

The Preserve Observer



Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine Vol. XXII, Spring 2009



The Peony Celebration

By Herbert Hadad

On Thursday, May 21 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve are hosting a fund-raising event that will celebrate the blooming of the well-known Japanese peonies. There will be a cocktail reception, flower arrangements from local garden clubs, an Ikebana display and sale, and an art exhibition called Blooms. To get more information, please consult our web site, www.friendsrock.org. Ticket price begins at \$100.

Some visitors are not familiar with how these beautiful flowers came to grace our park. When the tragedy of September 11th occurred, a town in Shimane Prefecture, Japan wanted to express a gesture of healing and solidarity towards the United States. Therefore, they sent the Rockefeller State Park Preserve and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden a gift of 500 peonies each from Yatsuka Cho. The peony is the signature flower from this area and is considered Japan's "most noble of flowers."



Last year's beauties

(continued on page 4)

"Daffodil Hill" at Rockwood Hall William Rockefeller's Estate on the Hudson

By Ann Acheson

You may not believe that Rockwood Hall, William Rockefeller's estate from 1886 until his death in 1922, was once in the running to be the finest estate on the Hudson. Today it is a skeleton of what it once was, subdivided, its structures demolished and much of it overgrown. Even so, when you learn about what was there 100 years ago, you can begin to imagine what it might have been like.

William Rockefeller was the younger brother and business partner of John D. Rockefeller Sr. He bought the 200-acre site, a parcel of largely undeveloped land known as Beekman's Woods (hence the "Wood") owned by descendants of the Philipse family, complete with castle, in 1886. The first owner of the parcel had been a merchant who used a local quarry to supply cut stone to build the castle (hence the "Rock"). By the time William purchased it, the buildings and surrounding lands had been improved by an intervening owner, laying the groundwork for the several decades of work that William would pour into it.

Some believe that William Rockefeller demolished the existing castle and built another on the same location, using the stone from the first castle to build other structures. William's castle stood 150 feet above the river and was set back from it 500 feet. The castle

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From the Friends President

By Clare Pierson



Clare M. Pierson

As I write this letter, Spring is upon us, with hints of the full blooms that will be opening soon. The delicate woodland violets have peeked up their first leaves, and the crocus are out, the snow drops just past full bloom. I have seen the bees on sunny days around the dog's water dish, thirsty and still dopey from the long Winter.

The Friends have come through the long Winter too, and are really going to be blooming this Spring. We have two new events planned for this year I wanted to tell you about. On May 21, 2009 we will hold our first annual Peony Celebration at the Preserve gateway.

This will be a fund raiser built around the fabulous tree peony blossoms, and will include Ikebana arrangements for sale, a wonderful art show in the gallery at the Visitor Center called "Blooms" and flowers arrangements from several local garden clubs including Briarcliff, Pleasantville, and Tarrytown. It is a

(continued on page 5)

Ikebana Comes to the Preserve

By Pat Jones

The Japanese Reading Room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art spectacularly overlooks the glazed pavilion enclosing the Temple of Dendur. The large opening between the two spaces brings air and natural light into the quietly elegant wood paneled room filled with people on benches and folding stools, absorbed in the thoughtful convergence taking place on the long table before them. We are there to see Shoko Iwata demonstrate the art of Ikebana.

Translated as “arranged flowers”, Ikebana seeks beauty through symmetry, color and proportion using branches, flowers and containers. Without moving from behind the table or moving the containers, Ms. Iwata assembled four arrangements illustrating the concepts that underlie the teachings of the Sogetsu School of Ikebana. As Shoko worked, she spoke of angles, length and balance, the mechanics of anchoring, the characteristics and costs of plant material. In about an hour, she stepped away from her work, offering her conclusions to the dialogue between space and object.

Beginning the study of Ikebana at the age of 16 and guided by her mother, Mrs. Kazuko Moriwaki, an Ikebana master, she has achieved the Second Jonin Sanyo degree of the Sogetsu School. Together they teach and support Sogetsu Ikebana through the Houka Study Group, founded in 1982 and based in Larchmont. Shoko is a board member of the New York Chapter of Ikebana International Inc. and a member of Sogetsu New York Branch for 10 years.

Besides her work with the Houka Study Group, Shoko has taught Continuing Education classes throughout Westchester, volunteers monthly with Ikebana workshops at the YWCA Women’s Residence in White Plains and conducts monthly garden therapy workshops at the Sarah Neuman Nursing Home in Mamaroneck as a member of the Garden Club of Mamaroneck.

