

The Preserve Observer



Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine Vol. XXVI Fall 2011



Lantern Ceremony to Remember U.S., Japan Tragedies

By Nick Barlekoff

Sunday, September 11, 2011, was a beautiful day. The sun was out, but it was neither hot nor chilly. After a rainy summer season it was good to be in the sun. Towards the evening, motion intensified at the Rockefeller State Park Preserve—cars filled the parking lot; folk milled around engaged in quiet, focused talk and activity; kids smiled and giggled softly as they painted and wrote on folded painted lanterns.

Sunday, September 11, 2011, was a sober day at Rockefeller State Park Preserve. It was a day of remembering and hope.

Sunday, September 11, 2011, marked the 10th anniversary of the World Trade Center destruction and the six-month remembrance of the devastation in Fukushima, Japan.

Sunday, September 11, 2011, was a point in time when the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve transformed the pain, fear, grief and outrage of two horrific events into a serene statement of acceptance of the suffering
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Ceremonial Drummer

Photo: Peter Humphrey

Road Racing Against The Gathering Storm

By Edward Salim Hadad

The forecast called for brutal temperatures and snow. Could this be? At the end of October? I went to Grand Central and headed north to Westchester anyway. It was Friday evening and I was due to spend the night with my parents in the home I grew up in alongside the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. After the ride on the train, sitting next to the fireplace, we all dined and watched the final game of the World Series as the ominous weather updates continued to come in. It did not look promising for the Rocky's Annual 5K.

Any opportunity to leave Manhattan, where I now live, to spend some time in the woods, especially during autumn, is a welcome prospect. I was looking forward to running in the race the next morning, but struggling through snow and excessive cold was not the charming picture of fall foliage and agreeable air I had envisioned. "The snow should hold off until noon. I think you'll get lucky," my father Herbert declared. My mother Evelyn, known to challenge some of my father's proclamations, nodded in affirmation.

We all rose on Saturday to a chilly but dry morning. The race, which had sold-out, was on. The parking lot at the Preserve was teeming with activity: cars parking, runners stretching, guides directing. The cold temperature was contrasted by the warmth exhibited by race coordinator Stella Medina, Friends president Clare Pierson, and other

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Being Prepared for the Force Called Irene

By Thomas A. Capossela



Photo: Laurence Gill

Some of the damage

Hurricane Irene hit The Preserve on Saturday, August 27, and Sunday, August 28 delivering as promised high winds and heavy tropical downpours. The winds were in the 50 to 60 mph range and the rainfall topped out at 10 inches (6 inches would fall a week later with Tropical Storm Lee.) Both downed trees and trail washouts were guaranteed to be numerous with this type of weather front passing through our area.

The entire Tri-State area was under a hurricane alert thanks to today's sophisticated weather tracking equipment, which allowed us to follow the hurricane through the Caribbean and up the coast, almost pinpointing the

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A generous matching grant for \$10,000 has been offered to the Friends for carriage road maintenance.

Please help us raise this money by March 1, 2012. Donations may be mailed in enclosed envelope. Thank you!

Feds Go On Fishing Expedition at Preserve

By Herbert Hadad

Now that the fishing expedition by the feds is over, we're able to break the story.

It all began when Assistant United States Attorneys Elliott B. Jacobson and Perry A. Carbone began to engage in talk around the office cooler. I am their press officer and joined them. We decided that the only two things better than talking about fishing is (1) going fishing and (2) catching a fish.

We agreed to convene the next weekend. They had never been to Swan Lake so on a bright Saturday morning we headed for the Preserve office, where Richard Nelson, the naturalist, checked our state credentials, issued preserve tags and wished us well.

Elliott and Perry, both hard-driving prosecutors on the job, were pretty well prepared for the day. Elliott had new fishing gear from Cabela's, a top-of-the-line equipment company. Perry sported a collection of gear reflecting his years of working the Croton Reservoir.

One fact stood out as we made our way down the trail to the western side of the 24-acre lake – this was Elliott's first attempt at fishing since boyhood, and we wanted dearly for him to succeed.

We came upon a father and his son of about 12 casting and retrieving. We stopped to watch and chat (translation: ferret out the best spots on the lake) when the dad's rod was suddenly whipped by a strike and he skillfully landed a smallmouth bass of about 4 pounds.

After admiring his fish we set up just far enough away to preserve our dignity and began casting.

