



# Fire Place

## Brookhaven Village Association

Fall 2009

Published by the Residents of Brookhaven Hamlet

### Squassux Landing Dredging Update

**W**e have just received approval for the spoils sample plan from the DEC. The next step is to collect the samples per sample plan and have them tested for toxicity. If the samples pass toxicity tests, then dredging can go forward and could start in mid November. Based on conversations with folks in this field, we are fairly confident that the toxicity tests will pass.

If the samples do not pass toxicity tests, then we have to revisit dumping spoils at the landfill which will greatly increase the cost of the project.

Mike Murtha, Chairman Dredging Committee

### The New Squassux Chairman

**I**t's early October. Things are getting quiet at Squassux for now. That's good for my first year as Squassux chairman. Still getting my feet wet. In a few weeks all should change. We'll be scrambling to get all the boats out for the dredge to start. Wow! Didn't plan on this for my first year. Good thing I'm surrounded by a few people who do a lot. They make it easy for me. We share a lot of the same feelings about this place as do many of our neighbors.

Ain't no place that I'd rather be

John Curiale, Chairman, Squassux Committee

### Landfill Leachate Plume Update

**T**he Beaver Dam Creek Water Quality Committee has been meeting regularly since September 2008 to discuss the impact of the leachate plume emanating from the Town of Brookhaven's landfill. The plume was first detected in 1982 and continues to be present in the groundwater. Cells 1 and 2, which were responsible for the leachate release, have been capped. This should prevent further release of leachate and it is expected that concentrations of contaminants within the plume should decrease over time. Ground water sampling of monitoring wells has shown that since the capping of the cells, the concentrations of contaminants, including ammonia, are decreasing. Also, at the July 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, Chart Guthrie, New York State DEC Long Island Fisheries manager, gave an encouraging report on the populations of brook trout and other fish species found in Beaver Dam Creek. While ammonia levels are still above standards in the creek, they are not high enough to kill off the fish.

The Town and the Suffolk County Department of Health addressed the committee's concern for safe drinking water. The residents with wells along the plume's path will be connected to public water.

Earlier this year, the Brookhaven Village Association hired Dermody Consulting, Geologists and Environmental Scientists to conduct an independent analysis and make recommendations. Based on their findings, they offered

the following recommendations:

- An Environmental Database Search Report should be obtained for the areas surrounding Beaver Dam Creek to determine if there are any reported and known releases of contamination in the Beaver Dam Creek Watershed other than the Town of Brookhaven Landfill.
- Residences located down gradient of the landfill that remain on private drinking water wells should be connected to public water supplies.
- Due to the periodic large numbers of gulls hovering over cell 5 recently, it may be helpful to visit the landfill to assure that municipal solid waste is not being disposed at the landfill.
- Residents living in close proximity to the creek should be discouraged from using pesticides and fertilizers.
- Post-Morrow should continue to monitor the water quality down gradient of the landfill to assure that contaminant levels in the groundwater continue to decrease and that there is no future evidence of a new release of leachate.
- Direct discharges of storm water to the creek should be evaluated to determine if they could be redirected.
- The man-made barriers within the creek should be removed to support fish propagation.

The complete report from Dermody Consulting is available at the Brookhaven Free Library.

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# Carmans River

In the give and take of American history, the issue of whether our nation's natural resources should be exploited for private profit or preserved for our public benefit has been ongoing for more than 150 years. This has struck home recently as a new generation of city-born politicians has decided to reverse the efforts of the past 60 years and privatize our public watershed land along the greatest natural resource in Suffolk County- our beloved Carmans River.

Some 350 years ago, our first settlers saw this natural resource right away and, in 1657, their first purchase from the Unkechaugs on the south shore of Brookhaven Town was a salt hay meadow along Carmans River. The later purchase of Yaphank Neck in 1688 led to harnessing the power of the river as three mills were built, sustaining the colony for more than 100 years. The 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries recognized the Carmans River and environs as being the best that nature had to offer, and only a few of the wealthiest men in America would own it. One, Maurice Wertheim, realized just how important this resource was and willed 1,700 acres straddling the lower river to "the people of America." This became the Wertheim NWR, now grown to 2,600 acres.

