



## Coalition fundraiser features film about citizen activism, seeks to save Flowerfield

By David Ambro

In its ongoing quest to preserve and acquire the 75-acre Flowerfield property in St. James for public parkland, the St. James-Head of the Harbor Neighborhood Preservation Coalition will hold a fundraiser screening of **Forever Wild, Celebrating America's Wilderness** at Harmony Vineyards Wednesday, August 3.

The movie will be preceded by an introductory video message by Coalition founding members Head of the Harbor Trustee Judith Ogden and St. James resident and attorney Joseph Bollhofer. They are ardent opponents of a proposal by Gyrodyne Inc. to subdivide the Flowerfield property on the southeast corner of North Country Road (Route 25A) and Mills Pond in

St. James, which has been approved by the Smithtown Planning Board. The Coalition filed a lawsuit in New York State Supreme Court challenging the subdivision approval.

**Forever Wild** is an hour-long, award-winning feature documentary narrated by Robert Redford about a small group of residents who triumphantly rally the community to stop a golf resort development project on 600 acres of environmentally sensitive valley floor in Telluride, Colorado. Tickets to the outdoor viewing of the film on August 3 at 6:30 p.m. at Harmony Vineyard, 169 Harbor Road, St. James, are \$25 per person. The show comes with a free glass of wine.

During an interview this week, Ms. Ogden said the movie depicts a very similar plight to the Flowerfield

situation in St. James except in Telluride there was more land. "What we liked about it is that in this day and age you like to hear good news, and this is a good news story about how a community came together and fought the developers who wanted to put in a golf course and hotels and buildings and restaurants, and the community came together and won," she said. "It really took a real act of determination by the community and they had success."

The showing at the vineyard is part of the summer fundraising drive for the Coalition's legal defense fund. Ms. Ogden said in addition to raising money the importance of the event is to make the community aware that the fight continues. "We aren't stopping, we continue to go, we are moving forward

and things are happening," she said. "We want this to be a feel-good event. We want people to come out, enjoy the movie, join our efforts, and feel like you are on the path to success."

Harmony Vineyard shows movies during the summer on the back of its building. "It's wonderful," Ms. Ogden said. "You are coming at sunset, so you will get to see the sunset and you get a view through the vineyard to the water. And you will be at the vineyard having watched the sunset and we will show the movie and you will be with these people who have all come together for the same reason and the same concerns."

The video intro to **Forever Wild** by Ms. Ogden and Mr. Bollhofer will present what the Coalition has done in St. James to fight the development of Flowerfield and the efforts that have been made and why they are fundraising now and where they stand.

Ms. Ogden said the QR code on the Coalition advertisement (see page 7) will allow anyone to view the movie and the introduction by her and Mr. Bollhofer without making donation or if anyone wants to make a donation and not watch the movie they can also do it through the QR code or on the coalition website: [wtjameshohnpc.org](http://wtjameshohnpc.org). The virtual screening will be online through August 12. The rain date for the August 3 Harmony Vineyard screening is Wednesday, August 10.

"It's a group of people in a community who wanted to save land from the developers and how they joined together and raised the funds to do it. It was truly inspirational," Ms. Ogden said. "We feel the movie is really our story. So it is a great story to show because it is the same thing we are trying to do here."

"If we get over this first hurdle, the ideas people have for Flowerfield are truly amazing," Ms. Ogden said. "We want the people in Smithtown to recognize, and the people at Gyrodyne to recognize, that for all the individuals who have no voice, we are their voice."



**COOL KIDS:** At the St. James Summer Nights event on Lake Avenue Wednesday, July 20 children sit on the stoop enjoying their ice cream. The next Summer Nights event will be held Wednesday, August 17 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. on Lake Avenue.