

Illustration by
Dennis Puleston

Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring 2013

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

A Brief History of Squassux Landing

Perhaps the most beautiful place on all of Long Island is Squassux Landing, the Brookhaven Village Association's 13-acre site along the longest and most ecologically productive river on Long Island, the Carmans River. Surrounded by the 2,600-acre Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, it has been owned and operated by the BVA for the enjoyment of the community since 1945.

The history of Squassux Landing goes back thousands of years to a time when the Delaware Algonquins moved northward following the retreating glacier. The Carmans River is unique among all the rivers on Long Island in that it starts in the middle of the island and flows through the Ronkonkoma Moraine. This is because it was a tunnel valley created while the glacier was still here and the ice melt ran under the glacier.

The name "Squassux" is said to originate from an Indian potter named Wessquassucks, who lived here when the first Anglo settlers arrived in the late 1600s. Squassux Landing and all the land that includes today's South Haven, Brookhaven and Bellport was purchased from the Unkechaugs in 1664.

As the first bit of high ground encountered when entering the Carmans River from the Great South Bay, Squassux Landing has been a port of entry for both Indians and Anglo settlers for centuries. The local band of the Long Island Algonquins were known as Unkechaugs, their main village located along Unkechaug Creek just east of Smith's Point. Archaeological digs indicate human habitation

along Carmans River for thousands of years.

The Brookhaven/South Haven area was originally settled by residents of Setauket and known as Fire Place. It is said that this was the Indian name because fires were made near the kettle hole along Beaver Dam Road to signal a gathering for the surrounding villages for cultural events. The settlement continued using the name Fire Place until 1871.



Initially the main interest of the Setauket settlement in purchasing land along the south shore was its meadowlands and salt hay. They didn't have to clear natural meadowland for their cattle and other livestock, and they used the salt hay for insulation as well as bedding and feed. Fire Place Road, remnants

of which are now Old Town Road, led directly from Setauket to Squassux Landing and the meadows.

Many also came from Setauket for clamming, oystering, eeling, fishing and whaling. Squassux Landing was a protected area near the bay, a perfect place to launch their boats.

In 1780, Samuel Carman Sr. bought the mills along the lower Carmans River and later opened a store, tavern and inn. Over the course of the next century the Carman family became quite wealthy and influential, and, by the mid-1800s, owned much of the land on the west side of Carmans River. Sam Carman Jr. had 12 children; in the 1840s, one of them, Joseph Henry, was given about 30-acres that included Squassux Landing.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Brookhaven Village Association

7:30 PM, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2013

A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE NEW INLET ON FIRE ISLAND

Guest Speakers:

Kevin McAllister, Baykeeper and the President of the Peconic Baykeeper Organization

Charlie Flagg, Research Professor, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University

Anthony Graves, Principal Environmental Analyst, Town of Brookhaven, NY

St. James Parish Church Hall 260 Beaver Dam Road Brookhaven Hamlet

(continued on page 5)

Karen Rowley

Former Director, Brookhaven Village Association

It is with sadness that we mark the April 14th passing of Karen Schuler Rowley, who moved to Brookhaven Hamlet with her husband Keith over 50 years ago. A BVA director from 1989–98, Karen was a vital, generous and cherished member of this community. Her interests were many and varied; she was an avid birder, a conservationist, a musician, a gardener, a traveler, and a terrific cook — to name a few. She delighted in sharing her enthusiasm and knowledge. Among the organizations which benefitted from her membership and tireless efforts were: The Moriches Bay Audubon Society (she was its president), The Friends of Wertheim, The Fire Island Wilderness Society, The Bellport Garden Club and the Herb Society of America, L.I. unit. She was particularly instrumental in designing and maintaining the herb garden at the Post Morrow Foundation, and with the assistance of the Town of Brookhaven and



the Waste Reduction Coalition, she developed a program to distribute the composters in Brookhaven Hamlet. Her own garden was admired by all who saw it, year after beautiful year. Music was also Karen's passion. She loved listening to and attending the opera. Trained from childhood as a pianist, she took up the recorder as an adult and achieved a high level of playing ability. She was a member of the Long Island Recorder Society, played with the Swingettes, Stan Davis and the All Women's Swing Band, the East End Consort, the Fireplace Consort and Ardea. Karen was on the South Country Education Foundation's Community Advisory Council and was a founding member of its Becker/Gambles Music Fund, whose mission is to support music education in South Country schools.

Deb Mayo
Hamlet Resident

Is It Over? Is It Spring Yet?

Wow, what a winter! With Superstorm Sandy, a few Nor'easters and a huge snow storm to ice the cake, Squassux Landing had been seriously beaten down - but not out.

