

Comments on Connetquot



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greeting Friends!

Do you feel the crispness in the air these days? Notice that the sky is brilliant blue? Starting to see leaves turning shades of red and gold? And where did the ospreys go? These things were brought to my attention during our September Mindfulness programs. Fall has arrived, bringing cooler weather and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors after this very hot summer!

I wish to thank all of our anglers for respecting our trout this summer by ceasing fishing on warm water days. As the weather cools down, let's get outside, back into the river and enjoy the thrill of a tight line! Need equipment? Please support our new sponsor, ORVIS of Westbury! Besides fishing, we have a great array of programs planned for the next few months (see inside) with more in the works that will be announced by email.

We're sorry to say that our Treasurer, Bobby Ploetz, has decided to retire. Are you willing to step up and fill the role? Board membership requires only a minimal commitment of your time. (After all, we are all volunteers.)

On a happier note, I'm excited to announce our 2023 Gala is scheduled again at the beautiful Snapper Inn on December 7th honoring retired park manager, Susanne Wuehler. Do you like to plan parties or make gift baskets? We need volunteers! Planning meetings will begin toward the end of October. Whether you volunteer, donate a raffle prize or purchase a seat, please consider coming out to enjoy a night with your Connetquot Friends!

Stay Well!
Janet

Cover photo: Carole Scialdone

Not yet a Friend of Connetquot? Please support our efforts to enhance our beautiful preserve.
Visit our website, www.friendsofconnetquot.org/join.

Historical Bits

by Keith Snedecor

Shepherd Knapp, one of the original founders of the South Side Sportsmen's Club, his grandson, Edward Spring Knapp Sr., and wife, Margaret Ireland Lawrance, purchased twelve acres of land on Saxon Avenue in Bay Shore, midway between the villages of Islip and Bay Shore, in the spring of 1879. The property was located on the west side of Saxon Avenue, about halfway to the bay. They named it Awixa Lawn, the name "Awixa" coming from the name of a creek that empties into the bay on the west side of the place.

In the summer of 1879, construction work started on what would become the future home of the Knapp Family. Brookwood Hall, circa 1910, was the home of South Side Sportsmen's Club member Harry K. Knapp. Upon the death of Harry's wife in the 1920's, the property was inherited by his son Theodore who, in turn, sold the property to SSSC member Francis Thorne. Francis held on to it until the early 1940's when it was then acquired by an orphanage that was displaced by the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Having grown up in East Islip, I've had friends whose family members worked for the Thornes. It was said there were kidnapping threats against the Thorne children, and when Nazi saboteurs landed in Amagansett it apparently was too much for Mrs. Thorne. The family moved up to Millbrook, NY, but returned a year later, having missed Long Island, and settled on Maple Avenue in Islip. Family members from the Knapp and Thorne families are interred at Emmanuel Church in Great River.

Our history team has found photographs of Harry, Theodore, and Francis enjoying time conversing with friends on the SSSC porch.

Former FOC Board Members Jerry and Rita Trapani passed along additional information, gleaned from the Bay Shore Historical Society, about Awixa Lawn. Wealthy textile importer Julius Oppenheimer purchased the two-and-a-half-story Colonial Revival house from the Knapps in 1917 and spent twelve summers vacationing there. They found Bay Shore a desirable location because the area was malaria-free and the town residents were accepting of people with Jewish heritage.

Julius Oppenheimer's older son was none other than J. Robert Oppenheimer, the atomic physicist whose story has been one of this year's blockbuster films.

Opinion: Protect Park Patrons & Personnel?

by Joe Mikulas

So do you enjoy an occasional "thrill?" Have you ever thought about a real-life game of "chicken?" How do you feel about driving the entrance and exit to Connetquot State Park Preserve? At prime traffic hours, it's truly an adventure and, more likely, an accident waiting to happen.

NY State Assemblyman Jarrett Gandolfo recently met with a contingent of concerned stakeholders to observe the problem firsthand. We pointed out the narrow access and egress lanes, along with fast-moving, busy traffic. 8th District NY State Senator Alexis Weik expressed our concerns to NYS Dept. of Transportation Region 10 Director, Richard B. Causin.

In turn, Mr. Causin referenced crash analysis data, showing no significant issues with vehicles entering and exiting CRSP. He did indicate that in 2023-2024, the DOT would begin an Environmental Impact Study on the Oakdale Merge project, which will include park access and egress.