Ms. Iwata was born in Tokyo, Japan, and immigrated to California in 1957. Moving to Larchmont in 1961, she attended Mamaroneck schools and Barnard College. Mother of three children, she and her husband still live in Larchmont.

The Preserve will benefit from Shoko Iwata’s attention in two ways: three of her creations in special containers will be exhibited and available for sale at our Spring Peony Celebration on May 21; she will also offer a three-part course in Ikebana on July 11, 18 and 25 at the Visitor Center. The course is limited to 10 students. Make your reservations early!



Shoko Iwata (left) and her mother, Mrs. Kazuko Moriwaki; Arrangements created during Ms. Iwata’s Ikebana demonstration at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (below).



THE CENTAUR AT ROCKEFELLER

Rockwood Hall Section of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

A Fun-filled day for Equestrians, Runners and the Local Community!

June 27, 2009 – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

(Rain Date: June 28, 2009)

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The First Annual Centaur Festival at Rockefeller State Park Preserve will be held on Saturday, June 27, 2009. It will be a new exciting event for all equestrians, runners and our local surrounding community members and families.

Over 1,500 people are expected to attend this event consisting of a 10k race for runners, a day of horse clinics for the equestrian community and a fun-filled day for all members of the community.

There will be music, food, arts and crafts, children’s games, pony rides and hay rides!

If you have any questions, please contact either

John Manuele at jmanuele@manuelemanagementgroup.com or Liz Meszaros at friends@friendsrock.org or by telephone at 914-762-0209.

Daffodil Hill *(continued from page 1)*

was on a high point, built on an existing rock outcrop, with open lawns and gardens between the house and river. It was certain to have had a spectacular view! His ambition was to create the finest estate on the Hudson, and he spared no expense. He brought craftsmen from Scotland and Switzerland, and gardeners from England. A formal garden 150 feet long and 60 feet wide was in front of the castle. A 2-acre flower garden supplied the house with fresh flowers. There were 150 head of Southdown sheep used on the lawns instead of mowing machines. The estate had 26 acres of lawns and gardens, with the rest being woods and meadows.



Rockwood Hall

William Rockefeller was known as a lover of rare and beautiful plants. The shaping of the land on his estate was performed with the utmost care, thought, and attention to detail, resulting in a very naturalistic setting. But there was plenty of opulence as well. Rockwood Hall had 17 greenhouses, a vegetable house, 3 graperies, 3 peach houses, a palm house, 3 rose houses and a cool house. These in addition to a 3.75 acre vegetable garden surrounded by a brick wall. He grew figs, melons, grapes, peaches, nectarines and many other exotic plants. There were 4 acres devoted to a nursery with 1,000 rare and valuable trees and shrubs, among them Japanese maples, hybrid rhododendrons, hybrid mountain laurels, elms, oaks, maples and locust. A second nursery had 700 dwarf conifers. There were, and still are, a great number of specimen trees on the estate, many installed as mature trees and some brought from England, including beeches, oaks, and ginkgos.

It's amazing to imagine what this place must have been like! In addition to all the rare, exotic and beautiful plants, William Rockefeller also had collections of rare ducks and geese, as well as using state-of-the-art building techniques and installing the latest "mod cons" of the time. An article in the NY Times on the occasion of his daughter Emma's wedding, December 12, 1895, the estate in all its glory is described in detail, including all the magnificent woodwork (American oak, English oak, mahogany, satinwood, basswood), frescoed walls, stained glass windows, electric chandeliers, two eleva-

tors running from "cellar to attic," the entire house heated by hot air and its own "electric-light station which supplies light for the whole place and the house. At evening the roadways and all the groves are brilliantly lighted with incandescent lights". The reporter goes on to conclude: "In beauty and cost it is probably second only to that of George W. Vanderbilt at Biltmore, near Asheville, N.C."

No surprise, then, that William Rockefeller also installed mass plantings of daffodils on his estate. Because this was also the era of the great renaissance of the daffodil! Daffodils (or *Narcissus* as they are known botanically) are some of the earliest flowers appearing on plant lists in ancient gardens. Daffodils have been found amazingly well-preserved in Egyptian funeral wreaths from 3000 years ago. The Poeticus type of daffodil was familiar to the ancient Greeks. Daffodils were present in England in 1629 when John Parkinson set forth to describe every plant known in England. We can only speculate as to why daffodils were and are so widespread, but part of their ubiquity must be due to the fact that they are bulbs and, as such, are storable for long periods of time and easily portable. Plus they propagate themselves rapidly and naturalize easily, and are not devoured by squirrels, rabbits, or deer. Daffodil bulbs were brought to England by the Romans, were later imported from Constantinople, and were taken to the New World on the ships with the colonists.

