

# THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF EAST HAMPTON

the Village  
**Preservation**  
Society of East Hampton

SPRING NEWSLETTER  
2022

• CELEBRATING OUR 40TH YEAR •

## VPS Welcome to Summer Party!

**Save  
the Date!**

Saturday, June 4, 2022 • 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
at the Tennis House on Maidstone Ln.

**Save  
the Date!**

**Reserve Your Tickets Now!**

## VPS SPURS CREATION OF VILLAGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

*By Georgia deHavenon*

As so many of us were housebound during the pandemic, it gave rise to a renewed sense of how special East Hampton is for its inhabitants. It is this sense of place that the VPS recognized when it created the Historic Preservation Award Committee with a mandate to raise consciousness about the historic relevance of our Village.

In addition to presenting the Historic Preservation Awards each year, the Historic Preservation Committee also is involved with monitoring the state of preservation in the Village. With this in mind, we developed a proposal suggesting that the Village government form an Historic Preservation Commission. Many other villages and towns similar to East Hampton have already done so. On January 21, the Mayor and Village Board adopted a resolution to form a five-member Historic Preservation Committee, the purpose of which is to assist the Planning Board, Design Review Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of Trustees with decisions relating to outcomes on

land use applications. This applies to properties that are historic or related to the aesthetic heritage of the Village. Within its purviews are also numerous general and advisory powers including the ability to recommend any changes to the historic preservation laws, maintenance of an inventory of locally historic properties and districts and the capacity to recommend proposals for the acquisition of preservation easements, to name a few.

The Committee is co-chaired by Larry Kane and Frank Newbold and the members are the Chair of the VPS Historic Preservation Committee, Georgia DeHavenon, Kevin O'Sullivan, and Adrienne Posillico. We commend the Village and the Mayor for their interest in preservation. Thanks to former VPS Trustee Curt Schade and current Trustee Gene Cross for their input and guidance, along with other interested parties, that led to the proposal that initiated this legislation.

The VPS and its Historic Preservation Committee have presented two awards annually to outstanding public and private preservation initiatives beginning in 2018. There was no award in 2020. This year we will again be presenting the awards and we invite interested individuals to participate by nominating possible recipients. All nominations will be reviewed by our Historic Preservation Committee. Your help in keeping East Hampton's history alive will be much appreciated. Full information regarding how to nominate an awardee can be found on the VPS website, <http://www.villagepreservationsociety.org/award.html>. The deadline is July 15.

## AIRPORT UPDATE

By Peter M. Wolf

The Town of East Hampton reached a milestone on September 21, 2021 when its obligations to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) concluded after twenty years. This freed the Town to run the airport in (hopefully) the best interests of the community, rather than bound by FAA rules and regulations serving a small minority of intense airport users.

For the last year, the Town has been engaged in a process of re-envisioning the airport. It has determined to try to operate the airport as what is known as a Prior Permission Required or PPR facility. As a PPR, airport users would be required to conform to Town requirements, whatever they turn out to be. Some possibilities are limited use to aircraft of a certain type, likely related to noise, and other considerations. Presently a Scoping document is being drafted by the Town as required by the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act. Three lawsuits against the Town for its proposed changes to the airport have already been filed by aviation interests.

In a protracted and difficult negotiation with the FAA, a routinely bad faith actor, the Town has determined the airport will be deactivated on May 17 and will reopen as a new private-use airport on May 19. The PPR operational regulations are yet to be determined. Some possibilities are a curfew from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Other possibilities are limits on aircraft that exceed certain noise and weight limits and possibly limits on commercial operators to one operation per aircraft per day. Nothing has yet been decided. The proposal for PPR can be found at this link: <https://ehamptonny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11894/Airport-Proposed-PPR-Framework-for-2022-Season-Mar-1>.

The public was encouraged to participate in the SEQR Scoping exercise to be sure that all possible suggestions for changes in use were included in the study. The deadline for that portion of public comment was March 18, 2022. A time line for the Town's process can be found at this link: <https://ehamptonny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11895/Airport-SEQRA-Scoping-Process-Presentation>.