Repairs to damaged electric and docks were started right after Superstorm Sandy. The Ice-eaters were installed before the ice began and through the cold winter they did their job very well. Squassux Landing was ready for boats to be launched April 15th. Only a few months ago I thought the boating season of 2013 at Squassux Landing was just a far-fetched dream. Thank you to all those who helped make this season possible.

I have spent the last nine years on the board of the Brookhaven Village Association and three years as the



Squassux Committee Chair. It's hard for me to believe that my time is up. Although I don't want to leave and there is still much more I want to do, my term has reached its limit and I must go. Like most people, I live a very busy life. Volunteering as a board member took time and dedication. But I feel that we have a high quality of life in Brookhaven because of the people who volunteer their precious time for the greater good of the community. I'm happy to say that in my nine years with the BVA I worked with the best of the best. It made my job much easier.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve.

John Curiale
Squassux Chairperson

The Gazebo

The iconic gazebo at Squassux Landing has been sanded and re-stained this spring. Interestingly, it was about 20 years ago that my father Steve Marshall, who was chairperson of Squassux at that time, recruited me and my friend Mike Despres to do the same job. It was a bright spring morning and as the three of us worked, the sun reflected off the Carmans and shone in wavering lines up into the rafters of the gazebo. My father showed me, through his example, the importance of volunteerism and community involvement (although I must admit, he paid me and Mike out of his own pocket that day). Now as a board member myself, I can't help but take this opportunity to say thank you to him and all the other unrecognized volunteers of our

community. Those people who spend hours of their time completing countless projects over the decades, never seeking recognition, working hard to make our community the unique place it is.

For an interesting story about a unique Brookhaven resident who called the gazebo his part time home, please visit the link <http://brookhavensouthaven.org/history/Negvesky/StanleyJosephNegvesky.htm>. Stanley, as he was affectionately known, is now commemorated by a simple, granite stone on the floor of the gazebo engraved with his first name.

Chris Marshall
Editor

Dockmaster's Report

Damn hurricanes. My thanks to John Curriale (Squassux Chairperson) and the BVA Board for their quick response in allocating funds and initiating work orders to put Squassux back together (again). It really looked like a pile of pick-up sticks after the storm last fall. Fortunately we had the resources to rebuild again. I applied to FEMA in an effort to obtain some part of the \$60 billion in aid the U.S. government sent to the Northeast but we were deemed ineligible. I also want to thank our dock builder, Walt Martens, who worked all winter to repair and replace what was needed to make Squassux a functioning marina once again.

To my surprise, all Squassux slips will again be rented. I had thought that with the destruction of Old Inlet, there might have been a drop off of boaters who for want of convenient ocean access might give up on boating altogether. Due to the new inlet, many boaters have told me the marina water is noticeably cleaner to the eye, but I had noticed a clarity to it during past winters. The real test will be in August if it is aqua rather than brown. We may also observe new wildlife like seals, replenished fish stocks, and probably gobs of barnacles stuck to our props, shafts, and lower units.

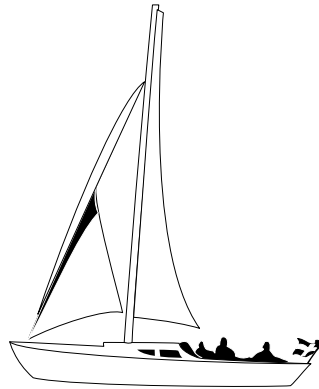
People's natural curiosity about the new inlet and better fishing might also make Squassux a destination for some (or many) out-of-towners. This possibility has been mentioned to me by several members, and I suppose this is possible. The BVA's response to this has been to post the guards earlier, make sure the camera system is online, and ask all members to lock the gate

behind them. Due diligence of all BVA members is important. If you see people fishing from river docks, ask if they own a boat in Squassux. If not, tell them it is private property. Please call me at 521-4411 if you see something that seems "fishy".

Another issue perplexes me. Everyone I speak with extols the unique beauty of our wonderful marina. Yet some residents still walk their dogs without picking up after them. People often complain to me about discarded fish heads in the water. Too many bottles and beer cans are thrown into the water or reeds. Finally, boaters are often in a great rush to get aboard their crafts and drive too fast on the premises. Every member of Squassux Landing should work to preserve our special place. Please do what you each can to protect Squassux.

One last thing. If you plan to be out of the water for the season or a period of time, please let me know so the BVA can utilize the slip in your absence. No one may sublet his or her slip, or allow a friend or relative use the space. Only the dockmaster can reassign the slip if it is temporarily not in use. Also, if you acquire a larger or different boat, I must be informed so I am properly able to manage the marina by knowing who owns what boat. Should a stranger appear on a different boat, please let me know immediately to insure our security. Also, safeguard your keys and do not lend them out to anyone else. Have a fun and safe boating season this year.

