



# Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct

*Newsletter*

**No. 13, December 2002**

## Good News! Aqueduct Awarded Grants for Overseer's House and Yonkers Trail

All who treasure the Aqueduct have cause to celebrate and much to look forward to in coming years, thanks to the award this fall of two major grants. Governor Pataki announced that the application by Friends of the Aqueduct, in partnership with State Parks, for federal funds to restore the Overseer's House in Dobbs Ferry as an educational facility and visitor center was successful. More good news followed when State Senator Nicholas Spano and Assemblyman Michael Spano announced a grant to restore a section of the trail in Yonkers. The two projects represent a giant step forward for the Aqueduct as an educational and recreational resource for the region.

**Unique Historic Link.** Aqueduct users regularly pass the graceful old brick house that sits next to the trail in Dobbs Ferry, across Walnut Street from the trailer that serves as headquarters for Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park. The house breathes Aqueduct history: it served for more than a century as residence

and office for the superintendent of the Fourth Division of the Aqueduct. This is the only house remaining of a number built as "keepers'" houses along the route of the water tunnel. Its first occupant, from 1845 to 1872, was James Bremner. His successors lived there until the early 1950s, when it was closed.

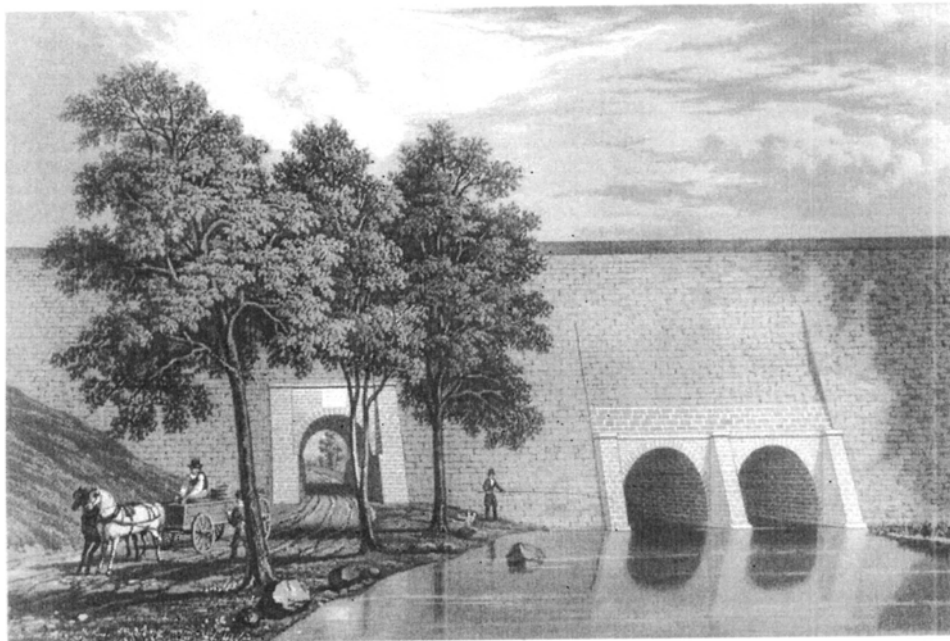
In recent years, a look of life has come back to the long-boarded-up structure. Volunteers organized by the Friends repaired windows, replaced rotten porch boards, and erected a fence, while State Parks repaired the masonry and woodwork on the northeast corner, cleared the garden, and removed asbestos from the basement.

The Friends have long dreamed of – and long applied for – funding to restore the house, uniquely linked as it is to the day-to-day work of operating the water tunnel. Current plans call for the first floor to be used for exhibit space, a classroom-multipurpose room, and visitor amenities. The



C. Fahn

*Overseer's House on Aqueduct Awareness Day, 1998.*



*The Aqueduct bridge at the Saw Mill River, Yonkers. The walking trail is along the top of the high embankment. (From: Illustrations of the Croton Aqueduct by F.B. Tower, J.W. Hill, artist, 1843. Reproduction courtesy of R. Kornfeld, Jr.).*

second floor would include office space for the park manager and the Friends. An amphitheater would be created in the adjacent sloping landscape as a continuation of the classroom.

The project, which is headed for the Friends by preservation specialist Douglas Emilio, will eventually receive \$694,400 through the Transportation Enhancement Program of the federal Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21). The program is administered by the state Department of Transportation and supports cultural, historic, and environmental projects related to state transportation networks, including pedestrian paths and bikeways. "Working with our partners, the state Department of Transportation and Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, I am delighted that this grant will help highlight this historic resource and strengthen the visitor experience at the park," said State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro. The Friends must now raise \$173,600 in matching funds, 20% of the total project budget of \$868,000. A fundraising campaign is being planned.

