

# **The Preserve Observer**

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine Vol. XLII Fall 2019



Patches created for other parks

# **Rockefeller State Park Preserve Patch Design** Contest

CALLING ALL K-12 ARTISTS! Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve is holding a contest to design a RSPP patch!

#### **Contest Entry Deadline:** December 1, 2019

Eligibility: K-12 students attending public, private or home schools are eligible to enter. Winning entry will receive a NYS Empire Parking Pass and be featured in the spring 2020 issue of the Preserve Observer, the FRSPP biannual newsletter.

Design Requirements: Design should be simple and unique, and easily reproduced as a patch. The final produced patch will be approxicontinued on page 4

## Ride, Dine and **Raffle Proves** a Good Bet

By Patricia Jones

Since 2002, Rockefeller State Park Preserve has celebrated its carriage roads by holding an annual equestrian event to raise funds for carriage road and trail maintenance. The Friends introduced a new event in 2016 called "Amble & Gamble" (A&G) in which riders earned extra draws in a 5 card stud game when they stopped to hear interesting Preserve facts from volunteers along the route. Back at the dining tent after their ride, they had a chance to earn prizes with a winning hand. Seeing an increase in interest and attendance, A&G has run for three years.

Once again the Friends are seeking to reach more riders and a broader audience for the beauty and the needs of the Preserve. With David Rockefeller's last land gift to the Preserve, it now encompasses 1771 acres - more to love but more that also needs our care. This year we rolled out "Ride, Dine & Raffle", an

continued on page 11



George Gumina, Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton and Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky

# **Clintons Honored** and Fund Raising Campaign Launched at Friends Gala

By Herbert Hadad

As a former U.S. President and the Secretary of State, Bill and Hillary Clinton are accustomed to making major announcements. But another disclosure was left to Friends Vice President Evelyn Hadad, who told a spirited gala audience that the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve was mounting an important campaign that would impact and please hundreds of thousands of visitors.

She revealed plans for a special fundraising drive to restore Brothers continued on page 3





# Friends Gala June 22, 2019 at Rockefeller Playhouse



On a glorious early summer afternoon and evening, the Friends held a fund-raiser to benefit the famous carriage roads. The event featured outdoor cocktails and an indoor dinner at the Rockefeller Playhouse. Spirits were high. Here are some of the scenes photographed by Don Pollard.



















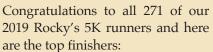


# Rocky's 5K Race Is A Winner For All!

By Evelyn Hadad

It was a beautiful, crisp fall day for the Rocky's 5K held on Saturday, October 19, 2019. Challenging hills and wide carriage roads - the perfect race for experienced trails runners and first timers. The well-marked course and friendly volunteers made it enjoyable from start to finish. One volunteer from Morgan Stanley remarked that the runners were very polite, "They thanked me for volunteering and asked me if it was okay to drop the water cups. I told them it was fine because we pick them up afterwards. Such nice people!" The Friends gave out overall and age group awards, newly designed t-shirts courtesy of Kelly Thompson and refreshments. It was a good time by all – please join us for our next race, the Rockwood Ramble 10K on June 6, 2020!

Thank you to Stretch Labs, New Balance, The North Face and Westchester Road Runner for their support. The superbly organized 5K was managed by Race Director Laureen Fitzgerald.



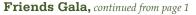


- 1. Skyler Mosenthal
- 2. Travis MacKenzie
- 3. Thomas Arnold

#### Female

- 1. Jena Tiernan
- 2. Krista Barron
- 3. Charlotte Rizzo





Path – named for Rockefeller brothers Laurance and David – that encircles Swan Lake. Both brothers contributed thousands of acres of land and enormous resources to the Preserve for many years. Friends President George Gumina said, "The goal is to raise enough funds to restore the surrounding carriage roads as well – Overlook Trail, Ash Tree Loop, and Brook Trail."

