

Illustration by
Dennis Puleston

Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring 2014

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

Erastus Corning Hawkins

Today's Brookhaven Hamlet is the oldest settlement on the south shore of Brookhaven Town and the largest of the Town's Historic Districts. The name of this newsletter reflects the fact our community was named Fire Place for more than two centuries. Through the leadership of the Old South Haven Presbyterian Church, Fire Place was the hotbed of the American Revolution in Suffolk County. During the two centuries following our independence, many of Fire Place's residents contributed greatly to the building of America.



E. C. Hawkins

One such person was Erastus Corning Hawkins, who would become perhaps America's greatest civil engineer of the 19th century, acclaimed both nationally and internationally.

Erastus was born on Sept. 8, 1860, to Capt. Bartlett and

Clarissa Hawkins, on the Hawkins family farm, which was on the west side of the Little Neck peninsula. This neck lies between Little Neck Run on the west and Yaphank Creek on the east, southward from Montauk Highway to Carmans River with Barto Road roughly bisecting it. Erastus attended the little South Haven School and went on to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to earn his engineering degree.

The Hawkins family was among the first settlers to own land here at Fire Place, having purchased two meadow lots in 1664. The will of one of Erastus Hawkins's ancestors, Zachariah Hawkins, is one of the first to be recorded in Suffolk County. Erastus's great-great grandparents are buried in one of the two Hawkins family cemeteries on the Little Neck peninsula.

Erastus's career began in earnest in 1884 with the construction of the Citizens' Canal, an extensive irrigation project in Colorado, which was considered a major

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The Zula Rides Again!

I was heading over to the new Old Inlet last summer & was on Tooker's creek when I looked back toward Tooker's boat yard and saw a very different but beautiful wooden boat heading out as well. It took me a few seconds but I recognized her as the Zula!, Adam Starke at the helm with his fiancé Jamie aboard as well. She was completely restored, thanks to current owner Dave Starke's persistence and love of wooden boats. Dave bought the Zula about 30 years ago in rather sad shape (he outbid his nephew Adam for her. Adam, at age 3 recognized a classic boat and bid a dollar (see picture below). She sat in brother Bill's boat shed at Tooker's, with Dave making slow progress on the monumental restoration project.

Dave has to be complimented for staying the course, as you can imagine the family jokes and rolled eyes when it came to the subject of restoring Zula. The gentle ribbing stopped though, when Dave hired Ricardo Vicente in 2004. Ricardo replaced the transom, replaced the aft deck, spliced in a new keel, finished sistering the ribs that Dave started, built the



The Zula when Dave first bought her.

cockpit floor, replaced the canvas on the cabin, rebuilt the seats, built the step-up deck (with mahogany that local boat builder Steve Gould got from a public school demo in NY), replaced the floor boards, and rebuilt the interior cabinetry.

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Visit our website at: www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org

Squassux Spring 2014

The calendar shows that spring is on the way. However, the thermometer shows that it is eighteen degrees, and the weatherman is reporting that more snow and another polar vortex is on the way. So I guess we will go with the calendar and start planning this year's boating season. We had a very cold winter but Squassux did well. The Ice Eaters worked overtime and kept ice damage non existent. Even the river fared well.

The potholes are scheduled to be refilled and the guard service will be back with new responsibilities and will be more visible. We should be good to go on April 15th. All we need now is for the weather to cooperate. Keep your fingers crossed.

Michael J. Rizzo
Squassux Chairman

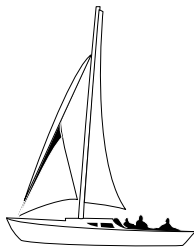


Snowy Owl resting on Fire Island Photo by Lan Rice

Dockmaster Report Spring 2014

What a long, crummy winter! If I can find a positive I can relate relative to winter at Squassux Landing this year, it would be the performance of the Ice Eaters the BVA Board invested in three years ago. They are expensive, require maintenance, eat a lot of electricity and place challenges on the electric grid powering them. However, to date, no ice has damaged any docks. Preventing ice damage saves a great deal of money and has already paid for these units several times over. They operate with thermostats which cause them to run only when air temperatures are below freezing as a cost savings feature. Mike Rizzo, Squassux Chairperson, and I have kept a close eye on them this winter as they sometimes act temperamentally when very cold and wet. Once the cold weather abates, repairs and improvements can begin early so the Marina should be ready to open by April 15th.

