



Friends of the
Rockefeller State Park
PRESERVE

The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine
Vol. XLIII Spring 2020

Photo: Jessika Creedon



Canter Alley Carriage Road

Friends and NYS Win National Status for Rockefeller Preserve

By William E. Krattinger
*Historic Preservation
Program Analyst, New York State*

In early November 2019, the Rockefeller Pocantico Hills Estate Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, thereby bringing to conclusion a multi-year collaborative effort initiated by the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve (FRSPP) in coordination with Parks and the latter's Division for Historic Preservation.

The district was previously listed on the State Register of Historic
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In This Difficult Time, Please Don't Neglect Our Beloved Preserve And Those Who Gave The Most

By Herbert Hadad

Yes, we all must continue to protect against the frightening coronavirus, but we of the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve have an additional obligation: to keep our property open and safe for you who have made the Preserve a vital part of your life.

As of this writing, fans have swarmed to the trails for exercise, rejuvenation and inspiration, often filling the park to overflowing. As an example, in the period from March 1-April 15, there was a 68% increase in visitors, over 9,000 more than in the same period last year.

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Learning to Share

See page 4 for Benjamin H. Cheever's provocative essay.



Photo: Jessika Creedon

Earlier Friends race

Friends Contemplate First Full Marathon

By Jessika Creedon
Administrative Director

It has long been talked about, but it was never the right time. That will all change in November when the very first marathon will take place in Rockefeller State Park Preserve. The Pocantico Hills Marathon is set for Saturday, November 14, 2020 and it is sure to wow runners with a fantastic and challenging course. If you've run the Preserve, you know it can feel uphill both ways, but don't let that discourage you, for every uphill, you get a downhill (eventually!).

Race Director Charlie Gadol, board member of the New York New Jersey

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National Status, *continued from page 1*

Places in December 2018, following its approval by the State Board for Historic Preservation; it was placed on the register at the national significance level, an acknowledgment of the district as a preeminent American cultural landscape of remarkable importance, quality and beauty.

"The Rockefeller family traditionally preferred public and private cooperation in its projects," said George Gumina, President of the FRSP. He and the Friends worked tirelessly with the state for the distinction. "The outcome of the designation is thrilling to us," he said.

The carriage road system, the central and constant feature of the historic district, has long been recognized for its historic associations and engineering significance. Designation of the district thus serves in part to confirm and formalize this significance; it also allows for its further appreciation as a historic resource and places it on a par with another contemporary engineering achievement spearheaded by the Rockefeller family, the carriage road system developed on Mount Desert Island in Maine that is now part of Acadia National Park.

The designation project was not without its challenges, foremost of which was creating a narrative description of the carriage road system and the complex and varied landscape that it engages. There were changes in scope during the project, as well, such as the addition of the previously National Historic Landmark-designated Park area to the new district area, which required an updated survey of the physical features located therein. Fortunately, as these new challenges arose, the FRSP were there to assist; without the group's constant and dedicated support some of these obstacles may have proved insurmountable.

It was under the direction of John D. Rockefeller Jr. (JDR Jr.) that the carriage road system was developed to its fullest extent during the first half of the twentieth century. His efforts served to expand the circulation system and unify those earlier sections of roadway established under

his father's oversight, as well as those established on his uncle William Rockefeller's estate, Rockwood Hall, which bordered the Hudson River.

Portions of the latter property were later subsumed into the adjacent Pocantico Hills estate following William Rockefeller's death, though the commodious mansion that once formed the centerpiece of the latter's property was ultimately demolished, leaving only its impressively scaled cut-stone foundation and the carefully planned ornamental landscape that formed its immediate setting. The portions of roadway that correspond with the Rockwood Hall property, some of which offer superb views of the Hudson River and its accompanying landscape, provided yet another layer of visual complexity to a landscape and road system already marked by a diverse range of landscape elements and viewsheds.

The historic designation emphasizes a number of specific points relative to the carriage roads, not the least of which was the personal investment of the Rockefeller family in their design and construction. Remaining documentation makes clear the extent to which JDR Jr. invested himself in this endeavor; he was an active participant in establishing the location and orientation of new roads and in the specific placement of bridges and the finer points of their construction and detailing.

