

Illustration by
Dennis Puleston

Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.
Fall 2021

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

President's Message



Mel Morin & Jayson Kaplan at the Squassux Dock Party 9/26/21

Welcome fall 2021 and a warmer welcome to the forty new homeowners who have made the very wise decision to call Brookhaven hamlet their home! Ours is a community rich in heritage, natural in beauty and strengthened in possibility because of you and to the many families and civic-minded residents living here and volunteering their time with the BVA.

Your Brookhaven Village Association has been your vanguard for nearly 115 years and this bi-annual Fire Place newsletter was first published in 1990. If you haven't done so already, take five minutes and visit www.brookhavenvillageassociation.org website to read the very first one page publication of the Fire Place Newsletter. Among the very familiar community concerns that still hold true even to this day, I now know why Brookhaven Hamlet was once called Fire Place!

In the six months since our spring 2021 Fire Place newsletter, our community was honored with additional landscape plantings, a new sign welcoming travelers to the hamlet was erected, our voices were heard at town meetings regarding landfill matters and infrastructure upgrades continue to be a priority down at Squassux with a focus on rebuilding/reconfiguring the boat ramp. Certified letters about the project were mailed to hamlet residents and the public notice and sign is in the works. The Freshwater Wetlands and Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers divisions of the DEC has completed a technical review of the project and do not have any objections. Our consultant, Cole Environmental, is frequently following up with the DEC for their final approval and the permit will be issued shortly.

There were many acts of community kindness and volunteer engagements that have occurred and for this, the BVA is very grateful. I would especially like to thank members, residents and everyone involved in this year's "Dock" Party. It was a perfect weather day for good food, friendly conversations and live music. I'm sure it's only going to get better.

Please enjoy the pages that follow and feel free to share your experiences and input by commenting to us from the BVA website. We'll continue to keep you informed on community matters and events in the weeks and months ahead as we forge ahead to close out the 2021 boating season and begin planning for the upcoming holidays.

In the words of the BVA past president, Jim Fuchs, I'd like to say thanks again to everyone "who give of their time and selves for the betterment of the community."

Respectfully,
Chris Ciervo
BVA President



Photo by Julia Villacara

PFAS Unchecked in Private Wells



According to the EPA, “per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, are a group of man-made chemicals that can accumulate in the body over time and exposure. They are typically found in a variety of places, however, drinking water is the most common carrier

when localized and associated with a specific facility (e.g., manufacturer, landfill, wastewater treatment plant, firefighter training facility). There is evidence that PFAS cause harm.”

Without the testing and filtration systems SCWA have in place for “city-water”, private well water users are at greater risk for PFAS contaminating their drinking water.

In October 2017, the Suffolk County Department of Health (SCDOH) identified 20 private wells within the Brookhaven landfill PFAS Private Well Assessment Area and did outreach with these owners. Four years later, 2/3 of the private wells have still not been tested, although no well owners refused testing. Of the 7 that were tested, two had PFAS levels above current drinking water standards and one had common landfill contaminants above drinking water standards (so 3/7 or ~40% of wells tested were found contaminated above drinking water standards per SCDOH). If you are one or someone you know are a private well water user in the area and have not been tested, contact Jason R. Hime, Principal Public Health Engineer, Chief of Office of Water Resources 631-852-5779, or email jason.hime@suffolkcountyny.gov

Testing is free as is a hook up to the public water line.

Thank you Kerim Odekon for the above information and for making the BVA Board, Town officials and a growing list of our elected officials aware of this hazard to our community members.

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
PUT A LITTLE LOVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY
WITH
Holidays in the Hamlet
Celebrate the season together.
Decorate the community tree with
your naturally made ornaments
Food, toy & holiday card drives ✦ Kids activities
DECEMBER 11, 2021 2-5PM
FIRE PLACE/ ZIMMER PARK

What are naturally made ornaments?
It is important that if any decorations fall off our community tree in the park that they not become litter or contaminants to the pond but can go right back into the environment. So, like last year, get creative and crafty with wood slices, food color dyed pine cones, sea shells or any natural elements you like that can be hung with jute or any other biodegradable cordage. Bring your creations down to the park and adorn our gorgeous tree as we gather together December 11th (rain-date the 12th) to celebrate the season as a community.