Brothers Path is the 1.1 mile scenic gateway to the Preserve that needs extensive rehabilitation of stonework, drainage ways, road surface and edges in order to secure safe conditions for hikers, joggers, equestrians and all visitors, including those with limited mobility. In the fall, with heavy rains, the carriage roads become rivers of mud, that Secretary Clinton and President Clinton would slough through on their many visits to the Preserve. In the winter, dangerous ice develops.

All of the money raised at the gala became the first contribution towards this effort. The Clintons received the inaugural John D. Rockefeller Jr. Park Preservation Award from Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, Chair of the NYS Councill of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and Friends President George Gumina, for their many environmental accomplishments in keeping with the Rockefeller history of conservation. Therefore, it was also a fitting start for the fund-raising effort for carriage roads that commemorate the family's legacy.

And everyone was reminded that their donations are a worthy investment not only in their own health but in that of their children and grandchildren since taking a walk in nature benefits all of us in our physical and mental well-being.

This fund raising campaign is a worthy investment for all of you, too! Please consider going to our web site and making your voices heard.



Rachel Gumina with her own two dogs Windsor and Lulu

# **Dog Visitors May Get A New Leash on Life**

There is a feasibility study being done by the Friends and the Preserve to establish a dog park!

This effort has been spearheaded by Rachel Gumina, who is a local dog trainer and also the wife of the Friends president George Gumina. Rachel said, "I will make sure that this project is well researched, safe and fun for all who will use this park." A fund raising effort will begin once the study is completed and we are given a green light!

## **School Children in Park Respond to Another Bark**

By Brian Geary

On a brisk and slightly overcast day that felt like the first true day of Autumn, the sounds of excited children could be heard echoing across Swan Lake. The laughter and raised voices belonged to students from Pocantico Hills who were sharing in the enthusiasm and giddiness that comes with a school day spent outside the classroom. The students were participating in The Pocantico Hills School Foundation's annual fundraising hike around Swan Lake. The mission of the Foundation is to provide grants for innovative and important programs that are beyond the school's budget. This year's hike was held on October 6th and helped raise funds for the school's first therapeutic support dog, Duke.

As with so many who visit the Preserve, the students experienced the joy and value of a walk with friends in a beautiful setting. Along their way the students stopped at several educational stations that dotted their route. The interactive stations allowed the students to see, hear, touch and even taste (maple jelly beans) as they learned about the ecology and history of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. The planning of the stations was a collaboration between the Foundation and the Park's naturalist Rebecca Policello and stewardship coordinator Kim Costaldo. A great deal was learned by the students and more than one child was surprised to learn that wooden baseball bats do not come from Modell's or Amazon Prime, but from Ash trees.

The Pocantico Hills School Foundation would like to thank the team at Rockefeller State Park Preserve, as well as the administration and staff of Pocantico Hills, all of whom worked to ensure that the day was a success both for the students and for Duke!





#### Patch Contest, continued from page 1

mately 3" on its longest edge. The patch shape (border) is an integral part of the design. Make sure to include the border in the design. Patches can be any shape. All designs must be original and not use art forms from other sources. The final design may be edited to meet vendor requirements.

**Lettering:** The following text must be included in the patch design: "Rockefeller State Park Preserve" & "NY"

**Theme:** The design should include RSPP components (i.e. Swan Lake, carriage roads, deer, horses etc.)

**Medium:** Drawing may be any medium (pencil, oil, pen and ink, chalk, crayon, computer graphics etc.) and can be color or black and white.

**Entry Requirements:** Entries can be submitted using this form, or a blank piece of paper 8.5x11 paper, but it must include student's name, address, phone number, grade level and parent or guardian's name.

One entry per student.

Mail entries to:

FRSPP Patch Contest PO Box 8444 • Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591 Or email to friends@friendsrock.org





### **Reaching the Friends**

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

### **The Preserve Observer**

E-mail: Friends@friendsrock.org
Website: www.friendsrock.org
facebook.com/rockyspark
instagram.com/rockysparkfriends
Editors: Evelyn Hadad, Herbert Hadad
Letters and submissions are invited.
Please contact us c/o the Friends.