Details such as these were never left to chance, thus ensuring the cohesiveness of the landscape and circulation system as it was completed. This level of personal investment in engineering and design considerations was established by none other than JDR Sr., who was passionate about the estate's landscape and the design and construction of its carriage road system. It was through the efforts of his son and namesake that his grand vision for the estate was ultimately realized. The public is now the beneficiary of this remarkable achievement in landscape design and road engineering.

Notice to Our Readers

As a result of the coronavirus epidemic, we have decided with this issue not to mail home any copies of *The Preserve Observer* to supporters. Instead we are emailing the issue to our supporters, we will have hard copies available at the Preserve office and in the kiosk near Swan Lake, and we will post it on our web site.

In addition, readers who wish to continue receiving hard copies of *The Preserve Observer* will have that option: please contact our Administrative Director Jessika Creedon at the Friends office.

Thank you for your support – and keep reading and visiting the Preserve!

Volunteer Gardeners Ready Peonies for their Annual Audition!

By Herbert Hadad



Photo: Herbert Hadad

The peonies show their stuff.

While the onset of the COVID-19 virus prevented the Friends organization from holding its very popular fundraising event, this would have been the Twelfth Annual Peony Celebration, it did not stop the stalwart volunteer gardeners who tend the peonies each year from getting them ready for another spectacular showing!



Photo: Evelyn Hadad

Chris Davies, a woman happy in her work!

Their effort was applauded by thousands of visitors, many of whom spent time staring in admiration and disbelief and snapping many photos.

One of the committed volunteers was Chris Davies who seemed tireless in the garden. "I'm a weedaholic," she said. She also tends a small garden for a neighbor in her condo complex in Ossining as well as giving her service to Ossining Community Garden.

Many people like to talk about the peony garden. But one group visiting was a surprise: a family from Stoke-on-Trent, England. "My hometown, famous for chinaware."

Chris is one of a peony team that includes Keith Austin, the garden leader, and Joann Stern.

"The most difficult task is dead-heading the flowers," Chris said. But work continues for three seasons of blooms. In early June the garden was showing spectacular white foxgloves. Chris volunteers five days a week. No salary or commissions!

I love being outside, talking with people who like the same things I do. It's the English in me." Next year? "Can't imagine not doing it," she said.

Shimane Peonies

By Herbert Hadad

The blockbuster tree peonies had a novel beginning at the Preserve. The generous people of Shimane Prefecture in Japan contacted the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New York. They wanted to donate 1000 peonies, their most beloved flower that they raised, to the residents of New York to show solidarity with Americans for their loss of lives on September 11, 2001 and to ease their pain. The Director of External Affairs for the Chamber was Evelyn Hadad, a Friends official and now its Vice President. She requested that 500 be delivered to the Rockefeller location with another 500 sent as a gift to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

The tree peonies have thrived through the efforts of many gardening volunteers and on Memorial Day of this year, May 25, 2020, a representative from Shimane Prefecture, Masato Fujihara, came to visit the Preserve and the peony garden. He marveled at how big they had grown and how well cared for they were. He wants to continue the friendship with the Preserve and will send a report on how the beautiful peonies are doing back to Shimane Prefecture. Kindness and culture are bringing two peoples together!



Photos: Masato Fujihara

Director of Operations Laurence Gill (left), Preserve Manager Peter Iskenderian (second from left), NYS Parks Police Officer (third from left) and Representative from Shimane Prefecture Masato Fujihara (right).

Learning to Share

By Benjamin H. Cheever

Excepting cases of extreme drunkenness set on a foundation of bestial stupidity—as when the starting backfield violates the ardent cheerleader—the love object is not something that we want to share.

Desire hardens into a need for ownership. Hence the widespread practice of monogamy. Hence the just murder of Carmen and the unjust suffocation of Desdemona. I have a talent for expecting the worst, but not even I could have imagined that the park I adore would be crammed with strangers, strangers wearing masks.

Tracy Corcoran, who leads the meditation group Hudson River Sangha in Tarrytown, had given me a clue as to why suddenly everybody else was in love with **my** beloved park. She told me that when the forces of evil were aligned against him, the Buddha reached down with his right hand and touched the earth.

Unless they trip, walkers don't often touch the ground, but I like to think Siddhartha would recognize the draw of earthen trails. Like him, we have been confronted by evil. Death—at least our own—is bad, we think, it's evil. So we head to the park. I didn't know there were so many of us.