Fall 2021 Dockmaster Report

The boating community has experienced a resurgence. As in past years, all slips were always leased during my tenure as BVA Dockmaster, but during this covid pandemic, the community has decided to go boating in an unprecedented way. This past season, we had about 30 new resident boaters, and there is a waiting list of about 20 new boaters already. (If you have a friend or relative in another town, please do not have them call me for the non-resident list as I am not able to accommodate any new non-resident boaters.) Please remember no one can get a slip without a boat, and all boats must have a valid registration with the proper names and addresses.

Should anyone in the Hamlet move away, kindly let me know so I may reassign the slip. Also, if you have a desire for a different slip or you purchase a new boat, let me know prior to January of 2022. Once the new slips are assigned, it may be impossible to effect any changes. I have always been able to accommodate changes, but I must know of the circumstances early.

Remember, that you are required to occupy the slip assigned to you. Do not under any circumstances use another slip. Let me know if you use an empty slip or swap with another boater. The BVA has also instituted another policy. If you lease a slip and do not use it for an entire season, you will not be invoiced for it the following season and be placed on the waiting list by contacting the Dockmaster.

So far, only 2 used batteries and a couple of minor items have been pilfered this year. Everyone must be vigilant regarding any suspicious activities. We all must participate in keeping the marina safe. Lock the

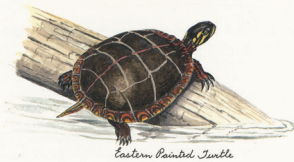
gate, especially when the security guard is off duty, and remove anything of value from your boat. Also, lock the launching ramp when it is unused. Yesterday, I saw two jetskis using the ramp. The same is true if you notice a speeder. Ask your neighbor to slow down for safety's sake.

Other assets to the marina this year have been the water system and the electrical grid. Please unplug any electric device not in use, and be sure you do not use any device or tool that draws too much wattage, or anything that is 220 volts. As for the water, be sure to close the valve and use a hose with a nozzle on it to be sure we do not have a wasteful outflow of water.

I wish to thank the BVA Board for all of its Squassux oversight and help, and the Squassux Committee that collectively works diligently to make sure Squassux Landing remains the special place it is. Andy Lovito has also been an invaluable resource by doing repairs required to keep everything operating efficiently.

As always, if you have any Squassux issues, suggestions, or questions, please call me at 631-521-4411.

Andy Rubin
BVA Dockmaster



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 (\$25 annually): \$ _____

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.BROOKHAVENVILLAGEASSOCIATION.ORG

Why Does A Box Turtle Cross the Road?



An interview with Pete Puleston

Pete Puleston has worked as a Field Naturalist for Lingblad Expeditions for 40 years. His travels have taken him everywhere a ship can go. When he's not working on a boat he divides his time between his farm in New Brunswick, Canada and Brookhaven Hamlet. Pete has studied the wildlife in the hamlet for decades and has a particular interest in turtles. For the past 6 years Pete has photographed 32 different box turtles on his property, with only 5 making a repeat appearance. This interview was conducted last June at his home in Brookhaven.

It's June now and I haven't seen many box turtles this year. Is that unusual?

I've seen one or two. You just don't see them this time of year. They are visible more often in July and August. They're laying eggs between now and August, usually 3--6 eggs each time, and this occurs several times. All the eggs are buried in a nest. It takes between 50 and 70 days for box turtle eggs to hatch. The time depends on the daily temperature. The sex is determined after the eggs start to develop. Warmer temperatures mean more females. Cooler temperatures mean more males. The eggs in the nest that are closer to the surface are naturally warmer. They become female turtles. The eggs on the bottom of the nest become males. The females mate once every 3 or 4 years. The average lifetime for a box turtle is 50 to 60 years.

In the past people who tried to rescue sea turtles would move their nests to more secure areas which were often in the shade. This produced only male sea turtles and affected the population that nests along the coast of Mexico and Texas. This shows why moving turtles from their habitat creates challenges, even when the intentions are good.

When did you first become interested in turtles?

I was always interested in reptiles. When I was about 3 or 4 I watched a snapper lay eggs. She buried them. I learned that it took 90 days for them to hatch. I was always looking for turtles on our property.

I had an early interest in snappers. They are native to this area. Snappers are scavengers. They help keep the water clean by weeding out sick birds and fish. They are predators of some fish, and will also eat the injured or dead fish found in the Carmans River.

