



Illustration by  
Dennis Puleston

# Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring 2017

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

## President's Report

Our BVA board members have been active with many issues in the hamlet for the start of 2017. The Beaver Dam Road storm water remediation plan by Squassux Marina is still going forward. Ellen Clyne, vice president, is liaison for the BVA. She is in contact with 6 outside agencies, including Brookhaven Town officials. With the recent installation of additional hose bibs on the river, our board members will be able to water the initial plantings in this area.

The annual boaters' meeting was held in January at the St. James Church auxiliary hall. We thank Reverend Hickman Alexandre for letting us use the facility. Our annual meeting is scheduled for June 21st at 7:30 pm at the hall. Planned guest speaker will be Rebecca Muellers, board president of the Center for Environmental Education & Discovery, (CEED). This



Patrice Casanova

group is in the process of rebuilding the Washington Lodge at 287 South Country Road to house their activities. They will provide an array of programs for all ages- preschool and youth through adult. Put the date on your calendar. We look forward to BVA members and residents attending.

Ground and dock improvements were made over the winter at Squassux Landing Marina. We will again have security cameras throughout the marina, as well as security guard service. Unfortunately, the BVA has incurred an unnecessary expense due to the mess left by dogs when their owners don't pick up after them. For the health of our residents using the marina, we needed to hire an outside company to remedy this situation. Our guards will be enforcing the Town's leash law. Mutt Mitts are provided free of charge.

Again, I urge you to join the BVA and get involved in our wonderful community.

**John Knapp**  
BVA President

## Historic Signs

The Fire Place History Club recently purchased and installed these signs at the entrances to the historic district in the hamlet. Ted Anderson, who lives on Chapel Avenue, designed and created them. Brookhaven hamlet became a Town designated historic district in 1985. The FPHC was able to take on this project thanks to the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation. Residents' generous donation to the Historic Fund made this possible. Here are the locations of the four signs: South Country Road at the Dennis Puleston Nature Preserve, the west end of Bridge Street by the rail road trestle, on the property of Old South Haven Presbyterian Church and at the intersection of Bridge Street and Old Stump Road.



ANNUAL MEETING  
NOTICE

**Brookhaven Village Association**

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 21, 2017 • 7:30 PM**

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

Presentation by Rebecca Muellers from CEED, the Center for Environmental Education and Discovery.

Pick up your free copy of *Ambling Around Brookhaven Hamlet* (2nd edition) at the meeting.

See page 3 for more details.

# Spring 2017 Dockmaster Report

Squassux Landing opens on Saturday, April 15th. Expect the water and lights to be turned on shortly thereafter. Keys have been mailed to everyone who either reserved keys or receives them automatically. Please call me if they do not arrive within a week of opening day or if you need to launch your boat immediately. Inexplicably, the keys sometimes take a very long time to arrive.



Squassux Landing

Regarding keys, we have a two key system again. If you are a general member and purchase a gate key, it will be a silver colored key. Boaters and trailer users will likewise receive silver gate key(s) and a single gold tone key for the launching ramp. If you leave a key home and a security guard is on duty, they have keys to aid you. Should you lose a key, they may be replaced for \$5.00 each. I will have some extras this year.

Squassux is very good repair this season. Many older docks are being repaired or replaced outright, and if your dock has a weakness or requires work, please contact me right away. Andy Lovito, the Squassux Chairperson, and the BVA Board have worked diligently to insure the marina is safe and in good form.

Security Guards will start by Memorial Day, and it is essential that every boater at Squassux realize that we can all augment the security service by being pro-active about locking the gate, your cars, and especially keeping your boat empty of any expensive gear that can be easily carted away by any unwanted "guests". If your boat has a cabin, do **NOT** lock it for the sake of security. I feel strongly that damage done to your door and/or cabin would exceed the value of anything stolen.

For the boaters, please also remember that at the beginning of the season, it is wise to replace your aging dock lines with a substantial rope, preferably spliced with a loop. Besides cordage, check your fire extinguisher or replace it outright. They are inexpensive enough. Go onto the Coast Guard website to be sure your boat is in compliance with their standards regarding your gear, such as floatation devices and flares. Remember to leave slack in your dock lines so your boat does not lift docks and poles out of the water. Instead, use spring lines to keep your craft alongside the dock.

Going forward, please make sure you refer to the "Rules and Regulations" found on the BVA website at [www.brookhavenvillageassociation.com](http://www.brookhavenvillageassociation.com). Some important concepts are carrying out your garbage, driving cars and boats slowly, and picking up your dog's waste. The BVA Board also requests all dogs to be on a leash within the marina. I hope you all have a fun and safe boating season for 2017. Also, if you know of anyone, either a resident or non-resident who would want a slip, please have him or her call me. We are presently full, but I could always add to the list. If you have any questions, please call me at 631-521-4411.