I don't mind sharing with George Gumina, who worked to have the 65 miles of trails designated a New York Historic Place. Clare Pierson, Lucy Waletzky, and others who have fought and fought and fought to keep the open land as opened land, are welcome sights. As is the new park Manager, Peter Iskenderian, who's cheerful old-fashioned open mindedness seems revolutionary in this time and place.

Like Othello I don't want to share. Unlike Othello, I don't love my park so much that I'd rather have her dead than to imagine she has other suitors. I'm sure Buddha would do better, but I have trouble with the crowds. Even 16-foot wide trails can seem too narrow for social distancing. When a walker shouted that I should run in single file, I retorted that she should be nice to runners. She was right, of course, but so was I.



Ben Cheever, right, with his running partner, John Nonna.

Photo: John Cheever

I was ensorcelled by the park before it was a park at all. What is currently the New York State Rockefeller Park Preserve

was the Rockefeller Estate. Not public, but opened to the public. A generosity too often overlooked. My first memory is so old it seems more a dream than a day retrieved from life. I was four. It was a sunny day, I'm sure of that...I think. There was a body of water, so we must have picnicked near Swan Lake. My father was boyish, my mother beautiful, the gorgeously presented landscape a revelation. Like many of the recollections we most treasure, that blissful hike was edged with danger. When a couple rode by, the woman fell violently from her horse. "She's dead! She's dead!" the man called out.

Scared the wits out of me, but didn't keep me out of the park. I run and I've been on the trails almost every day for 30 years. I've run with my wife. I easily beat and then was easily beaten by both our sons.

I ran once without Yak Tracks when it was 14 degrees. The trail was ice. I fell and fractured my left arm.

Hardships don't make me love the land less, but more. This is how I know it's love.

I've come to like the rain, because so many people are made of soap. They will melt away in a medium that only soaks my shirt and fills my shoes.

Ordinary traffic, I didn't mind. It came in familiar genres. Women cantered past on powerful horses, exciting both desire and fear. Elite men and women barely touched the ground as they gusted by. A man even slower than I, went red so fast, that I could almost see the note from the cardiologist clutched in his sweaty palm.

Weekends I run with John Nonna, Tuesdays with Drew Vanover. Before that I ran with that great expanse of athletes

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Reaching the Friends

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Letters and submissions are invited.
Please contact us c/o the Friends.

From the Friends President

By George Gumina

This year has been a challenging one for the Friends, for the Preserve and for our country! Life as we know it has changed so drastically but one thing that has remained constant is the beauty and serenity that the Preserve offers to all of us in our time of need. John D. Rockefeller Senior and Junior recognized this value and wanted to give people experiencing the drastic changes of the industrial revolution a place to get away and be at peace. The Rockefeller family members continued to carry on this noble tradition and we need it now in the throes of this pandemic and upheaval more than ever!

I see when I am out on the carriage roads the number of people who are benefitting from being in the Preserve. We are all able to do this because of our very own front line heroes – the Preserve Manager Peter Iskenderian and his hard-working staff! They are out there every day, doing whatever it takes to manage the needs of the Preserve and the needs of the visitors.

That work includes not only maintaining the carriage roads, removing downed trees, clearing drains, planting new gardens, but directing the parking, making sure people are social distancing and putting up signs to remind them, informing people this is not a place for barbecuing or riding bikes, picking up garbage and that includes discarded or lost facial masks, cleaning up the bathrooms where some days there are even lines. They had to paint lines in the back parking lot in order to accommodate more cars. They had to put up fencing for the thousands of people who came to view the peonies blooming so the staff could enforce mask wearing and social distancing. You name it and Peter and his Preserve staff do it and do it well! You can join me in thanking these wonderful people when you see them and by donating so we can help them in the upkeep of this treasured Preserve!

The Friends have also tried to show our appreciation to the staff, for instance, by buying lunches for them to say thank you on behalf of all who use the Preserve!

We also want to thank our volunteers who are in the Park every day lending a hand. They got the peony garden ready (see story on page 3) and they helped the Preserve staff manage the crowds coming to visit. The Friends host a dinner to thank volunteers once a year. We held one the first week in February before the pandemic.

I hope by the time I write to you again in the Fall we will be back to some sort of normalcy and we are able to hold our very first marathon race. Thank you for your support. Please continue to visit this beautiful place and stay safe!



Photo: Herbert Hadad

On the house. Preserve workers enjoy lunch provided by the Friends.