**Where the Aqueduct Turns East.** Starting from the original Croton Dam, the Old Croton Aqueduct followed the Hudson River for about 22 miles. It then turned to make its way to the Harlem River, which it crossed on the High Bridge to enter Manhattan. The \$400,000 grant announced by Senator Spano and Assemblyman Spano on October 30 addresses the

mile-long portion of the trail, from Lamartine Ave. to Yonkers Avenue, where the Aqueduct veered eastward. Jayne McLaughlin, Director of the Taconic Region of State Parks, which will carry out the project, reported the happy news that State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro would add another \$100,000 of agency funding for the work. The trail segment includes the 40-foot-high, stone-banked Nepperhan Bridge, which carried the water conduit across the Saw Mill (formerly Nepperhan) River and local roads.

Just as northbound walkers have long asked "Where do I go after Lyndhurst?", so southbound walkers have wondered "Where do I go after Lamartine?" The path appears to end amid parking lots, schools, and

streets, an impression reinforced by a fence near Lamartine blocking further access. Where the visible path reemerges, around Palisade Avenue off Ashburton Avenue, occurs one of the few steep grades encountered anywhere on the entire trail, a drop of 25 feet. These problems are compounded by overgrown vegetation and a general air of neglect.

The grant seeks to open access and restore the trail in this area to its natural beauty for the enjoyment of both local residents and longer-distance hikers and bikers. The first phase of the project, a survey of Aqueduct property boundaries, has been completed. Subsequent phases, to be announced, are expected to include restoration work on the original section of the Nepperhan Bridge, grading the trail dropoff, brush clearing, landscaping improvements, direction markers, and signs identifying the path as a state historic park.

**Stay Tuned.** There is a long way to go on both projects, but having the means at hand to go forward is heartening indeed. Appreciation is owed to the public officials and agencies involved and to Brian Goodman, who as state manager of the Aqueduct for the last 10 years helped make these grants a reality. Above all, appreciation is owed to the public that has helped the Friends build a strong constituency for the Aqueduct. We'll keep you posted.

## Brian Goodman Honored, Awarded Replica of Aqueduct Medallion

Tributes flowed like water through the Aqueduct at the retirement party for Brian Goodman, who stepped down in October after 10 years as Historic Site Manager of Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park. The party,



F. Charles

*Brian Goodman with (far left and far right) Holly Daly and Doug Emilio, co-emcees, and (inner left and right) Friends co-presidents Gwen Thomas and Mavis Cain.*

sponsored by Friends of the Aqueduct and Historic River Towns of Westchester, was held at the Lyndhurst Carriage House on October 29th and attended by well over 100 people. "Brian always demanded respect for the Aqueduct, and he got it," said State Parks' Ken Lutters, Taconic Region Senior Landscape Architect and a longtime colleague of Brian's. Douglas Emilio, who with fellow Friends board member Holly Daly emceed the evening's program, remarked that "the turnout speaks for itself."

Attending were State Park officials and park managers from the region and upstate, officials from the rivertowns and NY/NJ Trail Conference, and many trail neighbors and trail users. An especially notable guest was Brian's son Nicholas, in from Anchorage for the occasion. After John Chervokas, Chairman of Historic River Towns of Westchester, welcomed all, Carmella Montello, Executive Director of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, spoke on behalf of Governor Pataki and the Greenway. State Parks Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Historic Preservation J. Winthrop Aldrich represented Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro in honoring Brian and spoke warmly of Brian's achievements as Aqueduct manager.

Also speaking of their years of collaboration and friendship with Brian were Taconic Region Director Jayne McLaughlin, who hired Brian as the Aqueduct's

first full-time Aqueduct manager in 1992, and John Middlebrooks, Manager of Rockefeller State Parks Preserve. Don Derr, representing State Parks' Taconic Commission, drew laughs with his "letter of reference" to the head of state parks in Alaska, where Brian plans to spend much time. "I understand you may be considering the development of a linear park and trailway along the route of the Alaska Pipeline," it read. "I call your attention to the recent availability of a person uniquely suited to manage such a project . . . he is highly qualified in the operation of linear parks associated with pipes."

Capping the evening was the presentation of gifts by Friends Co-presidents Mavis Cain and Gwen Thomas, in recognition of Brian's unstinting support of the Friends over the years as well as his extraordinary service and accomplishments. One was, to the Friends' knowledge, the first modern replica of the historic medallion cast in 1842 by New York City to commemorate the longed-for arrival of Croton water in the city (see p. 4). The Friends are hugely indebted to Conservator Heidi Miksch and her colleagues at State Parks' Bureau of Historic Sites, Peebles Island, NY, as well as Board members Robert Kornfeld, Jr., Constance Porter, and Karen Schatzel, for making it possible to present the medallion to Brian at the party.

