The Civic Association of the Setaukets and Stony Brook’s
2015-16
Recreational Guide to the Three Villages

West Meadow Beach and Preserve  West Meadow Beach and Preserve
–With more than a mile of beach access, vast sand bars at low tide, two large child friendly play-rounds, beach volleyball, jetty fishing, a paved multi-use path that is 1.2 miles long, and spectacular sunsets – West Meadow Beach and Preserve has something for everyone. The crown jewel of this “little slice of heaven” is the Gamecock Cottage – a small Swiss chalet style cottage at the end of the peninsula that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The beach is a local favorite for sun bathing, jogging, bicycling, rollerblading, walking, picnicking, or simply “people watching.” Located at the western end of West Meadow Road, this Town of Brookhaven park is handicapped accessible. With this summer season, visitors will find that the bathrooms and changing room have been updated, adding an even more pleasant beach experience. A seasonal parking sticker from the Town is necessary.

The Nora Bredes Preserve at Forsythe Meadows. This is the newest, and one of the most unique walks in the Three Villages! Also know as Stony Brook’s Last Forest, and recently renamed in honor of the memory of the late County Legislator Nora Bredes, this 36 acre park sits in the heart of Stony Brook. Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn has worked tirelessly to see this area open to the public. Now, it is open to the public! You can walk a variety of terrains – meadows, hills, and valleys - and get an unrivaled elevated view of Stony Brook Harbor and Stony Brook Village. Access can be found on Hollow Road in Stony Brook.

Flax Pond  Simply put, this is a magical place. The unique beauty of this 135-acre coastal paradise is the result of a constant changing seascape throughout this salt marsh -the wind, light, color and wildlife are never quite the same. If you haven’t visited Flax Pond, you are missing one of the Three Village’s -- and America’s – most spectacular wonders. Yet, even with the great beauty here, it is the least visited site in our recreational guide! That might be because it is a bit off the beaten path, or some people are trying to keep it a best kept secret. Supervised under a partnership of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Stony Brook University, Flax Pond has a rich diversity of ecological treasures. Go for a
hike, nature viewing or practice your painting or photography. Keep in mind a couple of particulars: you need to obtain a permit, and parking pass from the DEC to visit this area. The permit is easy to get, it’s free and it is “good” for a few years!

To apply for your permit, go to www.DEC.NY.gov/outdoor/7815.html and print it out. Keep a copy with you on your visit and leave the parking pass on your vehicle’s dashboard. Parking is at the end of Shore Road in Old Field, at the State University’s Flax Pond Lab. After parking, access to the marshland should be made at low tide via the path on Crane Neck Road that leads to a footbridge. This location is 200-300 feet west on Crane Neck Road from the intersection of Shore Road. (It is best to visit when the tide is out to avoid muddy feet and damaging any of the marshland.) Well, what are you waiting for – get that permit. Also, keep in mind that The Friends of Flax Pond is an active and effective voice in the preservation and protection of this area.

**Avalon Park and Preserve** Just about everyone has seen or heard about the new cable series titled *Turn*. The television show focuses on the drama and intrigue of the Culper Spy Ring in our own Three Villages during the Revolutionary War. Well, if you are interested in the natural environment our colonial forefathers and Native Americans experienced, Avalon is the place to go. The park has been specially designed, plant by plant, to reflect the woodlands found in our area centuries ago. Avalon has a unique, magical beauty that will delight you. With a total of 82 acres of woodlands, forests, meadows, and ponds you will think you have been transported to another place and time. The Paul Simons Foundation manages and maintains Avalon Park. The main entrance is opposite the Stony Brook Grist Mill on Harbor Road. There is limited handicap accessibility.

**Stony Brook Beach** Known to locals as Sand Street Beach, this little gem is located in the heart of Stony Brook. With amazing vistas of the Gamecock Cottage, the West Meadow peninsula, Porpoise Channel, Long Beach, Smithtown Bay, and Connecticut, this beach is the perfect respite for those who want to sunbathe, swim, or picnic. There’s so much to do – after setting out your beach blanket, visit the pier to see ‘what’s catchin’, stroll to the village for a light meal or take-out, or watch the boats being launched from the boat ramp and pass through the channel. It’s hard not to think you have stepped back in time when visiting this beach. And, with the recent
renovation of the bathhouse about two years, the beach complex looks better than ever. Parking at the Town lot opposite the Three Village Inn is a bit inconvenient. This is a property of the Town of Brookhaven. Parts of this area are handicapped accessible.