Please predict for yourself the time when actual road improvements will be accomplished. Months? Years? In the meantime, who uses the park? We know that families enjoy hiking and programs in the preserve; so do bird watchers, joggers, fishermen and equestrians. Special users include veterans' groups including Wounded Warriors, women's groups including Casting for Recovery, and school groups on environmental field trips. Please keep in mind that park employees and volunteers enter and exit the park on a daily basis.

Now visualize an equestrian pulling a horse trailer, or a school bus full of children attempting to exit CRSP from a short, narrow egress lane, during high traffic times. (The entrance is no easy feat either, given the lane width.) Despite posing the question as to NYS DOT standard length and width of such lanes, instead, we read of low crash statistics. For once, can we be granted an interim solution to a potential serious (maybe fatal) accident?

Data and statistics would soon be forgotten, should one fatality occur. It's time for park patrons to insist that action be taken; proactive rather than reactive. And if you follow Major League Baseball, how did analytic data work out for the NY Yankees this season? Last time I checked, they were in last place. Let's make sure the Sunrise Highway entrance and exit becomes a first place concern for our NYSDOT.



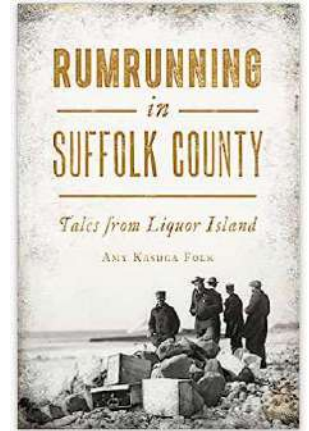
Shepherd Knapp. Photo supplied by Keith Snedecor

Friends of Connetquot Lecture Series
at Connetquot River State Park Preserve Clubhouse

Rumrunning in Suffolk County
Presented by Amy Kasuga Folk
Saturday, October 14 at 1:00 PM

Prohibition and rumrunning impacted the entire nation during the early 20th century. With its long coastline and proximity to New York City, Suffolk County was one of the places that often witnessed the struggle between federal agents and the liquor smugglers. The book *Rumrunning in Suffolk County* explores local rumrunning through documented accounts found in local newspapers.

Author Amy Folk is the Town of Southold Historian.



Fall Fishing Outing
Friday, October 27 at 7:30 AM



The Friends of Connetquot would like to invite all to enjoy a day of fly fishing and a tasty lunch with beverage from the Snapper Inn.

Note: all park rules still apply. Admission is \$80 per person. We are sorry, but there will be no refunds for cancellations. Space is limited, so plan accordingly!

Register for this event at www.friendsofconnetquot.org. Reservations must be received by October 13th so lunches can be ordered.



Haunted House and Grounds Tour

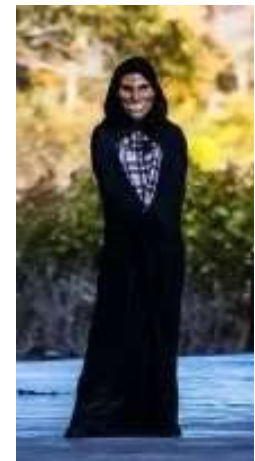
**Connetquot River State Park
Preserve**

Walk the halls of the Connetquot Preserve Clubhouse as spirits and monsters come back to life! Then find your way through the woods as you encounter the wandering ghosts of Long Island's local myths and legends.



3 Nights of Fright!

Friday, Oct 20th
Saturday, Oct 21st
Sunday Oct 22nd
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM



Lectures are free for members of Friends of Connetquot. Non-members pay \$5/person. Please consider becoming a member and enjoy our programming all year long. Seasonal parking rates apply. To register or to become a member, please visit www.friendsofconnetquot.org.

Holiday Decorating of the Clubhouse

Sunday, December 10

From 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Please join the Friends of Connetquot as we decorate the Clubhouse for the Holidays. Refreshments will be served.

Register at friendsofconnetquot.org.

Community Service will be provided.



