



Friends of the  
Rockefeller State Park  
**PRESERVE**

# The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine  
Vol. XXX Fall 2013

Photo: Jeff Johnson



Susan Antenen

## New York State Announces New Parks Manager

By Linda Cooper,  
Taconic Regional Director

It gives me great pleasure to announce the appointment of Susan Antenen as the next manager of Rockefeller State Park Preserve and Rockwood State Park. With more than 25 years' experience in conservation, land and natural resource management, environmental education and program administration primarily with The Nature Conservancy and most recently with the Conservation Biology Institute, Ms. Antenen brings a wealth of experience to her new positions.

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## Bronx Track Club Official Describes Glories of Runs On the Rockefeller Trails

By Herbert Hadad

One of the goals of the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve is to convince runners of the distinct pleasures of running some of its 50 miles of carriage trails. Hiroshi Kitada needs no convincing. And he also has some big ideas for the preserve.

Hiroshi is a board member of the Van Cortlandt Track Club in the Bronx but was drawn to the beauty of the Rockefeller trails and began to volunteer at the preserve's 5 kilometer races in 2009, an activity he also pursues as a coordinator at Van Cortlandt-hosted races.

"A growing number of our club members are running here on Sunday," he said during an interview at the preserve. "We car-share from the Bronx. There used to be only a couple but now there are 10."

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## Living the Motto: 'Here to Enjoy... Ours to Preserve'

By Carol M. Lyden

The Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve are delighted to announce that we will be hosting our first "Carriage Road Gala." The Gala will take place on Saturday, December 7th, 2013 at the Playhouse on the Rockefeller Estate.

The Gala is a very important event for we are celebrating the unique carriage road system built by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

We are so pleased to be honoring a very good friend of the preserve, Bernadette Castro, Former Commissioner of New York

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## Parks Are Better For You Than You Could Ever Imagine



By Benjamin H. Cheever

Here's something new. Parks are good for us. I read it in *The New York Times*. Parks are like green vegetables. Parks are like exercise.

Economy took a spill back in 2008. Governments needed to raise taxes to make up the shortfall. People hate taxes almost as much as they hate death. Death is a protected species, but taxes can be got at, taxes can be slashed.

The park budget looked a good place to start. Staff was cut at the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. We like parks, but do we really need them?

Turns out we do. Parks, it turns out, are like medicine. *The New York Times* reported on a study published in *The British Journal of Sports Medicine*. The study showed that people walking in a park experienced less stress than those passing through a heavily trafficked commercial area. Stress makes people sick. Sick people are expensive.



Photo: Herbert Hadad

*One of a thousand sights you will see*

Researchers at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh and the University of Edinburgh took the job of proving the obvious and they took it seriously. They were only able to perform their ground-breaking study because miniaturized technology makes it possible for an individual to take an electroencephalogram while strolling. The subjects were young adults. They walked around with electrodes on their heads. Each set

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### Carriage Trail Gala, *continued from page 1*

State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Special Honored Guest is The Honorable Governor George Pataki. Our Honorary Chairpersons are David Rockefeller, Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky and Ann Rockefeller Roberts.

Our Gala Committee Members are Chairman George Gumina, Clare Pierson, Carol Lyden, Kimberly Rockefeller and John Manuele.

The Friends was created in 1997 and our mission statement is to raise funds to help the State restore and maintain the preserve's distinctive 40-mile carriage road system along with its magnificent pastoral landscape and woodlands.

The preserve is like a second home to many who come to walk, ride horses, drive carriages, run, birdwatch, fish or just sit and take in one of the many beautiful vistas that the Preserve offers.

The preserve is also unique in that it not only is the backyard to many of our neighboring towns but is also just 32 miles from New York City.

The Friends sponsor several events such as the Country Pace, the Peony Event and the 5- and 10-K races each year, along with events at the State Park Gallery. The proceeds go directly to the seasonal maintenance of the preserve.

We are reaching out to our community of Friends to help us raise monies so we may continue building support for the preserve as a whole.