Peter Barr, who was active in 1863, travelled to wherever "wild" daffodils could be found and made a large collection of species, many of which had been lost to cultivation for 200 years. He arranged the first Daffodil Conferences of the Royal Horticultural Society, held in 1884 and 1890. The first Daffodil Show was held in Birmingham in 1893.

The cult of the daffodil was spreading fast! Improvement followed improvement - larger trumpets, whites, pinks, doubles. Best of all, most of these new varieties did not revert to their parental phenotypes, so it was possible to propagate them. The bulbs of the exotic new daffodil cultivars were rare and expensive. In 1902, rare bulbs could cost 50 pounds each. In 1923, a new variety called 'Fortune' sold for 500 pounds per bulb.

So daffodils were just the thing for William Rockefeller, plant collector, lover of rare and beautiful plants and in-the-know about the latest in English gardening. The beautiful and unusual new daffodils could be incorporated into mass plantings, with drifts of different types of flowers flowing into one another. Daffodils are great for naturalizing in open woodlands or grass, and they combine beautifully with early native wildflowers. Remember that 26 acres of William's estate were kept as lawns and gardens. The lawns were "mowed" by sheep, and would have looked quite different than our golf courses of today. The lawns would have included wildflowers and would

(continued on page 11)

Peonies (continued from page 1)

The present was and is meant to help the healing process in New York and the placing of Japanese flowers on American soil symbolizes the blending of two cultures and two people. The Friends accepted this generous gift and created a landscaping project around the gateway to the Preserve. The remainder of the design called for American wildflowers and native trees. Yatsuka Cho graciously sent over Japanese gardeners to plant the flowers and to teach the Preserve staff how to care for them.

The cost of the Gateway Preserve Project was originally projected at \$74,000 that was mostly underwritten thanks to the generosity of the Friends Board of Directors, the Rockefeller Family, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and

Industry of New York, Inc. and Japanese companies, as well as donors from the surrounding communities. The cost of the landscaping ultimately increased and a sprinkler system was put in place to accommodate the additional demand for water. The result is an inviting entrance that serves as a gateway to our entire peaceful Preserve.

The Preserve had always represented a public-private partnership and with the Japanese Peony project, it became a public-private international partnership that has proved very successful. Please come and enjoy the magnificent flowers! Chairperson of the event is Kimberly K. Rockefeller, Vice President of the Friends Board.



THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY'S
OPEN DAYS PROGRAM

11 OLD POSTAL ROAD • P.O. BOX 219 • COLD SPRING, NEW YORK 10516 • 845-265-5384/5392 FAX

March 17, 2009

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, Inc.
P. O. Box 8444
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

Dear Friends,

We are very pleased to tell you that Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, Inc. has been named as a benefiting organization of the Garden Conservancy's 2009 Open Days Program, the only national garden-visiting program of its kind in America. Your organization will receive a portion of the proceeds from the Westchester County, NY gardens of Robert Welsch & David Davenport, open on Sunday, June 14th, and Smita & Srinj Conjeeveram, open to visitors on Sunday, July 19, 2009.

We think your members would enjoy visiting the gardens that also support your organization. Won't you help us spread the news by telling them about this upcoming event? I have enclosed some materials about the Garden Conservancy and our Open Days Program for your information. We are eager to work with you on promoting this opportunity to your membership and the public through your organization's newsletter or web site. Links to our web site, www.opendaysprogram.org, are encouraged as well.

Please contact me via e-mail at swerskey@gardenconservancy.org or by phone at (845) 265-5384 for more information.

Sincerely Yours,

Stephanie Werskey
Media Coordinator, Open Days Program
The Garden Conservancy

President's Letter *(continued from page 1)*

cocktail reception starting at 5:30 pm. For more information and to buy tickets e-mail the Friends at friends@friends-rock.org. It will be a very festive event.

The second event is in cooperation with the Westchester Horse Council. The Centaur is to be held at Rockwood Hall on June 27 . We are really excited about this event, which will be bringing together the horse riding community and the runners community. We are holding a 10k race, to register go to www.active.com and look for the Centaur, as well as a series of all-day horse training clinics, which will be registered through the Westchester Horse Council by getting in touch with Lenore Shimkin at Lenore@email.com.

There will be vendors of all kinds at Rockwood Hall including some great food, live music, games for the kids, pony rides and hay rides. In addition to the fun, there will be workshops on horse safety, dog walking safety as well, and several wellness educators. It will be a great day for family fun, and education about all the different aspects the Preserve has to offer its various constituents. Bring the whole family!