### From the Friends President

By George Gumina

This year has been a grand one for the Preserve! We have a new manager, Peter Iskenderian, who has rolled up his sleeves and dug in immediately to improve this wonderful place. And I mean that "dug in" literally, as well as figuratively. Peter has started to create buildings to store the state equipment at the back parking lot, as well as Friends materials, and also cleaned out many drains and culverts. This work is in addition to the educational programs and many other initiatives he has started. We believe that Peter never sleeps!

The Gala that we held in early summer honoring the Clintons for their environmental work was a big success (please see story on page 1). That was the start of our fund raising campaign to restore Brothers Path and all the surrounding carriage roads. We are currently working on Phase I of the campaign that will begin work on the roads in 2020. This campaign will be a tribute to my uncles Laurance and David, who contributed thousands of acres and countless resources to the Preserve during their lifetimes.

We have another Gala planned for next June on Saturday, June 6, so please mark your calendars now!

Our annual Rockwood Ramble 10k race took place in June, which is always a lot of fun! And we had the Rocky's 5k race at the end of October. If you haven't already joined us for one of these races or for walking these courses, please do. It's an opportunity to keep fit and enjoy the beautiful scenery. You will always find someone who is going at the same pace as you and all the funds go for the restoration of the carriage roads underneath your feet!

Our patch contest is in full swing. Please have your child or grandchild join in the excitement of entering the competition, the details are in the article on page 1.







Board members attending the gala.

The equestrian event on October 6 drew many happy riders and lunch-goers. The raffle prizes are always amazing and we thank all the vendors who so kindly donated to this effort. That story begins on page 1.

There are always stimulating things happening at the Preserve, so keep on coming if you visit regularly and plan a visit soon if you haven't been here recently!

# Board of Directors Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

George Gumina, President M. Evelyn Hadad, Vice President John Nonna, Secretary Carol M. Lyden, Treasurer

Benjamin H. Cheever
Herbert Hadad
Patrice Ingrassia
Patricia Jones
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Kimberly K. Rockefeller
Donald W. Stever
Ron Vogl

Administrative Director: Jessika Creedon

10tos: Don Polları

# Spotlight on the Rockefel

# **Land Management and Natives Restoration**

As the Preserve's Natural Resource Specialist, Rebecca Policello is primarily focused on habitat management, including designing and implementing programs to protect and maintain the health of the Preserve's 1771 acres for its residents and its 350k visitors annually. She does all this with one staff person and by artfully recruiting and managing unpaid volunteers and interns.



This year, Rebecca spearheaded several volunteer efforts targeting key invasives including Japanese Angelica and "Mile-a-minute" (MAM). Visitors noted the many cleared areas. For 2019 Rockwood is considered MAM-free! (NOTE: due to plant cycles, MAM wil be back next year though diminished and the process continues!)



An intern takes measurements as part of the "10 Tallest," a program developed by the USDA Forest Service to measure how populations of tree species are changing over time.

### **Volunteer Coordination**

The Park relies heavily on volunteers for much of its Land Management programs. Every year, over 300 volunteers, students and interns are active at the Preserve



# Natural Resou



In this issue we provide readers the Preserve's Naturual Resource We hope to help readers unders that is involved in the operation well as to understand the dedicateam members who work here. Resource Specialist requires eduas well as a special kind of charamore. This brief profile will provider team's daily work as well as the Preserve.

BIOGRAPHY: Rebecca Policello recommany Marywood University in Biology and Pathology. She has been working at and in natural resources for six. She Teatown Reservation doing invasive management. At the Rockefeller Stabeen focusing on building the volunted reducing the spread of key invasive understory plants. She hopes to conthe Preserve and grow the Steward

# ller State Park Preserve's

# irce Specialist community Outreach

# Rebecca Policello

with a glimpse into the work of a Specialist, Rebecca Policello. tand both the day-to-day work of a place like the Preserve, as tion and professionalism of the The job of the Park's Natural cation, training and dedication, cter. Rebecca has all of this and vide a picture of Rebecca and the challenges that we face at

eived her Bachelor's Degree from d attended SUNY ESF for Forest the Preserve for nearly two years, e spent most of her career at e species mapping and ate Park Preserve, Rebecca has need program, identifying and species, and planting native nation to improve the habitats of ship Program.



