



Illustration by
Dennis Puleston

Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring 2025

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

President's Message

Dear Brookhaven Hamlet Community,

On a warm, sunny day, I walked past Brookhaven Elementary School and noticed the parking lot was empty—except for a young mother helping her child learn to ride a bike. I paused, wondering how many children had wobbled through their first rides in that very spot. How many proud, anxious parents watched from the sidelines? And how many more will, decades from now?

Whether you learned to ride there, watched your children, or imagine that moment for your future family—the feeling is the same: *connection*. These shared spaces and the memories they hold are what make this place home. They're the threads that tie us to one another.

Much like the school lot, Squassux Landing is filled with memories. For generations, families have discovered nature along its shores, celebrated at the Squassux Fairs, and found peace watching eagles return over the river. The Landing has become a hub for connection, recreation, and the best of South Shore living.

But with rising tides and eroding shorelines, Squassux faces real risks. That's why we launched the Shoreline Preservation Fund through the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation, our 501(c)(3) arm. The goal: to install a low-sill bulkhead along Arthur's Creek and the Carmans River. We're currently in the agency approval phase. This long-term effort will take years to complete, but we're deeply grateful to all who've donated and to the boating community for supporting the slip raffle and recent surcharge investing in the future of Squassux. We've all shared in the Spirit of Squassux, and it's up to us to protect this gift for generations to come.



Thank you to those who've supported the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation Plantings Fund. Your generosity helps us carry out one of the BVA's core missions. This spring, three new native trees were planted under the care of Kris Holmberg and the Quality of Life Plantings Committee—with three more planned for fall. We're also grateful to the homeowners nurturing them. Together, we're growing a greener, more connected community.

The Virginia Brown Scholarship Committee is now preparing to review applications. As a committee member, reading students' essays about what the Hamlet means to them is always the highlight of my year. Thank you to everyone who supports the future of our community through your contributions.

A huge thank-you to our backbone team: BVA Dockmaster and Manager Andy Lovito, and Treasurer Janet Quirk. Over the winter, they handled invoicing, registrations, processed payments, and ensured a smooth and timely marina opening. Thanks to their work, Squassux is fully booked, and those slip fees are already being reinvested in upgrades—from new mooring poles and security cameras to fresh gravel for safety and stability.

Continued on page 2

President's Message Continued

Andy's vigilance continues to protect our long-term infrastructure investments, and Janet's integrity and sharp eye keeps our operations, invoicing, and tech systems running smoothly. We'd be lost (and very analog) without her.

Thank you to our boating community—your partnership is key to Squassux's success as a cherished community resource.

Our Mission, Continued

For 119 years, residents have served on the BVA Board, guided by the same sense of connection that ties us all to this place. Today's Board proudly continues that tradition.



Serving as President is a humbling and reflective experience, and I'm deeply grateful for the trust of our residents, the support of the Board, and the dedication of our employees—who give way beyond a paycheck. The past few months have brought their challenges as we continue to advocate for our community, operate the marina, raise funds, and fulfill the BVA's vision to strengthen the Hamlet—now and for generations to come.

What sustains me is the thoughtful guidance I've received and the shared passion of our Directors, who have each made meaningful contributions to our collective work.

As my own "training wheels" wobble off, I'm especially thankful for the steady support of our former Presidents—John Knapp, who continues to lead the Land Use Committee, and Chris Ciervo remains an active member of the Squassux Committee, continuing to provide valuable support

with security camera installations and guidance on the Shoreline Preservation Project.

I'm also grateful to Vice President Chris Bland for his stewardship of the Shoreline Preservation Project and his ongoing guidance on marina operations, alongside the Squassux Committee. His support has allowed me to stay focused on chairing the Quality of Life Committee and broader community needs, while helping the BVA advance strategic planning, establish standard operating procedures, and foster growth—energized by the generative ideas of our Board.

Thank you to both longtime and new BVA Members. Your annual dues are reinvested into community events, welcome bags for new residents, and this very newsletter—all helping to build connection and a sense of belonging across our Hamlet.

A New Chapter for The Fire Place

A special thank-you to Director Kevin Glynn, who has served as editor of this newsletter, *The Fire Place* for the past six years. His wit, dedication, and patience (especially with my nitpicking) kept this publication strong—particularly during the pandemic, when it served as a much-needed reprieve in Hamlet homes. Kevin, it's been a joy—thank you, and *good afternoon*.

Now, the file officially passes to Director Karin Wagner, stepping in as lead editor, working alongside photo editor and BVA Board Director Lynda Wagner, who is donating her talents as a photographer to this newsletter and Secretary Kristin Kirk-Murphy who also shares her writing skills. This issue marks Karin's first at the printer, and we're excited to see her voice and vision take root. We kick off this new chapter with a special 80th Anniversary celebration of Squassux, featuring contributions from BVA Historian Martin Van Lith. Enjoy!