**Please help us make our motto  
"Here to Enjoy... Ours to  
Preserve" grow.**

**If you wish to obtain tickets for  
the Gala or donate money towards  
the trails, please visit our web site  
[www.friendsrock.org](http://www.friendsrock.org)**

## The 12th Annual Autumn Country Pace



By Liz Meszaros, Administrative Director

On Sunday, October 20, our 12th Annual Autumn Country Pace took place at Rockwood Hall, overlooking the mighty Hudson River. Our annual pace is a popular equestrian fundraiser that supports carriage road maintenance. This year, we were once again pleased to welcome some more new riders as a result of our collaboration with the Associated Bridle Trails Association, which offers riders the opportunity not only to compete in our pace, but in the Fall Pace Series. Many riders expressed their pleasure with the length and beauty of the course and its many challenging jumps. Afterwards, over 200 guests enjoyed a delicious feast under the tent prepared by Turco's of Yorktown and served by Margaret Monteforte.

We would like to thank all of our volunteers who arrived at 6:45 am to get ready for the first team out at 8:03 am as the sun made her appearance. As many of you know, this event is an enormous undertaking that would not be possible without our 40 plus volunteers. Our dedicated Pace committee, led by Lou Accurso, worked very hard with the preserve staff to make this event go off without a hitch. Along with his two right hands, Laurie Towle and Chris Davies, they did a remarkable job overseeing the entire volunteer recruitment. Special thanks to Tommy Capossela, of Greenrock, and preserve staff members, Stephen Sciamè and Jen Sylvestri, who cleared an entire jump trail to ensure a safe and challenging course for the riders, and to Deb Homer who helped mark the course and put up signs with Laurence Gill, who was also instrumental with pre-pace set up. Debbie and Steve Shecter, of the Westchester Horse Council, made sure that all safety concerns with regard to parking and crowd control were addressed. Liz Meszaros, the Friends Administrative Director, registered the riders and coordinated the luncheon. Preserve staff members Richard Nelson, Stephen Sciamè and Frederick Von Pichl held down the fort while Chris Davies, another dedicated park volunteer, had the arduous task of calculating the pace results.

Each year, Marlene and John Schrader of Beech Hill Farm do an incredible job designing and setting up beautiful and challenging jumps with help from Cliff Harris and other Beech Hill volunteers. A special thanks to Agway of Danbury, Connecticut who generously donated cornstalks.

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 Sharon Pickett, who manned the Friends table selling raffle tickets, lunches, t-shirts, etc. and Peter Humphrey and Nick Burlakoff for their exceptional photography skills. In addition to photos, Jeff Johnson of the Cutting Board, was kind enough to video a large part of the day. Philipse Manor Hall was good to lend us their PA system for the day and we cannot forget our neighbors at New York Life Insurance Company who graciously lend us their parking lot each year. We also had assistance from the Ham Operators of the Westchester Emergency Communications Association who were instrumental in improving communications along the trails. Lastly, many thanks to Viola Powrie of Kleen Sweep who came up and swept the New York Life parking lot after the last horse trailer pulled out!

A raffle was part of the festivities for the day. The Friends would like to thank Blue Hill at Stone Barns for donating a "Dinner for Two" gift certificate, Historic Hudson Valley for a "Classic Tour of Kykuit", The Horse Connection and Twisted Bit Saddlery, for their generous gift certificates. Beech Hill Farm for free private riding lessons, Dr. Natalie Landen for a free Equine Acupuncture session and Ellerslie Custom Blankets and Clothing, for their beautiful rider bags.

Trophies and Ribbons to 10th place were awarded.

### First Place winners were:

**Pleasure Division:** Samantha Gordon and Maureen Rhyan

**Hunt Division:** Catherine Gillet and Dana Worlock

**Western Division:** Gisela Greitzer and Nanacy Paganelli

**Junior Division:** Lisa Haines, Sonya Meberg and Alyson Palmer

The Board of Directors of the Friends and the Westchester Horse Council would like to thank all who have joined us this year to support the preserve and its beautiful trails and especially all of our volunteers who worked so hard to make this pace a success! We could not do it without you! Our Friends President Clare Pierson said, "Hope to see you again next year as we continue our Pace tradition! See you on the trails!"



## Reason to Ramble: No Location Like It

By Todd S. Ruppel

Why would I register for a race when I can run in the same place for free? As they say in real estate, "Location, Location, Location," and that is another of the reasons I ran the Rockwood Ramble 10K. Right in our own backyard we have miles of trails within the Rockefeller Preserve. The Ramble covers just 6.2 miles of those wonderful trails.