Squassux docking should be at capacity once again with nearly all of the slips already assigned. If any resident requires a temporary second slip for 2014, please let me know soon. If you change boats (bigger or smaller) tell me as it may be difficult to find an appropriately sized berth last minute. In case you have decided not to use your slip or give it up altogether, also contact me. Your gate/ramp key will be sent



out prior to opening, after the Iceaters are removed, and after most of the repairs are completed to the roadway and docks.

Please review the Rules and Regulations sent to all boaters with their January bills. Safety for all is paramount. Keep car and boat speeds to a minimum, avoid parking on grass and canal embankments, and after the boat fire last year, be mindful of safe gasoline management. During spring boat commissioning, you or your mechanic should take a close look at fuel tanks, fuel lines, and carburetors and flame arresters if so equipped. You do not want to put your family, friends, or other boaters in peril with a preventable fire. If you have no hull or liability insurance on your boat, look into it. A policy could save you lots of anguish later.

I must remind everyone to remit dock payment, and include a copy of your current boat registration with your check. If you have any questions concerning any aspect of boating at Squassux Landing, please reach me during the day at 631-521-4411. I look forward to seeing all of you soon.

Andy Rubin
Dockmaster

South Country Community Leadership Network

In November of 2013, the BVA was invited to participate in a new community initiative developed by Dr. Joseph Giani, Superintendent of Schools and Suffolk County Deputy Police Commissioner, Risco Mention-Lewis. Over 40 organizations and individuals from the South Country Central School District joined together to form the South Country Community Leadership Network. Led by Commissioner Mention-Lewis, the Network works to create solutions that are community-based and community supported for residents of our school district. The focus is on addressing underlying

issues to promote a stronger and safer community.

The Network is beginning to address a broad variety of issues such as job training and job fairs, youth athletic scholarships, distribution of winter coats and positive options for at-risk youth. Many services and resources already exist and the Network is compiling a Directory of Community Services to consolidate the information in one place. You can find more information on the Leadership Network at www.southcountry.org

Ellen Clyne

Fireplace Park Restoration

A group of interested gardeners have been working with the BVA, the Town of Brookhaven, and the NYS DEC to help restore Fireplace Park, also known as Zimmer Park, which sustained quite a bit of damage in Hurricane Sandy. Located at the triangle where South Country Road and Fireplace Neck Road meet, this park and the adjacent Memorial Park are at the heart of the Fireplace Historic District in Brookhaven hamlet.

Helen Geraghty, Deb Love, Jane Tierney and Ellen Williams worked with Jeff Jenson, BVA Board Member and Arborist, and with Lynn Brown of the BVA Tree Committee to choose and acquire six new trees provided by the Town. In compliance with the Town's policy of using native species in its parks, two each of red maple, red oak, and disease-resistant elm were planted last spring after the Town removed the many fallen trees. Helen, Deb, Jane and Ellen undertook weekly watering. It seems the trees survived the very hot, dry summer, and so far, the snowy winter.

Helen raised funds for additional planting at a potluck supper, and the money was donated to the BVA Tree Committee. Jeff Jensen co-ordinated the purchase of three tupelos, and six American hollies. These were planted by Frank Petriagnani's Terraservice. The ad-hoc park committee also donated and planted bearberry to stabilize the bank of the pond, and winterberry to help mitigate road run-off, and they provided weekly watering to these as well.

Since the most important feature of this little park is the pond and the beautiful Beaver Dam Creek flowing through it, everyone involved is working to comply with DEC regulations regarding wetland plantings and removal of invasive aquatic plants. The watercress in particular seemed to create a problem last summer. We have been advised, though, that pulling out the weed would further negatively impact the ecosystem of the creek and pond. It might open the way for something much worse to happen. It is possible

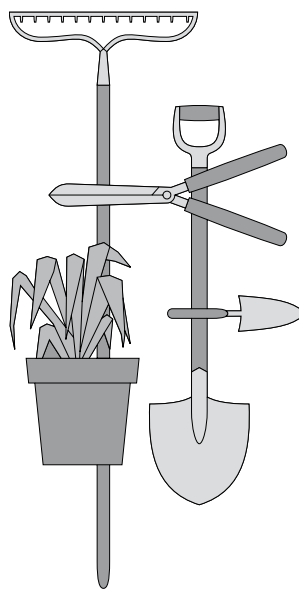
that the increased sunlight due to fallen trees, and the very hot summer, as well as the increased nitrogen load in the creek from run-off has enhanced the spread of the watercress. It is hoped that the new trees and perhaps a cooler summer will curb the growth of this plant which while not native to North America has been here for centuries. (Using less fertilizers along the watershed would also be helpful.) Other very invasive plants such as knotweed, and mugwort are

over-running the west and south edges of the park. Permits are required to remove these in a wetland area, and we are hoping to work with the Town on this project.