Thank you to each and every one of you for being part of what makes our Hamlet not just a place, but a home. In our shared care and commitment, we find the true strength of community.

With gratitude,
Julia Villacara
President, Brookhaven Village Association

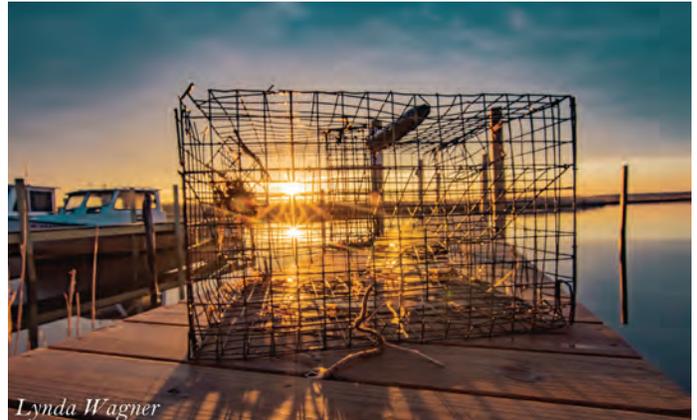
Spring 2025 Dockmaster Report

Squassux is now open for the upcoming season. This gem, that we all love, is best when all members show a deep sense of appreciation by abiding by the rules set down by the BVA. These rules are meant to keep all that enjoy Squassux safe. The speed limit is set at 5 mph and this slow, but safe speed is mandatory to avoid any possible accidents, whether it be car to car or a more serious tragedy possibly hitting an exuberant youngster impulsively running from boat to car. Only slow, careful, and alert driving will prevent a catastrophe.

Please park your cars away from the embankments to prevent further damage to an already delicate and compromised area.

Boat speed takes on the same importance to both safety and the prevention of damage to our shoreline caused by large wakes. When tying up your vessel, please try to keep the boat up against the stern 4 by 4 and the midship 4 by 4. This prevents the transom from going under the dock. Each year several boats sink due to not being tied up correctly.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary will be at Squassux on June 7th at 9:00 am. They will inspect and make very important suggestions to make your boating experience safe.



In summary, before the opening we completed all dock repairs, made sure that all lights, electricity, and water are in proper working condition. The roads have been replenished with new stone. All is ready and awaiting boaters; however, if you have any issue with your dock or infrastructure, please feel free to contact me. You can text the dockmaster phone, please provide your name and message.

Enjoy another wonderful season at our prized treasure.

Warm Regards,
Andy Lovito
BVA Dockmaster

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



Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund	\$ _____
BVA Tree Fund	\$ _____
Virginia Brown Scholarship Fund	\$ _____
Squassux Shoreline Preservation Fund	\$ _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Checks must be made out to the **Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.BROOKHAVENHAMELTFUNDATION.ORG

The Life of Dennis Puleston, Lover of Birds and Longtime Resident of the Hamlet

By Karin Wagner

When we drive down the roads of Brookhaven most often in the Spring, we might see a turtle slowly trying to cross the road. We are asked to please slow down and watch for these turtles and to stop and assist the turtle to get to the other side. These turtles are very territorial, and like us they love their homes, so we are advised not to take these turtles away from the area where we find them. This is the Eastern Painted turtle, which is also on the BVA logo, using an original watercolor illustration by Dennis Puleston, a longtime resident of Brookhaven.

Through his love of birds, Dennis Puleston became a leader in the environmental movement to ban DDT, a pesticide used widely to control mosquitoes. He was a co-founder of the Environmental Defense Fund and incidentally co-designed an amphibious vehicle used in World War II. He loved Brookhaven Hamlet and lived and eventually passed away here in his home at the age of 95.

He was born in 1905, in London, England and eventually became a US citizen. His uncle introduced him to the love and study of birds and his mother was an artist and encouraged him to draw. He combined these two loves to become a talented watercolor artist depicting local wildlife. The BVA logo is an illustration he created of the Eastern Painted Turtle, a native of this area that you see sometimes trying to cross the street!



Dennis Puleston's original watercolor of an Osprey

He particularly loved the ospreys of Long Island and kept records of their nests and ability to reproduce. He counted nests and baby chicks and noticed a decline and that the eggs looked dented

and crushed he thought when parent birds tried to incubate them. Puleston tested the eggs and found high levels of DDT. He believed DDT made the eggshells weak. He wrote, "Using DDT to control mosquitos was like torpedoing the *Queen Elizabeth II* to get rid of the rats on board". The Suffolk County Mosquito Control Commission was very used to spraying the Long Island coastline with DDT and they did not want to accept the evidence. Puleston and others filed a class action law suit in New York State to force them to stop using DDT. In court Puleston used his artwork, showing his beautiful watercolors to the judge. He painted the species that were in danger from the DDT. One work was of the blue-claw crab that Puleston believed ingested DDT through eating mussels. Through his artwork Puleston was able to convince the judge and the Suffolk County Legislature to ban DDT.