By 1960, with our natural resources rapidly disappearing, Suffolk County recognized the need to preserve the most important part of it and purchased 1,200 acres straddling the river from the Hard family- today's South Haven Park.

By the 1970s the science of biology recognized the importance of the river not just for its own ecological value but also in the larger context of the web of aquatic life, the beginning of the food chain for our estuary and ocean. Members of Bellport High School's Students for Environmental Quality documented the river's biodiversity and lobbied to have Carmans River designated a NYS Wild, Scenic and



Carmans River Looking South Photo by Jen Clement

Recreation River. Two students rode their bicycles 250 miles to Albany toting bottles of Carmans River water to dramatize the need for protection. Their efforts paid off: Carmans was the first river in NYS to receive the WSRRA designation.

In the 30 years since our students bought attention to the importance of this great natural resource, hundreds of acres of Carmans Watershed land have been acquired by the public at the cost of millions of dollars. Until now, it was unimaginable that the river and its watershed be considered for anything other than the great natural resource that it is, least of all as a place to put hockey arenas, factories, restaurants and a mini-city. As a community that historically has benefited most from this natural wonder, I urge you to speak up on behalf of the Carmans River just as those who came before us did.

Marty Van Lith, BVA Historian



## Squassux Fall 2009



Change is in the air! Squassux is poised for some maintenance that should occur this fall and winter. The main canal is slated for a dredging as is the creek that leads to the river. Following that, the roadways in Squassux will be filled and graded. Also, the electric service will be revamped and our water service is expected to be hooked up to public water. No more yellowing of your hulls and decks, or pump outages. Not that Squassux is to become a theme park - expect Squassux to visibly appear virtually the same as it has in the past once the work is completed this spring.

As the Dockmaster, one of my functions is to implement BVA Board policy which is detailed in a flyer sent to all boaters each spring. While it may be fruitless to review this document in the fall, I wish to underscore a few of the more egregious problems presented this summer at the marina.

First, please DRIVE SLOWLY. I know everyone wants to catch a bass or sun over at Old Inlet, but some drivers bounce crazily over our moon craters with little regard for their cars, or children and pets that populate Squassux. Next, please PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG! This remains a problem as boaters must always be vigilant of where they step. Another issue is

the use of weed killers, like Roundup, to help maintain the entrances to your docks. **THESE CHEMICALS ARE FORBIDDEN** as they will certainly leach into the water and pollute. Also, should your dock break and/or require maintenance, or if the water or electric fail, **DO NOT FIX IT YOURSELF**. Call the Dockmaster who will arrange for repairs. Another concern of mine is boat upgrading. As many of Squassux' slips are narrow, having been designed for boats from thirty or more years ago, I find that many newer boats are beamier and therefore present problems with slip accommodations. Please call me so I may do what I can to fit your boat into the marina. One last issue that will be addressed for next season is parking. Until rules are devised, please attempt to park, whenever possible, as far away from the water's edge as possible. This will help minimize erosion and keep the soil in place. I almost forgot: **PLEASE LOCK THE GATE** for the security of everyone's boats.

As the 2009 season winds down, I am happy to report that there were no boat sinkings, noteworthy thefts, or injuries reported. I hope all of you enjoyed the season.

Andy Rubin, Dock Master

# Brief Interview with Brookhaven Resident Meg (Sylvester) Koch

**A**s part of an ongoing series of brief interviews with lifelong residents of the hamlet\*, my wife Mary and I went to Meg's house on Old Stump Road to ask her a standard set of questions about growing up in our wonderful hamlet.

Although I knew that Meg had roots that went back a few generations, I wasn't prepared for just how deep her roots went! The house Meg and husband George and her 2 sons Matt and Jason live in was built by her grandfather, Thomas Poole, who bought the land from his father-in-law, Wallace Swezey. Wallace Swezey raised his family several houses north of Meg's at 175 Old Stump Road. Thomas Poole married Ada Celestine Swezey (Wallace Swezey's daughter). Long story short, Meg's roots go all the way back to Rebecca (Reeve) and Thomas Rose (b 1683)!

If you go to this website: <http://brookhavensouthhaven.org/HamletPeople/tng/index.php>, you can trace Meg's ancestors back to Thomas Rose starting with Wallace Swezey -> Hannah Hulse -> Hannah Hawkins-> Rachel Rose -> Jesse Rose-> Nathan Rose Sr. -> Thomas Rose!