The long drawn-out time frame projects a Draft General Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) early April; studies and monitoring of PPR this summer; review and acceptance of Draft GEIS in late fall, including public comments on this document; with responses to those comments due winter 2022-23. A Findings Statement is scheduled for late winter 2023 which will document the Town's reasoning for decisions that will initially govern the PPR operations rules.

This is a lengthy process. The Town Board has persevered through many legal challenges and will continue to do so. The aviation community, aside from recreation pilots and some residents, is driven by for-profit business interests, and as such is willing to spend a lot of money on litigation. Given the nature of politics, addressing the profound environmental impacts of aircraft travel has been difficult to have sufficiently noticed, as proposed by the scientifically minded strong advocates who want to see meaningful change. Or the airport closed altogether.

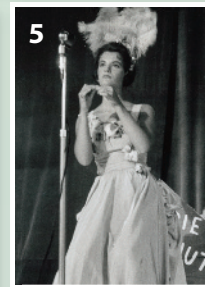
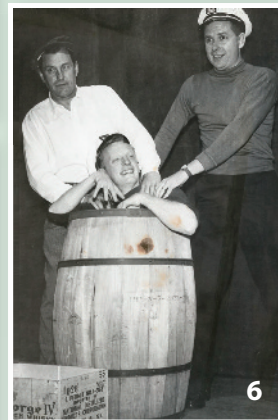
In the meantime, this remains, in part, a data driven process. Therefore, those affected by aircraft noise and other quality of life infringements caused by the present day airport are encouraged to continue to log complaints at: <https://www.planenoise.com/khto/> or call 1-800-376-4817. This has been a long, protracted battle, but the operation of the East Hampton airport

seems on the verge of actual change. Nothing would have been done without advocacy by the public. Your voice is needed to keep this effort on track. You are making a difference.

## DEVELOPMENT DESCENDS UPON THE VILLAGE

By Joan D. Osborne

It seems the message has gone out to developers near and far that major improvement projects are now most welcome in the Village of East Hampton. Several raise the alarm for those residents who have spent decades maintaining the historic, neighborhood character of the Village for future generations. The Toilsome Brewery, proposed on Toilsome Ln on property zoned Manufacturing/Industrial is one such application. This zoning designation permits some commercial uses including a restaurant, making mitigations for the neighboring residential properties difficult. The project presents several challenges as the 5.7-acre land is partially within the Village with a much larger portion



*By Averill D. Geus, Historian*

Every small hamlet, village or town, at some point in its development acquires a gathering place for its inhabitants. It may be a church, a tap room, or even a sports arena, but a place to enjoy the company of others. From clubs to crusades, this human inclination provides the backbone of our village, society, culture and entertainment. As early as the 1650s in East Hampton, before a church was built in the vicinity of today's James Lane, the home of Thomas Baker was licensed for church services on Sundays for which he received 18 pence per service. But, it was also used as an "ordinary" or tavern on weekdays. David Gardiner, who wrote up the history of the early days in East Hampton, reported that "the playing of draughts" was a favorite amusement of "tavern idlers" and "flip", a mixture of whiskey and rum, was the most popular drink. The Baker House still stands on Main Street facing the Village Green.

During the Revolutionary days of the 1770s–1780s, when Long Island was occupied by British soldiers, an Inn was established at the Hunting House, where locals and the military ate and drank together. When the occupation ended, Reverend Samuel Buell raised enough money to build a school for local children that was named Clinton Academy. Public schools were established in the late 1800s and the Academy was transformed into a community center in 1886. A large south wing was added to the building that provided space for entertainments, traveling vaudeville shows, lectures, art exhibits and even a basketball court, where my father learned to play basketball.