Pollinators and the Fun of Herb Gardens

Saturday, February 24 at 1:00 PM

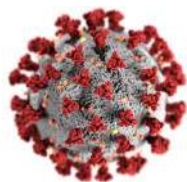
Presented by Laura Klahre, Blossom Meadow Farm

There are close to 450 different bee species in New York State, so why does everyone focus on the invasive non-native honeybee?!? Join bee rancher, farmer, and award-winning jammer Laura Klahre (Blossom Meadow Farm) for an eye-opening alternative pollinator discussion of Long Island's native bees, flies, wasps, butterflies and moths. In our increasingly suburbanized landscapes, herb gardens serve as critical habitat for pollinators (food, shelter, and place to raise their young) as well as corridors to connect patches of natural habitat, increasing gene flow, promoting reestablishment of locally extinct populations, and increasing species diversity within otherwise isolated areas. Native pollinators are not domesticated and need to be coaxed/managed to supercharge the pollination of your garden, farm and forest. Herb gardens are a great management tool!

Laura Klahre's work life has spanned the Department of the Interior, Peconic Estuary Program, and The Nature Conservancy before incorporating her farm in 2009. Blossom Meadow Farm in Southold, NY specializes in growing organic berries to make award-winning jam (national Good Food Awards, International Flavor Awards, World Jam Festival) and raising mason bees for sale as cocoons. Now widely coined as Regenerative Agriculture, Blossom Meadow Farm embraces nature to improve soil health and maximize seed set, resulting in consistent harvests of premium fruit each year.



Covid Rears Its Ugly Head



Viruses evolve and mutate, fighting for their own survival and risking ours. Covid-19 seems to be rebounding and deserves our attention. Park Manager Jessica Anderson-Ruiz tells us that this is a good time to review State Parks protocols for positive testing and exposure to Covid-19. Anyone exposed will need to wear a mask for 10 days when inside buildings and whenever they can't social distance. Anyone who tests positive will need to isolate and then wear a mask for 5 days after.

Health and safety is most important, especially to those park staff or FOC members who are immuno-compromised, so please observe these protocols!

Note also that an updated booster vaccine is now available. Consider getting one soon.



The Friends of Connetquot thanks Parks and Trails New York and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for their support of our efforts.



Great State Park Programs!

Connetquot River State Park Preserve announces a wealth of interpretative programs for this fall. There's something for visitors of all ages on this busy schedule!



Fee: \$4.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child, and children under 3 are free.

\$8.00 parking fee during the fee collection season.

Outdoor programs are rain or shine, so please dress appropriately.

Reservations are required and are taken beginning 2 weeks prior to each program.

To make a reservation, visit **Eventbrite.com** and search **#NatureAdventure**. (Notice that's "Ed," not "Ad.")

If you are unable to keep your reservation, please call or cancel so others may have the opportunity to attend. Please be prompt.

If others are waiting, your place may be given to them if you have not arrived when the program starts.

Tiny Tots: "Nature Discoveries"

Wednesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Explore the natural world around us. These programs will connect children and their parents with nature through short walks, animal visitors, and crafts. Children ages 3-5.

Pumpkins

October 25th

Leaves and Trees

November 15th

Squirrels and Acorns

November 29th

Nocturnal Animals

December 6th

Welcome Winter

December 20th

Apple Bird Feeders: (Family Program)

Saturday, October 7 – 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

There's a chill in the air and summer songbirds are migrating! Learn about where our summer visitors go and how we can help songbirds on their winter migration by creating seasonal and natural bird feeders with autumn harvest fruits!

Life at the Fish Hatchery: (Family Program)

Sunday, October 8 – 1:00 ~ 3:00 PM

Enjoy a leisurely hike to the fish hatchery where we will explore what we see in nature along the way. Once at the hatchery, we will take a tour to learn about the trout raised there and the history of hatchery operations at Connetquot River State Park Preserve. This hike is approximately 2 miles.

Clubhouse Tours: (Family Program)

Sunday, October 15 – 1:00 – 2:30 PM

A docent will discuss the history of the tavern and the high society Club which shaped Connetquot River State Park Preserve into what it is today. Tours of the historic Nicoll Grist Mill are included and will be offered after your house tour.

Recommended for children 8+. House tours are about an hour long and run consecutively every half hour. There will be a short talk outside before viewing the inside.