In addition to Snapping Turtles, Spotted Turtles, the Eastern Painted Turtle, the Mud Turtle, the Diamond Back Terrapin and the Musk Turtle are native to Long Island. Most of those are on a big decline or are nearly extinct.

Box turtles, of course, are also native to Long Island. Over the years I've seen them all here.

What should we do when we see a turtle in the road?

Help it cross the road in the direction that it is going. They don't travel very far. Turtles spend their lives within a quarter of a mile from where they were hatched. If you move them they will spend the rest of their lives trying to find their way back to that spot. They are resilient in that way. They will come back to their home turf if possible, even travel on roads. But walking back to their territory increases the chance for them to get hit by a car or injured some other way as they try to return home.

It's not a good idea to take them home. Not a good idea to keep them as pets. They won't survive. Never a good idea to relocate them—unless they have to be moved due to major development and construction. Most likely the turtle you see has lived a lot longer than you—and right in that very spot. They have favorite areas and know where they're going. Sometimes it's to bury themselves for winter. Sometimes it's to lay their eggs.

Floyd Nichols Estate had a farm on the property and from 1900-1920 Nichols kept a record of the box turtles on the farm. In 1980's and 90's US Park Ranger found several of them on the estate. They were within 100-200 yards of where they were first found 60 to 80 years before.

What do you do if you find them mating?

Try not to disturb them. If a turtle is laying eggs stay away and let her finish. Sometimes you come across one out in the open digging and preparing a spot. They spook easily. If disturbed they will leave.

What do turtles eat?

Carion, insects, slugs, mushrooms, fruit, tomatoes. Fruit is attractive to thirsty turtles. They look for water and like to sit in shallow water or under a sprinkler. They will drown in a swimming pool or deep water if they can't get out, though they can swim across the river. So help them out of a swimming pool. When they hatch they are about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Babies eat more high protein, such as insects. Adults survive more on vegetation. It takes 10 to 15 years for them to mature and breed. Females will lay eggs their entire lives.

What habitat do they like?

They are solitary creatures and live alone. Females leave immediately after they lay their eggs. They make their nests in dunes and in the marsh. Turtles like to hibernate in marshes. Out of hibernation they like to sleep under foliage or where they can find shade, especially during the heat of the day.

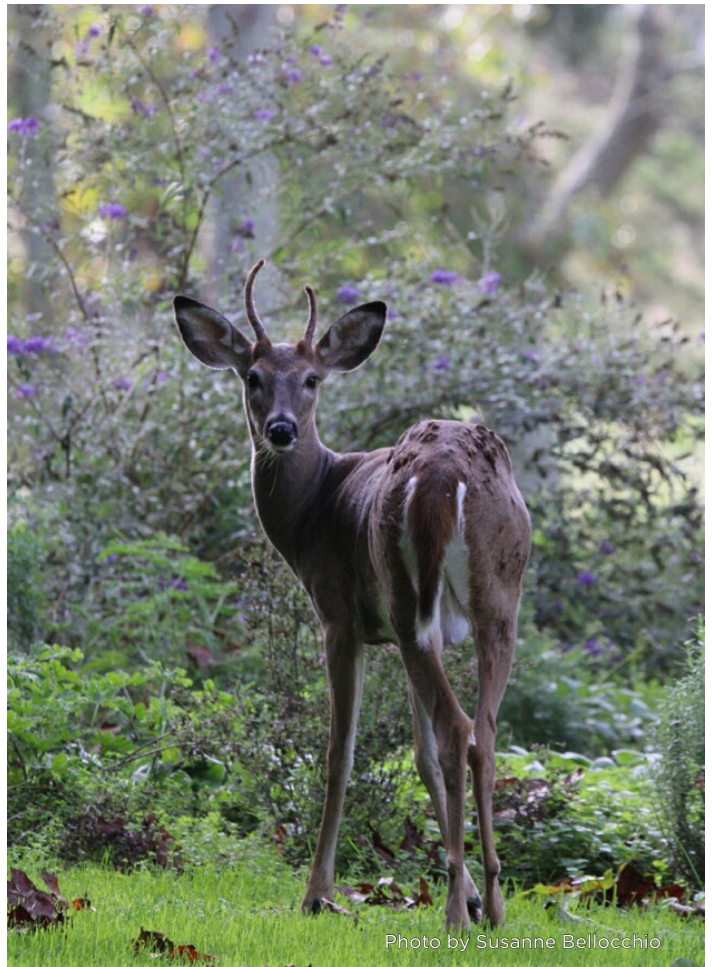


Photo by Susanne Bellocchio

How do you identify the males and females?