Andy Rubin
Dockmaster



Hamlet Happenings

Since the last issue of Fireplace came out we have had a superstorm that brought devastating floods to many South Shore communities, including our Hamlet. Sandy also carved a new inlet straight through what was Old Inlet, so named for the inlet that existed just west of the current breach that filled in after two ships sank in the channel during the 1830s.

Although some have called for the breach to be filled, the voice of reason seems to be coming from the scientific community, which has been studying the inlet's effects since the superstorm's winds subsided. These experts have done exhaustive studies that prove that the additional flooding that has occurred since December is not due to the breach, but to other environmental factors including numerous nor'easters in the wake of the superstorm, and higher than normal tides up and down the eastern seaboard.

Now that the piping plovers have returned and are starting to nest, the matter is temporarily on hold. We should all take a deep breath and pause to consider rationally the risks and benefits of leaving the inlet open to the vagaries of nature, or of closing it. If you want to hear more about the inlet and the studies being done, come to the BVA Annual Meeting on June 19th, when a panel of experts including Dr. Charlie Flagg of Stony Brook University, Anthony Graves, Environmental Analyst from the Town of Brookhaven and the Peconic Baykeeper, Kevin McAllister, will fill you in on the latest. The BVA is in favor of the "wait and see" approach. We mourn the loss of our beloved beach facilities, but love the cleaner water in the bay and the wildlife that has accompanied the flushing tides.

Speaking of mourning...it has been a sad time this late winter and early spring with the loss of several dear and long-time Hamlet residents and friends of the BVA. I make special note of the wonderful gifts endowed upon Squassux Landing by friends and family of Michael McKeown (pictured above), who passed away in January at the age of 94.

The hurricane that caused the breach also produced enormous amounts of brush and tree debris that, unfortunately for our local residents, was sent for incineration at the Town Landfill on Horseblock Rd. Despite protests, four Air Curtain Destructors (incinerators that produce an extra-fine particulate matter) were put into use at the Landfill where they burned 24/7 for about three months. Further protests resulted in the installation of air monitors. The data from the monitors convinced Town Supervisor Romaine to halt the use of additional incinerators. For this, we are grateful, and hope the newly introduced County legislation to severely restrict future use of this type of incinerator will be enacted.

Speaking of the Town...the Landfill Liaison Committee has been reconvened, and is working hard on finding ways to wean our Town off of its addiction to garbage as revenue. Supervisor Romaine is headed in the right direction by



Michael McKeown

speaking of a move toward single-stream recycling, and of "beginning to think about" (my words) a closure plan. Our residents and our environment will not be well-served by the status quo, and it is time – past time – to join the 21st century and cleanup the landfill. We all can, and should, do our part by thinking about what we throw away. Do you recycle? Do you think about how the products you use are packaged? Would your habits change if a mandatory Pay as You Throw program were in place? We live on an island. Our resources are not infinite, nor are they replaceable. Please do your part to save what's left.

Kathleen Lacey
President, BVA

SUNSET SALUTE

IN HONOR OF JOHN CURIALE

Start the summer with the BVA Squassux Sunset Salute in honor of John Curiale. Please join us as we say thank you to John for 9 years as a BVA Director and 6 as Chairperson of the Squassux Committee

**Friday, June 28, 2013
6:00 – 9:00 pm
at Squassux Landing**

The BVA will provide cold drinks and dessert. Tables and coolers will be available. BYOB, chairs and a covered dish to share.

Please visit our website at:
www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org
for information about the BVA, our mission, membership application, and calendar of events. If the Sunset Salute is rescheduled due to rain, the date will be posted on the website.

Restoring Zimmer Park

Last fall Superstorm Sandy took its toll on the hamlet and residents rallied to help each other in the wake of the storm. This neighborly spirit continues as we work to cleanup the community now that winter is over. On April 6th the BVA sponsored the annual Spring Cleanup, led by Jeff Jensen, chair of the Quality of Life Committee. Residents turned up on a Saturday morning to remove trash and debris from various sites in the hamlet. A big thanks to everyone who helped give the roads and lanes a good spring cleaning. We invite all residents to join us each fall and spring when we work together on these seasonal cleanup events. Please check the website for the fall date.

One of the treasured spots in the hamlet, Zimmer Park, was also effected by Sandy. The park, located at the



intersection of Fireplace Neck Road and South Country Road, lost many gorgeous shade trees and most of the gardens suffered damage. Hamlet resident, Helen Geraghty, organized a fundraiser to purchase new trees and clean up and restore Zimmer Park. The BVA and the Town of Brookhaven Parks Department will collaborate on a new design and plantings for the park. Thanks to Helen, her committee, everyone who generously donated to the tree fund and Jeff Jensen for all your hard work and community service. Your efforts will be appreciated by everyone who enjoys the park.

