

Illustration by
Dennis Puleston

Fire Place

BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Winter 2026

Organized-1906

Incorporated-1944

President's Message

Dearest neighbors,

A warm welcome to our new neighbors. Faces (and home facades) may change, yet the spirit of care and connection at the heart of our Hamlet remains unchanged. Here, a story is woven carrying the echoes of laughter, song, traditions, and small acts of kindness shaped by every Hamlet resident. Every neighbor, new or longtime, adds a thread to this living fabric. We are fortunate to call this place home, and even more fortunate to share it with you.

As fall softened into winter, I walked the Post-Morrow trails, struck by the quiet poetry of change. The air was crisp, scented with wood smoke and damp earth. Beneath my feet, leaves whispered and crunched in fading shades of green and gold, deepening at last into cinnamon. Sugar-coated pinecones dotted the ground, soon to be blanketed by the first snowfall - a brilliant symphony of a trillion little lights glistening in the sun. Bittersweet vines reached skyward, winding around juniper branches, glowing in the gentle hush of golden hour. The treetops, once ablaze, softened now, slowly surrendering to the turning season. In moments like these, I see our Hamlet reflected in nature's palette and its rhythm. And I am reminded how closely we are connected to this place and to one another.



Photo credit: "First Snow" by Julia Villacara

In our 120th year, your BVA stands as the oldest civic association in Brookhaven Township in continuous service to our community. Your BVA is a living testament of care passed hand to hand across generations. We stand on the shoulders of those who first imagined what this Hamlet might become and gave freely of their time, resources, and vision to bring a home to life for over a century.

We honor all past BVA directors whose dedication allows us to thrive today, and offer special gratitude to Treasurer Janet Quirk. For 20 years, Janet's extraordinary service has guided our finances, strengthened our systems, and informed decisions with institutional knowledge, integrity and insight. We are all profoundly fortunate Janet will remain with your BVA for a few more years. Whew.

This past year also brought new energy to the Board. Dave Anderson stepped into the role of Vice President, and we warmly welcome our newest director, Stephen Heck, a marine biologist specializing in ecosystem studies and an experienced grant writer, whose passion for our waterways aligns with our mission to protect the place we call home. We also marked endings with gratitude, thanking former board members Aileen Kokell and Christopher Bland and their families for sharing their time and remarkable energy with the community.



Photo credit: "Permanent Change" by Julia Villacara

Continued on page 2

President's Message Continued

At our Annual Meeting, we celebrated neighbors whose contributions weave the fabric of our community. The Bob and Gloria Brown Civic Engagement Awards honored lifelong leaders Tom Williams, Vice President of the Post-Morrow Foundation and former BVA Director, and Boy Scout Troop 4 Leader Lex Mallon, alongside emerging contributors Kyran Murphy and Sidney Yablon, students recognized by their teachers for dedication to civic service and assisting their peers. Recognizing these individuals reminds us that community is built not only over decades, but also through small, daily acts of care, connection, and responsibility.

Squassux Landing stands as a living symbol of belonging. It is a space cared for by many hearts and hands. This season, under the steady guidance of Dockmaster and Marina Manager Andy Lovito, Treasurer Janet Quirk, the Squassux Committee, and dedicated volunteers, the marina thrived. Operations ran smoothly, every slip was filled, and the community once again affirmed its commitment through timely payments and support of the Shoreline Preservation surcharge. Thoughtful stewardship keeps Squassux strong, resilient, and ready for the future. That spirit of shared responsibility was never more evident than on a sunny December morning when volunteers arrived cheerful and ready to install the ice eaters. They brought genuine affection for this marina not just as boaters, but as neighbors who understand the privilege of this shared gift.

The Shoreline Preservation Project continues to evolve. The DEC rejected the proposed low-sill bulkhead. While we may appeal, we are also preparing for alternative plans that meet DEC approval. No matter the method approved by the DEC, the costs will be significant, and we are actively seeking the best representation to guide and engineer this essential stabilization, ensuring Squassux Landing remains a sanctuary for generations to come.