The first LVIS fair was held in the Clinton Academy addition. The East Hampton Star was located there in the 1890s. And, the former upstairs classrooms were the forerunners of the East Hampton Library. Clinton Hall, as it became known, was used as a place for public assembly for many years.

But by 1921, East Hampton could boast of a new school, a movie theatre, a library and a newspaper office. The center of the old Town, at that point, had shrugged off its dirt roads and quaint lifestyle. It had acquired a summer colony, a handsome new golf and tennis club, and it could be said, East Hampton had entered the Jazz Age.

Among the new summer residents were Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Woodhouse, who built homes on the newly opened Hunting Lane. They were enthralled by their adopted Village and its antiquity. In 1912, they gifted the Village with a handsome library building. The old Academy building attracted their attention next and by 1921, was transformed to its original design. The large wing and kitchen were removed to be replaced by Hemerocallis garden area. It was then leased to the East Hampton Historical Society for 99 years. It became a showplace for many of East Hampton's antique treasures: century old dolls filled one room, scrimshaw and mementoes from whaling voyages another, locally made furniture emerged from attics and early Main Street homes for display. It was an exciting museum, but it was not a Village gathering place.

Recognizing the need for a community center, Mrs. Woodhouse, again stepped in to help out. On November 4, 1930, according to The Star a "momentous meeting" was held at the East Hampton Library. Representatives of the entire Village met and formally accepted the gift of a site for a new social and artistic center. An old Samuel Miller house on the lot was demolished and the site cleared. It was directly opposite the new library building on the corner of Dunemere Lane and Main Street.

A gift of \$100,000 was made by Mrs. Woodhouse for the construction and upkeep in addition to the property. Alfred D. Bell, suggested the center be named Guild Hall, as Mrs. Woodhouse preferred her name not be used.

Chairmen for the enterprise were also elected and included five local residents and five Maidstone Club members. Plans were drawn up by Amor Embry, Jr., who also designed the Library. Envisioned were two large galleries for art exhibits, a small theatre for local productions and concerts, a green room and dressing rooms. An outdoor garden area was designed by Mrs. Embry's wife.

The new center built by Frank B. Smith was highly praised. The public was invited to see their new center on August 19, 1931, to be used, as Mrs. Woodhouse stated it, "to encourage and cultivate a taste for music, drama, and the arts, to furnish a meeting place for various organizations and to promote and encourage a higher type of citizenship." Guild Hall surpassed the dreams of all in the community, considered unique because unlike centers elsewhere it provided space for all the arts: painting, sculpture, music and theatre. Most provocative was the jewel box of a theater with its circus motif: a cluster of colored balloon-like house lights, and a striped tent-like ceiling and pink seats.

Guild Hall became a secondary home for many in the community. School teachers, housewives, and talented local men all joined Guild Hall Players and performed in acclaimed local productions. And, boy were they fun! Teenagers learned to dance in weekend classes. Classes were held for amateur artists, photographers and home craftsmen. Concerts were given by the men's choral society. Conventions for Republicans and Democrats were held there. It became a meeting place for local organizations such as the LVIS, the Music Club, the Bridge Club and a group called the Lithuanian Alliance of America. Never to be forgotten were the Guild Hall Player's trips to entertain the service men at Camp Upton at Yaphank and Camp Hero at Montauk, during WWII. Other delights were wintertime parties, and the grand mixture of local and summer club thespians in annual Labor Day shows. These were known as the Village Vanities. Summer stock plays filled the theatre during summer months. Many remember the stars who performed here, such as Helen Hayes, Bela Lugosi, and Olivia deHavilland, not to mention scores of others.

Guild Hall continued its commitment to artists who were working in East Hampton in the 1950s and later. The galleries shocked many viewers when they first saw works by Jackson Pollock and Willem deKooning hanging on walls once revered by Childe Hassam and Thomas Moran. The galleries have outperformed through the decades with amazing museum shows including one display of the Montauk and Shinnecock Indian artifacts. Another with a great history of whaling and fishing tools which became the prelude to the outstanding Marine Museum in Amagansett. Crowds of local people came to see a display of photographs taken by former Police Chief Fritz Leddy.