You can identify the sex by the color of the eyes. The males have red eyes and the female eyes are brown. Males usually have a brighter colored shell. Females are more likely to pull their heads into their shells. Males are not as timid. Of course the more obvious way to tell the sex is by the shape of the shell. The underside is concave for males and flat for the females.

Is it possible to tell the age of a box turtle?

You can look at the scutes, the 13 scales, that cover the shell. Count the rings in the scutes. They usually grow another ring on their scales every year. These rings are called annuli. It can be difficult to count each annuli as the turtles age. After they reach 40 or 50 years of age it's harder to see the annuli. The shell is the rib bone and it grows as the turtle grows. If a turtle is hit by a car and the shell cracks it has a chance of surviving. If the crack is not infected it can heal. You can also tell the age by measuring their size.

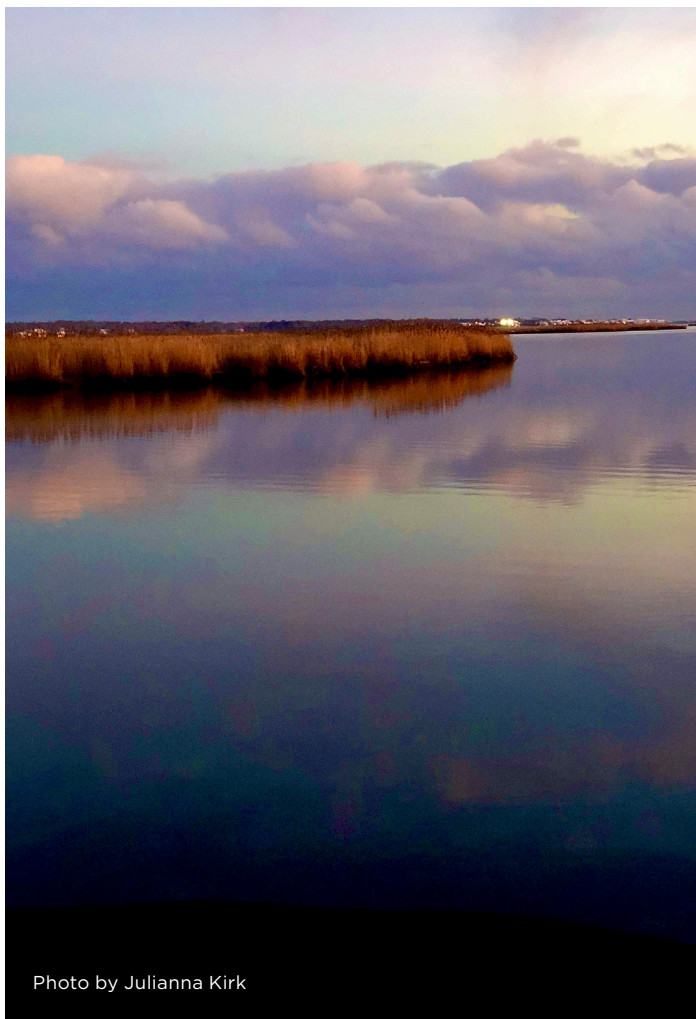


Photo by Julianna Kirk



by Ellen Clyne

Virginia Brown Scholarship Awards

The VB Scholarship Committee had the pleasure this year of reading excellent essays. The committee awarded 2 scholarships in the amount of \$3,000 and \$2,000 at the BHS awards ceremony in June. The winner of the \$3,000 scholarship, Jake D'Esposito, is attending Clarkson University majoring in Computer Science. The winner of the \$2,000 scholarship, Vivian Fritz, is attending Gettysburg College, Sunderman Conservatory of Music majoring in Music. Both the winning essays are included in this newsletter and we hope everyone enjoys it as much as the committee enjoyed selecting it.

Janet Quirk

Virginia Brown Scholarship Committee Chairperson



Virginia "Ginger" Brown

Jake D'Esposito, 2021 Virginia Brown Scholarship Essay

I consider myself very fortunate to have lived all my life in Brookhaven Hamlet. No matter where I may be in the Hamlet, I always feel like I am part of a storybook. You just have to look out your window to understand what I am talking about. To me it is very rewarding to be able to enjoy the deer grazing in the woods, the birds chirping and flying overhead, the bunnies, the flowers and vegetation all around us, the individual architecture of each residence and their respective perfectly manicured yards. The natural beauty and uniqueness of where we live cannot be found anywhere else. There is no other place like the Hamlet of Brookhaven. One thing I enjoy very much is going for walks or bicycle rides with my mom. We don't have to go really far to find a trail in the woods. There is so much to explore around us.