My companions favored their lures. I had dropped by the venerable Hudson Valley Rod & Gun store in Beekman Avenue in Sleepy Hollow the day before and acquired two dozen Canadian night crawlers from the proprietor Tony Morality. I have great faith in the night crawlers.

Nobody caught anything. We tried the thin, murky, mysterious end of the lake, where, I had been told, the real big lunkers

like to linger. Hauling in nothing but vegetation, we soldiered on to the east side of the lake. This required maneuvering down slopes below the old railroad right of the way and avoiding overhead branches, but it looked like fish territory and we were glad to try and find out.

After a spell, Perry began to hook sizable sunfish, which we admired and released. Shortly later, I got one and held onto it only long enough for a photo before returning it to the water. We moved on. But no prize had yet to be caught.

Crossing over the unfinished tombstones that serve as a footbridge at the mouth of Swan Lake, we found an open, comfortable spot and resumed fishing.

Elliott patiently continued to cast and retrieve. Perry took a break. I switched from a lure back to my friend the night crawler and suddenly:

Elliott's line was slammed, he set the hook and the excitement was on.

But it was also to be a memorable moment for another reason. Just as the fish struck, David Rockefeller, leading a procession of horses and carriages, came along. "Good Day, Mister Rockefeller," we called.

He and his guests waved. All were witnesses to Elliott's moment of triumph.

He reeled in a small but beautiful bass, delighted with the catch yet slightly humbled by the size. Perry and I rejoiced. The camera clicked. The fish was returned to the lake. History was made. The fishing expedition was a success. There was no need to continue.

We repaired to my garden, where wife Evelyn put out a beautiful mezze, a spread of Middle Eastern appetizers, and a few bottles of wine. As we dined and talked, Elliott's bass grew bigger and bigger, happy in the lake.



Photo: Herbert Hadad

Left to right, Perry Carbone, the catch and Elliott Jacobson

Scenes from the Preserve Neighborhood

Photos: Brother John Argauer

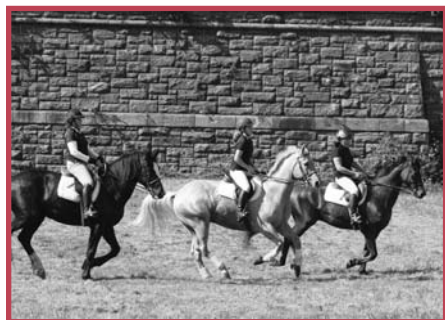


Picture Perfect Day For the 10th Pace

By Liz Meszaros

On Sunday, October 16, 2011, the Friends marked their 10th Anniversary of the Autumn Country Pace, a fundraiser held annually at Rockwood Hall. We couldn't have asked for a better day. The weather was perfect, the course was magnificent, the meal was delicious and more importantly, the company – many of our wonderful riders who have come each year and have supported us and our trails – made this day extraordinary! The first team headed out under clear blue sunny skies close to 8 a.m. As they approached the finish, they expressed their pleasure with the length of the course and its many challenging jumps. Afterwards, over 210 guests enjoyed a scrumptious meal under the tent at Rockwood Hall prepared by Turco's of Yorktown and served by Margaret Monteforte. The day ended with our trophy, ribbon and raffle ceremony.

Our dedicated Pace committee, chaired by Lou Accurso, worked very hard with the Preserve staff to make this event go off without a hitch. Along with his third hand Laurie Towle, they both did a remarkable job overseeing the entire recruitment and organization of 45 plus volunteers. Special



Arriving at Rockwood

thanks to Alix Schnee, Preserve Manager, and her staff along with Tommy Capossela of Greenrock Corp. who always ensure a safe and challenging course for the riders! Preserve staff members Laurence Gill and Jen Sylvestri also spent many hours marking the course with arrows to ensure a safe ride and Debbie and Steve Shecter, of the Westchester Horse Council, made sure that all safety concerns with regard to parking and crowd control were addressed. I registered our riders and coordinated the luncheon, trophies and ribbon and raffle ceremony. Preserve staff members Richard Nelson, Stephen Sciamie and Frederick Von Pichl held down the fort while Chris Davies, another dedicated park volunteer, had the arduous task of calculating the pace results.

As always, Marlene and John Schrader of Beech Hill Farm did an incredible job designing and setting up beautiful and challenging jumps with help from Westchester Horse Council member Cliff Harris. A special thanks to Agway of Danbury, Connecticut, and John and Carol Lyden who generously donated bales of hay for the jumps and to Rosedale Nurseries, which once again supplied us with cornstalks to

decorate the jumps and tent area.