Staring high up on the foundation of the Rockwood Hall mansion overlooking the Hudson River, the course gently entered the park. I ran on familiar trails, which has its pros and cons. The pros were that I knew that I would be running on well-maintained trails with spectacular views and sharing nature as I ran. The cons were that I knew when the hills were approaching. The obvious pro from hills is that for every uphill there is a downhill, but with that said, it never feels that way in a race.

The course followed the various brooks and streams, which were full of recent rain water that resulted in white water rapids. The sound of the water, the songs of the birds and the crackling of twigs made by startled deer is the reason why there is no need to wear ear phones when running in the preserve.

I had a running partner; Ben Cheever, for the first three or so miles to keep me company. He too is a supporter of

the preserve. As we pushed each other, mostly Ben pushing me with his stories and providing needed inspiration because I hadn't been running for a couple weeks prior to the Ramble. He left me with one last joke before he decided it was time for him to speed up.

As I ran alone I just enjoyed the beauty of the trails, thought of the history surrounding the land, counted the number of people I passed and the number that passed me knowing we all were making our own running history that day. As I turned a corner, I saw a fellow runner, Stella Medina, ahead of me which spurred my competitive impulses. So running along the Hudson River, I tried to catch her before the finish line.

Although I failed in my attempt, I finished strong and gladly high-fived my friends at the finish. There is nothing better than finishing a 10K race along the Hudson River in the morning sun. Like I said, "Location, Location, Location".

*Todd is vice president of the Rivertown Runners. The club raises funds for charities and organizations, trains in the park and runs in Rocky races.*



Todd Ruppel

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### Preserve Manager, *continued from page 1*

She worked as a state park naturalist in Vermont and Ohio, oversaw a network of 50 preserves on Long Island, and helped the country of Mongolia to establish a grasslands preservation program, for which she is being honored this month in Mongolia, as the program celebrates its fifth anniversary.

She currently serves as the Sierra Project Coordinator for the Conservation Biology Institute, where she helps to bridge between various stakeholders on projects that entail working with scientists on landscape scale planning and climate vulnerability assessments. Ms. Antenen began her position on October 23.

Rockefeller State Park Preserve and Rockwood Hall State Park are contiguous parks in Westchester County

that span more than 1,400 acres of beautiful woodlands, fields, walking and jogging paths and equestrian carriage drives, as well as exquisite Hudson River shoreline views. The Park Preserve is a National Audubon designated Bird Conservation Area; it plays an important part in the preservation of habitat for more than 180 recorded avian species. The 22-acre Swan Lake and meandering Pocantico River add to the pastoral setting. A favorite location for photographers and meanderers alike, these state parks quickly become a favorite place for those who visit.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is looking forward to welcoming Ms. Antenen's leadership to these special places.

Former manager Alix Schnee retired earlier this year.



## From the Friends President



By Clare M. Pierson

Fall is my favorite time of year in the preserve and this fall has been spectacular! I am sitting at the Pace, looking at the Hudson River from the foundations at Rockwood Hall as I write this, and feeling very grateful. We are surrounded by a gem of tranquility and beauty in the middle of our country's most populated corridor.

There are some very exciting things going on in and around the preserve I wanted to report. Our most exciting news is that we have a new preserve manager in place as of this writing. Susan Antenen comes from the Conservation Biology Institute in Oakland, California. Her passion is land management, and we are thrilled to have her on board. See her first article on page 6.

Our events include the annual Autumn Pace, which was an exceptionally lovely day at Rockwood Hall, the Rocky's 5 K on October 26th which is sold out already, and this year our Carriage Roads Gala on Dec. 7th, which will be a chance to get out your black tie attire and celebrate the preserve in style.

Bernadette Castro will be our honoree at the gala. She was the former Commissioner of Parks for New York State when the preserve was first created and she has been a champion of this park ever since. Her understanding of how important the care of the carriage roads is led her to create a special funding line for them that has sustained us through all the budget cuts the state has undergone. She is a true friend to the preserve. More about the Gala on page 1.

You may have noticed the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve have a new look as well. The new logo and updated website are part of a broader effort to reach out to preserve visitors and the community to encourage participation in supporting the preserve.