Board of Directors

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

George Gumina, *President*

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Administrative Director: Jessika Creedon



When I started writing this issue’s centerfold,

we had just launched our “COEXIST” motto and thought this would be an excellent jumping off point. And then came COVID-19.



And like everything else in this country – and the world – all plans were put on hold. Returning now to this, it seems to me that perhaps **COEXIST** is even more relevant to all of us and very much connected to the pandemic.

COEXIST started as an idea because of all the fears people were voicing about the Rockefeller State Park Preserve (RSP) resident coyote population. We decided to initiate a program to teach about the importance of learning to coexist with coyotes and teamed up with NYWolf.org to produce a seminar/webinar series. We also decided to produce a free whistle to teach the technique of “hazing” or making noise to scare a curious coyote away – promoting knowledge not fear.

As we discussed it more, we all decided that **COEXIST** had a much broader meaning and would be our way of promoting a return to an understanding that nature is not just a place we visit on the weekend, but is fundamental to who we are. That is, we are nature and nature is us. Humans are not “in charge” of nature, nor is nature “ours” to exploit. Like a punch in the gut, COVID-19 has reminded us of this fundamental truth. COVID-19, and its origins in so-called wildlife wet markets, reminds us that how we **COEXIST** (or not), with the other species of the earth, may well impact the survival of our own.

So you will see our **COEXIST** messaging throughout all we do now. Whether it's reminding visitors that dogs **MUST** be leashed at all times, that animal residents should never be touched nor fed, plants should not be picked, or when we ask you to leave the picnic or bat and ball in the car, we do so to honor the important relationship we have here with all residents of the Preserve.

Ask a child

“where is nature?”

They will most likely point to a tree, a piece of wood or maybe the sky.

But they will not likely point to themselves.

Why is that?



COEXIST: because humanity and nature are not separate.

Adopt **COEXIST** into your daily life:

- Live it! Preach it!
- Be a part of nature, whether in your office, home or in the Preserve.
- Plant gardens with local and natives;
- Recycle wherever possible;
- Practice grasscycling;
- Make it a habit to think about what you do and its impact (i.e. is that single use really necessary?);
- Support sustainable consumption;
- Let wild be wild;
- Teach respect, not fear, of wild things;
- Spread COEXIST to your friends and neighbors and on social media.

In researching the COEXIST project, we put together a reading list of sites and articles we found useful. Available on our FB page/notes and our NY State Parks webpage.



RSPP FREE COEXIST WHISTLE: available while supplies last



Life in the Preserve During COVID-19

What has COVID-19 meant to you?

Some team members share their thoughts

Laurence: I have been with the Preserve 26 years and I have never seen anything like the pandemic. At times, we had cars parked for a mile both ways on 117! My proudest moments are when I hear from doctors and nurses who tell us they came here to “recharge.” Honored to be there for them.

Jean: We appreciate those who care about the Rockefeller Preserve and keep our space clean and smoke free. But during the Covid-19 pandemic nature has been interrupted by the streams of people pouring into the Preserve, many of whom have the misunderstanding of what a nature preserve is. We are a place for peaceful walking, jogging, and horseback riding, NOT for toys, sporting equipment, wheeled vehicles, chairs, blankets, alcohol, coolers, flying objects, etc. There are no beaches, playgrounds, or sport fields here. We want people to visit the Preserve with respect and keep a distance from all the live creatures, without leaving their trash behind for them to choke on. Our creatures and vegetation do not speak your language to express their feelings. Their language is “Roaring”, “Growling”, “Chirping”, “Hissing”, “Singing Songs”, “Showing glorious colors in their Blooms”, etc. They are innocent bystanders who roam and bloom and try to live a peaceful life.

Kim: It has been challenging keeping up with stewardship goals without having our regular seasonal stewards and having to split time between maintaining the Preserve and parking/traffic duties that have been unprecedented due to COVID. The positive side is that we have made new connections with all types of people through their experiences at the Preserve.



COVID-19 couldn't stop our magnificent peony blooms from bursting through. Preserve staff and volunteers took extra steps to ensure social distancing.

Thanks to all our garden volunteers for 2020's unique Peony celebration!

The Preserve saw a 104% increase in visitors as a result of COVID. Thanks to the Mount Pleasant Police and the Westchester Sheriff's Office for their help with traffic management.