Sincere thanks go out to the dedicated trail volunteers, runners, friends at the registration desk and start and finish lines, parking attendants, and those who helped set up and clean up. Thanks also to Friends Board members Evelyn and Herb Hadad and Lorraine Clifford, a volunteer from Beech Hill Farm, who manned the Friends table for the day selling raffle tickets, lunches, T-shirts, hats and totes. The Sleepy Hollow Volunteer Ambulance Corps and New York State Park Police were also on site to ensure the safest possible event. Philipse Manor Hall was kind enough to lend us their PA system for the day and we cannot forget our neighbors at New York Life Insurance Company who once again allowed us the use of their parking lots for this special event. Berger Hardware of Thornwood provided us with garbage pails for recycling, shovels and brooms for cleanup. Lastly, Kleen Sweep came up and swept the New York Life parking lot after the last horse trailer pulled out thanks to Viola Powrie!

A raffle was part of the festivities for the day. The Friends would like to thank Alta Buden for sharing her talent by donating a custom portrait of a favorite animal companion as the first prize raffle item, Blue Hill at Stone Barns for donating a dinner for four gift certificate, the New Sheraton Hotel in Tarrytown, for donating an overnight weekend stay with breakfast for two, the Jacob Burns Film Center for their annual dual membership. Historic Hudson Valley for a classic tour of Kykuit, The Doubletree Hotel for a spectacular overnight anniversary package with dinner and breakfast and Beech Hill Farm for two free private riding lessons. A gift certificate was also donated by the Twisted Bit Saddlery of Scarsdale and Ms. Ann Stoller donated a pair of football tickets to a Monday night football game – NY Jets v. Miami Dolphins.

In addition, we also would like to thank our Friends and local merchants who supported our Journal as follows:

Blume Electric of Briarcliff Manor
 The Care of Trees, Elmsford
 Corbett Excavating, Inc.
 Grape Expectations of Tarrytown
 The Hudson Valley Writers' Center
 The Hudson Valley Horse Source
 Kendal on Hudson, Sleepy Hollow
 Manuele Management Group, Inc.
 Sharon Pickett and Paul Mazzilli
 John Settembrino, Financial Consultant
 Mid Hudson Veterinary Practice
 Phelps Memorial Hospital, Sleepy Hollow
 Sleepy Hollow Animal Hospital

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A Year in the Life of a Migratory Bird (Part Two of a Two-Part Series)

By Dr. Richard Nelson, *Preserve Naturalist*

Preserve records from the past 15 or 20 years indicate that with a single exception the date of the first arrival, as indicated by singing males, fell between April 19 and May 9, many of them between April 24 and April 29. These dates are consistent with general arrival dates for the Middle-Atlantic region. In addition many of these records come from one area, the lower end of the Old Sleepy Hollow Road Trail. In part at least this is related to that area being one of the better nesting and foraging habitats in the Preserve for this species. However, it also may be that this is due to specific individuals returning to the location in which they had previously nested or where they themselves had been hatched and reared. At any rate, these data indicate that Yellow Warblers, like many other birds, possess a strong sense of time and location, in terms of a goal. The first aspect may be related to some internal calendar perhaps related to day length (photoperiod) indicating to the bird that it is time to leave their tropical wintering ground and return northward. The second point could relate to some type of homing behavior already described.

Yellow Warblers nest in areas of low thickets, especially near water. Apparently in spring male birds arrive first to establish their rather small, but intensely defended territories. Females build the nest, small cup shaped structure constructed of fine stems, grasses and other materials including silky material from caterpillar nests, in a fork of a small tree or shrub. Four or five eggs are laid and incubated for 9-15 days. In most cases, there is one, occasionally two broods. Unfortunately, Yellow Warblers are known to be rather frequent hosts for the brood parasitism of Brown-headed cowbirds who lay an egg in their nest. Interestingly however, Preserve records indicate only two confirmed records for them as hosts for cowbird fledglings. Here in the Preserve, the most frequent hosts for cowbird chicks appear to be sparrows and vireos. It is worth noting however, that Yellow Warblers, whose normal breeding range overlaps with the traditional, original breeding range of cowbirds in the mid-continent area, have learned to some extent to cope with this problem. If they discover a cowbird egg in the nest, in many cases, the adult warblers simply build a new nest on top of the old nest containing the cowbird egg.