I have volunteered many hours of community service around the Hamlet. One year I helped at the HOG peeling garlic. While I was at the HOG, one day I was able to go feed the chickens. I have never done that before. At first, it was a little overwhelming and scary to see so many chickens approaching me. The chickens knew I was there to feed them, so they all came towards me. I got used to them quickly. It was fun and a new experience for me. Another year I helped at the Brookhaven Library during a children's program where they set up pools around the grassy areas around the library's yard. The kids had so much fun and I did too. Last year, together with my Boy Scout Troop, we cleaned up the invasive plants growing next to the road on the wetlands on Bay Road next to the Post Morrow property. I find it very rewarding to be able to give back to the community that gives so much to me. When it was time to decide on my Eagle project, I wanted to do something that will enhance life in the Hamlet. I have had so many positive comments about the Purple Martin colony my team, under my supervision, erected at Squassux Landing. Residents of the Hamlet not only

enjoy seeing the birds around but have commented on the noticeable decline in the mosquito population at Squassux since the establishment of the colony.

I enjoy and appreciate nature very much; however, my real passion in life lies with anything related to computers which is why when I start college next September, I am going to major in Computer Science.

Since the end of tenth grade, I have wanted to become a computer scientist. In the summer of 2018, I built my first computer with parts I had saved for and picked myself. At the time I was only interested in talking and playing with my friends. In eleventh grade, I started taking a computer science class at school which I loved very much.

Over the summer between eleventh and twelfth grade, I had experimented with server hosting, coding in Java, domains, and Linux. I did this to be able to get a Minecraft server going so I could play with my friends. In 12th grade, I continued on into an advanced placement computer science class. The class was centered around Java, the language I had been coding in since the start of summer so it was not too difficult for me. I had always wanted to create a game and I was confident enough at that point that I set out to do it. I used the "Light Weight Java Game Library" as a foundation and through some tutorials I found online, I have been able to make a small game. Now, I am still working on the game as I had only started it not long ago and I am as excited as ever to learn more about programming. Also, with the robotics team at my school, I have been working on getting some hardware to do work on some fully autonomous operations using a camera.

I am very excited to go to college next year and continue learning more in-depth about computers and how they work. I am so eager to learn and I know a

college education will help me get really far in life. I have been able to do so much just with the classes I am taking in high school and what I have been learning on my own that I am looking forward to what the future will bring with a college education. I would like to get a master's degree in a branch of computer science. I do not know yet what branch I would like to specialize in, but I have

time to decide. I want to learn as much as I can about computers.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of entering the selection process for this scholarship. You will not be disappointed with me.

Jake D'Esposito

Vivian Fritz, 2021 Virginia Brown Scholarship Essay

I grew up walking and riding my bike through Brookhaven Hamlet. I enjoyed the sounds of water running under the bridge on the way to the Brookhaven library and the birds waking me in the backyard. All of this was music to me. Along with its beautiful sights, the Hamlet is also full of music, and that is really where my passion lies.

I grew up in a musical family. My cousins are all music teachers, they play just about anything with strings - and even have a local folk band. I spent many nights and weekends at The HOG farm or the Bellport Bandshell, enjoying the warmth of the community as we listened to folk music and fiddle tunes while running barefoot through the garden full of flowers and insects or combing the tiny beach at the marina for treasures.

When I was three, I looked through a toy magazine and saw a toy harp being advertised. I decided right then and there that I had to play harp. Though my family is musical, no one plays the harp, and 3-year-old me knew I had to be different. I begged for years for a harp. I wanted to stand out, and nothing was going to stop me.

One of the first things I learned about playing harp is how much it hurts. The small intestines of approximately 14 cows make the strings on one harp - and I have had blisters on every finger that has ever touched a string. And getting a harp to rehearsal is not for the faint of heart. Strapping a harp into its case and dolly and loading it into a car seems straight forward, but my harp weighs around 100 pounds, so lifting and moving it is challenging....so many times my harp started to slip off its wheeled dolly, and I saw my life flash before my eyes!