From the Preserve Manager

By Peter Iskenderian

The Rockefeller State Park Preserve has always been a place of comfort and relaxation for generations of families who call this region home. In this unprecedented time of COVID-19 the Preserve has transformed into a place of healing and reflection for thousands of people from the tri-state area. As surrounding municipalities and states closed their parks to the public, Governor Cuomo had the foresight to say we can't close the New York State Parks, these places are necessary for people to maintain their health and stability and we can come up with a strategy to keep them open. While the staff had concerns, we understood our role and were willing and able to take on the challenge.

While we appreciated the need for Parks to remain an open resource to the community, we also recognized that it was critical to implement a density reduction plan to control vehicle and foot traffic and to keep the guests and staff safe. We first decreased our parking capacity to 50% by eliminating all parking on the grass, taking away a row of parking in the overflow lot and ended the practice of using the equestrian parking lot to park cars on busy days. We also closed the Visitor Center because it was too confined a space to be able to maintain social distancing. Then we needed to create a media strategy to get the word out about the plan. This included print and social media, signage and word of mouth.

We also had to plan for the blooming of the peonies. This annual peonies bloom is one of the most popular events at the Preserve and we had to come up with a plan to staff the garden, limit traffic entering the garden and to make sure people were wearing facial coverings and social distancing. What this all entailed was surrounding the garden with a fence to control access to one location and to create a lot of signage to inform people of the garden rules and to direct people away from the garden who were eager to start their workouts. With all the other issues we were dealing with, the staff wasn't able to manage the garden eight hours a day, so our garden team stepped up and helped get volunteers scheduled to help.

Our plan was in place, the volunteers were on board and the staff was ready. We didn't know entirely what to expect, but we expected to be busier and we were prepared or at least we thought we were. As COVID shut everything down everyone was working or schooling from home, we lost half of our parking and bathrooms and there was no parking fee being charged. We soon realized we would be the only show in town for people to relieve their stress and anxiety over the current state of affairs. All this combined with the beautiful weather ironically created the perfect storm.

People had no place to go to recreate, they were stuck in their apartments and they needed relief and we were it. It initially started off slow but as the days went by the people kept coming and we quickly realized what we were in for. The parking lots started filling up and we were closing the gates to vehicles by 9:30 am and the entire staff was now required to do traffic control. As guests arrived at the closed gates, we would direct them to other parking areas or other parks. As much as I was trying to avoid it cars began to park on Rte. 117 (which is not illegal) and people started walking in. At the peak the cars parked on Rte. 117 stretched for over a mile in each direction from the entrance gate. Cars were parked everywhere on Rte. 448 and at other access points.

As the days went on, we soon understood that this was the new normal. Weekends have always been busy at the Preserve, but now weekdays that were once slow were now as busy as weekends. For most of the groups it was their first time here, thus creating the next issue. People did not know what a Park Preserve was. A Park Preserve is a protected area of importance for flora, fauna, or features of geological or other special interest, which is reserved and managed for purposes of conservation while also allowing for passive recreation such as walking, jogging, photography or wildlife viewing. The people coming didn't research the Preserve before they arrived and thought this was a regular park and were coming in with grills and charcoal, picnic supplies, sporting equipment and bikes. So, there was a lot of educating to do to inform people about the Preserve and why it's important to treat it with respect.

Honestly, it was very frustrating at times. Trying to balance traffic management and then dealing with angry people who were looking for an escape to a park to play with the family. And then we would get complaints from the regulars about garbage on the trails, people in the fields, harassment of the farm animals and in general a disrespect for fellow Preserve users. We had signage everywhere informing people of the policies of the Preserve and of social distancing but there were still conflicts over social distancing, people not wearing masks or just rudeness.

In the end though, I really think most of the staff, like me, came to accept that on the whole people were so very grateful for the Preserve and the escape it could provide them. I cannot count how many times people stopped me to just say "thank you for all you do." And it helps.



❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖

The gallery is presently closed due to the corona virus. Hopefully, it will open in mid-June after Governor Cuomo gives the approval and a floor plan is developed so that everyone can stay safe and maintain social distance.



Anne Bell: *Cyclamen*

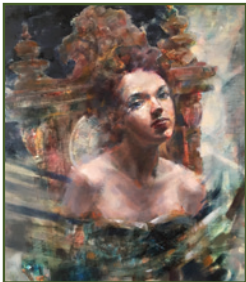
“Captivating Blooms & Botanical Images”

Scheduled to be open to the public from
mid-June through mid-July

Featuring the work of Anne Bell, Kristen Bowen, Peggie Blizard, Corinne Lapin-Cohen, Michele Gage, Dale Payson & Bonnie Sakoff. This exhibit illustrates the emergence of plants from seed, bulb, and tree to a variety of irreplaceable images nurtured by nature and mankind through the decades.