Yellow Warblers, like most of their relatives, are insectivores, feeding on insects and larvae for themselves and their

fledglings. A few sources refer to use of fruit and berries; even those sources, however, describe these birds as primarily feeding on insects, caterpillars and spiders. Yellow warblers are known to feed on tent caterpillars. Unlike some of their relatives as well as other breeding migrants, Yellow Warblers do not hang around very long after the young have fledged and can fly. The birds go through the normal post-nesting molt, called the prebasic molt, while the young are still being cared for and fed. Consequently they are able to leave the nesting grounds for the fall migration far earlier than other migrants, usually in July or August; soon, they have pretty much all departed southwards. Some evidently cross the Gulf directly while others use other routes.

Aside from the post nesting molt, many birds also undergo a shift in diet, often involving change at least in emphasis from insects to fruit. This appears to have the effect of increasing their intake and body content of fats, needed to provide energy for long distance migratory flights. In some other warbler species, and other long distance migrants, as well as birds that are not long distance migrants fruits and berries become an important part of the autumn diet. A variety of native or exotic plants are used. One species that seems especially important for this in the Preserve is an exotic shrub,

Japanese Angelica, of the ginseng family. Its tiny dark purple fruit are widely used by such other warblers as Black-throated Blue Warblers and Northern Parulas, along with other long distance migrants including Gray Catbirds and Scarlet Tanagers. Yellow Warblers in the Preserve have never been observed or recorded feeding on these or other fruits at the Preserve. During long migrations many migrants have stopping off points along the route where they rest and feed. It is not inconceivable that the presence of Japanese angelica fruit in quantity could make the Preserve such a place for some south bound migrants in the autumn. Risks encountered during migration can include bad weather, adverse winds, and loss of stopping off/resting places along the route.

In the wintering grounds

Once a migrant has successfully completed the long and potentially hazardous trip to its tropical wintering grounds, it then faces a series of issues related to its existence during that period. One issue relates to winter habitats. Many birds



Photo: Dr. Richard Nelson

Yellow Warbler

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From the Friends President

By Clare M. Pierson

This year has been a good one for the Friends. Our budget has grown modestly, and our events have been successful as fundraisers as well as community builders. The Park is an integral part of the community: people move here to be by this Preserve, their property values are higher for being close, and, most importantly, everyone's peace of mind is better for their access to our beautiful Park.

Meanwhile, we continue to work on our Federal Highway Administration grant to get the Swan Lake area repaired and to build some handicap access.

Back on June 25th, the running community celebrated the Preserve as they do in the Rockwood Ramble 10K. The race runs through the Rockwood Hall side of the Park on a beautiful route that goes over hill and dale to the river and back. It was a lovely day and successful fundraiser under the wonderful guidance of Laureen Fitzgerald.

Our 9/11 event allowed those who attended to experience that difficult day with serenity and a real sense of community. Buddhist Monks from America, Vietnam, Japan, and Germany led us in Prayers of Compassion and a Japanese Lantern ceremony that memorialized the departed of the participants as well as those who passed on 9/11 here and 3/11 in Japan.

Our 10th Annual Pace was October 16th and turned out to be a beautiful day to ride in the Park. We are so grateful for the many volunteers who make this event happen. The Pace is chaired by Lou Accurso, who is assisted by Laurie

Towle and they make it happen. The Pace is also the longest running collaboration between the Friends and the Park staff. Alix Schnee, our Park manager, has a limited staff as it is, but they mark the trails, they clean the jumps, make all the signage and put it up. It would not happen without them either. Beech Hill Farm is another vital part of this Park community. The youth group set up tables and jumps and Marlene Van Hagen and John Schroeder donate their time, contacts, and then their riders come out.

On October 29th our Rocky's 5k Race, which is getting larger every year, was run under the guidance of our board member Stella Medina. The second of our two races each year, the Rocky's 5K has a very supportive and efficient team. This was our third year. Check us out at on Active.com.

Speaking of athletics and fitness, we are also thrilled to announce we are seeking a partnership with Club Fit for our Preserve Observer.

As you can see, the Friends group is a community of communities. As we come to terms with this age of violent rain and shrinking retirements, we discover the deep generosity of the people around us. So many people have stepped forward to help the Preserve and we are grateful to them all!