Haunted House and Grounds Tour: (Family Program)

Friday, October 20 – 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Walk the halls of the Connetquot Preserve Clubhouse as spirits and monsters come back to life! Then find your way through the woods as you encounter the wandering ghosts of Long Island's local myths and legends. Recommended for children **ages 8 and up**. Beware strobe lights will be used! **Free event!**

Haunted House and Grounds Tour: (Family Program)

Saturday, October 21 – 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Walk the halls of the Connetquot Preserve Clubhouse as spirits and monsters come back to life! Then find your way through the woods as you encounter the wandering ghosts of Long Island's local myths and legends. Recommended for children **ages 8 and up**. Beware strobe lights will be used! **Free event!**

Haunted House and Grounds Tour: (Family Program)

Sunday, October 22 – 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Walk the halls of the Connetquot Preserve Clubhouse as spirits and monsters come back to life! Then find your way through the woods as you encounter the wandering ghosts of Long Island's local myths and legends. Recommended for children **ages 8 and up**. Beware strobe lights will be used! **Free event!**

Haunted Tales on Trails: (Family Program)

Sunday, October 29 – 10:00 AM ~ 12:00 PM

Come with the family for a morning walk on the trails. Collect prizes along the way as you unravel the myths and tales associated with some of the world's spookiest animals! Feel free to join us and dress in costume to celebrate the spooky holiday.

More programs on the next page. ⇒

Sunset Up North: (Adult Program)**Friday – November 3, 5:00 ~ 7:00 PM**

Join us for a hike as we explore the trails north of the trout hatchery at sunset! This is great opportunity to see and hear wildlife in an undisturbed part of the preserve!

Clubhouse Tours: (Family Program)**Sunday, November 5 – 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

A docent will discuss the history of the tavern and the high society Club which shaped Connetquot River State Park Preserve into what it is today. Tours of the historic Nicoll Grist Mill are included and will be offered after your house tour. Recommended for children 8+. House tours are about an hour long and run consecutively every half hour. There will be a short talk outside before viewing the inside.

Mystical Creatures: (Family Program)**Friday, November 10 – 7:00 ~ 8:30 PM**

When the sun goes down, all of Connetquot’s mysterious creatures come out to play. Woodland pixies, unicorns, and even bigfoot roam around the preserve for a night of adventure after the wandering ghosts of Halloween have left. Come learn all about these mystical creatures on this unique night hike! We’ll be looking for traces of them with a fun scavenger hunt for all to enjoy! Bring a flashlight and your imagination!

Clubhouse Tours: (Family Program)**Sunday, November 19 – 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

A docent will discuss the history of the tavern and the high society Club which shaped Connetquot River State Park Preserve into what it is today. Tours of the historic Nicoll Grist Mill are included and will be offered after your house tour. Recommended for children 8+. House tours are about an hour long and run consecutively every half hour. There will be a short talk outside before viewing the inside.

Colonial Games: (Family Program)**Saturday, November 25 – 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Take a journey to the past and visit Colonial America! Leave that smart phone behind in modern times and test your coordination with a ball and cup. How far can you roll a hoop? Join us for these and many other fun games to test your skills.

Clubhouse Tours: (Family Program)**Sunday, December 3 – 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

A docent will discuss the history of the tavern and the high society Club which shaped Connetquot River State Park Preserve into what it is today. Tours of the historic Nicoll Grist Mill are included and will be offered after your house tour. Recommended for children 8+. House tours are about an hour long and run consecutively every half hour. There will be a short talk outside before viewing the inside.

Holiday Wreaths: (Adult Program)**Saturday, December 9 – 10:00 – 11:30 AM and 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

It’s the holiday season again! Whatever holiday you celebrate, a fragrant natural wreath is enjoyable during these cold months. We will have all the natural plants to decorate with. Feel free to bring ribbons or anything else you like to decorate your wreath with for the season. One wreath per household.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

Fee: \$4.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child, and children under 3 are free.

\$8.00 parking fee during the fee collection season.

Reservations are required and are taken beginning 2 weeks prior to each program.

To make a reservation, visit **Eventbrite.com** and search **#NatureAdventure**. (Notice that’s “Ed,” not “Ad.”) If you are unable to keep your reservation, please call or cancel so others may have the opportunity to attend. Please be prompt.

Farewell, Bobby ...