**Frank Melville, Jr. Memorial Park** With 24 acres of specimen trees and bushes, long meandering trails through woodlands, spectacular views of the Setauket Mill Pond and Conscience Bay, this site is our own local arboretum. And, everywhere you turn there is a historic building- the East Setauket Post Office, the Mill House and the old red barn. Simply walking over the graceful stone bridges and observing the pond is an unrivaled experience. This is one of the most visited sites in the Three Villages! The free Summer Concert Series each Sunday evening is a special pleasure – great music, a delightful environment, and a hip crowd. Concert goers ‘in the know’ bring a lawn chairs, a bottle of wine and some dinner. The park is on Main Street in Setauket, just north of Route 25A. It is owned and beautifully maintained by the Friends of the Frank Melville, Jr. Memorial Park. Some areas are handicapped accessible.

**Percy Raynor Park** Experience the excitement of athletic contests being played on the many “fields of dreams” at this large outdoor sports complex. With a children’s playground, picnic area, sun shelter, and bathroom facilities, you can easily enjoy watching Three Villagers play soccer, football, and baseball. The size and variety of the area will enable you to spend time as a spectator or an active participant jogging or walking in open fields. A property of the Town of Brookhaven, this area, on the south side of Route 347, is handicapped accessible.

**The Setauket to Port Jefferson Station Greenway** A true linear park! This is the longest paved multi-use trail in Suffolk County. The Greenway utilizes land acquired by the NYS Department of Transportation in the 1960’s for a planned bypass of Route 25A. This bypass has been re-purposed, and today you can walk or bike through an amazing variety of terrains and landscapes: an old growth forest, rolling hills, rhododendron woodlands, an abandoned sand mining operation, a dormant industrial site, active neighborhoods, county parkland, old farmland, etc. With the recent opening of Phase II of the trail, you are now able to pedal from the Setauket Post Office to upper Port Jefferson Station. The path runs approximately
four miles and is handicapped accessible. The Friends of the Greenway, a committee of the Three Village Community Trust, maintains the Greenway.

**The Paul Simons Memorial Bike Path at Stony Brook University**  Paul Simons was a Stony Brook student and an avid bicyclist. This six-mile long path covers a variety of terrains and links the University community together and is a beautiful reminder of Paul’s youth and vitality. An amazing number of Three Village residents have not taken the opportunity to walk or pedal this paved, multi-use path that is handicapped accessible and available to University students and the public. Get out and enjoy!

**Stony Brook University’s Ashley Schiff Preserve** – Located on the southern edge of the University, this 26 acre preserve has everything: a kettle hole, Garnet Bearing Rock formations, ridges and valleys, and a wide variety of trees and wildlife. There are fifteen scientific viewing stations along the established park trails worth investigation. (Search: Ashley Schiff Preserve)

**Shore Road Beach and Pier**-  OK, it’s small, there is limited parking, and there are no lifeguards. But this local sandy beach is great for sunbathing and wading and serves as a great place to launch your kayak and explore the main harbor and Little Bay. The beach is a short walk from downtown Setauket, and has two picnic tables which make it a great picnic site. Shore Road Beach and dock is a Town of Brookhaven facility, and there is limited handicap accessibility. If you make reservations with Bev Tyler, our local historian, you can arrange a walking tour along the harbor shore and hear about shipbuilding history in Setauket Harbor during the 18th and 19th centuries. Don’t miss the opportunity to join the newly formed Setauket Harbor Task Force, which is working to improve the entire harbor area.