Blistered fingers and the panic of moving a harp is worth it. Wherever a harp is, it stands out with its six-foot-tall crown-topped column and bronze trim. As a harpist, I stand out. Rarely are there harp sections in orchestras. I will never be the shy musician hidden among many other musicians. My instrument is distinctive - as different as me.

People expect the harp to sound delicate or ethereal, but I discovered I could create new, untraditional sounds. A pedal harp has nearly 2,000 parts, all with different functions. This led me to experimenting, writing lines of music where I did everything BUT pluck the strings. I would pick at the part above the pedal disks, rapidly change pedals from sharps to flats, pluck with my fingernails, and tap on the soundboard. I would do anything that sounded cool and different. These ventures

in alternative sounds led my teacher to give me modern and experimental pieces to play, and I adored them. From middle eastern to contemporary jazz, I incorporated it all into my playing. While I love the classical sounds of harp, I cannot get enough of the "weird."

I was an avid YouTube watcher as a child, and I loved watching "let's play" - videos documenting the playthrough of video games by different people. I obsessed over story-based games, consuming them like I needed them to live. I loved the emotional journey I went on with them. As I got older, I realized that what I loved was not what most people liked - the writing, voice acting, or the animation. What resonated with me in every game was the soundtrack.

I discovered how composing for video games is different from other mediums. Video game music must loop - the end of a track must be the start of the track because nobody knows how long the music will play. I watched hours of videos, picking apart soundtracks and learning how

composers create suspense, making music work as the game changes, tracks that made me cry in a world where the game reacts and repeats endlessly as a player explores. The music is flexible, and transitions happen in minutes or hours, depending on the player.

I want to be able to make music that creates this kind of extraordinary experience. Music has been an anchor in my life, but I need to find my own voice and continue to be as unique as my harp. I have been accepted to the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College. It is a place to find my music.

The Sunderman Conservatory is a dedicated place for music inside a liberal arts college, a conservatory surrounded by an academic community. It's a place of arpeggios and anthropology, ensembles and environmental science, symphonies and sociology, harmonies and history. My choice of college will help shape my future, but what I become is up to me.

My 3-year-old self knew I had to be different. Like a video game composer writing music in a way that the end points towards the beginning of a track, my future starts with my first wish to be unique.

Vivian Fritz

Updates at Brookhaven Landfill & Surrounding Lands

Back in mid-August, the BVA Board president, several directors, and former Ad hoc committee member, Tom Williams, were invited by the Brookhaven Town leadership to Town Hall for a private meeting. One of many, Town officials explained, would be held with community organizations regarding the landfill. The agenda was to address ongoing concerns, its future, the proposed rezoning and sale of property surrounding the landfill that had been slated for the now-canceled ashfill. Supervisor Romaine, Chief of Staff Johnston, Councilman Loguercio, Town Attorney Eaderesto, Planning Commissioner Reilly, Recycling & Sustainable Materials Management Commissioner Andrade and Chief of Operations Matt Miner were in attendance. Mr. Romaine's invitation was a direct response to our community's adamant opposition, as conveyed by the BVA Board in writing and public testimony, to District 6 Councilman Dan Panico's proposed motion BR 1 to rezone 136 wooded acres from residential to "light industrial" in preparation for the sale of 80 plus acres.

The first order of business was Supervisor Romaine's explanation that the Town administration is selling to pay off debts associated with the operation of the landfill. The other 50 acres will not be sold but will also be rezoned in this proposal. Those remaining acres are adjacent to the landfill and are intended as a "buffer zone" for now.

When the rezoning was first announced weeks earlier it was met with rancor at the July public Town Hearing with unanimous voices in strong opposition to the proposal. It is the biggest one-time sell-off of town property in the history of Brookhaven Town. It has many concerned about how it may change the dynamic of the immediate area, how it impacts the environment of surrounding communities and our waters, how it will affect the Township's future, and then there's the issue of destroying more wooded lands. Many locals were upset by the lack of communication from the town about the proposal and how fast it was pushed through within the council without adequate time and consideration of public knowledge and feedback. It should be noted that Brookhaven Landfill Action and Remediation Group's (BLARG) petition to stop the rezoning received over 600 signatures and there were 82 pages of public testimony submitted for the public hearing against the proposal. At this time, BR1 has not been publicly voted on by the Town Council and no decision date on the matter has been announced. Our councilman Mr. Loguercio, as of September 16th, is still "reviewing the public comments along with the merits of the project".