Longtime FOC Treasurer Bobby Ploetz will be resigning shortly, citing frequent travel, obligations at home and other matters. Bobby has been a meticulous keeper of our financial records and transactions. We thank him for his years of service to FOC and wish him all the best in the future. Thank you, Bobby!

... and Welcome ...?

We’d love to insert a name here, but as Bobby has just announced his intentions, we haven’t had time to cast our net in hopes of snaring a new Treasurer. Might YOU be willing and able, or do you know someone who is? Candidates for this board position ideally will have some knowledge of Quick Books. As he transitions into retirement, Bobby will work with the new treasurer as much as possible to show the methods he uses and how he keeps records.

We hope to fill this vital office soon. Please email Janet Soley at janetmariesoley@gmail.com.

A Grand Tour

The staff at Connetquot State Park Preserve organizes an annual team-building outing for the docents who lead tours of the park's Clubhouse and Mill, visiting other historic sites to experience other guides in action. On August 27 many of our docents, joined by other FOC members, enjoyed a nearly two-hour guided tour through the beautiful Coe Hall at Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park in Upper Brookville. Afterwards, several of the group roamed the extensive grounds of the estate.

William Coe, pictured right, was a railroad and marine insurance magnate who, as president of the Johnson and Higgins firm, was involved in insuring the *R.M.S. Titanic*. He weathered that debacle and became chairman of the board of J+H in 1916. Coe also bred champion racehorses. He loved the American West and purchased Buffalo Bill Cody's hunting camp in Cody, Wyoming.

He had four children with his second wife Mai, daughter of Henry Huttleston Rogers, a dominant figure at Standard Oil. Coe built Planting Fields in 1911. When the original house burned down, he erected the present one between 1918-21. Of special interest to us, Coe was a member of the South Side Sportsmen's Club, as was his youngest son, Henry.



Pictured far left, sitting on Connetquot's porch with Merle Smith, is Henry Coe.

At right is a portrait of William Coe's sons, William, Robert and Henry. Henry is wearing girl's clothes, a common custom at the time for very young boys.



Photos supplied by our Research Team's Ritamarie Weigand.



At left, tour guide Eileen points out features of the entrance room at Coe Hall.

At right, a cleverly hidden bookcase, one of the many fascinating features of the mansion.

Photos: T. Casey



Give Us Your Best Shot: Share your photos of the Preserve with us! Send us up to four photos in .jpeg or .png digital format, and you may receive a year's subscription to the FOC newsletter. Photos must be current (within a year of submission) and shot within the park. FOC board members are not eligible. Please give the approximate location of the scene, if possible. DEADLINE for next issue: December 11, 2023. Send your files to Tom Casey at: 2caseys@optonline.net.

HOOF BEATS

by Carole Scialdone



Wow, the summer just flew by this year! Everyone deals with the heat in their own way: some ride early in the morning, others late in the afternoon. Some avoid riding altogether, and others go for a quiet walk on a shady trail. Thankfully, the tree canopy does give us some needed relief from the sun's intense heat. However you handle the heat, our horses still need their exercise and we need our respite from the world. There is always a cool hose waiting back at the barn to refresh our steeds when we get home.

Each ride through Connetquot is a fun, new adventure and we feel blessed to ride here. We get to see a variety of woodland critters including lots of deer and turkeys, several varieties of turtles and the adorable and curious foxes that are so abundant this year. Several foxes seem very interested in our horses, following us on trail and, on some occasions, even leading us! If we're lucky, we get to share these experiences with a friend or two.

A portion of the Red Trail (Brook Road) has been closed due to a washout from heavy rain, preventing access to the building complex from the east side of the park. A pothole developed near the small bridge and until it is repaired, it is unsafe to use this trail. We hope it will be repaired and available to use again soon.

We've enjoyed a few "fall preview days" with reduced humidity, cooler temperatures and a nice breeze. Autumn is just around the corner and, as always, promises to bring the beautiful fall foliage we all love to see. We look forward to fewer bugs, crisper air and crimson leaves.

The Allwood Road gate lock was very rusted and could no longer be locked. We reported it to park management, who replaced it the same day.

Park staff has been busy mowing and clearing low hanging branches on Upper Brook Road (Green Trail). We also reported the hill on Mud Trail washed out during recent heavy rains, creating a very deep crevice and several dangerous holes. Staff added sand and graded the hill. They also added sand on the banks at Collins Crossing. We still need sand to be added to the very deep, muddy spots on the trail on the west side of Collins.