To address concerns about the landfill plume and the letters the Town sent to residents in August, the Quality of Life Committee hosted Adrienne Esposito of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment and Hamlet resident Lynne Maher of BLARG in October. The speakers discussed the plume's history, its impacts on residents and waterways, and DEC-mandated corrective actions. CCE's presentation with recommended corrective measures and BLARG's talking points are available for review at brookhavenvillageassociation.org. NYS DEC has approved the Town's request to extend the Corrective Measures Assessment, now due April 15, 2026, with the Corrective Measures Report due May 1, 2026; more information is available on DEC's Brookhaven Landfill webpage. The public hearing has been postponed twice, with a new date expected this spring. BVA will notify the community via email (please subscribe for community emails using our website) and Instagram (@BVA11719). Residents are strongly urged to attend the hearing - our voices matter

in protecting our waters, health, and the future of our Hamlet.

Thank you to all who answered another big BVA initiative - our fundraising call in December. Your support through BVA dues and Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation donations is fundamental to our work in the Hamlet. Your membership dues fuel the heart of our community: year-round community-building, traditional events like Holiday Cheer, welcome bags for new neighbors, and The *Fire Place* newsletter, now led by editor Karin Wagner. Your contributions to the Brookhaven Hamlet Foundation's community funds nurture our children, care for our landscapes, and protect our natural spaces:

- **Virginia Brown Scholarship Fund:** Celebrating graduating seniors whose essays and actions embody service and community. Congratulations to the 2025 recipients: Sean Glynn (\$3,000), Kalisto Mignola (\$2,000), and Brynne Ballan (\$1,000).
- **Plantings Fund:** Over 250 native trees thrive across our Hamlet, with more planned for 2026, strengthening streets, homes, and natural areas.
- **Dennis Puleston Environmental Fund:** Supporting local ecosystems—from post-Sandy restoration at Squassux to Purple Martin habitat installations.
- **Squassux Shoreline Preservation Fund:** Safeguarding the spirit of Squassux through shoreline stabilization along Arthur's Creek and the Carmans River, so generations may continue to enjoy its peace, vibrancy, and beauty as a hub of our community.

Every membership dollar and financial gift - whether it keeps us connected, helps a student pursue a dream, plants a tree, or preserves our beloved Squassux - is an act of care and an investment in our shared story of community. Together, we support a Hamlet where nature prospers, neighbors care, and community endures. To learn more or support these efforts, please visit brookhavenhamletfoundation.org or use the forms included within these pages.

As I continue to walk these quiet trails in the welcomed silence of winter, I am again reminded that community is not a word or a place, but actions within a shared story - a story written by every person who shows up for one another, who volunteers, who teaches, who guides, and who protects. It is written by you. Thank you for your generosity, your partnership, and your commitment to this extraordinary place we call home.

With gratitude and warm wishes for a New Year filled with peace and promise,

Julia Villacara
President,
Brookhaven Village Association

Winter 2026 Dockmaster Report

Hello to all of our resident boaters,

Another season is done. Squassux is not just a boat basin, but also a park that residents enjoy for dog walking, bicycle riding, quiet contemplation, and photography. Everyone's cooperation, specifically when it come to car speed through the marina, helps keep the area safe and enjoyable for all.

The official closing date for summer seasonal slips was November 15th. Please make sure that all lines, bumpers, and hoses have been removed. Water service was turned off on November 15th, and the lights will be turned off several weeks after. If you plan to winter over on the Carmans River, you must text the Dockmaster's phone with your name and current slip number so that you can be invoiced for the winter season. Please text your intention to stay. As of December 7th, access pin codes to the security gate have been deactivated, and only those boaters being invoiced for the winter season will have active pin code access to the basin.

Unfortunately, an alarming issue has arisen since late September. A motor was stolen from a sailboat, and according to police this has become an active problem at many marinas across Long Island. Please be cautious when leaving valuable items on your boat, including fishing poles stored in rocket launchers. If possible, chain or cable-lock small outboards, as these appear to be a primary target for theft.

On a positive note, the marina's infrastructure has improved immensely over the past several years, making it safer and more reliable when water, electricity, and lighting are needed. We are continuing to move forward with plans for the erosion project. This undertaking will require significant time and effort, and the BVA remains fully committed. While there are many challenges to address, the time and expense will be well worth the investment in securing the future of Squassux.

The ice eaters are now in place. The BVA would also like to extend a sincere thank you to the members who volunteered to assist with their installation. Community involvement helps keep slip rates affordable, and your support is greatly appreciated.