The Woodhouse gifts to East Hampton made nearly a century ago, transformed our Village from a tiny, rural dot on a Long Island map, into a cultural center now nationally known. Perhaps the real importance of Guild Hall to the community was best expressed by a long-time member, "I remember the good times. We formed life-long friendships and you felt good about giving pleasure to the community."

Guild Hall had a place for everyone.

within the Town. This land was identified early on as a parcel to be purchased through the Community Preservation Fund (CPF) and one wonders why it has lingered on the list so long. One solution may be for the Village to purchase the Village zoned lot as open space, providing an access easement with one driveway onto Toilsome Ln for the portion otherwise landlocked and within the Town. Unless some other access can be arranged onto Route 114, which would be preferable, though likely not so easily procured. This will increase traffic on that small Village Street, which is already used as a bypass around downtown and the compatibility of a drinking establishment with neighboring residential uses seems questionable at best.

Another project of concern is the expansion of Guild Hall and alterations to the interior space of the theatre including the removal of the historic circus tent ceiling, so iconic to the experience of audience members, particularly children, for so many decades. The property is in a residential zone and also in the Main Street Historic District. Because this is a preexisting nonconforming use in a residential zone, the application is

subject to Special Permit standards and will require many variances. Generally, the proposed changes to accommodate for disabled persons, are necessary. However, the sidewalk expansions with plans to serve drinks and snacks out of doors appears to be an expansion or intensification of the use, which is described as a 'theatre use'. Guidelines for such a use are somewhat subjective. The overall increase in requested coverage will ultimately more than triple what is permitted on this residential lot, already way over permitted coverage. The new parking lot configuration seems an improvement in circulation and traffic flow, but the diminishment of available parking – and seating as the interior plans correlate to this – creates an even greater deficit of parking for the institution. And its neighbors, particularly the East Hampton Library, with which parking is sometimes shared for special events. Bringing food and drink to the outside of the building, whether in the rear on proposed terraces or in the front on the proposed widened sidewalk will surely bring added noise and light to nearby residents. These are substantial variances and should be well considered before granting by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Design Review Board has jurisdiction over the building improvements regarding compatibility of design and harmony with the Historic District. While not the purview of the governmental agencies responsible for reviewing this application, it seems counter intuitive to make fewer seats available to the public as that will necessarily raise ticket prices. One struggles to find the nexus between the institution's plans for the future and Mrs. Woodhouse's vision for Guild Hall when she established it as a meeting place for local people to encourage greater civic participation through an understanding of the arts. It seems, like so many local organizations embraced by well-meaning second home owners committed to the long-term health of the institution, there is a general failure to infuse local disposition into these plans. Rather, they often tend to mimic those of the bigger, urban institutions with which their Boards are more familiar. One questions how accessible this new vision of Guild Hall will be to the local, year-round community, for whom it was originally intended.

Another worrying issue is the proposal to bring alcohol to the Beach Hut at Main Beach. Run by a local family, the Seekamps propose to expand the menu to potentially include breakfast with cooperation from the Village to allow those without beach permits to park there before the beach opens for the day. The operators have also applied to the NYS Liquor Authority for a liquor license to sell beer and wine during hours of operation. The Tuesday night concert series would also be an income opportunity for the operators. VPS feels selling alcohol of any sort at any time of day will be unsafe, especially when combined with ocean swimming. The friendly, family atmosphere at the Main Beach Pavilion that has defined the experience of Village residents and beachgoers alike for so many years, will be negatively affected if purchasing alcohol is brought into the mix. Kids running up to the concession stand for a treat, a first independent errand for many who grew up at Main Beach, will need to proceed with caution if there are people drinking alcohol there. One recalls the fiasco that unfolded at the Town Beaches in recent years, with drunken groups of young people flocking to local beaches by the bus load with cases of beer, which completely ruined the beach experience for sober beach goers and families alike.