Two legislators have introduced a bill recommending that dogs be allowed in ALL New York State Parks, except for the Adirondacks and Catskills. Connetquot is a State Park *Preserve* with abundant wildlife and equestrian trails, and as such is not an appropriate place for dogs. I started a petition to continue preventing dogs in Connetquot. It only has 217 signatures so far. The link for the petition is below. Please feel free to sign and have your family and friends sign, too!

https://www.change.org/p/concerned-citizens-oppose-allowing-dogs-in-connetquot-preserve?fbclid=IwAR1kOIJ26n-1EU_yQBvhRqT2THPOOr3AMg8jPcfTivAWShrd_MIQO5VGoRo.

Photo: Carole Scialdone

What's Happening in the Park

Superintendent Jessica Anderson-Ruiz reports that the last evening fly fishing session for the season was September 3. Evening fishing was offered May 6 to September 3. We had a total of 219 people who fished the evening session, with a daily average of 2 people.

A section of the Red Trail is still only accessible by foot, with no vehicles or horses permitted, until the washed-out culvert is repaired. At the end of August, Parks met with an engineering firm, which will be preparing a proposal for the work. We will provide updates as plans and approvals progress.

Trail maintenance, landscaping, invasive species removal and pruning continue as usual.

We continue regular stocking of trout in the Connetquot River, as well as at Caleb Smith State Park Preserve Historic Club House & Nicholl Grist Mill Tours resumed September 3 from 1:00-2:30 PM. Tours will be offered the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month through December 17.

In mid-August, West Nile Virus was detected at Connetquot in mosquitos tested by the Suffolk County Health Department. Signage is displayed on all access gates to inform the public, and informational flyers are distributed at the entrance toll booth. The Health Department recommends minimizing outdoor activity between dusk and dawn, wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants, and using mosquito repellent.

An American Shipbuilder

by Lawrence Dauch

Erastus Young 1820 –1884

The Young family was one of the first settlers on Long Island. They were Puritan descendants of the Reverend Christopher Young, 1575-1625, Vicar of Southwold, England. His sons John and Joseph sailed to the New World in 1629 and settled in Salem, MA. The brothers later moved to Long Island and settled the first English colony, Southold.

Erastus' father, Joseph Young Jr., a descendant of Gideon and Jonathan of Orient, was a silversmith who moved from Orient to the South Shore farther west on Long Island. The Youngs were one of the earliest settlers in the hamlet, hence the name Youngsport. The twenty-one families in this settlement were baymen. Joseph came to Youngsport with some wealth and was able to build a shipyard on the Connetquot River. His son Erastus was born in 1820 and later became a shipbuilder himself. Erastus' reputation grew, and he began building sloops for the wealthy families on Long Island.

In the late 1840s, Donald McKay called upon Erastus to help him build the *Flying Cloud*, the legendary clipper ship launched in April 1851. The fastest clipper ship in the world, it sailed from New York City around the Cape of Good Hope to San Francisco in 89 days and 21 hours. It once covered 374 miles in 24 hours, an average of almost 13.5 knots, or 15.5 miles per hour. No square-rigged ship has ever broken the record of the *Flying Cloud*.

In 1870, the hamlet of Youngsport was renamed Great River. The Young family lived on Great River Road, about 1.5 miles from Montauk Highway. Alva Vanderbilt, the Oakdale socialite, lived across the river from them in the Idle Hour Estate. Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt later purchased the Youngs' home and donated the property to Trinity Parish in Brooklyn, New York to be used as a summer camp for city children, known as Seaside Camp.

The New York Yacht Club hired Mr. Young in 1880 because of his rich history in the shipbuilding industry. He moved to Brooklyn that year and died on December 28, 1884 at the age of 64.

Erastus and his wife Jerusha had nine children, one of whom was my great grandfather, Edmund Young. My mother was Helen Francis Young 1907–1961; a beautiful person who died too early.

The author is Erastus Young's great great great grandson. Flying Cloud illustration courtesy Mr. Dauch.



Save the Date!

Please Come!