Happy Fall,



Board of Directors

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Clare M. Pierson, President

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John Nonna, Secretary

Carol M. Lyden, Treasurer

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Patricia Jones

Donald W. Stever

Administrative Director: Liz Meszaros

From the Preserve Manager

By *Alix Schnee*

The fall is upon us, and we're still trying to catch up with the impact of Hurricane Irene and tropical storm Lee; whether hurricane or tropical storm, the amount of rain did a number on our trails. Thanks to the professionalism of Greenrock Corp., under Tom Caposella's excellent direction, the culverts on our trails were cleared before the storms ensuring that the destruction caused by runoff was kept at bay. Accordingly, while many trails had deep ruts on their sides, where the water is supposed to run, they were not cut in half by water jumping over from one side of the trail to the other. Nonetheless, over 56 trees came down, there were many dangerous hangers, and the bridges along Rockwood Hall's Brook Trail were severely undermined as was the small Pocantico River Bridge. Our most eastern trails, Buttermilk Hill, Laurence's Ridge, and Raven's Rock were also eroded and are still in need of repair. The payment of all work falls under the FEMA domain. However these rain storms are on the increase and remind us of the Preserve's vulnerability and the importance of land management.

The condition of Swan Lake is being closely monitored by the Agency's Environmental Management Bureau. A seven-year study revealed that the water quality of the Lake had degraded over the past two decades. Its productivity level has moved from moderate (mesotrophic) to very productive (eutrophic). Algae blooms, sedimentation, increased aquatic macrophyte growth, and periodic episodes of oxygen depletion are reducing the quality of the Lake as habitat and as a recreation and scenic resource. In order to ensure that water quality is protected from further decline, David Rockefeller is supporting the need for maintenance dredging of the lake's southern end. He has also supported the restoration of a historic sediment basin, and the implementation of three additional basins to control run-off from Hudson Pines Farm and the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture.

To ensure that the lake's water quality is restored and improved the study recommends: applying best management practices within the lake's watershed, especially with respect to agriculture; improving the lake flushing rate and water level; controlling aquatic invasives; reducing nutrient input; reducing blue-green algae blooms; and providing educational opportunities. The flow of the Pocantico River is also being examined as it periodically floods and undermines the River Trail. The destruction of its surge to the small bridge and its environment, an Irene remnant, is an example of its unbridled power.

We have initiated a permit for school running groups. While the Preserve is a passive recreation environment we understand why schools would want to train their young ath-

letes on our well-maintained trails. However we also want to ensure that the serene environment is not overtaken by this energetic population. Accordingly the schools have been requested to limit their runners to running two abreast, in groups that are no larger than six; thus teams of six running two abreast at least 20 feet apart. We are also request that students wear clothing identifying their school. It's a short season, but our most populous one so we want to ensure enjoyment and safety for all. Meanwhile, Sleepy Hollow High School, our area school, has been holding meets at Rockwood Hall, as they do every year.

On that note, equestrians have been commenting on how pleasant their interactions have been with most runners in the Preserve. There seems to be a much more sensitive relationship between these two important groups of users, which is wonderful.

Our volunteers have been busy helping with the gardens, the office, and clearing trails. They've also assisted with our art exhibitions, and were critical to the success of the 911 Memorial; indeed mention must be made of the particular efforts of Miho Goto and Nick Olefer who arranged the Buddhist ceremony, the participation of the monks, and for the purchase of the lanterns. The event was highlighted by the participation of the Valhalla Troop #1 Boy Scouts who helped light the lanterns and assisted with releasing them onto Swan Lake. This fall, 40 volunteers from Pernod American will continue their annual support by assisting with the removal of the invasive plant *Akebia* from Rockwood Hall.

Christmas came a bit early this year, we were all greatly concerned that Dr. Richard Nelson, our naturalist, was again slated for termination. So it came as an enormous relief when PEF—the Public Employees Federation voted overwhelmingly to ratify a four-year contract that averted 3,496 layoffs. Richard has been a mainstay at the Preserve since 1985. It was his scrupulous scientific research which enabled the Preserve to become an Audubon New York Important Bird Area. His annual bird counts, study of wild flowers and general overall understanding of the Preserve greatly enhance our offerings. Indeed, his presence is instrumental in defining the nature of the Preserve. We are all overjoyed that his position has been retained and that we can continue to do the work we've been legislated to perform.





Spring Gallery Schedule at a Glance

November 18, 2011 – January 15, 2012
Holiday Exhibit entitled “Peace and Joy: Magical Images”

Opening Reception: November 20, 12:30-3:30 pm

Featuring Jeanie Neyer, Eleanor Miller, and Paula Renee, the exhibit will include Neyer’s miniature landscape masterpieces, Paula Renee’s colorful dimensional images of woven treescapes and abstract constructions, and Eleanor Miller’s delicate oil paintings of diamond shapes set in golden frames.