After the ban of DDT, everyone noticed the increases of the Osprey nests and also other beloved species like the Bald Eagle saw increases. We love seeing the bald eagle nests along Carmens River. And we have Dennis Puleston to thank. Dennis retired in 1970 to concentrate on art and writing. He passed away on June 8th, 2001, in his Brookhaven home at the age of 95. Let's think of Dennis and his remarkable life whenever we see the BVA logo or see one of the beautiful Eastern Painted turtles trying to cross the road!



Photo credit: Jeff Johnsen

Squassux Committee Chair Report

As the temperature slowly gets warmer and the days get longer, we know that finally the spring and summer months are upon us! This can only mean one thing! That the Squassux Landing Marina will soon be open, and our wonderful boating season will begin.

Dock damage was at a minimum this year, due to the mild winter season we experienced this past year. Because of this, winter maintenance consisted of one dock being repaired, nine mooring poles were replaced and five walkways were stabilized.

This was all completed in a professional and timely manner by Intercoastal Contracting!

This season we will be looking into the possibility of installing additional security cameras in the marina and, with funds from the Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund, we added two additional Purple Martin Houses installed by the Chiofolio family.

I wish everyone a happy, safe and enjoyable summer.

Respectfully,
Andrew Komosinski
Chairperson, Squassux Committee



“Squassux Landing”, oil on canvas, 2022
Artist, Ashley Bland



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

A Brief History of Squassux Landing

As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of Squassux Landing being deeded to the Brookhaven Village Association for ownership and stewardship, we reflect on its rich history—from where we began to where we are today. This milestone highlights the enduring importance of preserving not only the natural beauty of this treasured place but also its role as a vibrant heart of community life in our hamlet. We honor the numerous community members over the years whose service on the BVA Board has helped shape and keep this local gem, and we celebrate the enduring gift it was always meant to be for all residents of the Hamlet.

By Marty Van Lith, BVA Historian

Republished from the Spring 2013 Issue of Fire Place for the 80th Anniversary of Squassux Landing



Photo credit: Jeff Johnsen

Perhaps the most beautiful place on all 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.

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.



Photo credit: Lynda Wagner

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.

Squassux: A History in Pictures



Squassocks Indians,
Brookhaven, L. I.

According to *The Indian Place-Names On Long Island ...* by William Wallace Tooker, Algonkinist, the meaning of "Squassocks" is derived from the name of a person who lived here, Wesquassuck, whose name meant "pot maker." The name "Wesquasesac" appears on the Indian deed for roads in 1690.

Squassux Landing as a cow pasture circa 1900, owned by Joseph "Henry" Carman and later his sons, whose house is on the left. Henry didn't mind people tying up their boats along the banks of the river on his property. *Photo courtesy Post Morrow Foundation.*



Connecticut River, Brookhaven, L. I.



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BY
F.H. TOMS
"SQUASSUX LANDING"
BROOKHAVEN L. I.

Joseph Carman Jr. and his brother Edward inherited Squassux Landing after their father, Joseph Sr., died in 1894. They continued letting people use the riverbank for their boats for free.

Brookhaven, L.I.



The riverbank remained undeveloped, save for the ferry dock and Post's boat dug-out slip, during the 30 years the Post family owned it.

Photo courtesy Post Morrow Foundation.



The ferry Fanny Fern on its way to the Smith's Point House.

Photo courtesy Post Morrow Foundation.



Photo credit: Julia Villacara

Squassux Landing Marina is funded exclusively through slip fees and surcharges paid by residents and non-residents, with all revenue directly reinvested into the ongoing operation, maintenance and preservation of the Landing—making it a true community investment.

Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation

Hamlet residents have been incredibly generous in their financial support of the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation. Through your generosity we can maintain our historic cemeteries, plant trees throughout the Hamlet, fund scholarships for our college-bound seniors and embark on our needed environmental projects including preservation of the historic shoreline of Squassux. Thank you to the following generous donors who have contributed to the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation this past year. We are truly grateful for your support strengthening our hamlet now and for generations to come.

Jane Abell
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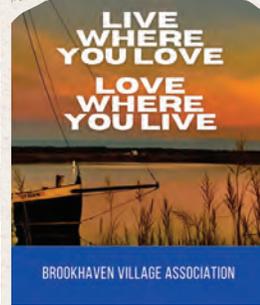
Karin Wagner • Lynda Wagner

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.

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Your civic association in service to our community

brookhavenvillageassociation.org

Strengthening our hamlet now
and for generations to come

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June 18 | 7PM

Post-Morrow Foundation | 16 Bay Road, Brookhaven NY

Fire Place

A Community Newsletter from the
Brookhaven Village Association

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