Many people are still unaware that the Rockefeller State Park Preserve is part of the New York State park system and therefore relies heavily on state funding. In recent years, funding has diminished significantly. At the same time, increasingly destructive weather events have increased the costs of maintenance and restoration. To help address this shortfall, the Friends have been working with Applebaum Associates to get the message out. Applebaum is a branding firm that specializes in naming, visual identity, and strategic communications. They have experience working in both the corporate and nonprofit sectors with organizations such as Pepsi-Cola, L'Oreal, Kraft Foods, Lupus Research Institute, Westchester Jazz Orchestra, and the Adirondack Museum. With their help, the Friends hope to increase awareness and support for the preserve, ensuring the survival of this unique natural treasure.

As always, thank you for your support for our wonderful preserve.

Clare

(Please visit [friendsrock.org](http://friendsrock.org) to find out about upcoming events and join us by becoming a Friend today!)

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

Clare M. Pierson, *President*

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John Settembrino

Donald W. Stever

Administrative Director: Liz Meszaros

**Parks**, *continued from page 2*

of electrodes, according to the *Times*, was “hidden unobtrusively beneath an ordinary looking fabric cap.”

The brain readings were sent wirelessly to a laptop carried in a backpack by each volunteer. Why wirelessly, I wonder, since a person’s head is usually close enough to the backpack he’s wearing so that the two can be connected by a wire. I can only guess that Scots don’t like to be seen out in public with wires coming out of their heads. Which makes them different than Americans. Here in America, we like to be seen in public with wires coming out of our heads.

In any case, the laptops reporting on the brain waves of the volunteers indicated that walking through green spaces helped restore mental equilibrium. Walking through heavily trafficked areas, on the other hand, seems to have upset even Scottish equilibrium.

Maybe it’s the distant glint of the dying dream of socialism, but I also think it helps that parks are public. Parks are shared. This is medicine that can be shared. Sharing itself can be a kind of medicine.

The *Times* reported that these Scottish pioneers were backed by other studies. Apparently people who live near trees have lower levels of cortisol in their saliva. Children with attention deficits tend to concentrate and perform better after walking through a park.

So conditions that might require expensive medical intervention might be ameliorated by the careful application of the out of doors.

Apparently human beings were once a part of nature and the divorce was not well advised. I don’t know if nature misses us, but we all seem to miss her.

There is evidence that some autoimmune diseases are on the increase because we have so little contact with nature now. We have these immune systems meant to fight off the bacteria we got from swallowing dirt and catching parasites. Now that we have fewer parasites and eat less dirt, the immune system turns on its host.

That’s just one of the ways we suffer as the result of that divorce we got from mother nature. There are others. We’ve got all these swell electric lights. So we stay up too late. This also is bad for us.

And parks are one of the ways we can get back in touch with our old lover. Even if we don’t eat dirt, or get tired enough to go to sleep on time, we are still reducing our stress when we walk through a park. Stress makes us sick. Sick people are expensive.

When the decision-makers close parks, or cut park staff they may not be aware of the expenses these actions incur. The Rockefeller State Park Preserve is beautiful, of course, but let’s not hold that against her.

Whatever their leaders think, the people themselves seem to have cottoned on to their need for the great outdoors. The Rockefeller State Park Preserve is well under 2,000 acres—closer to 1,500—but it gets visited at least 350,000 times a year.

The Rockefeller State Park Preserve is not only beautiful, it’s also beautifully placed. Or that’s what Washington Irving thought, and he was America’s first great writer.

Washington Irving liked this section of the Hudson Valley so much that he made it the backdrop for some of America’s first home-grown stories. He kept coming back and now he’s buried in a cemetery that abuts this park. He was so famous that his entire headstone was stolen twice. As far as I know the headstone was all they took. So Washington Irving is still here today, melting into the landscape he adored.



## Reaching the Friends

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## The Preserve Observer

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

## Our New State Manager Finds Preserve Friends Even in the Gobi Desert

By Susan Antenen

It's a glorious time of year to move into Rockefeller State Park Preserve! My husband, Sam Kornhauser, and I arrived just in time to catch the peak of autumn weather and foliage. We look forward to watching the landscape slip into winter and following the arc of the seasons. We also look forward to meeting you, preserve neighbors and users, on the trails and at the Friends events.