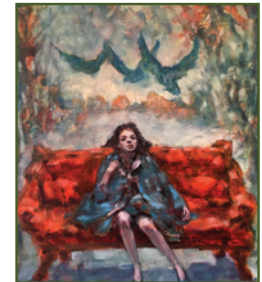
Corinne Lapin-Cohen:
Bird of Paradise



Bound

“Impressions of 21st Century Women”

Paintings by Ivan Pazlamatchev
July 18-August 16, 2020



Big Red

“Women’s Suffrage Centennial Exhibit”

August 23-August 30, 2020

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing and protecting women’s constitutional right to vote. This historic centennial offers an unparalleled opportunity to commemorate a milestone of democracy and to explore its relevance to the issues of equal rights today.

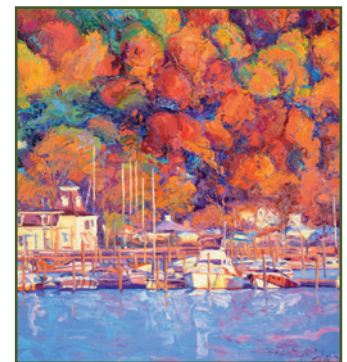


Sparkill Waterfall

“Glorious Hudson Valley Visions”

Paintings by Radu Serban
October 18 – November 29, 2020

Radu Serban, born in Bucharest, is a realist painter. His landscapes, cityscapes, still life, floral subjects and portraits are sensitive, exuberant, colorful and textured powerful images of the surrounding world. He painted since he was a child. A detail of one of his paintings, *Peony Hill*, from the upcoming exhibit is on our front cover.



Piermont Marina

Photo: Evelyn Hadad



Friends to the rescue. When the Preserve staff urgently needed a new backhoe, the Friends stepped in. Your supporter dollars at work!

Photo: Herbert Hadad



Preserve Manager Peter Iskenderian being interviewed by Channel 12 News reporter Nikita Ramos.

This Issue's Cover Artist



Swan Lake by Radu Serban in upcoming exhibit. (See page 9).

Share, continued from page 4

called The Rivertown Runners. Spotting a friend on the trail is always both a shock and a pleasure.

The pandemic drew strangers, but also whole genres I had never seen before. Children rode illegal bicycles. Grown ups wore knockoff track clothes and smoked unfiltered cigarettes. They paused uncertainly at every intersection to study their maps.

Now I've shared loves before. I fell hard for Doris Day, though I suspected that other people loved her too. Rock Hudson, for instance, though he's dead now, and probably wasn't as enthralled with Doris as I was. Doris Day is also dead.

That woman who fell off her horse and into my childhood did not die right then, though she might have died by now. My father and mother have both gone into other lines of work. I will die too. I promise I'm not a lawyer, but it's in the contract.

The rest of you will have the park. I hope you love it, though, as I have done. Beauty does not defeat it, but somehow seems to render death beside the point.

We can't all be Buddha. We can all touch the earth.

Mr. Benjamin H. Cheever, author of several books, is a board member of the Friends of the Rockefeller Preserve.



Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

- Peter Iskenderian, Preserve Manager
- Laurence Gill, Director of Operations
- Dmitri Benzinger, Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- Susan Lewenz, Conservation Communicator
- Kim Castaldo, Stewardship Coordinator
- Jean Dolen, Office Manager
- Anthony Corda, Parking Lot/Visitor Service Assistant
- Maso Robinson, Buildings & Grounds Keeper
- Ed Lara Orellana, Buildings & Grounds Keeper
- Michael Baris, Buildings & Grounds Keeper
- John Kourtessis, Buildings & Grounds Keeper

Marathon, *continued from page 1*

Trail Conference (NYNJTC) and race director of Manitou's Revenge Ultra and the Cat's Tail Marathon, both trail races in the Catskills, will lead the race committee. The committee includes Friends board members Clare Pierson, Stella Medina, and Ron Vogl along with Taconic Road Runner member Heidi Fuhrman and ultramarathoner, author, race director, and NYNJTC board member Ken Posner. Charlie and Ken have collectively directed over 10 different races. Charlie says, "The Pocantico Hills Marathon is a special opportunity for runners unfamiliar with the park to visit all of its signature features. It should be a memorable experience in every respect."

