

SEASONS ON THE NORTH FORK



By Michael Killelea

A celebration of its people and times through the eyes of an artist

Seasons on the North Fork

Like space and time, seasons have no real beginning. They spill through the cosmos evolving from one zone to another, revolving like the Buddhist's prayer wheel, and moving in a line as straight and true as the horizon. At times, when the air fills with snow in September or forsythia blooms in February, they seem to wobble like some disconnecting wheel. But it never lasts. There is a time and a season for all things and we're limited to enjoying the beauty or coping with the discomfort.

It's arbitrary to say seasons start in the joyful springtime but that's where this will start. There is so much birth and new growth then, when the air is filled with the rich smell of earth, giddy songbirds, and buds about to burst. But surely life has been stirring in the earth long before the ice melts and green shoots appear. And won't the energy of summer's abundance be draining back into the soil by the end of autumn, food for the next generation?

A time and a season.

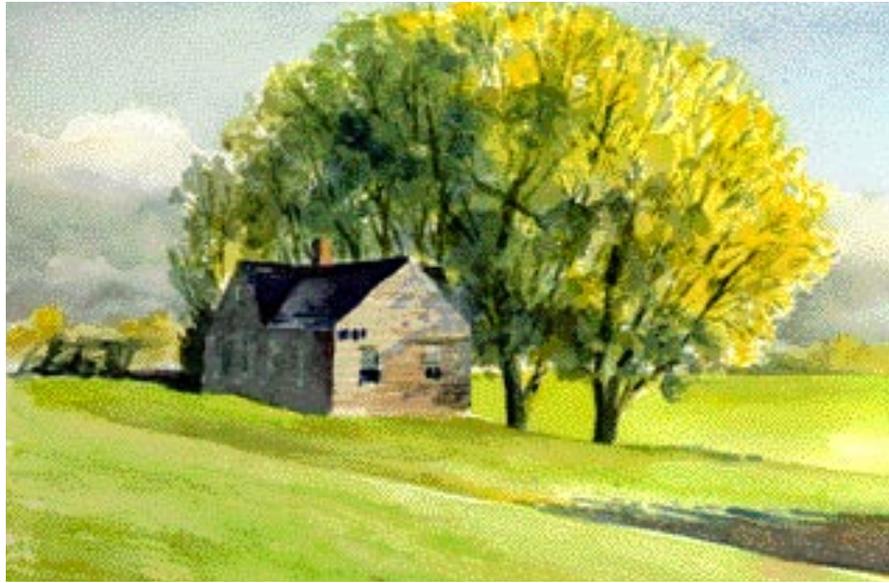
From 1800 to 1857 this small weathered building just off of Main Road was Mattituck's original one room schoolhouse. A wing was added around 1900 and for a time it housed farm workers. It remains today, a steady, silent and now feeble observer to the turning pages of the seasons.



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Mattituck's first school may still whisper the name of its students through cracked shingles.

Emerging plants begin to separate from water soaked furrows and the soil that feeds them across a broad swath of the Schmidt Farm in Riverhead.

Bearded Iris lends an air of dignity to spring gardens.

SPRING-- Early morning shadows recede from pregnant fields, evaporating in the face of the advancing sun. Freshly turned soil shows little of the richness stirring within, but in the timeless ritual, the land has once again begun to keep her promise. Spring has come. For the North Fork of Long Island, much of spring's richness will be born in the fruit of the vines that are budding across its face. Along fence rows and lanes forsythia has spread its boisterous cheer, prying a smile from the gray landscape. Willow and maple glow with a chartreuse halo and the air comes alive with the raucous calling of winged creatures looking for companionship. It's the time of new beginnings everywhere. In farmyards and boatyards and marinas and shops, the voluptuous smells of earth and sea mix with the scent of varnish, cleaners and fertilizer as the season of promise begins.









Bobbing and weaving in colorful harmony, legions of nasturtium and daffodils make a visual counterpoint to the serenade of migrating song birds. Skip Waxberger tills amid budding plants and the misty tint of their new greenery in Orient.

In Aquebogue, at the opposite end of the North Fork, greenhouses on the Bayview Farm nurture new plants on a grander scale. They're preparing for spring gardeners, anxious to spread their seedlings across the face of the North Fork.