If you do not need a slip for the upcoming 2026 season, please text the Dockmaster's phone so accommodations can be made for those on the waitlist. If you are upsizing or downsizing, please text the Dockmaster's phone so the best possible arrangements can be made. Please note that only fully completed invoices returned next year will guarantee a slip. This includes an up-to-date photo of your current registration and payment in full by the invoice due date.



We have great news. Squassux boaters age 70 and older with 25 years at Squassux will receive a 10 percent discount on their slip payment. This discount does not include the Shoreline Preservation surcharge or the general membership fee. Please text your name and proof of age to the Dockmaster's phone for verification.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.

Respectfully,
Andy Lovito
BVA Dockmaster
631-819-4151



Squassux Committee Chair Report

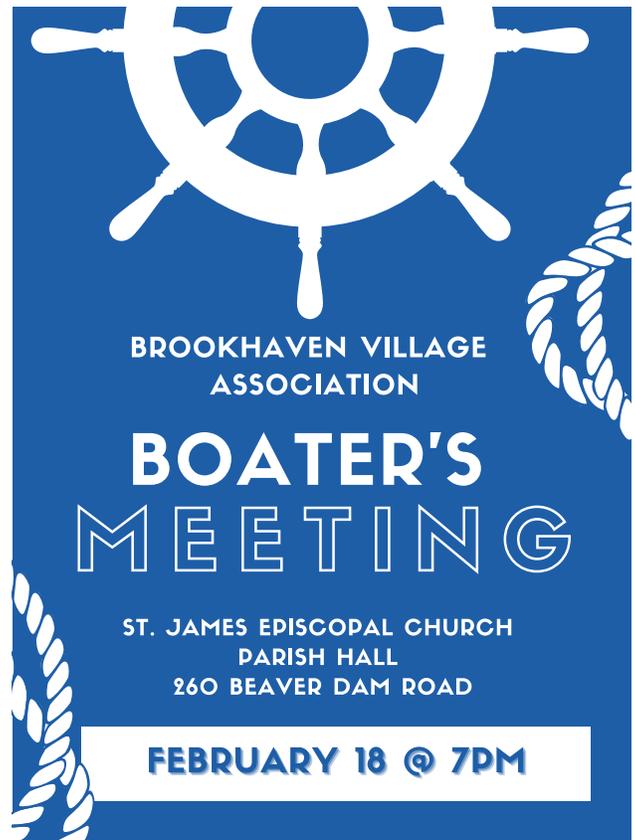
We know summer is coming to end when the nights begin to get colder and the sun begins to set earlier. From the early spring launches through the late days of summer, if you happen to be lucky enough to spend time out on the water or if you are just stopping by for a walk or taking in the beautiful scenery, your presence here at Squassux is appreciated.

All of us who sit on the Squassux committee, as well as the BVA Board of Directors, thank you for spending part of your summer here.

It has been another great boating season. We hope you enjoy your time on and off the water. We can only hope for the same in 2026.

And, just a quick reminder, please join us for the Annual Boaters Meeting the end of February.

Respectfully,
Andrew Komosinski
Chairperson, Squassux Committee



BROOKHAVEN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

BOATER'S MEETING

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
PARISH HALL
260 BEAVER DAM ROAD

FEBRUARY 18 @ 7PM

**Another Chance to WIN! Check your boating invoice for raffle info.
Every entry helps support the Squassux Shoreline Preservation Fund.**

TICKET NUMBER : <input type="text"/>		Brookhaven Village Association
NAME : <input type="text"/>		Squassux Slip Raffle
CONTACT : <input type="text"/>		Prize : 2026 Boat Slip Fee  Price: \$50

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- Slip fee must be pre-paid with current registration and contract submitted by March 1, 2026
- Winner's boat slip fee will be reimbursed by check within 15 days from April drawing date
- Prize does not include surcharge for Shoreline Preservation Project or Membership Dues of \$25
- Prize good for 2026 season only. It can not be deferred to another season
- Prize is non-transferable
- Winner will be notified via the contact information provided

Our Shared Traditions



For more than six decades, the joyful tradition of neighbors gathering for Christmas carols wove its gentle magic through the homes of the Hamlet, wrapping friends in the warmth of song. Every Sunday in December, voices rang out from the Puleston home and others, spilling holiday music and laughter into the night, drifting along snowy Hamlet lanes and settling into the memories of all who experienced those magical evenings.