The single loop course will give runners a full tour of the Preserve, from Rockwood Hall to Buttermilk and back again. Passing Stone Barns, Swan Lake and even Eagle Hill, the scenery will inspire you to keep moving when your legs feel as though they can't take another step. The beauty of the Preserve is that it feels like a trail marathon, but without the technical difficulty. Heidi Fuhrman, who has run at the Preserve for many years and helped map the course, notes, "We designed a course that goes the full 26 miles on carriage trails without encountering a single roadway. It is destined to be one of the most coveted and bucolic marathons in the nation."

Four aid stations will be at strategic points along the course, runners will pass each station twice. Cut-off times will ensure things move smoothly and on schedule. There is an eight hour time limit and a cap of 500 runners. Runners should note it will not be a closed course and the carriage roads will still be open to the public that day.

The marathon is a joint effort between the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve (FRSPP) and the NYNJTC, which develops and maintains over 2100 miles of trails from central Jersey to the Catskills. All proceeds from the race will be divided equally between FRSPP and NYNJTC, and all of the FRSPP revenues will go toward trail maintenance. Friends President George Gumina said, "This is a very exciting project and we fully support it!"

We would also like to assure the public that the course is being carefully planned to have the least impact on patrons as possible. We hope that if you encounter runners that day, you will wish them well and they will be courteous in return. This is not only an opportunity to showcase our "runner's paradise", but a fundraising opportunity where all FRSPP proceeds will go back into the carriage roads. With the cancellation of our spring events, now more than ever, we are counting on our fall fundraisers.

We owe a tremendous thank you to Preserve manager Peter Iskenderian, for supporting this endeavor every step of the way, and to Laurence Gill for helping to plan a route that maximizes the runners experience while moving the runners through in the least intrusive way for daily visitors.

FAQs**November 14, 2020, 8AM****Start/Finish: Rockwood Hall Foundation****www.pocanticohillsmarathon.com**

We anticipate registration opening July 1, 2020 but due to the current COVID-19 situation, details are subject to change. We will follow all state and local guidelines, which could necessitate the event date changing or a cancellation.

*Earlier Friends race*

Photo: Jessica Creighton

Support the Preserve, *continued from page 1*

There are the mothers and fathers with baby strollers and toddlers, the grandparents with grandchildren, the runners, the elderly couples strolling hand in hand, the people walking their dogs, and these are just a few of the many people coming and enjoying the respite from the virus that this tranquil place provides.

The Friends traditional tools for raising funds—the famous outdoor peony party, road races, a summer soirée—must be cancelled. We are warily optimistic that the proposed marathon will be able to take place. The carriage roads, recently designated as national historic landmarks (*see story on page 1*), still need upkeep!

The joint project between the State and the Friends to rehabilitate Brothers Path, named for Laurence and David Rockefeller, is still going forward. Both men shared the deeply held belief that things got done with a well-calibrated public and personal relationship. We have received donations in memory of these two extraordinary brothers since this plan was announced and for which we are extremely grateful. We encourage everyone to continue to donate to this project in their memory. They gave us so much, it's our time to give back. Work is due to begin in 2021.

Please consider your support with a donation to our website friendsrock.org or by mailing a contribution to Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, Post Office Box 8444, Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591.

Thank you very much. Keep Coming. Stay Safe.



The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve
P.O. Box 8444
Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591
www.friendsrock.org

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HERE TO ENJOY...OURS TO PRESERVE

Friends Host Volunteer Dinner

By Evelyn Hadad

The Friends appreciate all the work volunteers do at the Preserve. We couldn't keep things running as smoothly as they do without their tireless efforts. *(Please see story on page 3.)*

Therefore every year the Friends host a dinner at a local restaurant so that the Friends President George Gumina and the Preserve Manager Peter Iskenderian have the opportunity to say thank you to their workers.

This year the event was held on Thursday, February 6, at Casaletto's Restaurant in Elmsford. The fare included antipasto, eggplants rollatini, prosciutto, several cheeses and main dishes of chicken cacciatore, filet of sole, sausage and peppers and lots of pasta. This sumptuous meal was topped off by several desserts and we can honestly say a good time was had by all!



Photos: Herbert Hadad

Friends, Preserve staff and volunteers enjoying their dinner together.