The Friends of Connetquot Gala
Thursday, December 7 – 6:00 PM

We invite you to join us for our fundraising gala, this year honoring former Connetquot Superintendent Susanne Wuehler. Enjoy passed appetizers, drinks, dinner, raffle prizes and an evening of fun at the beautiful Snapper Inn on the Connetquot River. **Tickets are \$100 each.** (No physical ticket; check in at the door.)

Watch your mailbox for the invitation, or visit www.friendsofconnetquot.org/gala-celebration.

If you would like to help the gala committee with the planning, raffle prizes and tickets, please email Janet Soley at janetmariesoley@gmail.com.



500 Shore Road, Oakdale.

History Project Report

by Ritamarie Weigand

I am extremely pleased to report that our wonderful park employees have brought all of the antique South Side Sportsmen's Club accounting books, ledgers, scrapbooks, journals and registers that have been lying on the third floor attic table for several decades down to the air conditioned, locked, FOC Office. These books date from 1873 to the mid 1900's. They are all quite fragile, and many are in desperate need of repair.

We have been sorting and preserving these artifacts in oversized, custom archival boxes purchased by the Friends of Connetquot board. There presently remain 17 rare, antique SSSC books left to be preserved in another ten archival boxes, for which FOC has authorized payment.

There are "only" about 50 boxes left in the attic to be brought to the conference room to be sorted by the History Team. Of those, 23 are boxes of books—not antique, SSSC books, but books primarily about fishing, hunting, horses, dogs and wildlife that were mostly read by members. Janet Soley and I will sort through these 23 boxes in the attic to see what's there and figure out our next steps before having them moved.



The remaining stacks of historical records attest to the slow, painstaking, yet rewarding work the History Team has already done and, and their efforts continue!

Photos: Ritamarie Weigand



Board Spotlight: Sandi Brewster-walker

We are happy to have Sandi Brewster-walker as a member of FOC's Advisory Board. She is an independent historian, genealogist, freelance writer, and business owner. She is chairperson for the Board of Trustees and acting executive director for the Indigenous People Museum and Research Institute.

She has served in President William J. Clinton's Administration, as deputy director of the Office of Communications at USDA. Brewster-walker is a member of the Montaukett Indian Nation, and Executive Director and Government Affairs Officer. In the Long Island Region, she is a member of the Board of Directors for the Long Island Museum and the Friends of Plum Island; and an Advisory Board member of both the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum as well as the Friends of Connetquot River State Park. In 2017, she was a winner of the Press Club of Long Island Media Award for Third Place in the Narrative Column category.



Membership expiration dates appear on your mailing label on the back page. Please continue to support us!

AUTUMN'S ARRAY

On Long Island are gifted with an extended show of color that commences even before autumn, starting with the tupelo (black gum) trees along streams and ponds. They flash brilliant red beginning as early as Labor Day before turning a deeper, duller shade. Eventually, sassafras turns yellow and orange, hickories yellow, beeches range from golden to a paper-bag beige, and swamp maples red. Even in the Pine Barrens, the oaks and understory berry bushes light up the landscape.

Walt Whitman, traveling through the center of the Island in autumn, described what we now call the Oak Brush Plain, to the west of Connetquot Park this way:

"We are now in the midst of the aforementioned 'brush,' a growth of pine and scrub-oak, mostly, though interspersed with birch, sumac, and other modest-sized trees. But at this time (late in autumn) it is beautiful exceedingly! We can sit and gaze admiringly for miles and miles, at those colors that the chemistry of autumn has profusely dyed every leaf with. Deep and pale red, the green of the pines, the bright yellow of the hickory, are the prevailing hues, in numberless lovely combinations. We have often thought that those who make designs for carpets could get most excellent hints from these autumn garnishings. How pleasing and grateful would be a carpet pattern, richly covered with figures and colors, closely imitated from what one sees here—how much better than the tasteless, meaningless, and every way unartistical diagrams that we walk over, now, in the most fashionably carpeted parlors."



Connetquot State Park Preserve's 3,473 acres of pine barrens come alive in mid- to late October when the red and white oaks in the canopy and

the blueberry and huckleberry in the understory never fail to put on a crimson show. Autumn is prime time to walk in the park, especially after the first frost (if we ever get one).

