827 storm, a Spanish ship loaded with millstones sank in the channel of the inlet. Then another ship, the *Syracuse*, loaded with a cargo of salt, became entangled with it and sank. Over the years sand built up around the hulks, and by 1836, the inlet was essentially closed to sailing vessels. The area where Smith's Inlet was then became known as Old Inlet.

In 1912, a group of local residents formed a member-

ship corporation and purchased 3.2 acres about three quarters of a mile to the east of the remnant of the closed inlet (still there) and SSW of Carmans River, directly south of Mott Lane in Brookhaven hamlet. They then formed the Old Inlet Beach Club and built a boardwalk, pavilion and bathing houses. In 1959, another beach club, the Fire Place Beach Club, was formed and purchased 1.2 acres adjacent to the Old Inlet Club.

In 1964, federal legislation was passed creating the Fire Island National Seashore, and the land of these two



Marty Van Lith

the inlet through Judge William Tangier Smith's manorial property on Fire Island.

Some early maps called it New Inlet or South Inlet as well as Smith's Inlet; other early maps had no name for it. However, in 1834, the New York State Legislature passed a law "to preserve the grass on a part of the south beach" and used the phrase "heretofore known and designated as Smith's Inlet," indicating that the inlet was already known by the name "Smith's Inlet" at the time the law was passed.

This early inlet was both a blessing and a curse: It

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Presidential Farewell

Hello everyone! As I sit here writing my last message as Brookhaven Village Association President I cannot help but be amazed at how fast my 9 years have gone by.

I distinctly remember Rick Mohlmann approaching me and asking if I would consider serving as a director. I remember pondering whether I really wanted to get involved. Do I really want to be obligated to go to a meeting once a month and all that goes with it?? But being the good recruiter that he is, Rick pointed out that Brookhaven Hamlet did not become the place we all love without the care and concern of many people! Now looking back through the years I can appreciate their efforts. A community like our Hamlet doesn't just happen: it happens because the residents care about the community! The Brookhaven Village Association Board serves as one of the focal points for that caring in the Hamlet.

Most people in the Hamlet know that the board administers and maintains Squassux Landing Marina. While the running of Squassux is a big part of the board's responsibilities it is in no way the only one. The board is involved in quality of life issues such as pushing to regulate and ultimately close the landfill and neighborhood beautification through the tree planting committee. While the board has no regulatory or enforcement powers it is a forum where residents can voice their concerns and hopefully the board can use its influence to get things done.

The Brookhaven Village Association Board consists of 9 directors, a President, a Vice President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The director's term is three years while the President, Vice President and Secretary are one year terms. The Treasurer is a paid position. The most any one person can consecutively serve on the board 9 years,

hence my leaving. The board meets once a month on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm in the Post Morrow Annex on Bay Road. The meetings are open to the public and all community members are invited and welcome.

In reflecting back on my 9 years I can truly say it has been a satisfying experience knowing that I have helped contribute to my community and I am thankful to have had the opportunity! I would ask everyone in our Hamlet to consider becoming more involved. This does not mean you have to serve on the board but you can volunteer to serve on a committee, come out for the cleanups or the occasional work party. Attending a monthly or annual meeting is a good way to begin the process of getting involved.

In closing I would like to share a story that I think serves as a great example of community service.

Recently we removed the ice eaters at Squassux; one of the volunteers who showed up was young Harley Petri, a 10 year old community member who rode his bike down to Squassux to help. Harley showed up with his work gloves and enthusiastically proclaimed what do you need me to do? He spent the entire morning doing whatever needed to be done. I am sure as a 10 year old on a Saturday morning Harley had other things he could be doing (as we all do) besides pulling algae encrusted ice eaters from the cold water but he was there as were all the other volunteers. I thank them all, along with all the other people over the years who have devoted their time and talents to our community!