We will also be holding our Autumn Pace this year, in cooperation with the Westchester Horse Council, on Oct. 18. This is another day to come to beautiful Rockwood Hall and watch horses in action.

Spring is a time for awakening, and for the burst of energy that has lain dormant all Winter. Many people are suffering this Spring as the economy very slowly begins to recover. The Friends group stands as support to the Preserve, to our Preserve, which is a resource for us all, especially in hard times. Preserve Manager Alix Schnee tells me that more people come to the Preserve in hard times. We need your support if you can give it. Time and money are both very much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Clare M. Pierson



*Board of Directors
Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve*

*Clare M. Pierson, President
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From the Preserve Manager

By *Alix Schnee*

In designing his carriage trail systems, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. had a philosophy that evoked the spirit of the Chinese yin-yang and the Navajo belief of harmony with nature or walking in beauty. The prevailing notion was people need a quiet, peaceful atmosphere to realize their connection with nature.

The carriage roads were designed to move us out of civilization into the woods, by so doing they enable us to renew our relationship with nature, a connection that offers both physical and spiritual solace; to forget the hardness of pavements, sounds of traffic, and confusion of congested streets and busy sidewalks. By allowing the public to partake of nature's store of beauty, JDR, Jr. believed he could make people's lives happier, richer, better.

We are fortunate that we have these amazing trails to help us to get away from it all. Increasingly more and more people are discovering this extraordinary oasis. As the trails are all multi-use, it means that we all have to share, and with great variety comes the need to regulate so that all may experience a sense of oneness with nature, a harmony, being whole.

Our trails combined with the Rockefeller family trails create a 55-mile trail system, the most popular 1.1 miles are around Swan Lake. That is where 90% of those who use our parking lot choose to go. It is where many of the elderly and families with small children stroll. Unfortunately, last year this popular area was very congested, and we received numerous complaints.

With the arrival of Spring and the approaching Summer months it is important to ensure those who only venture to the lake are afforded the refuge they seek. Accordingly, to ease the crowded environment around the lake and on the trail leading to the lake it will be established as a walk-only area on weekends and holidays, from 10-5pm (The exact time is still under consideration as we want to ensure it is right) from June through October. This area is already an equestrian walk only zone for that very reason. At all other times runners in groups of four or less may continue to run around the lake.

Deer Run and trails east of the Lake—Peaceful Path, Rail Road Bed, David's Loop, and Brook Trail—will remain open to running groups of 4 or less. This area includes two equestrian access trails.

While some have taken exception to our need to regulate Swan Lake, that is the only way to manage diverse populations. Indeed, this year the equestrian rules have been expanded to ensure safe and comfortable interactions with runners. We are in the process of creating a "Share the Trails" guide so that our varied users can learn how to ensure that everyone who comes might get the most out of visiting the Preserve.

While the snow still covered the ground, the Old Croton Aqueduct Staff led by Tony Failla and Tony Prokopowicz restored the view shed from Eagle Hill. If you haven't experienced it, go check it out. The magnificent views are finally restored, with vistas of both Kykuit and the Hudson River.

Guide-by-cell at Rockwood Hall will be restored. In anticipation of the Quadricentennial Celebrations, Tony Prokopowicz will be expanding the tour to include other areas of the Preserve, including the swimming pool and trout hatcheries off Brook Trail, the abandoned farm site off Nature's Way, the Glacial Erratic and the Hemlock Forest off 13 Bridges Loop. The cost for the total tour will be \$5.00.

As I write this note we've had a couple of warm days to suggest that Spring is truly on its way. We've just had our volunteer breakfast, so it must be so. The breakfast was a lot of fun. It seems that we all enjoy the excuse of getting together, it's invigorating to see what a truly wonderful group the volunteers are. Bill Lichten came prepared with a proposal for a dog run, to help alleviate the problems of off-leashed dogs. Lou Accurso spoke about supporting the office, Lorrie Towle shared some pretty unusual stories from her experiences patrolling the trails on horseback, and Chris Davies did a terrific job covering the peony gardens in Keith Austin's absence...watch out Keith! Bill de Carmine brought amazing Italian pastries, which were donated by his friend Dominick, and Charles Keller brought Mimosas! Another bright spot was introducing our high school volunteer, Alex Chepigin, a sophomore from Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua. Alex knows the Preserve well as he has run here for years and he will be helping to map our invasives.

Clare Pierson, the new Friends president, has energized the group with three fund raisers to help support our trails. Many of you know Clare from her programs, she is an herbalist who knows so much about the "lowliest" weed to the tallest tree. Her connections to nature focus on its healing dimensions. We are fortunate to have her soothing but dynamic energies helping to direct the Friends during these uncertain times.