Audrey Leeds, curator. For further information contact: proleeds@aol.com

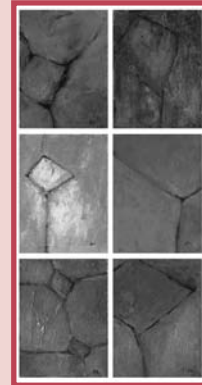
Parking is \$6.00 per vehicle.



Paula Renee



Jeanie Neyer



Eleanor Miller



The Spring “SNAP” photography exhibit will feature subjects of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Amateur and professional photographers are invited to submit their photographs. An application can be obtained from the Park Preserve Visitor’s Center.

For further information contact: Laurence.Gill@parks.ny.gov

Greetings From Our Office Boss

By Liz Meszaros



tion has been a perfect fit for me.

Along the way I also earned a degree in Business Administration studying evenings at Mercy College. My duties as Administrative Director range from handling the day-to-day clerical tasks necessary to run the office – answering telephone inquiries and correspondence, bookkeeping,

It's hard to believe that it has been seven years since I started my work as Administrative Director with the Friends! Not to be cliché but time flies when you are having fun, which I can honestly say has been my experience. Having worked for the Town of Greenburgh for 20 years in various capacities, this posi-

banking, record keeping, etc. to the most enjoyable part – to planning the wonderful and exciting events that the Friends host to raise funds for the Preserve.

Whether it be our annual horse pace fundraiser or the volunteer celebration held each year to thank our dedicated Preserve volunteers (my favorite), these events allow me to meet and work with so many interesting people from different backgrounds who all share a love of the Preserve. It is very gratifying to be able to see the results of this work and very rewarding to be a part of a community and organization that is dedicated to their mission.

While I am not doing the work of the Preserve, I enjoy spending time in Valhalla, where I live with my husband Stephen and two sons, Kevin and Brian. Hope to meet you one day!

Race (continued from page 1)

cheerful and encouraging volunteers handing out numbers, shirts, and timing chips.

Spirits were running high for the hundreds of runners and supporters. A procession of shivering brave souls advanced down the hill, over the Pocantico River, and to the starting line. Ben Cheever who was participating along with his two sons John and Andrew, his wife Janet, and John's girlfriend saddled up next to me before the start. Cheever, an author of a number of books including one on running titled *Strides*, looked down at my sneakers and remarked, "Oh, that's a really good pair. I ran a marathon in those."

I have never run farther than 10 miles and the completion of a marathon is a goal I'd like to achieve. I thanked him for his vote of confidence in my choice of footwear and took it as a good omen. The impending snow had held off as instructions were offered to the participants, all too ready to start moving. There was not a lot of tarrying before the signal was given and we were off!

The air I pulled through my lungs was chilled, but my body warmed quickly. My gloves and extra fleece soon proved to be excessive. The trail climbed and climbed. I have been to every corner of the Preserve but hadn't been back on this trail for a number of years. I knew there was an incline, but had not remembered the continual ascent. Despite the cold, however, the excitement of the race was a nice jolt to the system and the legs were feeling loose. I soon passed the first mile marker.

Naturally, the beauty of running up a hill is to go back down the other side. All the huffing on the front yielded to a

nice cruise into the second mile. I found a nice rhythm, as did the fellow runners around me. The trail leveled as we passed pastures behind Eagle Hill and crossed the second mile marker. An ambulance was positioned at one of the trailheads. I hoped the only purpose it would serve this day would be as a novelty, being parked in the middle of the woods. A couple twists and curves, and before I knew it we were in the home stretch.

The cheering grew louder as we approached the finish line. I gave a wave to my parents, who were keeping warm and chatting with fellow supporters, including Board Member Sharon Pickett and husband Paul Mazzilli, whose daughter Meredith and friend Devon were running. I crossed the final marker and clicked my watch. I was incredibly surprised with a personal best time of just under 21 and a half minutes.

The participants continued to cross the finish line. Reunions commenced, extra sweatshirts were put back on, and congratulations were extended all around. The procession of runners and supporters then started the return trip back up towards the parking lot, where they were rewarded with bagels and hot drinks.

The snow, which had held off all morning, began to fall. It was almost as if the god of weather had smiled and said, "O.K., I gave you all your race. Now it's my time to go out and have some fun." The morning had been frigid, but with a brilliantly organized event, a gathering of friendly and fit people, a personal-best time, and all set in the beautiful Preserve. Who could have wished for more?