Frank Miller
BVA President

Coalition Growing to Fight Landfill Odors

Last year, the Brookhaven Community Coalition (BCC) and Citizens Campaign for the Environment, decided to hire an independent consulting company to review community concerns associated with living near the Brookhaven Landfill. After careful consideration, the BBC hired Consulting for Health, Nature & Greener Environment; LLC (CHANGE) to provide an unbiased, science based evaluation in assessing public health concerns. CHANGE prepared a technical assessment of community concerns regarding the impact of the landfill on human health and our environment.

The report clearly identifies specific actions where the town needs to do more for Brookhaven residents. Here are the main findings of the report -

Air Quality Monitoring Needed

The Town should conduct a comprehensive air quality study and monitoring program in order to protect community health. In specific, public health impacts of using ash as a cover have not been assessed and the concern about exposure to fine particulate matter PM2.5 should be evaluated.

Given the strong community concerns, the fact that portions of this landfill are on fire, and the permitted placement of ash within the landfill, the Town of Brookhaven needs to conduct an air quality study and monitoring program to assess the potential impacts on

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local and regional air quality and public health. According to the EPA, particle pollution contains microscopic materials so small that they can get deep into the lungs and cause serious health problems. Numerous scientific studies have linked particle pollution exposure to a variety of problems, including premature death in people with heart or lung disease, heart attacks, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function, and respiratory symptoms, such as coughing or difficulty breathing.

The lack of any meaningful recent air quality monitoring is a large and important data gap that results in a high level of uncertainty of what potential environmental and public health impacts are as a result of landfill operations. Our residents deserve better. I have heard from numerous teachers who work at the Frank P. Long School who shared these concerns and want the air tested. *We need an air study and a program that provides for consistent air quality monitoring.* This includes the downwind areas OFF-SITE and not just on the property line.

The good news is that at a meeting with Supervisor Ed Romaine in March, he agreed that the Town will conduct air monitoring at the landfill and in the surrounding communities. The Brookhaven Community Coalition and the BVA will be meeting with the Supervisor and his staff to discuss the scope of this critical monitoring program. We are delighted with this update and will work to ensure the testing is comprehensive.

Groundwater and Surface Water Protection

- Groundwater data indicates that volatile organic contaminants (VOCs) contained in the landfill leachate plume are traveling south into tributaries and the Carmans river. Continued sampling of groundwater and surface water is needed to ensure there will not be an adverse impact by the plume.

BCC and the public are concerned about the impact of

the historical groundwater plume that is off-discharging into surface waters. The original remedy has addressed direct contact concerns with groundwater (consumption and usage) but we need to stay vigilant with testing surface waters to ensure protection of our tributaries, Carmans River and the South Shore Estuary. Sporadic detects of VOCs over the federal MCL (the trigger value for assessment of vapor intrusion impacts) have been reported within the past couple of years. Surface water sampling should continue to be done to assess water quality north of the plume discharge into surface waters and south of the discharge.

Public Dialogue and a Tracking System

- The town should provide a more transparent and meaningful presentation of data and how it was and is used to assess public health and safety.
- Current state of practice for landfills is to have a community complaint tracking system in place to track community concerns and allow the landfill to provide a meaningful response to complaints. No mention of such a system could be identified.

The town should engage communities who live around the landfill in more meaningful dialogue and open discussion. When BCC attempts to communicate with the town we are frequently met with less than an open door for discussing our concerns. When a community serves as the “host community” for a landfill, they should be granted easy access to data, dialogue and a forum to raise concerns and a pathway for those concerns to be addressed. All of Brookhaven reaps the financial benefits of the landfill but only a portion of the town reaps the adverse impacts. The Town should make special consideration for these adversely impacted communities.

Adrienne Esposito

Executive Director

Citizens Campaign for the Environment

A Brief History...(continued from page 1)

clubs was condemned and acquired. FINS let the Old Inlet Beach Club dock and boardwalk remain, and used the name Old Inlet to designate a free dock and access to the ocean beach. In 1980, the Old Inlet area became part of the National Seashore's Otis Pike Wilderness Area.