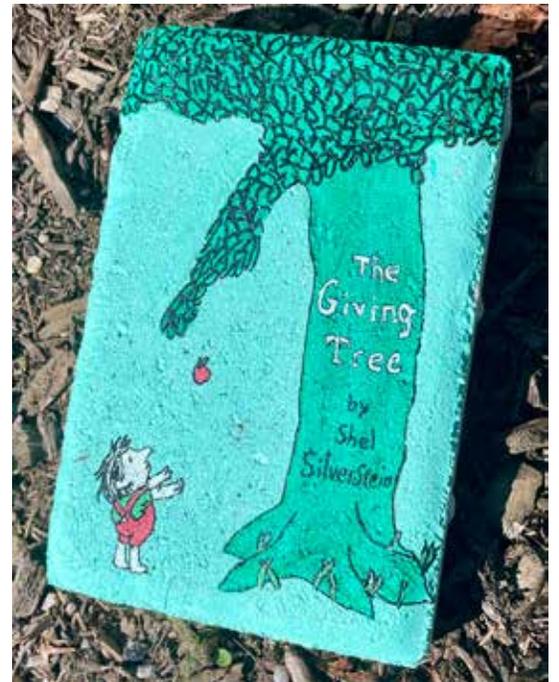
Thanks to the care of Hamlet residents Deb Mayo and Sean Pilger, this beloved custom continues. On a frosty December evening at the HOG Farm, neighbors gathered around crackling fires to embrace the simple tradition. Faces glowed

in golden light, hands clutched carol books made a generation ago, their pages soft with memory. Young voices mingled with experienced ones, laughter bounced like musical notes through the evening, and the simple, enduring joy of hope, peace, and community filled the air like a warm, invisible spell.

There was no hurry to the season. Only the quiet wonder of togetherness, the comfort of song, and the timeless, magical rhythm of life in the Hamlet: simple, meaningful, and unforgettable.



Triangle Park



Brookhaven Free Library up-cycles with hand painted bricks

Our Shared Traditions Continued

Five years ago, in the middle of the pandemic, Holiday Cheer started very modestly. It was a simple drive-up, drop-off food and toy drive. It began with a hopeful question to the Town of Brookhaven Parks Department; could the BVA decorate the gazebo at Fire Place Park for the holidays and maybe place a small tabletop tree inside for a little seasonal spirit?

The Parks Department responded... with a 14-foot living tree.

Much like that tree, Holiday Cheer has continued to grow.

What began as a quiet act of kindness has become a beloved Hamlet tradition, bringing together families, neighbors, and friends to celebrate the season of giving. It's a reminder that some of the best traditions start with small ideas, a lot of heart, and, apparently, very large trees.

This year, our simple and heartfelt gathering once again honored connection and community. Neighbors came together in the cold to donate, decorate the community tree, and prove that handcrafted ornaments are beautiful, charming and occasionally mysterious. We sipped cozy cider courtesy of cider chef Lex Mallon and Boy Scouts Troop 4, indulged in seasonal treats from Sweet Moments Baking, and warmed up with cocoa from Jim's Deli. The Brookhaven Free Library helped kids create holiday cards, while Karin Wagner and Elliot Pepper kept the spirit alive by banging out holiday favorites and a few deep cuts, including the timely demand that "Father Christmas, give us your money."

A special thank-you goes to young Mr. Evan Anderson and his very supportive parents. Evan finally - after five years of well-intentioned adult trial and error- got the tree lights just right. In addition to serving as our official lighting designer and repair crew, Evan quite literally went out on a limb to decorate the tree all the way to the top showing impressive skill, courage, and dedication. Thank you Jeff Jensen and South Country Arboriculture for donating the ladders every year.



Sweet Holidays

Holiday Cheer is a moment to pause, breathe, and make memories that feel meaningful in an otherwise busy season. Together, we extended compassion through our collection drives in support of the Mary Immaculate Food Pantry, the Lighthouse Mission teen toy drive, and needed supplies for the Brookhaven Animal Shelter, quietly celebrating the true meaning of the season through the care we show one another.

Thanks to our residents, their continuous generosity and all our helping hands, Holiday Cheer germinated from a small idea and a whole lot of love, grew into a very big tree, and continues to remind us that community is the greatest gift of all.



Grateful to Dave Anderson and his son Evan for helping our community tree shine a little brighter.