The arguments against the rezoning and sale are centered around the quality of life of those that live there and nearby, the impact of more industries brought into an already congested area and the environmental impact on us all in the surrounding communities. There is also a concern for the economic future of the Township and the potential of the Town-owned acreage in yielding

continuous profitable growth rather than a one-shot deal. Could the lands be developed to establish eco-friendly, sustainable businesses owned and operated by the Town to help cover the \$30-40 million per annum revenue loss the closure of the ash burying business would create? When asked if that is something to consider, Mr. Romaine responded that he was not in favor of the Town running businesses.

Arguments for the proposal centered on offloading land no longer useful, according to Town officials, and paying down the Town's debts. In our conversation, Town officials asserted that they would be conscientious and discerning as to what type of industry would go in the to-be-developed "industrial parks". There are also dozens of restrictive covenants established by the Planning Commission for which the land can't be used. However, there is no guarantee those covenants cannot be changed. The Town recently amended its restrictive covenants on acreage attached to the project at the Meadows at Yaphank despite the Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Associations' strong opposition to those changes.

As we began the second half of our meeting we wanted to discuss the future of the landfill and what it would look like after it is officially closed*. It was here we realized that the Town's description of what is to come is very different from public perception. The asterisk, which we will just tell you now, is meant to inform the reader that the landfill won't be closed like you think it would be closed. We were told that they will no longer bury burnt trash (ash) or bury c&d (construction and demolition debris) and that the last "cell" will be graded, capped, and installed with water/gas collection equipment by the end of 2024 so long as proper contour grades are reached according to NYSDEC regulations. Approximately 75% of cells are currently capped with more planned for 2023. However, almost everything else that happens operationally now will continue: It will still be a "transfer station" where our collected trash will be sorted and placed on trucks. The Resident Drop Off will continue accepting C&D debris after the closure of the landfill. This debris will be transferred via roll-off trucks to an approved C&D processing facility for proper disposal. Drop Off post closure will continue to accept various materials such as batteries and tires. The Town's Material Recovery (Recycling) Facility (MRF) will continue to operate, via a private contractor, into the foreseeable future. The Town is presently soliciting proposals for the handling / disposal of its yard waste; however, operations are expected to be similar to years past. Truck traffic in and out of the facility will continue albeit reduced. Monitoring of the closed "cells" will be ongoing for 3 decades minimum to ensure that the liners underneath them hold and any other issues that may arise can be dealt with as required by the NYSDEC. The Town has plans to use some of the 270 acres there as a place to store fuel cells and to produce energy. They are currently working with a contractor to build

a solar field that they hope will produce 8 megawatts of electricity when it is completed with the potential to double the megawatts as the landfill is fully built out. Wind turbines are another possible energy producer that was discussed.

As for the future of waste in our Township, according to Supervisor Romaine and others directly involved with the matters of the landfill, there is little to no help and no regional plan coming from NYSDEC on deciding what to do and how to do it. Town officials have hitched hope onto then-incoming NYS Governor Hochul that the town can get some attention, guidance, and money to help with the process of changing how the Town will organize waste disposal into the future. Town officials haven't shared how they plan to guide households towards zero waste, which was the ultimate solution recommended by the Ad hoc committee in February when building the ashfill was considered. There are no plans on educating

households on reducing garbage or strengthening our recyclables program similar to what smaller NYS townships like Southampton have implemented. The Town's plan, as of now, is once the last cell is closed the collection of our trash will be done by private carters. It would be trucked or railed off Long Island to another location with surrounding communities just like our own.

Admittedly, this is a complex, continuous issue with no single solution. We all produce trash and it has to go somewhere and it appears most everyone is frustrated in one way or another about the matter. While it is some relief that much of Long Island's trash will no longer be buried just a few short miles from us, the problem of what to do with it still persists.

Carlton Stewart and Julia Villacara

Nevermore...not so much!



Photo by Susanne Bellocchio

Have you been hearing some interesting sounds from the trees? A strange cooing or a deep "Yup" or a throaty caw as if a giant frog were making that noise? Perhaps a gasp-worthy shriek from the sky? Have you seen enormous, seemingly steroid

enhanced crows in the area? Hooked billed, two-ton black birds converging and conversing above?

It is the return of the ravens.