Marty Van Lith

inlet across Fire Island. One of the few benefits of Super-

It is interesting to note that section 8 (b) of the federal legislation that created the National Seashore strongly recommended the construction of an

storm Sandy was that nature provided the funding and construction for this desired inlet. Unfortunately, however, the new inlet washed away the Old Inlet boardwalk and dock in the process.

Concerns about the inlet causing flooding on the mainland have since been laid to rest, and we are now in awe of the beneficial results from the inlet's reopening. It is an astonishingly beautiful natural inlet fitting for a Wilderness Area.

But I urge caution to Squassux Landing boaters and bathers. Smith's Inlet is a wilderness inlet, wild as a beast. Just remember that on Nov. 5, 1813, its first iteration killed eleven of our Fire Place fishermen.

Marty Van Lith

BVA Historian

Squassux Chairman Report

My name is Andy Lovito and I have been a resident of Brookhaven since 1987. This is my first full year as the Squassux Chairman.

We had a rough winter, but fortunately there was minimal damage to the docks due to the ice-eaters. I would like to thank all the volunteers that came out to help with the installation and extraction of the ice eaters, especially Harley Petri, a fine, hard-working young man.

The B.V.A. has continued its effort in the ongoing process of improving the infrastructure, while maintaining its natural appeal. The ramp dock is being replaced with superior materials and construction. The main dock has been resurfaced with 2 x 6 construction. Five new finger docks are being built and will replace five docks that are most in need. In addition, we will continue to repair other docks.

We are bringing in forty yards of RCA stone to improve parking and the roadway. The electrical system will also be checked out and updated. We purchased a horse-fly trap in an attempt to decrease their numbers, which means less bites to all. We have also added a life ring and a first aid kit to the guard house.

The B.V.A. is committed to doing the best possible job for its community. If you have any suggestions, please come to a B.V.A. meeting on any second Wednesday of the month @ 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully,

Andy Lovito
Chairman
Squassux Committee

Dockmaster's Report

What a nasty winter. As I write this on Easter Sunday, it is still damp and cold. I have had no interest whatsoever in prepping, cleaning, or servicing my boat. Perhaps the diehard fishermen are getting ready, but not me. The ice eaters worked well and the ice damage was reduced. Even with the electricity expense, we are ahead as Squassux does not need as much extensive repairs. I wish to thank all the Board members and community members who volunteered on Saturday, April 3rd, to remove the ice eaters from the canal, clean, and store them.

All slips are rented out again, and if you have not yet paid for your slip, please remit payment to the BVA as it is now past due. The BVA Board has begun its annual spring "tune-up" of dock repair, and Walter Martens is presently pursuing some capitol repairs as well. The Big Dock has been re-faced with heavier 2x6 planks and the dock adjacent to the launching ramp is undergoing a total replacement. This is the time to alert me to the condition of your dock, and if you think it requires any repair this spring. Several boaters have already contacted me, and I already have passed the details along to Walter so he can make repairs.

One of the Board's chief concerns is the debris from replaced docks and ramps that is evident as you enter the marina. Before this material can be removed, Walter must first finish his repairs. Hopefully, this will be done and the wood carted away before Memorial Day. The persistent winter delayed repairs throughout the spring, and the big dock refacing and launching ramp replacement was time intensive and continued longer than planned.

These remnants of old walkways and docks are full of nails and splinters, so please keep children and pets away from the piles of discarded lumber.

Importantly, if you do not plan to put your boat in the water for the entire season or a portion of it, please inform me so I can re-lease the slip for the BVA. As you should know, boaters may not permit a friend, neighbor, or relative to use his/her slip.

Also, if you contemplate moving up in boat size, con-



Ellen Clyne

tact me first as I must find a slip for it. With every slip already assigned, this could present a problem. I have four residents looking for a larger slip on the big dock,

and since there are so few big slips available, it will take time to accommodate them.