(For complete race results, please consult <http://www.westchestertrack.org/2011/10/rockys-5k-results-photos/>)

Photo: Herbert Hadad



Runners Edward Hadad and Ben Cheever

Storm Damage (continued from page 1)

exact time of day the storm would hit and exit our region.

On Wednesday I called Preserve Manager Alix Schnee and suggested all important drain culverts and stream inlets be checked for debris and were operating properly; Alix wholeheartedly agreed. During the days leading up to any significant rainfall the Greenrock woodlands crew goes out on both Family owned trails as well as the trails in The Rockefeller State Park Preserve and checks key drainage areas to ensure drain pipe

entrances are clear of branches, leaves and any other materials, which would collect at the drain mouth and block the flow of water, thus washing out the trail. In addition to checking drain basins we take our backhoe and create

road cutouts on hills, which allow water to run off of the trail system where drain basins don't exist. You will notice these cutouts all over and can clearly see their effectiveness with the amount of trail material, which washes into the cutout itself.

The Preserve was officially closed to the public the week of August 29th, thus allowing the cleanup to commence. The first order of business was to remove the downed trees around the Hudson Pines Farm to allow the Farm crew access to the cows to



Photo: Laurence Gill

After Irene's visit

feed and monitor them. Then it was on to the Preserve; removing trees, which were blocking the trails (about 50 trees came down), and marking the trees that had dangerous hanging branches and needed a bucket truck to remove them. After all the trails were cleared of fallen trees we blew the trails with a tractor and blower to remove fallen leaves, twigs and light branches.

The last part of the cleanup was the most costly; repairing the trail washouts. With the many streams and rivers transversing through the park the culvert and drain system cannot handle the added water that 10 inches of rain in 12 hours adds, and trail damage is inevitable.

The worst trail erosion occurred at the end of Cantor Alley along the Pocantico River and at the Bridge Trail at the north end of Rockwood Hall. Both of these areas are surrounded by stream beds and both sustained similar damage during Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

There was no way of preventing the trail washouts in storms like Hurricane Irene; what we try to do was minimize the damage. This is done by continuing to upgrade and maintain the trail drainage system, which was put in place when John D. Rockefeller built the carriage road trails a century ago.

In closing I thought that damage was minimal to both Family-owned trails and the Preserve after taking almost a direct hit from a Category 2 Hurricane. Only a month later the RSPP was back and fully operational.

Mr. Capossela is an official of Greenrock Corp., which provides maintenance service to the Preserve.

Birds (continued from page 4)

apparently use winter habitats that are at least analogous, though probably not identical to, their breeding season habitat. In other words, a bird that nests in wooded areas may also winter that way too. At least some studies of wintering migrant Yellow warblers in the tropics indicate that they do exploit open areas, including areas modified by human activity. Migrant Yellow Warblers in Yucatan, Mexico exploit open habitats, while in Panama, they are known to use forest edges.

Other issues involve how they exploit limited resources. More importantly, how are they affected by competition with tropical resident species and with other migrants. There is some evidence that wintering migrant Yellow Warblers exhibit territorial behavior. This has been recorded for example in Costa Rica. In addition, Yellow Warblers are known to use the same winter locations from year to year, just as some individuals appear to come to same at least approximate locations in the Preserve from year to year. On the other hand, there are also records of migrant Yellow Warblers foraging as

members of mixed species flocks, along with local resident species as well as (presumably) other northern migrants.

As spring approaches, the migrants somehow understand that it is time to leave and return to their temperate nesting area. Being in the tropics they have no way of knowing what weather conditions in North America are like. It would appear that day length is important, even in the tropics where annual day length changes are considerably less than in the temperate zones. When the migrants reach North America, their arrival date or period coincides with the unfolding both of new leaves and their associated insect life, something which is advantageous in terms of the adults getting enough food for their fledglings.

Conservation Issues

There are many factors, which are actual or potential threats to migrant birds. These threats among other things can be categorized as relating to their nesting/breeding ground habitats; their winter habitats; and the actual migra-

(continued on page 11)

Ceremony (continued from page 1)

in life and unity of different peoples facing adversity.

Two clerics, Japanese priest and a Vietnamese monk, led the gathered in meditative walking and praying. Each of them, by their very presence, illustrated that past horror can be overcome, and hope and redemption found.