This summer, the Preserve hosted over 220 Girl Scouts as part of that organization's "Girl Scouts Love State Parks" Initiative. In short order, Rebecca and her team put together a day of fun learning programs for the girls, including tree identification tools, nature bingo, scavanger hunts and geocaching.





Citizen Scientists





As part of her work coordinating the Preserve's "Citizen Scientist Corps" Rebecca and her team launched a massive effort to aid in Monarch repopluation in the Preserve. The "Monarch Ambassador" program trained children and adults on how to care for, raise and release Monarch butterflies. This year, an estimated 800 Monarchs were hatched and released in the Preserve.

### From the Preserve Manager

By Peter Iskenderian

It's Fall and we are heading into our busy season. You could've fooled me because the last six months have been an extraordinary and busy experience for me. I had been away from the area so long that I didn't realize there was something missing in my life. What was missing was that special feeling you get when you walk through the Preserve and you see all the people enjoying the experience and you feel the history and how it all came to be. It's unlike any State Park I have ever been to, and when I walk the Preserve carriage roads it reminds me why I am here and what I need to do. I'm a new steward of this property and as we head into our busy season it reminds me that I must strike that balance between improving the visitors experience and being a steward of the land and to one day leave it a better place than when I received it.

To accomplish this, we need to build strong teams. Our biggest need, which was recognized before I got here, was to establish a maintenance team and home base within the facility for them. A 3-phase capital project was instituted at the facility to make this happen. What we required is a safe and secure working environment for the staff and our equipment. Even though the planning started before I arrived, I took the reins and made sure the projects conformed to our needs and fit in to the aesthetics of the Preserve.

First I evaluated the maintenance equipment we had, and we came up with a list of what we needed to make the work easier and to allow us to properly maintain the carriage roads. Number one on the list was a machine to clean and unclog culverts and drains. With a generous donation from the Friends we were able to purchase this new piece of equipment and you may have seen the crew out in the Preserve using it. If you haven't you will because we have a maintenance plan for the drains and culverts, and we plan

on hitting every one in the Preserve. With donations from the movie and tv shoots filmed in the Preserve I was able to buy the rest of the equipment we needed including a zero turn mower, a push blower and a brush cutter. With all this new equipment we need more room.

Phase 1 of the capital project was to construct a heated maintenance building for the maintenance staff to have a break room, workspace and a place to call home. The current conditions they work in are not ideal as they had no electricity or running water and work out of a series of dilapidated sheds. It's very draining to the moral of the staff to have to work in such conditions day after day in all elements. So, phase 1 was completed on August 8 and we started to move equipment and tools into the new building. As this progresses we'll be happy to see the old sheds disappear.

Phase 2 of the project is the unheated garage portion of the building where a 2-bay garage will help secure our equipment and give the team a dry place to work in bad weather. This project goes out to bid in September and construction work should start in early 2020. Then to finish out this project, phase 3 will concentrate of the redesign and paving of the back parking lot. This last phase will be bigger than the first two phases. It will include improved parking, another pay station and electric vehicle charging stations. When it's complete the project will be a model for similar projects around the region.

There are some other projects planned for the near future that will make working and recreating at the Preserve a much more enjoyable time. The Preserve will be hooking into the town water supply. Operating our own water system is a lot of work and this will free up a lot of time to work

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Runners enjoying the Rocky's 5K event that Peter and his staff helped to make such a success!

### **❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖**

### "Mammals & Migratory Art"

November 10 - December 15, 2019

Opening Reception: Sunday, November 17 from 1PM - 3PM

Living animals are joyfully elevated by artists Rosanne Cerbo, James Dykeman, Sharon Falk, Michael Garber, Jocelyn Henry & Doris Shepherd Wiese; who seek artistic opportunities to emphasize the remarkable qualities of creatures observed in eastern surroundings.

