



Fire Place

Brookhaven Village Association

Fall 2008

Published for the residents of Brookhaven Hamlet.

Alert! The Toxic Plum Beneath Us & In Our Creeks!

As residents of Brookhaven Hamlet, we need only look and listen to the trees, birds, streams and wild spaces that abound between our homes to know we live in a place of unique and precious beauty. But if we assume our native environment is safe and protected from degradation we are very wrong. A toxic blend of contaminants from the Brookhaven Town Landfill on Horseblock Road has been leaching into the groundwater for the past thirty years. The prevailing groundwater flow carries this plume southeast across the heart of our hamlet. *Our bay, streams, rivers, private wells, and the plants, animals, and people that rely on them are at risk of contamination by these poisons.*

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services has released the results from several years of testing the waters of Beaver Dam Creek and Little Neck Run. These creeks approximate the western and eastern borders of the Hamlet. According to the report, authored by Robert M. Waters, pollutants such as ammonia, benzene, naphthalene, and biphenyl-A are present at significantly elevated levels at locations in both creeks. The Town has been aware of this plume since the early 1980's. The leaking cells were capped and all new cells had improved liner systems installed. Public water was also provided to many homes in the area because of the imminent contamination of well water. *The town has done nothing, however, to accurately monitor or remediate the flush of poisonous chemicals* it knows are spreading into the water supply as cells 1 and 2 continue to leak through their compromised liners. Monitoring wells that could have been used to gauge the size, depth, and concentration of the plume have all been abandoned, short of a handful of wells just along the southern boundary of the landfill itself. *The effects of the plume on the fish and wildlife of our 'protected' watershed is unknown, no steps have been taken to understand the impact of these chemicals on the native biology.*

As the manager of the Hamlet Organic Garden, I have been working with Robert Waters to monitor groundwater conditions using samples from the two wells we use at the farm. As an organic farm that feeds my family and over 240 others in the surrounding area, I am very concerned about any threats to the quality of the

water we use to irrigate the fields, wash the produce, and quench our thirst.

We go to great lengths in our farming practices to ensure the health of the soil we grow on, and the biodiversity of our farm ecosystem. The diverse range of chemical free vegetable, fruit, flower, and herb plants we grow support a growing community of insects, birds, rabbits, red-tailed hawks, even fox, and unfortunately a few groundhogs. Clean water from the ground beneath our feet is the life blood of our farm organism. Our south well, which we use for washing our produce and watering seedlings, is clean, with no indication of landfill pollution. Our north well, which is used for field irrigation, contains trace amounts of several of the chemicals identified with the leachate plume. All of these levels are extremely low, below a few micrograms per liter (a microgram is a millionth of a gram) and meet drinking water standards. A new round of samples was taken last Wednesday and we are eager to look at the results and see how they compare to the spring sampling. Will there be more contaminants, or fewer, and by what degree? We have taken on the responsibility of finding out information the Town should have known and informed us of years ago.

The Town has agreed to assist the farm in whatever steps are necessary to ensure a supply of clean water, such as drilling deeper wells. A working group has been formed to address the full spectrum of this situation and seems eager to finally hold the town accountable for its profound negligence. The lessons of the past show us that none of this will happen unless we as citizens take an active role in communicating with our elected officials and raising hell. I invite all of you to do so, because only the squeaky wheels get any grease!

Go to www.brookhaven.org, call 451-TOWN, contact John Turner if you have a private well, at jturner@brookhaven.org The Beaver Dam Creek Water Quality report is available at the Brookhaven Free Library.

Sean Pilger,
Chairman Recycling Committee

Artists Who Lived in Brookhaven

In June of 1906, 44 Brookhaven Hamlet residents joined together as charter members of the Brookhaven Improvement Association, the original name of the Brookhaven Village Association, with James Post its first president. The first order of business was to purchase 12 oil lamps and put them along South Country Road near Brookhaven Hamlet's commercial center – Valentine's Brook Store.

In 1907, Malcolm Fraser, Canadian-born illustrator and artist whose drawings appeared in leading American magazines at the turn of the century, became the BVA's second president. Another Beaver Dam Road resident, Frederick Kost, a landscape and impressionist painter, was the 2nd Vice President. Kost would become BVA president in 1913. Their participation in community affairs underscored the change of character that marked Brookhaven Hamlet during the early 20th century, as a small but vibrant artists' colony whose roots were from New York City added their imprint to Brookhaven's 200-year history of farming and fishing.



Gardner Rae in his studio on Meadow Lane



Miller Homestead, by Alice Boughton, 1930

On Sunday, November 16, at 2 pm, Hamlet historian John Deitz will present a program titled "Artists Who Lived in Brookhaven, 1900-1940." The presentation will be at the Post Morrow Foundation annex, 16 Bay Road. John will portray many of our hamlet's earliest artists, including some of their original works. Refreshments will be served.