Sunday, September 11, 2011, paper lanterns glowed in the growing dusk settling on Swan Lake as they floated and carried prayers of memory, hope for peace, and even forgiveness.



Photo: Peter Humphrey

Commemorative Lanterns

Pace (continued from page 3)

- Teo Siguenza, Architect, P.L.L.C
- Twisted Bit Saddlery of Scarsdale
- The Stone Barns, Pocantico Hills
- Westchester Generator, Briarcliff Manor
- The Westchester Horse Council, Inc.
- The Williams Family
- Xtreme Clean of NY
- Trophies and Ribbons were awarded to all of the winners.
- First Place winners were:
- Pleasure Division – Carole Neukamm and Tina Thomas
- Hunter Division – Rich Crandley and Maria Bolis
- Western Division – Lou Champeau and Ruth Shedek
- Junior Division – Stephanie Jackson, Emily Trimm and Krista Gould

Clare Pierson, Friends President, closed the 10th Annual Autumn Pace by saying, “On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Friends and the Westchester Horse Council, we would like to thank all who have joined us this year to support the park and its beautiful trails and especially all of our volunteers who worked so hard to make this 10th Anniversary celebration extra special! We could not do it without you. Hope to see you again next year as we continue our Pace tradition. Catch you on the trails!”



Reaching the Friends

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The Preserve Observer

Editors: Evelyn Hadad, Herbert Hadad
Letters and submissions are invited.
Please contact us c/o the Friends.

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Birds (continued from page 9)

tion routes. In their nesting areas, these threats include loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation. Habitat fragmentation can result in increased levels of both predation, and cowbird brood parasitism, either of which can cause additional reductions in populations. Loss of nesting habitat can result from overgrazing by deer leading to reduction in shrubs, saplings and ground cover essential for the nesting of many bird species. At all times the presence of environmental toxins or chemical is an actual or potential threat, which can also lead to reduced breeding success.

Habitat loss is also a major concern in tropical regions where wintering takes place. Tropical forests and other vitally important winter habitats are being destroyed or fragmented. Finally, there are threats during the migration itself. Large numbers of migrants are killed each year by flying against brightly lit buildings on cloudy, mist nights when birds can become disoriented. In addition there is the threat of loss of stopping off places along the routes. These locations, such as



Photo: Dr. Richard Nelson

the cheniers, or scrubby wood areas of the Gulf Coast, are vital to migrating birds, for example in spring when the birds have just completed a long, exhausting non-stop flight across the Gulf of Mexico. These locations are important for the birds to both rest and feed. At present, yellow Warblers do not appear to be as seriously threatened by human related pressures as some other long distance migrants. Among other things they do appear to be able to use human influenced habitats in the tropics for their wintering grounds.

Finally, there is one issue that potentially affects all aspects of migration as well as many other things. This is the problem of global climate change. How might this affect migratory birds? Recall that birds coming north in the spring follows a schedule that is apparently strongly influenced by day length. Their timing is such as to correspond to the first growth of new leaves and the accompanying burst of new insect life. Were global warming to affect the timing of this new growth, making it occur earlier than it has been traditionally, then the arrival of migrant birds, based upon day length, would no longer be synchronized with the appearance of new foliage and the insects that come with it, creating potential problems for adult birds trying to forage for their fledglings, something which could affect the success and outcome of nesting.

It is obvious that the life of a migratory bird is a varied and fascinating one, and especially in the case of long distance migrants, including Yellow Warblers, one fraught with risks. Protecting such birds not only during the nesting season, but during migration and during the winter season, is a matter of vital importance. It should never be forgotten that very many of the birds that appear in the Preserve every year not only to nest, but also passing through during the Spring and Autumn, are migrants. Losing these birds would be a grievous loss to the wildlife of the Preserve.



Photo: Dr. Richard Nelson

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- These are the sources used in the preparation of this program. Anyone who is interested in these could find valuable additional information on this topic.*
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The Preserve Observer

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Views from this year's successful Peony Festival held at the Preserve in May to celebrate the blossoming of the Japanese peonies and the blending of two cultures and two peoples.



*Pace Coordinator
Lou Accurso and
Board Member Pat Jones*



*(l. to r.) Pauwla Groenewoud,
David Schmidt, President
Clare Pierson
and Brian Lindquist*



*(l. to r.) Tara Rockefeller, Vice President
Kim Rockefeller, President Clare Pierson
and Administrative Director Liz Meszaros*



*Terry Marchica and Joan Grund
with Martha Stewart*

Photos: Peter Humphrey