**Andy Rubin**

*BVA Dockmaster*



Boy Scout Troop 4 participated in the Brookhaven Hamlet Spring Clean Up. "We had fun doing it!" From left to right... Robert Queen, Max Yablon, Leo Mignola, Brendon Peters, Tyler Torregrosa, and Lex Mallon, Troop Leader.

# Preserving Hamlet History



*Congratulations to Anita Cohen, Marty Van Lith and John Deitz on the publication of the second edition of Ambling Around Brookhaven Hamlet. The revised edition contains two new sections as well as information about the historic cemeteries in the hamlet. Please join us at the Annual Brookhaven Village Association Meeting to pick up a copy of the book. It is free to hamlet residents and will also be available at the Brookhaven Free Library. On behalf of the current BVA board, as well as those previous, we extend a sincere thank you to Anita, Marty and John for their work to preserve Brookhaven Hamlet history.*

Anita Cohen and Marty Van Lith moved to the hamlet in 1982. "Anita and I moved here because all the open space, especially along the bay, reminded us of the south shore we knew when we were young," explained Marty. Anita added, "We were from the Mastic-Shirley area. What we grew up with in the 1950s---the open spaces, the woods, the meadows, coastal living---was no longer so prevalent there. But we found it in Brookhaven."

Marty joined the board of the BVA in 1989, at the urging of then-president Jim Fuchs, to work on land use and landfill issues. The Landfill Closure Law was being established. The community wanted to be included in the decisions regarding the landfill. Soon he was involved with preserving open space and preventing inappropriate development as chair of the BVA Zoning & Development Committee, started earlier by Ginger Brown. As Marty explained, "There was a need to fight for the community, but the challenge was keeping everyone informed. I realized we needed a newsletter because so much was going on."

So he turned to the logical choice, his wife, Anita, then BVA treasurer. With a background in publishing, an MA in English, and years of experience at Dupont and Brookhaven Lab writing technical manuals and newsletter articles on science and other subjects, Anita

was the perfect person to take on the job. Anita started the BVA newsletter, *The Fire Place*, in 1990, and continued writing and editing it until 1996. (The first edition of *The Fire Place* is available on the BVA website.)

After serving on the board of directors for nine years, Marty left the board, but not the BVA. Marty's efforts to prevent development led to an interest in local history. He met with a group representing old Brookhaven families that included Faith McCutcheon, Bob Starke, Fred Gillespie and Ben Savage. "They asked me to keep history alive," reported Marty. He was appointed to the position of BVA Historian by Bob Deckers, the BVA President at that time. He began by reviewing and digitizing all the BVA files. After Elizabeth Post Morrow died in 1992, Marty visited the Post-Morrow house and saw the treasure trove of historical archives. He worked on organizing and digitizing the collection.

Meanwhile, John Deitz was also working on local history. John started a hamlet history website called [Brookhavensouthaven.org](http://Brookhavensouthaven.org). John was becoming an expert on the local houses. Ellen Williams (also a former board member) catalogued the hamlet's historic houses for the Town of Brookhaven. Her work was instrumental in the establishment of the Fire Place Historic District within Brookhaven hamlet in 1985. Marty explained that John was moving to bring hamlet history into the tech age. "John added Ellen's research to the hamlet website. He continues to maintain the website and keep it current." Marty and John began to collaborate and formed the Fire Place History Club in 2005.

Marty explained how they dealt with all the materials and archives. "Malcolm Fleming from Post-Morrow designated a closet in the annex for our use and all the papers were put in there. Shelves were built. File cabinets were installed. All the BVA archives are there." John and Marty began to cross reference the website and the archives using resources such as the newly established New York State Historic Newspaper website and Ancestry.com. They compiled over 5,000 pages for the [Brookhavensouthaven.org](http://Brookhavensouthaven.org) website, covering a range of topics---BVA history, hamlet history, Post-Morrow archives, Ellen Williams's research and individual contributions. Oral histories were recorded and preserved there. Osborne Shaw's 1933 *History of Brookhaven* is included on the site, as is a novel set in mid-19th Century Brookhaven hamlet, *Ship of Dreams*, by Louise Forsslund. Ben Savage collected diaries of local residents and they were added to the site.

*(continued on page 7)*

# The Squassux Chairman's Report



Ian Minushkin

The winter this year felt like a mild one; however, it has seemed to have moved into the spring calendar. The work down at Squassux is moving forward. To date, we have installed five new finger docks and five more are being built and will be installed in the next couple of weeks. Although there wasn't much in the way of winter damage, age and the elements continue to be a challenge with the infrastructure. The repair work will include revitalizing four finger docks with new 2 x 6 pressure treated planks and new stainless steel hardware. The debris from the old docks should be removed by the second week of May. We also had some electrical work done to our wiring system underground which should allow for a dependable service.