Before our move back to New York, I visited Mongolia to celebrate The Nature Conservancy's fifth anniversary and go on a 10-day horse expedition to the Han Khentii Strictly Protected Area, the homeland of Chinggis Khaan. The morning I arrived in Ulaanbaatar, the capital, I stopped by the Conservancy's office to say hello to Enkhytuya Oidov, the country program director, Gala Davaa, conservation director, and rest of the program staff, Baigalma, Delgermaa, Tuugii, Tsogoo, Zola and Ganbat. After catching up on their conservation accomplishments and progress on the Eastern Steppe and in the Gobi Desert, I announced my big move to Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Imagine my surprise when Gala said, "I've been there." Turns out Gala had a friend from Chappaqua who brought him to the park a couple of years ago.

The next day I met up with the owners of Stone Horse Tours, Keith Swenson and Sabine Schmidt, who live in Mongolia, to plan our horse trip. Keith recalled visiting the preserve as a teenager with his father, a noted equestrian from Morris County, New Jersey. He remembered its beauty and graceful carriage roads.

It's been a pleasure to learn what the park means to other people and wildlife, as well. In mid-September, Greg Prelich posted the following note in NYSBIRDS-L@cornell.edu: "I was in warbler heaven this morning at Rockefeller State Park in Westchester County. Whereas the park was nearly devoid of migrants two days ago, I was swimming in warblers today, with multiple large mixed flocks. Black-throated green was by far the most numerous, with a conservative estimate of 75-100 individuals, followed by good numbers (in relative order of abundance) of Northern Parula, Blackpoll, Chestnut-sided, Canada, Magnolia, Black-throated blue, American Redstart, Black-and-white,

2 Blackburnians, 2 Tennessee. It was too active to keep count....now that's a birding problem that I'd like to have more often." As a birder, I'm excited to move into "warbler heaven" and look forward to tracking their comings and goings.

Many people "light up" when I mention Rockefeller State Park Preserve— "Oh, it's my favorite place to walk/ride/jog". Yet, as I run errands in Westchester County, I've been surprised how many local residents have never been here or are confused about what and where the preserve is. When I tell them about the preserve and invite them to visit, they smile with delight. When you meet these new friends and visitors, please greet them and make them feel welcome. Come greet me as well.



### Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

Susan Antenen, Preserve Manager

Laurence Gill, Preserve Office Manager

Richard Nelson, Preserve Naturalist

Steve Sciamé, Park Aide 6

Jen Sylvestri, Park Aide 5

Contact Station Personnel:

Tony Corda

Frederick Von Pichl



## Getting Hooked On Family Fishing Day

By Tony Prokopowicz, Preserve Volunteer

If you thought that a little rain would dampen anyone's spirits at Family Fishing Day this year, you were mistaken. Despite a continuous light rain all day, children of all ages were treated to a fun day of playing in the rain, and the fish didn't mind the rain at all.

Special thanks to Mike Brady, the current owner of Bob's Sport and Tackle in Katonah, for the ample supply of night crawlers for the event, and John Miller, the prior owner, for putting in a good word for us with Mike.

The rain did not dissuade a decent turn-out of between 30 and 35 families or groups who came at various times during the day. While no one caught the big one, there was



Photo: Tony Prokopowicz

Kiera and Kylie Prokopowicz

an adequate supply of baby bass, black crappies and blue gills to make the day interesting. From toddlers to adults, there was a decent amount of catch and release action. My granddaughter, Kiera Prokopowicz, was thrilled to catch her first two bass while her Dad Anthony, Sister Kylie and Uncle Nick looked on.

It was great to see Stella Medina of the Friends organization trying a few casts. Stella and Lou Accurso directed visitors to Swan Lake from the courtyard area. Chris Davies of the garden volunteers convinced the peonies to greet the public adorned in droplets of fresh rain.

Ryan Coulter and Indie Bach of the DEC were there with their poles and tackle keeping the action going in the area of the dam while Nicholas Prokopowicz and Laura Buonnano manned the Park's table near the South end of the Lake. These hearty troopers spent the whole day out at the lake in the rain with no cover, helping with bait, poles and advice.

The Preserve Staff, Tony Corda and Paul Lucadamo helped by guiding guests and moving Park tables for this annual event that is hosted by the Office of Parks, the Preserve, the Department of Environmental Conservation, and The Friends of the Preserve.