Residents concerned about these changes should make their feelings known. Much change is ahead and monitoring and shaping these projects into things we can live with as a community requires the commitment of the many, not the few.



**Opposite page:** 1. (l-r) Alice Lukeman, Alice Mund, Wilson Stone (right rear), 1975. Photo by Philippe Montant; 2. Joan and Bob Osborne, Shipwreck Party, March 1959. Photo by Mel Lamb; 3. Mrs. Woodhouse, Clothesline Art Sale, 1947; 4. Guild Hall Executive Director, Enez Whipple. Photo by Ivan Dmitri; 5. Hedwig Bates, Village Vanities. Photo by Patricia Coughlan. 6. Ray Whittaker, Trevor Kelsall (in barrel) and Art Palmer in "Oh Kay!", 1956. Photo by Eunice Telfer Juckett; 7. Grade School Kids Costume Party - Guild Hall, circa 1972;

**Above:** 8. Village Vanities, 1947, "We're the Girls Who Used to Be" (l-r) Mrs. Benjamin Barnes, unknown, Mrs. Julian S. Myrick, Mrs. E. J. Siter, Mrs. Ellery S. James, & Mrs. W. A. Taylor; 9. Guild Hall Players perform, "Girl Crazy" featuring Ken Stowell, beloved EHHS music teacher c. 1948; 10. Geraldine Gould in Mrs. Robinsons' Players Group circa 1942. Photo by William Boone Studios. 11. (L) Peggy Lou Mulford, of the Mulford Farm and Peggy Nugent, daughter of Dr Paul Nugent, c. 1940-42. Photo by Willam Boone Studios.

# THE STATE OF OUR PONDS

By Kathleen Cunningham

The hydrology of Town Pond is rather complex. The Pond is filled by rain water and has always benefited from water pumped from Hook Pond when levels become low. The pump broke last year. Combined with the dredging of the bottom, necessary environmental maintenance, and the drought conditions the entire northeast has been in for the last several years, the water level was very low. The new pump was installed around Christmas, funded by Community Preservation Fund (CPF) monies set aside for water quality improvement projects which the Village administration rightly accessed. However, given the lack of rainfall, water levels will continue to be low from time to time.

Village Government, in cooperation with the Town of East Hampton's Natural Resources Department, has purchased the Ayres property on Hook Pond, again funded by CPF money targeted for water quality improvements. Natural Resources is fielding bids for a natural buffer to begin to filter nutrients from run-off and other water borne pollutants. The property is well situated along the shoreline, which improves the likelihood that pollutants will be captured before they enter Hook Pond. Interested homeowners can also help by installing low-nitrogen waste water systems, developing similar natural buffers and bioswales to improve conditions in this important surface water body. Rebates and financial incentives for low-nitrogen septic

systems are still available through the Town and County. More information on financial supports for low-nitrogen septic systems can be found at this link: <https://ehamptonny.gov/584/Septic-Incentive-Program>.

At Georgica Pond, the good shepherds of the Friends of Georgica Pond (FOGP), continue to support a better understanding of the science of the Pond and how it can be mitigated to improve water quality there. FOGP will continue to run their algae harvester removing plant life that promotes algal blooms. Dr. Christopher Gobler of the Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook continues to guide the FOGP in their efforts to mitigate impacts of overdevelopment and antiquated septic systems that are major contributors to the algal blooms which plague the Pond. Also, new is a mobile pontoon boat that is equipped to sample the water in all areas of the Pond, much like the buoy anchored in the southern waters. The water is measured for temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, acidity and blue-green algae levels among other important factors which detail in-time conditions of the water so mitigations can be properly and immediately tailored. For more about the FOGP activities please visit their website at: <https://friendsofgeorgicapond.org/>.

VPS continues to support any and all efforts to improve water quality for our aquifer and surface water bodies. Without clean water, we have no quality of life at all.