The BVA also approved and had installed fifteen new water bibs along the Carmans River finger docks. It is our hope each bib will have only one hose attached and be shared by the boaters closest in proximity. Please hang the hoses on the brackets which will be installed by the beginning of May. I have ordered sixty more yards of RCA stone to continue the improvement of our parking area and road way. The same security company will be employed at Squassux again this year and the camera system will be up and running in the next couple of weeks. The fly traps will be installed as the summer edges closer.

Please keep in mind some simple but important rules. Be mindful of your fellow boaters by adhering to the speed limit both with your car and boat. Please lock the gate when security is not on duty and pick up after your pet. Finally, please do not park on or near the embankments, due to the unfortunate erosion issue. We all must become vigilant in order to slow this process down.

Lastly, I would like to thank the community members that helped install and remove the ice-eaters. I would like to wish everyone a pleasant and safe season.

Respectfully,

**Andy Lovito**  
*Squassux Chairman*



Ian Minushkin

# Ice Eaters



Andy Rubin, Dennis O'Neil, Lech Lipski

On March 25th our BVA Board Members were joined by Hamlet residents who volunteered to remove the 19 "ice-eaters" that were secured in the Squassux canals last December. These "eaters" are electrically powered circulators that swirl the water to prevent freezing over the winter. The freezing directly damages dock supports and walkways. Our Dockmaster, Andy Rubin, introduced these motors several years ago. The prevention of freezing has cut expenses on dock repairs annually. This allows funds to be directed to dock replacement instead of dock repair every spring. All units,



John Knapp, Andy Lovito

along with wires and ropes, were power washed and are stored for use next year.

**The BVA would like to thank the following for their help doing this messy job:**

*Lech Lipski, Dennis O'Neil, Ule Petri, Harley Petri, Jeb Barry, Jeb G. Barry, George Von Bartheld, Josh Hillim.*



## ***BVA 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: \_\_\_\_\_

*Checks for Membership should be made out to the Brookhaven Village Association*

**Member Fee (\$15 annually):** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.BROOKHAVENVILLAGEASSOCIATION.ORG](http://WWW.BROOKHAVENVILLAGEASSOCIATION.ORG)**

# Returning to the South Shore

There are a variety of reasons why people like living in Brookhaven. This series features residents who recently returned to the hamlet to start a business or who decided to stay here and pursue a career. If you have a similar story to share, or would like to recommend someone for this series, please contact us through the website.



*Zach Motl is a Bellport High School graduate. He attended SUNY Geneseo and graduated with a degree in Musical Theater and Sculpture. He moved to Brookhaven Hamlet in 2013 and shortly after located his business, Zach Motl Interiors, in the hamlet.*

## Why did you decide to buy a house in Brookhaven?

I always wanted to live in Brookhaven. My mom grew up here and I have many memories of time spent at my grandparents house in the hamlet. There were mulberry trees in the back yard. When we were barefoot the mulberries would stain our feet and my mom would have to wash our feet in lemon juice to get rid of the stain. We always walked down to Squassux Landing. My family lives nearby. My dad has his own business and works in the area. My grandfather had his own business, too. Now that I've started my business it's three generations working locally.

## Can you share some memories of Bellport High School?

Bellport High School was a very good experience. It was a welcoming environment. I had incredible teachers and have only good memories of the classes I took. I skipped lunch period most years and took extra classes, especially music classes. The music department was outstanding. Music in particular was an escape where you could express yourself creatively. I was very involved in the Variety Show and the musicals and thanks to my teachers I went to the All County and All State Chorus. The teachers made sure there was access to a wide variety

of options, including the Presidential Classroom and trips abroad, both of which I participated in. I no longer do musical theater but designing interiors is something like setting a stage. My training began at the high school.

## What did you do after college?

A variety of things. I bought an old sailboat that I restored out here on the weekends. I moved to Brooklyn in 2007 and had a number of internships and jobs. Studying studio arts and working on the boat led to an interest in interiors and design. I was basically living on the boat during the weekends and juggling part time jobs and an internship in the city during the week. In order to build my portfolio I decided to renovate my apartment in Brooklyn. Friends from Bellport visited and put me in touch with Penelope Green from the *New York Times*. She wrote a full page article about that included photos of my renovation. It was the most emailed article in the Times on the day it was printed. This helped lead to a several jobs in interior design in Manhattan.

## Does living here have a positive impact on your business?

Absolutely. I am building my business because of the location. I can work here, out east and in the city. With Brookhaven as my home base of operations I am able to travel to my clients and still have access to the showrooms in the city. Since moving here I'm taking on new clients all the time and working on interiors, construction and project management. And of course, as a home owner, I'm always working on my own house.