Ellen Clyne
Editor

A Brief History of Squassux Landing *(continued from page 1)*

Throughout most of the first 250 years of settlement, people who lived in Fire Place were farmers and fishermen and Squassux Landing was one of few places available to launch and moor a boat. There weren't many residents and Joseph Carman didn't mind people using his property along the river. Joseph Carman died in 1894 and passed the land to his two sons, who also let local residents use the property for their boats.

With the arrival of the railroad in 1880 came major changes in the hamlet and at Squassux Landing. Beginning around the turn of the century many residents built extensions to convert their homes to boarding houses, and ferries began to run from the end of Beaver Dam Road to Fire Island.

In 1907, the Carman estate, including Squassux Landing, was sold to Carman Lush, who had retired there from Hempstead. He was not as accommodating to the community as the Carman family had been. James Post, whose family was here since before the Revolution and who was vice president of the Brookhaven Village Association at the time, quietly bought the 13-acre Squassux Landing site from Mr. Lush and let the community use it freely again.

James Post and his wife Elizabeth had three children – Jessie Wells Post, Helen Post Hubert and Elisabeth Post Morrow. After their father's death, they officially donated Squassux Landing to the BVA on April 23, 1945.

The BVA board created a Squassux Committee composed of several directors, chief among them Bob Lyons Jr, who developed and ran the landing until 1954, when they hired William Engelhardt Sr. as their first dockmaster.

From about 1900 to WWII, ferries and

boaters leaving from Squassux Landing had a place to go on Fire Island, the Smith Point House located next to the Coast Guard Station. It was a hotel, restaurant and bar, which had a nice dock and boardwalk to the ocean. It washed away in the Hurricane of '38, then was rebuilt but burned down shortly afterward.

After WWII another beach house and hotel, called Paradise Beach, opened about a quarter mile west of the former Smith Point House and lasted until about 1958. In 1959, then BVA president Bob Starke resigned to form a separate corporation to sell stocks and bonds to buy land on Fire Island for Brookhaven hamlet residents, which became the Fire Place Beach Club. This 5-acre parcel was located just west of Bellport's Old Inlet Club and most Squassux boaters were members.

In 1964, legislation creating Fire Island National Seashore was enacted and both the Old Inlet and Fire Place Beach Club properties were condemned and purchased by FINS. However, two 5-year leaseback agreements were signed and the Fire Place Beach Club remained open until 1974. FINS then decided that they would demolish the Fire Place Club but leave the Old Inlet Club dock, boardwalk and buildings for public use until nature claimed more than 50% of it, at which time it would become part of the Otis Pike Wilderness Area. That event occurred last year on October 29th, with Superstorm Sandy.

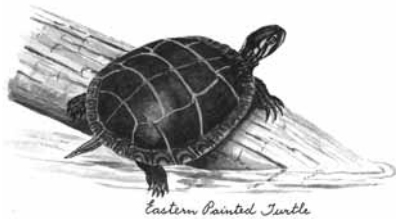
This will be the first boating season since the 1950s where Squassux boaters will again be challenged to find a way over to the ocean beach, but I'm sure they'll figure it out.

Marty Van Lith
BVA Historian



New Look for the BVA

We are pleased to introduce our new BVA logo featuring Brookhaven resident, the Eastern Painted Turtle. Last fall we worked with Searles Graphics to redesign the BVA stationery and logo. The Puleston family graciously gave their permission for the BVA to use Dennis Puleston's painting of the turtle. You can spot these turtles sunning themselves along the edges of the Carmans River and Beaver Dam Creek. Like many of us, they emerge from hibernation this time of year



and enjoy getting out to see their neighbors. Brookhaven residents are famous for stopping on a walk or a drive or a bike ride to let turtles cross the road safely. Perhaps

this is the turtles' way of helping us slow down and enjoy the pleasures of life in the hamlet. We hope our new mascot will remind us to continue to protect and preserve the Carmans River, Beaver Dam Creek and the wildlife in our community.

Ellen Clyne
Editor

BVA BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT:

Kathleen Scheibel

VICE PRESIDENT:

Frank Miller

SECRETARY:

Ellen Clyne

TREASURER:

Janet Quirk

DIRECTORS:

John Curiale

Deb Love Sack

Lenny DaConto

John Knapp

Jeffrey Jensen

Michael Rizzo

Carol Capaldo

Jeremiah McGiff

Chris Marshall

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.



Fire Place

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

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #17
ECRWSS
BROOKHAVEN NY 11719

Resident
Brookhaven, NY 11719