Caroling with Community Karin Wagner with Elliott Pepper



Trimming the Tree

Our Photographers



Photo credit: Susann Gude

Susann Gude is a Master Certified Professional Photographer through the Professional Photographers of America (PPA). She specializes in nature and wildlife photography, a passion she has pursued for more than 30 years in Brookhaven Hamlet, where she resides.

Julianna Kirk is a local artist who has lived in Brookhaven Hamlet since 1971. She raised her family here and continues to photograph her favorite places and make her glass art. She exhibits at galleries and her work is represented by the Huntington Arts Center and Gallery North. Currently her work is being shown at the Art League of Long Island and the Mills Pond Gallery.

Jan Shannon grew up in Brookhaven Hamlet, where summers on the bay sparked a lifelong love of nature. She now captures that passion through photography, often at sunrise with her camera in hand. Having raised her three daughters in the South Country area, it is where her heart is.

Carlton Stewart is a former Director of the Brookhaven Village Association, and he often runs the nature trails in Brookhaven, taking pictures of scenes that he finds beautiful. He is an avid camper and hiker and has hiked the Appalachian Trail.

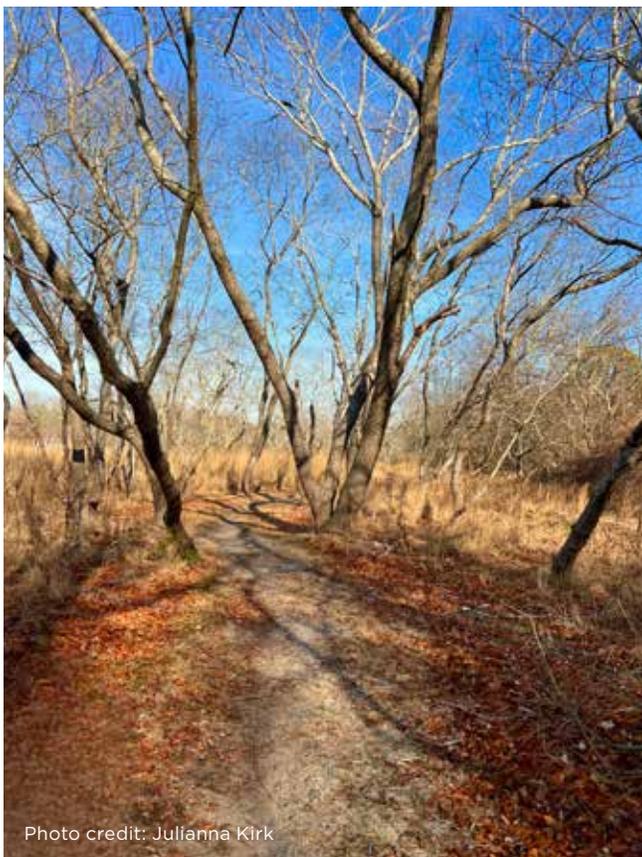


Photo credit: Julianna Kirk

Karin Wagner is currently on the Brookhaven Village Association Board and is a local singer/song writer. She moved to Brookhaven in 2004 and never looked back. She was drawn to the beauty, magic and history of the Hamlet.