**Sherwood-Jayne Hiking Trail**  This mile long trail opened a year ago. It takes you through the Sherwood-Jayne property and into Suffolk County parkland for a wonderful experience of densely forested lands. Because the Sherwood-Jayne House features a colonial setting with barns, meadows, sheep, and horses, this trail experience is a step back in time. Look for the signs on the property pointing you to the “Nature Trail” and get hiking! The Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA) owns the Sherwood-Jayne site, and works with the Seatuck Environmental Association to maintain the trail.
**Patriots Rock**  This is a little gem of a walk. Located across the street from the historic Setauket Post Office, Patriots Rock is a wonder to see, and photograph. Our community’s patriots used the rock as protective cover to fire on garrisoned British troops during the Revolutionary War. Visit the rock, and walk further into the woods and you are transported back into an earlier time. The entire area has been beautified under the stewardship of the Three Village Community Trust. It looks better than ever!

**Oxhead Road Park**  Located just south of Stony Brook University, this park has several ball fields and playground sites. There are swings, jungle gyms, and slides, as well as a picnic area. The Town of Brookhaven owns the park.

**The Stony Brook Kayak Launch**  This facility is pretty new. Check it out. The launch is located across the street from the Three Village Inn at the edge of the Town of Brookhaven parking lot. Kayakers can easily paddle the waters of Smithtown Bay.

**The Old Colonial Road**  Want more of the *Turn* experience? Or maybe you have school age kids that need a dose of history. Or maybe you just want to connect to our colonial roots. Well, this site is for you. The Old Colonial Road is a surviving segment of the old North Road, the route traveled to Brooklyn and back by our forefathers. Visit the Old Colonial Road and truly ‘step’ back into history. The road has a historical marker at the northwest corner of the Stony Brook campus. The best way to get there is to take Stony Brook Road heading north, make a right onto Dogwood Road, and go to the intersection with Mount Road. Park and walk southwest along the pebbled path for fifty yards. Continue on the forest trail toward the LIRR tracks and you’ll see the sole remaining piece of the road. The trail was once eighteen feet wide. Pretty cool!

**McAllister Park**  OK, it’s not exactly in the Three Villages, but it is close. And since it has been recently opened to the public it deserves a mention here – and a visit! Located at the eastern entrance to Port Jefferson Harbor, McAllister Park has it all: huge dunes, sand and pebble beaches, magnificent vistas of Long Island Sound, Connecticut and Port Jefferson Harbor, abundant wildlife, marshes, a rich variety of woodlands and a close-up view of the nifty-named Pirates Cove. Bird watchers, hikers,
naturalists, joggers, walkers and beach lovers are in for a treat at this site. For generations, McAllister Park, nestled in the Village of Belle Terre, lacked any easy access for the general public. Thanks to the efforts of Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn and the Suffolk County Parks Department, a small parking lot has been located at the end of Anchorage Road in Belle Terre. To get there, just take Cliff Road into Belle Terre, go almost to the end, and make a left on Anchorage. Although it is part of Suffolk County Parkland, you don’t need a “Green Key” card for your visit to this site.

The Beach Walks  Living on the north shore invites residents to the water. Sometimes beach walkers are perplexed by the many waterfront signs that state “No Trespassing,” “Private Property,” “Keep Out,” etc. No worries. No one owns the water, or the land beneath the water – something known as riparian rights. So as long as you are walking at or below the high tide mark you are OK to stroll the beach. Just remember to respect the rights of landowners.

And don’t forget to –Go back to School – Our public schools have lots of “open space” to enjoy in the afternoons and on weekends. Here is your assignment- take a walk or jog at our beautiful schools.

More? Yes, much more. Here are some other properties that may soon be available for your family’s enjoyment.

The “Sand Pits,” located at the western end of the current Greenway. This is 37 acres of County parkland, that offers a unique terrain and habitat shaped by man’s industrial hand. It is a fascinating place that is easily accessible to walkers. When developed, it will offer Three Villagers another recreational treasure.

And, Patriots Hollow, formerly referred to as the “Diocese Property,” is 28 acres on the northern side of Route 25A. This former farmland is today heavily wooded New York State parkland. Under the management of the NYS Department of Conservation, this area may see walking and biking trails.

Thompson-Detmer Southern Farm Property is located on the south side of Route 25A and is near the East Setauket Post Office. This three acre residentially zoned parcel may be acquired by the County in the future, and
could serve as a wonderful local park close to shopping, eateries, and the Greenway.

By Herb Mones

Send comments, additions, and suggestions to: HJMones@gmail.com
Subject: Recreational Guide