**Marty Van Lith,
BVA Historian**

Anonymous Letter of Complaint

As a BVA member, I am writing because I am appalled about the problem of residents walking their dogs at the marina and not picking up after them. I have observed this on many occasions. Why is this permitted? I have even noticed that there is a largely unused dispenser for "doggy" bags on the back of the bench adjacent to the launching ramp.

I believe that Squassux is for every Hamlet resident to enjoy, and no one should have the right to defile it by not cleaning up after their dog. If you walk your dog at Squassux, please do the right thing and pick up the droppings.

Caithness Power Plant Update

The first million has been divvied up for projects in the communities surrounding Caithness. All projects in that first round have been approved but the checks have not been cut. We received money for our BVA Tree fund, Friends of Wertheim Welcome Center and St. Joseph the Worker Food Pantry. Another 4 million will be distributed to qualifying projects/causes when the plant opens.

**Mike Murtha,
Caithness Committee**

Squassux Landing Dredging Update

We continue to search for a site to dump the dredge spoils.

**Mike Murtha,
Chairman Dredging Committee**

This spring the BVA will be accepting bids for repairing damaged docks at Squassux Landing. Anyone submitting a bid must be licensed, insured and have at least 3 positive recommendations to be considered. See BVA web site for more details in the spring.

Squassux Fall 2008

Like many other BVA boat owners, I have docked at Squassux for more years than I have fingers and toes. While I have always loved the Landing for its singular natural charms, historic nostalgia, and its seemingly unchanging character against the hectic world I live in, there is another aspect to Squassux I recently discovered.

I was invited to the Christening of a newly acquired catboat on the river this summer. It occurred to me after the boat was "baptized" with a bottle of champagne, that to most boat owners, their crafts are in many ways like offspring. They are joy and hope, and at times disappointment. They require constant attention and time, and need cleaning and fixing. And like children, they cost fortunes. But the fervent hope of boat owners is that they return pride and pleasure to repay the efforts made. Then comes the inevitable time the boater relinquishes the craft to either retire from boating, or to acquire another craft which better suits his needs. So in

a fashion, the boat moves on. For many boaters these are deep, often emotional decisions, which require thought and time to transition from one boat to the next once it gets too old, or no longer fulfills its need as life's requirements change. Boats truly can be extensions of our families.

In stark contrast to the boating life at Squassux is the death of a member. Last year, I was struck by the request for a funeral procession to bring a departed member back to Squassux for a final farewell. I never knew our marina meant so much to others, nor did I realize that Squassux embodies its own circle of life.

I wonder in how many other ways I have no possible knowledge of, that Squassux Landing has been an intimate part of a member's life.

**Andy Rubin,
Dock Master**

Hamlet Tree Planting

The Brookhaven Village Association plants a variety of trees each year throughout Brookhaven Hamlet. Tree selection is based on the species' resistance to disease, its adaptability to our environment, and its enhancement of the natural beauty of our community. Trees native to Long Island are given priority over other species, yet a variety of trees are planted as to improve forest diversity.



The BVA tree committee consists of volunteers, which includes a professional landscaper, John Beitel, and an arborist, Jeff Jensen. John's landscaping crew plants, stakes, and mulches the trees; a group of volunteers water the trees; and Jeff oversees the

maintenance of the trees. Trees are an investment in our future since they improve the environment and the quality of life for those within a community.

To date, over 80 trees have been planted in Brookhaven Hamlet. Every tree planted can be seen from the street so that all residents benefit from their beauty. This tree planting program is funded by donations to the BVA Tree Fund. Your contributions have made this program a success. Thank you for your support.

**Lynn DiClemente Brown,
BVA Tree Chairperson**

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION — Resident membership in the Brookhaven Village Association is open to individual and family 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

Membership Category: _____ Family, \$15 annual fee _____ Individual, \$10 annual fee

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Other family members at this address: _____

List areas of special concern on back • Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund contribution: \$ _____

BVA Tree Fund contribution: \$ _____ • Virginia Brown Scholarship contribution \$ _____

Quality of Life

Wow! Where did summer go? It's hard to believe it's October. I hope everyone had a good summer. I sure did.

We just finished our fall litter clean-up in September. Thanks to all who gave about an hour out of their busy schedules. It makes a big difference in the amount of litter in our community.

Thank you, Lynn Brown and the rest of the tree committee. Have you noticed all the new plantings around? While taking care of trees at the high school, Lynn fell and was on crutches all summer. She is up and around again and planning on fall tree plantings.

Stay warm this winter. Hope to see you at the spring litter clean-up.

**John Curiale,
Chairman Quality of Life**

Visit Our BVA Web Site !!

www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org/

BVA BOARD MEMBERS

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Andy Rubin

HISTORIAN:

Marty Van Lith

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

Fire Place

*A Community Newsletter from the
Brookhaven Village Association
P.O. Box 167
Brookhaven, New York 11719*

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