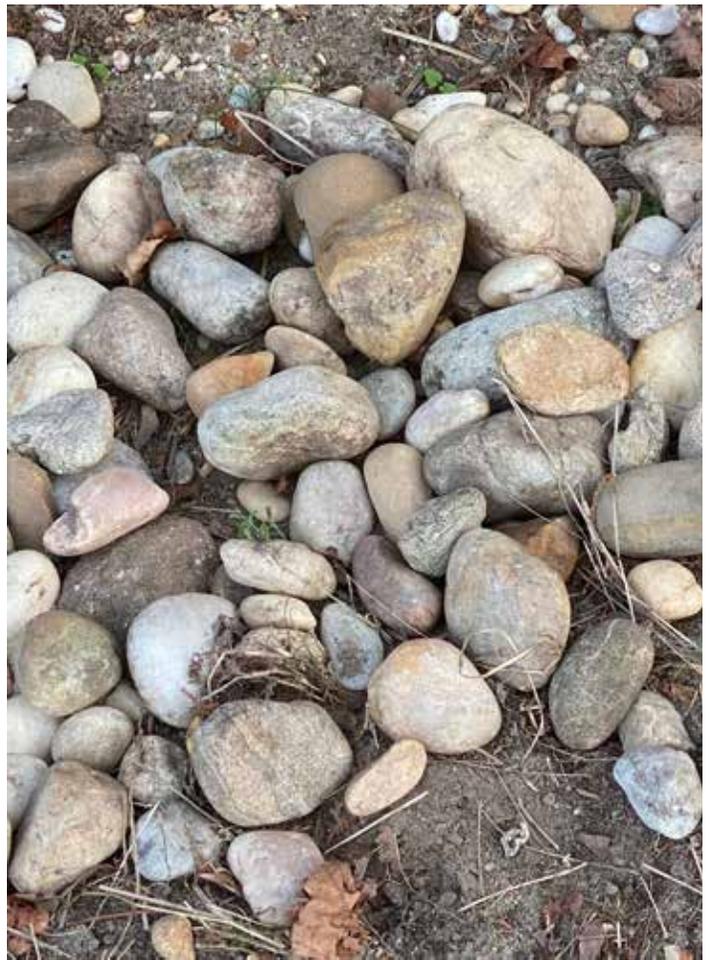
If you would like to submit a photograph to the BVA Newsletter please email your photography to bvemail@brookhavenvillageassociation.org.



Photo credit: Jan Shannon



"Happy Viewing on the Boardwalk" Photo by Carlton Stewart



"Squassux Rocks!" Photo by Karin Wagner



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

The Brook Store: History Right Under Our Noses



By Karin Wagner

Tucked along South Country Road just near Valentine Park, the Brook Store stands as a quiet witness to centuries of Brookhaven's rhythm, resilience, and renewal. Its renovated frame holds stories that stretch all the way back to 1742, when the original structure first anchored the hamlet of Brookhaven.

The earliest incarnation of the Brook Store was more than a place of commerce, it was a communal gathering spot or hearth. Built around 1742, it formed part of a modest town center right there near the small park and memorial grounds in Brookhaven. In an era when gathering spaces were few, the store offered both goods and human connection, stitching together the lives of the early settlers of the area.

In 1860, Hallack Bishop rebuilt the store, breathing new life into its aging timbers. By 1877, Charles Valentine—whose name now echoes in our little park with the gazebo—took ownership and added the Brookhaven post office just next door. As postmaster, Valentine transformed the store into a vital communication and community hub where letters

and local news passed mouth to mouth and hand to hand.

The Brook House in Brookhaven, New York was originally located at the intersection of Fireplace Neck Road and South Country Road, a historic corner in the heart of Brookhaven Hamlet. In the mid-20th century, as plans for road expansion threatened its survival, the house was carefully relocated westward along South Country Road in 1915, to preserve its architectural and cultural significance. This move allowed the Brook House to remain within the Hamlet's historic corridor while avoiding demolition, ensuring its continued presence as a symbol of early settlement and community stewardship. This move separated it from its attached house and repositioned it closer to what is historically known as Valentine's Corner or Triangle Park, also commonly referred to as the War Memorial. Though modest in distance, the relocation marked a symbolic shift—from a domestic-commercial hybrid nestled in the town's original center to a standalone civic landmark. Preserved by the Post-Morrow Foundation anchoring Brookhaven Hamlet's evolving geography.

By the mid-20th century, as modernization swept through Long Island, the Brook Store remained a steadfast community hub. In 1972, the Post-Morrow Foundation stepped in to preserve the building and its surroundings, recognizing its architectural and historical significance. Their stewardship ensured that Brookhaven's character—rooted in memory and place—would not be lost to time.

Now over 260 years old, the Brook Store continues to stand as a testament to Brookhaven's layered past. It reminds all of us that history is right under our

noses and not just recorded in books, but etched into the rhythms of our daily life.

Thanks to the vision of our local stewards in Post Morrow who know the importance of local history and the enduring spirit of our Brookhaven community, the Brook Store remains a living reminder—for all of us to remember, gather, and belong. Thanks for listening!



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

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Andy Lovito

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Marty Van Lith

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Kristin Kirk Murphy
Julia Villacara
Karin 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.

WWW.BROOKHAVENVILLAGEASSOCIATION.ORG FOLLOW OUR NEWS ON INSTAGRAM @BVA11719

Fire Place

A Community Newsletter from
The Brookhaven Village Association
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Brookhaven, New York 11719

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