Please fill out, cut along the line and mail to **THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY**  
P.O. Box 2015, East Hampton, NY 11937 • 631-324-3524 • [www.villagepreservationsociety.org](http://www.villagepreservationsociety.org)

Please enroll me as a member of The Village Preservation Society of East Hampton for the Membership Year from January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Members in this Membership \_\_\_\_\_

For year round Newsletters and information, please print winter address

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Contributors of:

\$ 25,000.00 will be listed as **Chairman's Circle**

\$ 10,000.00 will be listed as **Visionary**

\$ 2,500.00 will be listed as **Advocate**

\$ 500.00 will be listed as **Patron**

\$ 100.00 will be listed as **Friend**

\$ 15,000.00 will be listed as **President's Circle**

\$ 5,000.00 will be listed as **Champion**

\$ 1,000.00 will be listed as **Benefactor**

\$ 250.00 will be listed as **Supporting Member**

Regular Membership (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_

**The Membership Year runs from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.**

I would like to be active. My special interests are: \_\_\_\_\_

I (We) support VPS principles but do not wish to be listed as a member.

Enclosed is a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## THE VILLAGE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2015

East Hampton, NY 11937

[www.villagepreservationsociety.org](http://www.villagepreservationsociety.org)

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW TRUSTEE

*By Georgia deHavenon*

**Alexandra Chantecaille** has lived in East Hampton for most of her life, having grown up in her parent's charming wood frame house in the Village. When it came time to acquire her own home, she chose a historic structure that was built during the early settlement of East Hampton. Her home, The Conklin House, has been described by the Historic Services Director of East Hampton Village, Robert Hefner, as "the best example of an 18th Century saltbox in the Town of East Hampton outside the Village". The meticulous research required to return her home, at 57 Accabonac Road, to a closer version of its original form awakened her interest in historic preservation. Alexandra has pursued this interest diligently and we are very pleased that she has agreed to join the Village Preservation Society Board of Trustees.

Ms. Chantecaille's home was the recipient of our Historic Preservation Award in 2021.



### ANCHOR SOCIETY UPDATE

*By Bess Rattray*

The Anchor Society of East Hampton was launched in the summer of 2021 with little more than a dream — and a lot of good will. Our mission, for those who may not yet have heard the news, is to purchase a commercial building in the heart of the village and lease it at "benevolent" rental prices to the operator of an old-fashioned general store. This has already been done successfully on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, and, following this model, we can help small businesses sidestep the sky-high cost of running a shop in "Gucci gulch."

Why does East Hampton need a general store? Because we all crave the return of stores where we can actually buy things. Because we need stores that are healthy for the community, and that serve all of us, not just serving as marketing fronts for international brands.

Response to this germ of an idea, when it began to spread in local newspapers between July and November, has been absolutely overwhelming. It turns out that, yes, pretty much everyone in town (from longtime locals to summer folks to weekend tourists) would love to see a down-home, welcoming

mercantile on Main Street or Newtown Lane. A place not just to pick up the everyday items that have been missing from our retail scene for far too long, but also a place to see neighbors and feel a part of the community.

Since receiving a very generous grant of \$5,000 from the V.P.S. in the fall, the Anchor Society has been working hard to put in place all the building blocks essential to our upcoming capital-fundraising campaign. The grant has allowed the Anchor Society to launch a website ([theanchorsociety.org](http://theanchorsociety.org)), purchase basic but necessary office supplies, organize our social media, and build the online infrastructure to begin accepting donations. We expect to launch the capital campaign by summer of 2022, and are aiming to engage a very broad swathe of residents in the effort. We hope that as many as 500 residents will show their support by donating as little as \$1 to \$100, as a sort of "show of hands." Given the intensity of interest the Anchor Society idea has already generated — only eight months after its founding — we believe strongly that the larger-scale donations will follow, and we will be able to purchase our building.

The Anchor Society extends hearty thanks to the members and board of the V.P.S., and will keep the V.P.S. informed of all onward progress.