The event occurred this year on Sunday, May 19th, and it is held annually in mid-May. Thanks to the DEC, licenses are not required for this event which promotes the Preserve, fishing and conservation. Bait and tackle are provided free of charge. Many of the visitors commented that they had a great time whether they caught fish or caught weeds. It is rewarding to see the repeat participants each year, and we can look forward to this annual event for years to come, rain or shine.

## Fifth Annual Spring Peony Celebration

On Thursday, May 9, 2013 from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve hosted the Fifth Annual Spring Peony Celebration, which once again was a huge success! This was a fund-raising event that celebrated the blooming of the well-known Japanese peonies. There was an elegant cocktail reception and refreshments, flower arrangements from local garden clubs and an exhibit of fine art by the world renowned artist Richard Hambleton entitled "The Beautiful Paintings." The reception took place in the Visitor Center Courtyard under clear blue skies and warm weather, for which we were indeed grateful. Supporters and community members were able to come together for a good cause and enjoy each other's company while doing it. We are planning the Sixth Annual Spring Peony Celebration on a date to be announced in May 2014. Look forward to seeing you there!



Photo: Peter Humphrey



## ❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖

### “The Johnson Legend”

By Audrey Leeds

The Art Gallery at the Rockefeller Park Preserve introduces the “Johnson Legend”, an exhibition featuring the images of Dorothy and Astrith Johnson Deyrup’s memorable paintings celebrating the memory of their father, the visionary, Alvin Johnson; founder and first President of the New School of Social Research established in 1933.

Alvin Johnson’s progress as a pioneer of a major “arts” movement, was made possible by the Rockefeller Foundation, and philanthropist, Hiram Halle, a collaboration, sponsoring the exodus of hundreds of multi-talented intellectuals threatened by the Hierarchy of the Third Reich. These European scholars found a haven within the United States known as the “University in Exile” that later evolved as the New School’s Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Sciences. Among the group were Herbert Berghof, Fritz Eichenberg, Ewin Piscator and George Szell.

The heritage of Alvin Johnson is celebrated in the diverse imagery of Dorothy and Astrith Johnson Deyrup’s subjects. A Social Realist, Dorothy’s world was broadened by her families’ philosophical contributions to society. Dorothy attended the Arts Students League and studied privately with Robert Hallowell. Surrounded by such revered artists as Edward Hopper and Thomas Hart Benton, she engaged in painting places, people and their lifestyles. Astrith, a naturalist, traveled the world interpreting many environmental sites in watercolor and “Batik” mediums. She served as an art teacher at the New School. Their art has been exhibited by many galleries and museums during their lifetimes. Their legacy, as does their father’s, endures. This exhibition is made possible through the auspices of Michael Overn and Gallery Moderne, Piermont, New York.

**Exhibition October 13-November 24, 2013**

**Reception October 27, 1-3 p.m.**

*Co-curators Audrey Leeds and Mark Waller*



*Guggenheim by Astrith Johnson Deyrup*



*Building by the River by Dorothy Johnson Deyrup*

### 3 Track Teams Share Efforts To Clean Up Sleepy Hollow Trail

When Sean Ryan first started coaching the track team at Briarcliff High School six years ago, many of his athletes had never been to the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Or maybe they had been to Swan Lake, but had not experienced the many miles of carriage roads the preserve has to offer. He brought them to run and then he brought them back to volunteer.

"These parks don't happen by magic, they are here because a lot of people care enough to share stewardship of them. The athletes need to understand that," he said. Coach Ryan went a few steps further by inviting the coaches and teams from the Pleasantville and Sleepy Hollow High Schools, which run in the preserve regularly, to a major-clean-up of the Old Sleepy Hollow trail.

The scene on September 15th was one of happy industry that day, and as a result the trail has never looked better. It is an access trail to many of the carriage roads, and had become narrower and narrower over time. The athletes, their parents, and their coaches had clipper, weed whackers and rakes, and they went after the vegetation on either side of the trail with a vengeance. There were 40 from Pleasantville, including Coach Tom Patterson, his athletes and many of their parents. From Sleepy Hollow High School track team, there were 17 with coach Paul Gersfeld. Coach Ryan had 50 athletes and parents with him.