We all know the trails are special, and indeed they are. They cost over \$4,000 a mile to maintain. That is without a natural disaster such as a nor'easter or a tornado. With all the rain and wind we've been getting lately the trees are down all over. Now more than ever, it is our friends and volunteers who help to make everything possible. This is especially important with our diminished resources. While we remain fully open, our staff has been cut by 50%. It's our volunteers who make all the difference!

Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

*Alix Schnee, Preserve Manager
Steve Oakes, Deputy Manager
Laurence Gill, Preserve Office Manager
Richard Nelson, Preserve Naturalist
Aleks Jarosz, Park and Rec. Supervisor
Tony Procopowicz, Aide #7*

Contact Station Personnel:

*Charles Bunt
Tony Corda*

History Sets Sail 400 Years Later

By Herbert Hadad

Photo: The Associated Press/Mike Groll



A replica of Henry Hudson's Half Moon sails on the Hudson River near West Point, NY

Four hundred years ago, Henry Hudson and his crew sailed the *Half Moon* into New York Harbor and up the river where he undoubtedly gazed starboard up at Rockwood Hall and the Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

Sticklers will say there was no Rockwood Hall or Preserve, just an imposing bluff over the river.

That's right, but the harbor was not yet New York Harbor, the river was not yet the Hudson River either. So why quibble.

A flotilla of old-fashioned ships will retrace Hudson's journey from the harbor to Albany starting on June 5, and will reportedly drop anchor at Tarrytown before continuing North.

A Half-Moon replica is scheduled to duplicate the voyage in the Fall.

Hudson was English – the people who eventually conquered the Dutch colony in New Amsterdam and renamed it for the Duke of York.

But Amsterdam's Mayor, Marius Joe Cohen, recently visited New York and stated:

"Pioneers from Amsterdam settled into the Manhattan area and planted the seeds of democracy, entrepreneurial spirit, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion in what we now know as New York, the unofficial capital of the world. Amsterdam and New York share a commitment to quality of life. Amsterdam and New York share the same DNA."

Thank you, Your Honor, and welcome back.

Reaching the Friends

*Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve
P.O. Box 8444 • Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591
(914) 762-0209*

E-mail: Friends@friendsrock.org

Website: www.friendsrock.org

The Preserve Observer

Editors: Evelyn Hadad, Herbert Hadad

Letters and submissions are invited.

Please contact us c/o the Friends.

2009 Spring/Summer Calendar of Events
Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Volunteer Breakfast

April 18th

This is an annual kick-off event for our volunteer corp for the new season. It provides an opportunity to organize volunteer activities for the upcoming year and gives volunteers a chance to network. Volunteers share their experiences and discuss upcoming events. A member of the Park Police will be on hand to talk about safety and proper procedures.

**Yoga at Rockwood Hall
Beginning end of April**

Instructor Nancy Zucker Shenker is a registered Yoga instructor and is certified by the National Yoga Alliance. Nancy leads weekly classes at 9am outdoors at scenic Rockwood Hall. Nancy helps people reconnect with their bodies and minds to help them feel their best and feel more in touch. Classes are open to anyone of any ability.

Family Fishing Day

April 24th

RSPP hosts this day in conjunction with the DEC and Wade's Bait and Tackle of Hawthorne to provide a free day of fishing at Swan Lake for everyone. No fishing licenses needed. Extra equipment is provided including rods, tackle, and bait. Volunteers and Preserve Staff will all be on hand to help.

Dragonflies and Damselflies

June/July

Dragonflies and damselflies are sensitive to changes in the environment and are important environmental indicators. Learn about these creatures and how their populations are changing. Participants will also learn about and are encouraged to participate in a national survey program to track these insects.

Tai Chi

May

Gene Nelson has been studying and teaching this ancient art for over 25 years. His company, Empire Tai Chi, will host weekly classes at the Preserve. Classes will initially be held in the Visitor Center, but will move outdoors over the summer when weather is more cooperative.

Birds and Bagels

Mornings on the last Saturday of each month. Beginning in May.

Preserve Naturalist, Richard Nelson will lead a group on an early morning walk to observe and detail the avian life of the Preserve. Wild Birds Unlimited will provide bagels and coffee and the Preserve provides the birds.

**Invasive Vines Workshop with
the Sierra Club - An Earth Day
Event**

April 26th

This will be a hands-on workshop that educates participants on invasive vines that are spreading and threatening habitat all over the region. Patrons will be encouraged to participate in vine removal around Swan Lake. In addition to identification, participants will also learn proper removal techniques. Gloves and tools will be provided.