So how does the magic happen? Let's start with the green leaves: their chlorophyll absorbs red and blue light, so the leaves appear green. Actually, they always contain green, yellow and orange pigments, but the high concentration of chlorophyll masks the other colors. Because chlorophyll needs sunlight and warmth in order for a plant to produce it, chlorophyll production begins to wane when the darker, colder months set in, and the yellows and oranges come to the fore.

As the chlorophyll is exhausted and winter approaches, a layer of dense cells forms along the base of the leaves. This "abscission layer" seals off the movement of sugar from leaf to tree. Sugars that are left in the leaves react with sap to produce anthocyanin, a compound that produces various shades of red, depending on soil acidity. This means that trees in different soil types will display different hues of red, and some species are more brilliant than others, like maples, sweet gum, and dogwood. The anthocyanins will also combine and blend with the other yellow and orange pigments in the leaf, often resulting in multicolored leaves.

Eventually, the leaves detach or are blown off. You may notice that some trees, especially oaks, tend to hold their leaves longer. This is sometimes a simple variation from species to species, but sometimes is an indication that a tree is under stress.

Autumns with a lot of sunny days and cold nights will have the brightest red colors, at least theoretically. We have found over the years that when we try to predict the relative brilliance or dullness of each autumn we often end up surprised one way or another. Even so, it's still our favorite season, and in recent years it seems to be lasting longer. Come to Connetquot and enjoy the display!



Connetquot photos: T. Casey

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Mission Statement

The Friends of Connetquot is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation and history of the 3,473-acre Connetquot River State Park Preserve. We work to help management protect a pristine environment and historic buildings and artifacts. We also support educational programs, fishing facilities and hiking and equestrian trails.

The records of the Friends of Connetquot can be viewed in our room at the Preserve. The New York State Office of Charities Registration holds copies of the annual charities reports required by law.

PLEASE NOTE: Automatic defibrillators are available in the administration office, the BOCES room, the main building and at the hatchery. Preserve staff is trained in their use.

For Emergencies in the Preserve: Call the New York Park

Police at 631-669-2500.

Also notify the Entrance Booth at 631-581-1005.

Visit us at www.friendsofconnetquot.org



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Nature Note

It's obvious to anyone who walks in Connetquot Park that the place is part of the Pine Barrens. Fewer now realize that the Pine Barrens are part of what once was a much larger, fire-dependent ecosystem, now obscured by development, especially in Nassau County.

The Hempstead Plains once spanned about 60,000 acres from what is now Queens Village to Plainedge and Plainview (get it?), and north to the Ronkonkoma Moraine, the backbone of "fish-shape Paumanok." It was the easternmost tall-grass prairie, akin to those in the Midwest, mostly treeless and bisected by Meadow Brook. A grove of trees near its center acquired the name Island Trees and eventually became Levittown. Today, the Hempstead Plains survive in a 19-acre preserve and a nearby Nassau County-owned, 66-acre tract that is not in ideal condition.



To the east, the prairie transitioned into the slightly smaller Oak Brush Plains, a land of scrub oak and scattered pitch pines stretching from Plainview to Brentwood. Another term for this landscape is shrub savanna. What remains today are the DEC's 813-acre Edgewood Oak Brush Plains Preserve in Commack and Deer Park and the much smaller Bishop's Tract in Brentwood.

So, what wood does Edgewood edge up to? The Pine Barrens. The Oak Brush's pitch pines gradually increase in height and density moving east, until not far west of the Connetquot River in Islip Terrace we enter a tall pine-oak forest that once characterized 250,000 acres in the center of the Island. A long, narrow finger of pines, no more than a mile wide, extended from the Connetquot halfway into Nassau County. Today, over 100,000 acres are still preserved.

Each of these three regions formed an interrelated ecosystem dependent on brush fires to maintain their characteristics and drive out competing species. Encroaching development means greater efforts at fire suppression, so some of these areas, especially on their edges, are gradually being invaded by non-native flora. The aforementioned Ronkonkoma Moraine, roughly parallel to the L.I.E., marks the southern advance of the last Ice Age. The Connetquot River's watershed begins just north of the expressway, and the park boundary is a mile south.

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South of the Moraine lies the Hempstead Outwash Plain, where meltwater flowed out to sea as it deposited silt, sand and gravel in ever-finer gradations. Hence the sandy, mostly flat terrain of our park. Its deceptive appearance hides the fact that Connetquot is a geological and ecological crossroads, north-south and east-west.

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