**Q:** Where were you born?

**A:** Meg was born in Mather Memorial hospital in Port Jefferson, NY as Brookhaven hospital did not exist at that time.

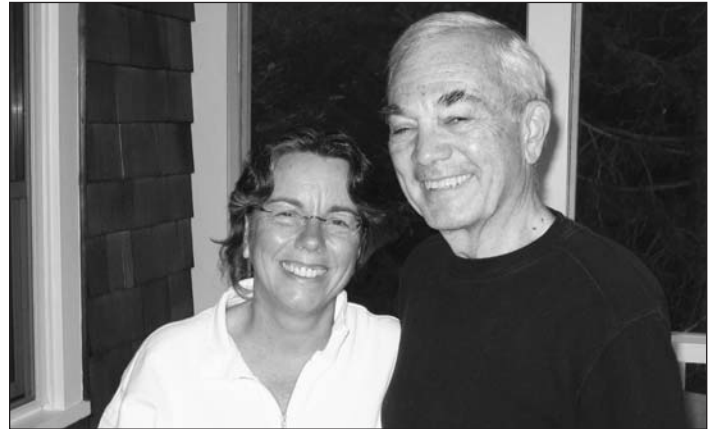
**Q:** What was Brookhaven like when you were a kid?

**A:** Meg said that a lot more of her family lived in the hamlet: elderly aunts, mother, father, sister. She spent time visiting relatives like her great Aunt Lila Swezey who lived



**This is the house that Meg grew up in, which was built between 1905 and 1915 by her grandfather Thomas Poole.** The porch on the side was added for Meg's Aunt Marion's wedding and Thomas Poole used windows salvaged from shipwrecks on Fire Island.

**\*Note:** although Meg has not lived in this house full-time, she grew up here and then lived here part time, as she does now. The house has been in her family for 3 generations.



Meg(Sylvester)Koch and George Koch.

with Miss Hand (one time Brookhaven Post Office employee and longtime member of the South Haven Presbyterian Church).

**Q:** What was the biggest event that took place in Brookhaven hamlet in your life?

**A:** Meg said that the closing of Bellport High School in 1970 due to "racial tensions", the old Michelson house burning down and the closing of the Leskowitz duck farm on Old Stump Road were the biggest events she remembers.

**Q:** Where did you keep your boat?

**A:** Meg had a Blue Jay sailboat that she kept at Squassux and her best friend had a Sneak box also kept at Squassux.

**Q:** Who was your best friend growing up?

**A:** Ninon (Lacey) Starke (who also still lives in the hamlet with her husband Bill Starke)

**Q:** What did you do for fun?

**A:** Meg and local kids would usually head to the Carmans River to sail or explore. There were often pick up ball games in the Lacey's back yard. One time Meg, her younger sister Pam, Ninon Lacey and Ninon's younger sister Kathleen got into Meg's Grandfather's tar barrel (used for tarring his fishing nets) and using her mother's pots proceeded to coat their driveway with tar! Brookhaven's first driveway sealing company!

**Q:** Did you have a job as a kid?

**A:** Meg, like many teenaged girls had baby sitting jobs. She also worked at a gift shop owned by a Miss Havens, which was in the Brook Store (an historic building on South Country Road by the triangle with the cannon).

**Q:** How do you feel about changes that have taken place in the hamlet?

**A:** Meg is amazed that there haven't been more changes! Many of the people she grew up with are still in the hamlet.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### A Big Thanks to

Larry Clayton for cleaning the graffiti off signs in the hamlet over the weekend of October 10 and to Kathy Kocher for diligently picking up garbage along Old Stump Road!



## BVA BOARD MEMBERS

### PRESIDENT:

Mary Jane Cullen

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Mike Murtha

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Sean Pilger

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Kathleen Scheibel

### DOCK-MASTER:

Andy Rubin

### HISTORIAN:

Marty Van Lith

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.

**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ • Cemetery Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Fire Place

*A Community Newsletter from the*  
**Brookhaven Village Association**  
**PO Box 167**  
**Brookhaven, New York 11719**

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