## What aspects of hamlet life do you find appealing?

I'm a member of the BVA and still have a boat that I keep at Squassux. I utilize both libraries which are an asset to the community. Friends from high school are in the area, including founders of Auto Body. I like the fact that they are doing art and bringing in a younger energy to the community. Of course the beach is always a plus, as are the local restaurants. I love living in the hamlet. Everybody bonds by suffering thru the mosquitoes in the summer! All the open space, the farms and the rural feel make it special. And I appreciate that there aren't any street lights. It's dark at night.



## CHECK OUT OUR NEW LOOK!

The Brookhaven Village Association is trying out a new look for our newsletter. Based on your feedback, we will continue printing in color or go back to our original format. The new look uses a vegetable based ink on FSC certified 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

Anita discussed one diary in particular, Irma Newey's, written when she was a teenager in 1904. "She lived on Newey Lane. Her father was a surf man. She kept what was called a day book where she kept track of daily life around her. It included the installation of the first telephone poles in the hamlet." The entire diary is on the website.

"It's a very good read." added Anita. "It was a different time, but not that different because Brookhaven doesn't change that quickly. We still try to keep things the same when possible. For a sense of how things have changed and how they haven't, look at her diary. Irma Newey was very observant of her daily routine and the rhythm of life in the hamlet. Many aspects of hamlet life are still the same."

It wasn't long before Marty and John realized they had enough material for a book built around three historic walking tours John had created and led a few years earlier. *Ambling Around Brookhaven Hamlet* was first published in 2014. Once again, Marty turned to Anita for her help and expertise. "All the footnoting and technical editing was done by Anita. She designed and edited the book, and wrote the introduction."

The initial funding for publishing the book came from Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning. She secured a grant for the first printing of 350 books. It was available to residents through the Brookhaven Free Library and the Post-Morrow Foundation. Later, the BVA began including copies in the Welcome Bag provided to new residents. Within a month, residents were clamoring to have their houses and families included. Marty reports that he was stopped on the street with questions from residents. "Why didn't you include my house?" was a common question.

"What people don't realize is that it takes extensive research to verify the stories and histories before they can be published," explained Anita. "Dates, deeds, court records all come into play and everything has to be documented before it can be included in the book."

Marty decided to gather existing and new research into a new tour section of Old Stump Road. He also felt that the hamlet's historic cemeteries should be featured, given the Fire Place History Club's extensive efforts to restore them.

So work on a second edition of *Ambling* began a few years ago. In 2016, the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation was established as a 501c3 organization. Thanks to generous donations from hamlet residents to the Hamlet Historic Fund, the BHF funded the printing of 500 copies of the second edition in March of 2017. Copies of *Ambling Around Brookhaven Hamlet* will be distributed free to residents at the BVA Annual Meeting on June 21, 2017.

"Marty and I see this as our last edition." said Anita. "It's been a labor of love and now we hope someone will step up to take on the next stage of research. I am happy to teach someone how to use the software so work on the book can continue." As Marty explained, "There are many aspects that go into this: research, writing, editing, taking oral histories, photography and graphic design. We hope others will be inspired to take an interest in this project."

If you are interested in getting involved with the next edition please contact the BVA on our website, [BrookhavenVillageAssociation.org](http://BrookhavenVillageAssociation.org).

Ellen Clyne

## Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation

Please consider donating to one of our funds dedicated to projects in the hamlet. Donations to these funds are tax deductible. To donate, please complete this form and send it with your check to:

**Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation, PO Box 387, Brookhaven, NY 11719**



*Common, Surf, and White-winged Scoters (left to right)*

<b>Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund</b>	\$ _____
<b>BVA Tree Fund</b>	\$ _____
<b>Virginia Brown Scholarship Fund</b>	\$ _____
<b>Hamlet Historic Fund</b>	\$ _____

Checks must be made out to the **Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.BROOKHAVENHAMELTFoundation.ORG](http://WWW.BROOKHAVENHAMELTFoundation.ORG)**

## BVA BOARD MEMBERS

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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.

[WWW.BROOKHAVENVILLAGEASSOCIATION.ORG](http://WWW.BROOKHAVENVILLAGEASSOCIATION.ORG)

Join us for

# Wine and Cheese Sunset Salute

**SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2017**

Meet the BVA Board of Directors, visit with friends, neighbors and enjoy a drink and light refreshments

**5:00 - 7:00 PM**

**SQUASSUX LANDING**

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](http://brookhavenvillageassociation.org) to reserve a space at the party!

## ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

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**WEDNESDAY JUNE 21, 2017 • 7:30 PM**

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

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# Fire Place

*A Community Newsletter from the*  
Brookhaven Village Association

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