A large population of the mysterious, often bad omen associated, winged sky giants have returned to our neighborhood this past Spring/Summer starting new families here. Ravens are known for their exceptional intelligence and, like our residents, they know a good location when they find it.

But why here?

Simple - we now have room in our ecological system. Go-to nature guru Eric Powers of CEED explained that in 2008 there was a bird flu that drastically reduced our corvid population of crows and blue jays leaving openings for Turkey Vultures, Bald Eagles and Common Ravens to return in subsequent years. Eagles began their march across the Island in 2010 and found a nice niche here in the hamlet. In 2011 the first ravens' nest was spotted in Hampton Bays and, like the Eagles and

Turkey Vultures, they are spreading out across the Island filling in their rightful ecological placement that the crows and blue jays once reigned over. Eagles and ravens are often co-conspirators residing in the same location so where you have one population growing, you'll find another. Ranger Eric summarized "with these and other species now added to our local ecosystem, the crow population has leveled out and probably won't ever reach those incredibly high densities as in the past. Our whole ecosystem has reached a new equilibrium."

Some bird nerd facts: Ravens have over 100 vocalizations and are apt to mimic human speech - *I know I'll watch what I say when doing yard work this fall.* These corvids are exceptionally playful and known for their aeronautical aerobics. Think of an avian Top Gun performance every day above us. Ravens use gestures to point out things to one another and, like crows, can use objects as tools. They've been known to recognize human faces and characteristics. The birds can actually hold grudges so treat them with kindness even though a group of common ravens is referred to as an "unkindness", a "treachery" or a "conspiracy".

Well, Poe was all wrong. Ravens are no longer "nevermore". Our hamlet treetops are officially under contract with loads of "treachery" settling into our neighborhood.

Bugs & hisses,
Julia Villacara



BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

SQUASSUX

SHIRTS

T-shirts \$15
Long Sleeve \$25
Hoodies \$40



Missed our new shirts?

Order yours now!

Order by 11.15.21
for the holidays

Email your order to
bvamail@brookhaven
villageassociation.org



PayPal

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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)

Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund	\$ _____
BVA Tree Fund	\$ _____
Virginia Brown Scholarship Fund	\$ _____
Hamlet Historic Fund	\$ _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Checks must be made out to the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.BROOKHAVENHAMELTFUNDATION.ORG



Photo by Susanne Bellocchio



Photo by Mike Busch



Photo by Mike Busch



Photo by Julianna Kirk



Photo by Mike Busch

Thanks to our contributing community members whose photos of our familiar surroundings and nature allows us to appreciate life through a different lens. If you'd like to contribute, please send to newsletterbva@gmail.com

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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

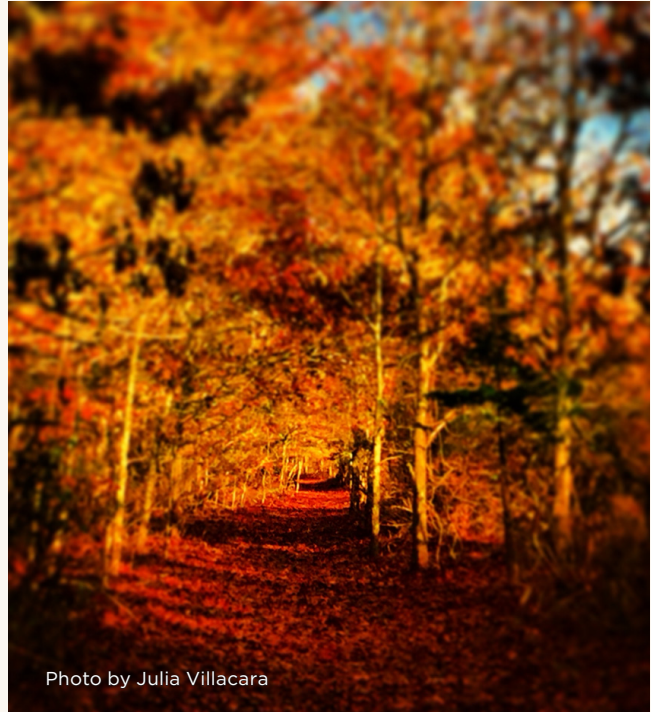


Photo by Julia Villacara

Fire Place

A Community Newsletter from the
Brookhaven Village Association

PO Box 167

Brookhaven, New York 11719

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