Curated by Audrey Leeds



Michael Garber: Bull



Jocelyn Henry: Foxes



Doris Shepherd Wiese: Bobcat

#### Preserve Manger Letter, continued from page 8

on other projects. Along with this you will see new water fountains at the facility that will better serve our guests needs. The internet connectivity at the Preserve is pretty bad and at times interferes with our daily work load. The IT department will be spearheading a project in 2020 to install a new fiber optic line to the office. This will eliminate all the current connectivity headaches we are experiencing.

The final project we are moving forward with is the rehabilitation of the Swan Lake Dam. A final inspection of the entire structure above and below the water was completed this year and we have a plan moving forward. There are no safety concerns about the structure of the dam, it's more that the dam control mechanism needs to be replaced and work has to be done on the outlet pipe.

On top of these big projects, you'll see all of us out in the Preserve working on smaller, but no less important jobs. With the help of our partners and volunteers, no job is too small or too big for us to take on. This summer we brought on three new employees and in the fall we will be adding one more so as we grow our capacity to do the work our need to increase personnel also grows. We know how much the Preserve means to everyone and we hope you enjoy all the new work that's happening around you.

# This Issue's Cover Image



SUNSET, CAPE SANTA MARIA - oil on linen by artist Jarvis Wilcox from the recent exhibit at the Preserve Visitor Center entitled "Reflections".

### Finding My Favorite Tree In Our Own Park!

By Benjamin Hoyer

On the way out of the Bronx Botanic Garden , we found ourselves in the shade of Tulip Tree Allée. Until that moment, I had never heard of Tulip trees, but these I would never forget- ten stories high, pencil straight, with brown grey bark; I'd hug these trees, but I could never get my arms around them. The leaves were deep summer green, yellow veined, and four-pointed, like misshapen maple leaves. Ample branches supported a wide, shady canopy, but they were so high up, you had to really crane your neck to get a view.



Tulip tree flowers in spring

On a display near the "Allée", I learned why these trees are called Tulips. When they bloom in spring, in April or May and for only a few weeks, they produce gorgeous flowers of yellow, orange, and green that resemble their tree's

namesake. Tulips in the sky! But it was only summer. How was I to wait nine months to see them?

Fall arrived with its spectacular colors and clear, dry, temperate, weather; the most pleasant season by far in the Hudson Valley.

Unfortunately, I forgot to inform the plantaris tendon in my left leg of our date with the Tulips. When it decided to snap in March, it was all I could do to hobble around with a cane. My date with the tulips in the Bronx was looking iffy at best.

In April, I started checking the Botanic Garden's Facebook page and website for pictures, hoping to catch a virtual glimpse – I hadn't yet given up hope. Recovery was slow, and by May I had a ton of work to catch up on. By June, it was too late.

Heart breaking, yes, but we're also so fortunate to live in an area with abundant Oaks and Maples, Walnuts and White Pines, Hickories, Hemlocks, Dogwood, Black Cherry, and even Muscle trees. We see them daily on our walks through the Rockefeller Preserve, near our home. So when my wife saw on their Facebook page that they were having a tree identification walk, I signed up immediately.

On the appointed day, I met my fellow tree lovers and our guide in the courtyard in front of the visitor center. We headed out around Swan Lake clockwise off the path until we came to the big Pin Oak near the benches by the lake. Behind it on the other side of the path looms a large Black Locust. Further down the path are the Birches and the Beeches (I despair of ever remembering which is which).

After reaching the corner of the lake, we turned left toward the Old Railroad Bed where the trail heads into denser forest and the shade returns, and followed the path to the juncture with Brook Trail. Those trees up ahead at the fork? Tall and straight? Brown grey bark? Misshapen maple-like leaves? These trees branched out much higher than eye-level- "leggy" as our guide explained. Tulips!