"During these days of budget cuts and staff reductions, it is so heartening to see this kind of dedication to teaching stewardship, and have it manifest in such a big way! We are so grateful for all their hard work!" Coach Ryan said.

Coach Patterson added: "The project provided a wonderful opportunity for the athletes to appreciate the importance of community service. The experience gave both athletes and parents a better understanding of what it takes to maintain the trails and a sense of 'giving back' in appreciation for the opportunity to use the Rockefeller trails. It was also a great team bonding event and great way for the rival team members to create and strengthen friendships."

We are grateful for Coach Ryan and his volunteer community!

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**"It was a great day and we appreciate everything you guys do for us. Thanks."**

**-Coach Paul Gersfeld**

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**Bronx official**, *continued from page 1*

While the preserve may offer more alluring trails and terrains than some other sites, the overarching idea for the Rockefeller runners and race coordinators such as Stella Medina, now also vice president of the Friends group, is to become a larger part of the regional running community.

"I like to encourage, to reach out," said Hiroshi, "to the very large running community – Brooklyn, Queens, New Jersey for instance."

His service and enthusiasm for the preserve does not diminish his loyalty to Van Cortlandt. "That park is in its 100th year of cross-country events, high school and college. On some weekends we see 10,000 kids."

Hiroshi's professional status in the internet technology world takes him to meetings in Europe and Japan. "We provide vision, strategies for global clients."

But that does not dissuade him from his love of running. The day of this interview he had just finished a 5-k race sponsored by the New York Road Runner Club in Central Park, Manhattan. "Today's race took a lot out of me," he admitted, but a curious remark when he also revealed he'd run a 100-mile race in Vermont two weeks earlier.

He makes no claims about being a champion. "I finished, that's all that counts," he said.

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**"I'm not an elite runner, I'm a middle-of-the-pack runner. But I know that trail maintenance is expensive. I volunteer because I want to give back."**

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The route, partly on the Appalachian Trail, began at 4 a.m., with Hiroshi and the others wearing headlamps. It was a timed race, with 30 hours being the limit to get recorded. He said 350 began the event and 200 finished, men and women.

Hiroshi lives in Tuckahoe with his wife Sachiko and daughter Ruri. Ruri, 20, is a junior at McGill University in

Montreal, specializing in international development. She started to run recently, he said, "just for fitness." His wife isn't interested. "She doesn't like the sun," he said.

But Hiroshi, in his love of running and his enjoyment of the preserve wanted to reveal some big ideas.

"This would be very fascinating to me," he said, as he proposed a 100-mile race on the Rockefeller preserve. "Some of these races use loops. Here it would be easy to get."

Acknowledging that his idea was quite revolutionary, on turf where the longest race has been a 10k, he added: "It doesn't have to start as a 100 miles. We could go a 50K, or 50 miles."

He also expressed a distinction between two major types of runners, or perhaps two major types of attitudes. "There are trail runners and road racers, and they have different mentalities," he said. "On the trails, it's all about the people around you and the environment. In the marathon, you stare at a watch."

"I prefer nature and this beautiful preserve. I prefer to be a trail runner." He said his favorite trails were the 13-bridge loop and the trails in and around Rockwood Hall overlooking the Hudson River. "The preserve is an amazing place. I've been coming here for 10 years and every time I get refreshed. It's a serene environment, that's why I come here."

"I'm not an elite runner, I'm a middle-of-the-pack runner. But I know that trail maintenance is expensive. I volunteer because I want to give back."

He figures that in his 10 years, coming on Saturdays and Sundays, he has logged about 150 miles a month. That, he pointed out, does not include his considerable mileage elsewhere in the region or around the world.

What about in winter? "I come here for snow shoeing," he said blithely.

After a difficult 5k in Central Park, recovering from a 100-miler and submitting to a lengthy interview, Hiroshi was asked his plans for the rest of the day.


"Top of the list is a nap," he said with a grin. 



Photo: Herbert Hadad

Hiroshi Kitada



## The Preserve Observer

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## Upcoming Exhibits



*Dorothy Johnson Deyrup*

See page 7 for details...

## On their marks...

*The start of the Friends Rocky's 5K race: October 26, 2013*



*Photo: Herbert Hadad*

For more photos and race results,  
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