**Morning Bird Walk with the Saw
Mill River Audubon**

May 13th

The SMRA along with Preserve Naturalist Richard Nelson will lead birders through the trails to observe and identify different birds they encounter in the Preserve. Bring binoculars, water, and a good pair of eyes.

**Boy Scout Camp-out at
Rockwood**

May/June

A group of over 100 scouts, scout leaders, and parents are organizing a 3-day camping fest at Rockwood Hall. The scouts have been granted a special permit by the Preserve for this activity. They will organize and host an array of scout activities throughout each day. They will camp out for 2 nights. This is a special restricted activity that is only open to this particular group.

**AMC Hikes at the Preserve
The last Sunday of each month**

AMC hike leader Jo-Anne Gisolfi leads a group of hikers on a tour of the carriage trails. This a longer hike that follows a moderate pace. Hikes include a stop at Stone Barns for lunch. Bring hiking shoes and plenty of water. Families are welcome.



Program Fees	
Adults	\$5
Seniors (age 62 and over)	\$4
Children (age 6-12 yrs. old)	\$3

Program fees apply to all programs unless otherwise stated. An additional \$6 parking fee may also apply. Space is limited and advance registration is required. For more information or to register for any program, please contact the Preserve Office at (914) 631-1470 x 14.



Gallery Schedule at a Glance

Blooms

An exhibit of flowers created by eight artists including Anthony Golston-Morris, Patricia Frank, Eleanor Miller, Tatiana Onus, Janet Shearn, Bonnie Sakoff, Joseph Siegel, James Sparks and Jarvis Wilcox. Each artist has chosen a medium and style that best expresses their sense of beauty found in nature. The floral subjects are diverse, dynamic, intuitive and delicate.

Exhibition: May 3-May 31,

Artist Reception: May 3: 1-3:30 p.m.

Gallery Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Enlightenment

A summer exhibit of sky, sea and land surfaces interpreted with the duality of vitality and meditative themes. Color is their harmonious common bond. Artists Frances Wells and Zaria Forman have been inspired by locations from northerly land masses to valleys including the Hudson River.

Exhibition: June 7-July 19, 2009

Artist Reception: June 7: 1-3:30 p.m.

Gallery Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Miro Sinovic

interprets City Scapes—a solo exhibition of atmospheric and spatial paintings.

Exhibition: July 26- September 20, 2009

Artist Reception: July 26, 1-3:30 p.m.

Gallery Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

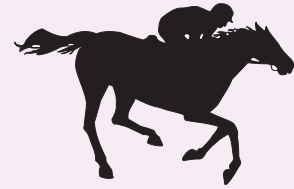
Thomas Locker

exhibits a series of lyrical paintings of the Hudson River Valley and one of America's earliest settled waterways, the Hudson River (a solo exhibition)

Exhibition: September 26-November 22, 2009

Artist Reception: October 4: 1-3:30p.m.

Gallery Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



SAVE THE DATE

**FRIENDS 8TH ANNUAL
AUTUMN COUNTRY PACE
& LUNCHEON
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2009
at Rockwood Hall
Overlooking the Magnificent
Hudson River!
Rain or Shine!**

Trophies & Ribbons for all divisions. Divisions include Pleasure, Hunt, Western and Junior. Advanced registration and payment is required. Registration forms will be made available at www.friendsrock.org beginning September. Rider entries close October 10th, or when Pace is full.

Non-riders are welcome, too!

Enjoy a beautiful day at Rockwood Hall overlooking the magnificent Hudson River with friends & great food!

Equestrian Permits are available at the Park Offices. Call (914) 631-1470.

All proceeds from this event underwrite carriage road maintenance.



Westchester Horse Council
e-mail: zyzgy80@aol.com
www.westchesterhorsecouncil.org

Volunteering Brings Its Own Rewards

By Laurie Towle and Louis Accurso

The Rockefeller State Park Preserve (RSPP) has a wide variety of natural landscapes, providing visitors with a spectrum of outdoor activities, and providing volunteers with a variety of opportunities to donate their time and expertise. Maintaining the RSPP takes the concerted efforts of dedicated park staff, the Friends of the RSPP and volunteers.

Volunteers can be found in all activities of the Preserve including removal of invasive plants, patrolling of equestrian trails, organizing and participating in equestrian events, maintaining the magnificent peony gardens, working in the art gallery and teaching new anglers the art of fly fishing. Whatever the task at hand, there is always the smiling face and willing hand of a volunteer. Volunteers come from all walks of life—their love of the park, and their desire to preserve its past and future, being the common thread that unites them all.