Ecstatic, then flummoxed, I wondered how I could have failed to notice. We walk along that path with our small, one-eyed dog, Lilo, nearly every day, and yet I had no idea. All these months that I had been dying to see a Tulip tree, it was here all along. Not exactly under my nose, remember they grow to over 100 feet tall, but certainly right on top of my head.

Even in my hobbled condition, all spring, I had only to look up to see the "tulips".

Spring will come again. And this year I know where to find

my Tulips, and I'll know to look toward the sky rather than the path. But first it will be Fall again, and I've read that Tulip tree leaves turn a vibrant, cheerful yellow. And I'll know exactly where to look.



Tulip trees form a golden canopy in the fall

### Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

Peter Iskenderian, Preserve Manager Laurence Gill, Director of Operations Dmitri Benzinger, Facility Maintenance Supervisor Rebecca Policello, Natural Resource Specialist Susan Lewenz, Conservation Communicator Kim Castaldo, Stewardship Coordinator

Jean Dolan, 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

#### Ride, Dine, Raffle, continued from page 1

event that included a trail ride through the Preserve with wonderful views, a dining tent overlooking the Hudson at Rockwood Hall and a delicious hot meal that included bourbon chicken, butternut soup, eggplant rollatini and roasted vegetables, catered by Turco's, to riders, hikers and Sunday diners alike. A raffle supported by outstanding local businesses was in place and wine was available to enjoy with your lunch. Early registration and lunch tickets offered the best price.

While the style of the event was new, the safety checks and ambulance support were unchanged provided by Phelps Hospital/Northwell Health and Briarcliff Volunteer Ambulance Services, parking for trailers and cars was still free and the winning combination of a beautiful park, horses and a fall day spent outdoors remained. Non-riders were encouraged to come and enjoy the horses and lunch with a view. Participation as a rider, spectator or diner provided much needed funding for carriage road maintenance.

The parking this year was on a rough mowed grass field accessed from Route 9 that the Preserve staff worked hard to have ready for the event.

Our event for next year will be on Sunday, October 4, 2020. Look for details on our web site closer to the date and please come and join the fun!

We would like to thank the following companies for donating to our event:

Aardvark Pet Supplies Agriventures Agway Beech Hill Farm Equestrian Center Black Cow Bosco Johnn & Company Eve Bucca Briarcliff Volunteer Ambulance CHG Wealth Consulting Group, UBS Connecticut Equine Therapy Feed Barn of Brewster Fox Hill Farm Good Reasons Dr. Brian Green The Horse Connection Le Jardin Du Roi Miller & Assoc. Mary Jane Mitchell Mount Pleasant Police Department NE Equine Our Wonderful Volunteers Phelps Hospital | Northwell Health Picture Perfect Equestrian The Professional Horsemen's Association River Rock Supply Corp. Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff Saddle Manor Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture Stone Gate Wine & Spirits Tractor Supply of Patterson Turco's of Yorktown

Blue Hill at Stone Barns

We would also like to give special thanks to our chief organizers Lynn Lucas, Debbie Homer, Joanne Henry, Friends Board Member Clare Pierson, Friends Administrative Director Jessika Creedon and Preserve Manager Peter Iskenderian.



Horse riders and dog walkers share the trail in harmony.



Riders are greeted by a volunteer.





#### **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

### **The Carriage Roads**

By Carol Lyden

These carriage roads mean not only a lot to me but to many others.

They give peace and tranquillity to so many!

Anyone can love a rose, but it takes a lot to love a leaf. It's ordinary to love the beautiful, but it's beautiful to love the ordinary.

So is the trail system!





Photo: Michael Garbe

Steven C. Rockefeller, Jr. (L) with Preserve Manager Peter Iskenderian (Center) and artist Cao Jun, in front of Cao Jun's painting from Steven Rockefeller's recent exhibit "Symbolic Associations" at the Preserve Visitor Center. The exhibit's theme was a Western artist revealing Eastern and Western art that depicted visual and narrative dramatic environmental images, enhanced by calligraphic poetry by Cao Jun, Master Fo Tan, Huang Yue and Ma Zinle.