Another change for this season involves keys. We are returning to a 2 key system. On or around April 15, boaters will receive a round silver key for ramp usage, and square brass colored keys for the gate. We require you to lock the ramp after each usage. Also, please remember to lock the gate for the sake of security.

On behalf of the Board, I have two requests. Kayakers are required to use the cement launching ramp in front of the guard booth to launch and retrieve their crafts. This will prevent erosion from launching over the ecologically sensitive and fragile embankments. Secondly, all boaters now must attach a nozzle to their hoses to help curtail water loss. We have often found a hose pouring into water or the grass long after the boater leaves. These incidents are wasteful and expensive for the BVA.

There were very few incidents of theft last season, and they were minor, continuing a positive trend for the last four years. Please be vigilant as to who is in the marina,

and report any suspicious behavior to the security guard, if on duty, or me, the Dockmaster at 521-4411. Call the police if you see theft or damage of any sort. Do not leave expensive fishing gear on your boar, especially in view. This invites unwelcome guests. Some people assume that if it is not locked up, the owner does not want it. Also, our security service will return for another season. By all accounts I heard, Squassux boaters felt they were professional, visible, and performed a good job overall.

I will see all of you soon. Wash, wax, and tune-up your boats, but do not forget to make sure your safety and fire gear is up-to-date and conforms with Coast Guard requirements. You might consult their website at www.uscgboating.org. Have a safe and fun 2015 season!

Regards,

Andy Rubin
BVA Dockmaster

Fireplace History Club Upcoming Events

• **"Ambling Book Tour"** led by *Marty Van Lith*

Tour begins at the Brookhaven Free Library, Saturday, June 13, 2015 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

• **Dedication of a New Memorial Plaque to honor** *Revolutionary War, Civil War, War of 1812 and Spanish American War Soldiers*: Memorial Triangle, South Country Road, Monday, May 25th at the Memorial Day Parade

Fireplace History Club Website: brookhavensouthhaven.org/history/



Newt enjoys an evening bike ride at Squassux. Photo by Ellen Clyne

BVA Membership Application

Membership in the BVA helps support our projects in the neighborhood. Please consider joining or donating to one of our dedicated funds.

New Membership Application – Resident membership in the Brookhaven Village Association is open to residents of Brookhaven Hamlet, as defined in the BVA Bylaws. To become a member, complete this form and send it, along with your annual membership fee to:

Brookhaven Village Association, P.O. Box 167, Brookhaven, New York 11719

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Member Fee (\$15 annually): \$ _____

Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund: \$ _____

BVA Tree Fund: \$ _____

Virginia Brown Scholarship: \$ _____

Historic Cemetery Restoration: \$ _____

Visit our website at: www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org

BVA BOARD MEMBERS

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Chris Marshall
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DOCKMASTER
Andy Rubin

HISTORIAN
Marty Van Lith

FIRE PLACE EDITORS
Ellen Clyne Chris Marshall

The BVA Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Post Morrow Annex, 16 Bay Rd. Meetings are open to the public.

Visit our website at: www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org

Join us for a
**Wine and Cheese
Sunset Salute**

FOR OUT-GOING BVA PRESIDENT FRANK MILLER

Meet the BVA Board of Directors
Visit with friends and neighbors
Enjoy a drink and light refreshments

SQUASSUX LANDING

Sunday, June 28, 2015

5:00 – 7:00 pm

This event is *free* and open to all residents of
Brookhaven Hamlet and members of the
Brookhaven Village Association.

NOTE: Please RSVP to brookhavenvillageassociation.org
to reserve a space at the party!

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Brookhaven Village Association

WEDNESDAY JUNE 17, 2015 • 7:30 PM

St. James Episcopal Church Hall 260 Beaver Dam Rd. Brookhaven Hamlet

...With a
Presentation by
the Friends of
Bellport Bay

Fire Place

A Community Newsletter from the
Brookhaven Village Association
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Brookhaven, New York 11719

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