Once all the new trees and shrubs were in place, the committee looked at the general appearance of the park. It was decided that the park deserved some more attractive furniture, just to pull it together and create some visual harmony. It seemed to become a bit of a jumble in recent years. The committee got some recommendations from nearby villages, and selected two sturdy tables and a litter receptacle all made of powder-coated steel. Help from the Brookhaven Fire Department and the Post-Morrow Foundation are making it possible to buy them for the park this spring. Many, many thanks to them for all the help!

The BVA will be co-ordinating some volunteers to power-wash the gazebo and benches, and possibly refresh the paint where necessary. It will be all spruced up in keeping with the vision of a lovely, green, serene park. In the spirit of simplicity, no signs or other visual distractions will be added. By caring for our new native trees and shrubs, protecting the creek and pond, and keeping the park clean, our community will preserve a beautiful natural space for quiet play or contemplation as well as the perfect spot from which to watch the Memorial Day Parade.

Ellen Williams



Spring 2014 Clean Up

Every spring and fall the BVA organizes a clean up in the hamlet. Now that the snow has melted it's time to give the neighborhood a good spring cleaning. Please join us and your neighbors as we give the streets a clean sweep. All ages are welcome. Any time you can donate is helpful. We appreciate your time and hard work!

The Spring Clean Up is April 24 at 10:00 am. Meet BVA Director Jeff Jensen at the Brookhaven Fire Department. Jeff will provide work gloves and trash bags. For more information please contact us at the website, BrookhavenVillageAssociation.org

Another Spring Clean Up

Do you ever wish the plastic bags filled with ads and flyers would stop landing in your driveway, your front yard or that puddle in the road? Hamlet resident Lou Blair saw them piling up and making litter on his street. He contacted the BVA and asked if there's anything to do about this. The answer is YES! You can STOP the delivery of these bundles by calling *Newsday* at 1-800-639-7329 and ask to be removed from the list. If you have a new neighbor, or one who travels a lot, share this information with them so we can get these bags off our roads and keep the lanes clean and green.

Ellen Clyne

Newsletter Committee

There were lots of great submissions for the spring newsletter. Thank you to all those who took time to write. The BVA would also like to thank Joe Collins who did roof work on the gazebo and donated his labor. Thank you to Jimmy Schait who painted the gazebo, Bob Fricken who donated work on the road grating and Uli Petri who donated his time to repair the west entrance to Squassux.

Chris and Ellen
Newsletter Committee

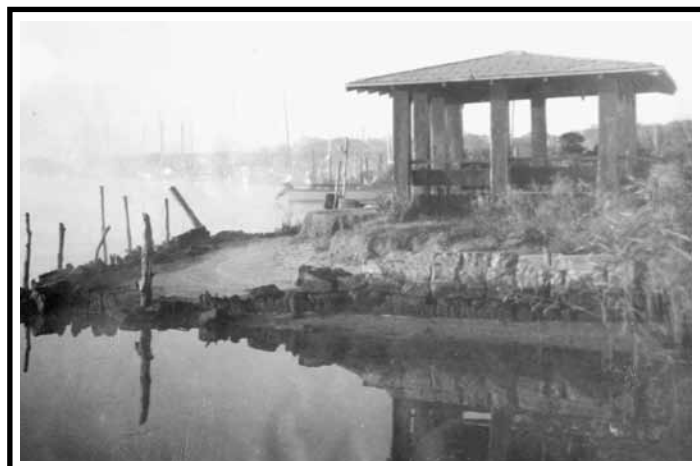


Photo provided by Jack Neill. Photo taken by Kerry Young circa 1960.
Come check out the latest restoration!

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

E. C. Hawkins (continued from page 1)

engineering accomplishment. His next major undertaking began on May 28, 1898, as the chief engineer in charge of building the narrow gauge White Pass & Yukon Railroad, which was completed in 1900. From 1900-1902, he was Vice President and General Manager of this railroad.

The White Pass & Yukon route climbs over 20 miles, from sea level in Skagway, Alaska, to almost 3000 feet at the summit at Yukon, Canada with steep grades of almost 3.9%. At the time, its construction was considered so difficult as to be "against all odds." The White Pass & Yukon Railroad has been designated a National Historic Engineering Site by the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers and the American Civil Engineering Society.