Last year marked the first special event for runners. The RSPP hosted the 5K race for the Westchester's Track Club as a means of raising funds for trail maintenance. Runners are thrilled that this has become an established event at the park.

Stella Medina, the volunteer who organized the race, stated that “The pleasure I receive when I run down Canter Alley on a beautiful sunny day with the wind in my hair, the birds in the trees, and the feeling of utter peace and beauty is like no other in the world.” Kudos are in order for those who envisioned this activity in the park's agenda, and gratitude for their efforts to make this a part of life at the Preserve.



Stella Medina

Equestrians feel a total sense of accord with the original intent of John D. Rockefeller, who built the system of carriage and trail systems, in part, as an escape from the concerns of everyday life. Seeing a carriage driving along the trails on a late Fall morning with the full autumnal colors and rolling hills in the background is like setting foot into a live Currier and Ives painting. How many places in the world sustain such vestiges of the living past? Being a part of that legacy, and continuing its heritage, is one of the many reasons why equestrians love to donate their time to the RSPP. The feeling of enjoying the

park from horseback is hard to describe. Nature, seen from a higher vantage point, is enhanced by sharing it with one of its most magnificent creatures. There is a special bond among equestrians. They feel like caretakers of the estate. There is a first-hand experience of the forest, wildlife, farm animals, Swan Lake, and Pocantico River, because it is a part of their trail ride.

A special kind of volunteer is one who multi-tasks. Longstanding people in this category include Lou Accurso, the co-writer, and Charles Keller. They are there, unsolicited, when and where help is needed. Reasons for their volunteering include being a resource to the community, helping visitors enjoy the best of the park, and sharing their common experiences with a wealth of individuals.



Dirty knees and happy grins, volunteers reworking the butterfly garden at the Preserve.

There are volunteers who donate time to maintaining the peony gardens, the fern garden, and the staving-off of invasive plants at Rockwood Hall and other areas. Volunteers can be seen in the heat of Summer, coolness of Spring, and height of tick season digging, pulling and pruning with enthusiasm. Anyone who has seen the peony gardens have witnessed its evolution over the years to a prized asset. The story of how these beautiful plants were donated from Japan is a story in itself.

Donna Kowal, the key volunteer in the fern garden, felt that volunteering could be fun, fulfilling and a joy to contribute to the Preserve. Bill Shore who is involved with controlling invasive plants “feels nothing but good about volunteering at the Preserve.” Chris Davies, a devotee to the peony garden, feels that she wants to help and preserve the beautiful calming and inspiring effect that the peonies have on her and visitors.

Paraphrasing a line from rock and roll, one volunteer summed up volunteering as having your own “stairway to heaven.” Maybe Led Zepplin didn't have this in mind, but it captures the sentiments of many volunteers who feel they receive more than they give.



Daffodil Hill *(continued from page 3)*

have been taller than our contemporary lawns. Just picture how a sweeping meadow of fresh spring grass and early wildflowers would have looked punctuated by sweeps of daffodils in early spring, with the Hudson river as a backdrop! There's other evidence from this time period suggesting that using mass plantings of daffodils was being adopted as a practice by cutting-edge horticulturalists. Gertrude Jekyll was a well-known horticulturalist in England at the time. She was on the forefront of a movement away from formal garden beds of Victorian design where plants and colors were separated into formal geometric patterns and hothouse flowers were considered the most desirable. Jekyll used hardy perennials and created a more naturalistic blending of color harmonies in generous borders.

At the same time in America Henry F. DuPont was putting some of his new ideas into the design of the gardens at his family's 1000-acre estate in Delaware, Winterthur. He studied ornamental horticulture at Harvard and was very interested in the trends of the time, especially the new and exciting ideas of British horticulturalists William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll, both of whom he met in travels to England as a young man. Robinson's most famous contribution to gardening was his book "The English Flower Garden", published in 1883. He encouraged his readers to aim for less strictly structured gardens, which he called "wild" gardens, while still grouping flowers together in an artful way. The greatest contribution of the book was probably the introduction of the "herbaceous border" that most gardeners are quite familiar with.

At Winterthur, Henry DuPont replaced the Victorian borders in the formal gardens near the house with William Robinson-inspired herbaceous borders and Gertrude Jekyll color harmonies.