In 1907, Erastus became Vice President-Chief Engineer and General Manager of the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad in Alaska, which ran from Cordova to the Kennecott Copper Mines.

Erastus died at the age of 51 on April 9, 1912, following an emergency operation for "urethral calculus" while on a business trip to New York. Obituaries in the *Seattle Daily Times*, the *NY Times*, the *Suffolk County News* and the *Patchogue Advance* all stated that he was buried in the family cemetery. So did the session minutes of the Old South Haven Presbyterian Church. But when the Fire Place History Club restored many of the 22 headstones in the David Hawkins

Cemetery in 2010, we didn't find a headstone for him. We have no doubt that he is buried in the unmarked space between his brothers Irving and Emmett. So, why isn't there a headstone for this great American civil engineer?

Richard Thomas researched through Seattle newspaper accounts of the period following Erastus's death and found that his wife, Emma, who lived in Washington with their five children at the time of Erastus's death, was unable to provide a headstone. Richard also located two of Erastus's grandchildren, still living in Seattle, who confirmed that Erastus is buried here.

Thanks to the generosity of those who contribute to the BVA's cemetery fund, in 2014 – 102 years after Erastus's death – the Fire Place History Club and Brookhaven Village Association had a monument made for him. As of this writing (Feb. 2014) we are waiting for the snow to clear before having our stonemason, Hollis Warner, install the headstone. Sometime in April his grandchildren from Seattle will visit for the unveiling.

Marty Van Lith
BVA Historian

For more about Erastus Corning Hawkins see:
<http://brookhavenSouthHaven.org/hamletpeople>

The Zula Rides Again (continued from page 1)

The Zula has a rich history as Dave tells it:

She was originally built by Elmer A. Sperry, inventor of the gyroscope and was named for his wife Zula. Frederick Lord, known for his designs of the express commuter yachts of the Great Gatsby era, designed her. She was built in 1925 by the Ruddock Boat & Yacht Works in City Island, launched in 1926 and listed in Lloyd's book of Yachts in 1927.

Elmer Sperry's daughter Helen Sperry Lea, who lived in Bellport owned her next. Helen Lea would pilot the Zula between Bellport and the Old Inlet beach club (where now the new Old Inlet sits) along with her friends. Those who remember Helen Lea will say she had a 'strong personality'. Dave's brother John, has a funny Helen Lea-Zula story (justice can't be done to the story here, but if you ever run into John, ask him to give you his rendition of the story. Hank Maust has another funny Helen Lea-Zula story as well):

John was in junior high at home one afternoon when the phone rang and it was Helen Lea on the line. She

asked to speak to "Bob Starke". Now Bob is the name of brother Bob and also the name of his father Bob. John explained that Bob the younger was away at college and Bob the elder was at work and could he help her. The line went quiet for a few moments and Helen pretty much

said or rather commanded, in these words: "Come over to my house and drive my boat and my friends to Old Inlet beach club!". So John got on his bicycle, rode to her house in Bellport, and rowed Helen and her garden club friends out to the Zula, which was moored a short distance off shore. It was foggy that day and this was John's first time piloting the Zula and being all of 14 years old he was taking it across at a slow pace. He was straining to navigate in the fog, when

he felt something on his shoulder and it was Helen Lea tapping him with her umbrella, and she said: "Take her up to 2500 RPM!"

If you are out on Bellport bay this summer, look for the Zula, you won't be disappointed!



Bill and Dave Starke on the Zula.

Brookhaven Hamlet's Spring Clean-Up



**Thursday, April 24th
10:00 AM
Meet at the BROOKHAVEN FIREHOUSE**

SUNSET SALUTE

**Friday, June 20, 2014 6:00 pm
at Squassux Landing
IN HONOR OF MIKE RIZZO**

Please join us to say goodbye and thanks to Mike Rizzo for his 9 years as a Director of the BVA and this past year as Squassux Chairman. The BVA will provide ice tea, water, soda and dessert. Bring a cover dish to share. Enjoy the sunset at Squassux. BYOB and chairs. Hope to see you there!

BVA BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT:

Frank Miller

VICE PRESIDENT:

John Knapp

SECRETARY:

Ellen Clyne

TREASURER:

Janet Quirk

DIRECTORS:

Carol Capaldo

Deb Love Sack

Michael Rizzo

Lenny Daconto

Jeffrey Jensen

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.

Visit our website at: www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Brookhaven Village Association

7:30 PM, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2014

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

Fire Place

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

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