This past Fall, the Friends of the Rockefeller Preserve, together with Westover Landscape Design, took the first step towards recreating a piece of William Rockefeller's vision at Rockwood Hall by installing 10,000 daffodil bulbs. Following Gertrude Jekyll's advice, we cleared a broad swath of the weedy undergrowth at the base of the hill behind the Rockwood Hall castle foundation. We planted a mixture of several different varieties of daffodils in "bouquets" of about 20 bulbs in several swaths about 20 feet wide at the base of the hill. Some of the same types of daffodils that were developed by Peter Barr and other early hybridizers are included in the mixture we planted - like 'Emperor', 'Empress', 'Sunrise', 'Evangeline', 'Actaea' and 'Apricot'. When Spring comes, follow the path along the river

from the parking area (near Phelps Hospital) going North, and have a look at the lovely spring show. Then join in with us in 2009 to plant more bulbs, so that eventually the entire 'Daffodil Hill' will be a Spring spectacular.

But we haven't quite finished the story. Why is only a skeleton of William Rockefeller's dream left?

When William died in June 1922, the property had to be sold to settle his estate. It was first sold to developers with the notion that it would become a country club. This plan never really got off the ground, and the property was eventually sold to John D. Rockefeller Jr. (William's nephew) in 1937. John



Daffodils

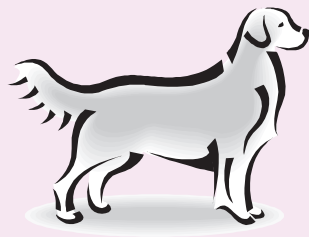


D. Rockefeller Sr. had already purchased his own estate in Pocantico Hills, abutting the Rockwood Hall property, starting in 1893 - evidently inspired by his brother's magnificent 204-room mansion built in the spectacular natural setting of the area. Rockwood Hall had been deteriorating since 1922, and John D. Junior had no real use for the property, so he had the mansion and its out-buildings razed in 1941. He left the roads, walks, terraces and retaining walls in place, and took care not to damage specimen trees and shrubs.

He passed the land on to his son, Laurance Rockefeller, in 1946, who later sold 80 acres to IBM in 1970. The terms of the sale called for much of the acreage to remain as open space, including the lake and most of the riparian buffer plantings that in William's time served as a stop for thousands of migratory waterfowl on their way south. This land is now owned and occupied by New York Life Insurance. Subsequently, Laurance leased the rest of the property to the State of New York as a public park for one dollar a year, underwriting the maintenance costs. He donated this property outright to New York State in 1999, as part of the Rockefeller State Preserve.

The Rockefeller State Park Preserve now carries on the legacy of William and all of the many other Rockefellers who were and are philanthropists and environmental activists. The ideas of the "Wild Garden" can be seen in today's Park, with the use of native plants, planting to sustain wildlife and working with nature rather than trying to bend nature to an ideal. Locally-grown food, from Stone Barns gardens, greenhouses and fields is fed to patrons of the Cafe and the Blue Hill restaurant, a modern-day echo from William Rockefeller's 3.75 acre walled vegetable garden 100 years ago.

Ann Acheson is a landscape designer with Westover Landscape Design, Inc. in Tarrytown.



Leash Laws and Habitats

At the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, we try to maintain a positive and enjoyable experience for all of our guests. Correspondingly, there are several rules and regulations in place to ensure a safe and secure experience by all visitors. One of the most fundamental rules set forth by the State is disregarded on an increasingly large scale. This rule requires that all dogs be leashed when in the Preserve's boundaries, including the Rockwood Hall area of the property. Even with the current regulations that require dogs to be leashed at all times, there are continuous incidents of unleashed dogs on a daily basis. Despite ample signage and patrolling efforts of park employees, these recurring incidents of unleashed dogs have resulted in a disproportionate amount of time spent enforcing the already established laws to park guests.

There are various reasons why dogs must remain leashed within the preserve. Many park users are intimidated or annoyed by the presence of unleashed dogs, which may consequently deter them from visiting the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. The presence of unleashed dogs may interfere with equestrian use in cer-

tain areas of the park. Unleashed dogs pose a safety hazard to equestrians by spooking horses and becoming entangled in their legs, which may lead to serious accidents. They may also be aggressive toward park guests, many of whom have small children and infants with them, and other dogs. There is also a higher chance of canine disease being spread among unleashed dogs including parvovirus, which can be expensive to treat. Moreover, there is a lack of absolute control with unleashed dogs often leading to interference with wildlife including chasing deer, squirrels and other animals.

For these reasons, we believe that it is essential that actions be taken to resolve the issue of unleashed dogs. Dog owners who frequent the park should be responsible and courteous to other guests who use the trails. Most recently a number of dog parks have opened, there is one on Kingsland Point in Sleepy Hollow, one off Cedar Lane in Ossining, and one in Hartsdale on East Rubrook Road between Dobbs Ferry Road and the Sprain Brook Parkway. If your dog must be off leash, please use these runs instead of the Preserve, they have met with great success.

The Preserve Observer

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