And literally to ease Brian's way during his sojourns in Alaska, where it still snows, he was given a pair of sleek, 21st century snowshoes, together with — so he won't forget us — the only existing Friends of the Aqueduct cap. With the cap firmly in place, Brian expressed his appreciation to all with his usual graciousness and his intention to stay very much involved. Note: Brian has since become an honorary member of the Friends' Board.

The Friends are most grateful to Susanne Brendel-Pandich, Director of Lyndhurst; Nancy Gold, President of The Gold Standard and Project Director of Historic River Towns of Westchester; and Marion Ventura of The Gold Standard for contributing so importantly to the success of the event.



*Ready for a tundra trek.*

## The Aqueduct Medallion

The medallion presented by the Friends of the Aqueduct on October 29th to Brian Goodman, retiring manager of Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, was a replication, in silver, of an antique Aqueduct medallion. The original was created in 1842 by sculptor Robert Lovett at the behest of the Common Council of New York City to commemorate the mammoth celebration staged for the opening of the Croton Aqueduct.



At the time, medallions were a common way of commemorating important events. The silver medallion was most likely presented to officials and dignitaries. Souvenirs such as printed silk "badges," broadsides of the Croton Ode, and sheet music with illustrated covers were more widely available to the jubilant public. Some recipients of the medallions drilled small holes in the top, to wear them suspended from a ribbon.

The engraving on the medallion is pictured here in its original size, with a cross-section of the aqueduct on the front side, showing the stone mantle and horseshoe-arched brick lining of the tunnel. Written "in" the water are the size, slope and flow of the aqueduct. The Murray Hill Reservoir is shown on the reverse, with its massive neo-Egyptian walls and the skyline of the city beyond. The text written "on" the water in the reservoir says "114 Feet Above Tide" on the left side of the dividing wall and "36 Ft. Deep" on the right. Listed are the capacity of both the distributing and receiving reservoirs; the latter, the York Hill Reservoir, was where the Great Lawn in Central Park is now. Also given is the capacity of the Croton Lake Reservoir above the dam.

The medallion was replicated by the Tallix Foundry in Beacon, New York, for the Friends, who benefited immeasurably in this endeavor from the advice and assistance of Conservator Heidi Miksch of State Parks' Bureau of Historic Sites, Peeble's Island, NY.

## World Premiere of "Croton Cantata"

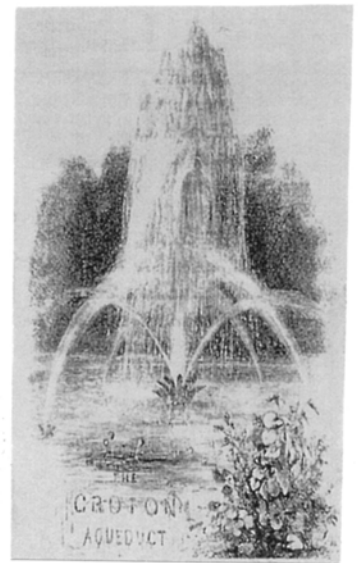
Perhaps only in colorful, creative Croton-on-Hudson, a village with a real zeal for the Croton Aqueduct, could this happen. On October 26th, at a concert entitled "Water From Croton: A Celebration of the Gift," the Croton Chorale and Orchestra gave the very first performance of a "Croton Cantata" by Croton resident, chorale member, and composer Jeremy Goldsmith. The work brought the story of the Aqueduct to dramatic and musical life, interweaving roles for orchestra, chorus, and soprano and baritone soloists.

The narrative starts with "two atoms of water," but moves quickly to the tragic circumstances of early-19th century New York City when the soprano sings of a mother's loss of her baby from the agonies of cholera. The baritone performs the broadly drawn role of Aaron Burr, villain of the piece, who – under the guise of bringing clean water to the city through a new Manhattan Water Co. – enriches himself by starting a bank (which became Chase Manhattan). A scheming Burr gloats: "It's a bank that I always had sought!"

The cantata tells of fierce opposition to the project – Theodorus Van Wyck, "Cortlandt squire," distributes militantly anti-Aqueduct tracts. Eventually, houses and farmlands in the northern villages are flooded that the city might prosper. The work climaxes with a fanfare and choral rendition of the "Croton Ode," a seven-stanza gem performed at the great October 14, 1842, celebration. It begins:

*Gushing from this living fountain,  
Music pours a falling strain,  
As the Goddess of the Mountain  
Comes with all her sparkling train.*

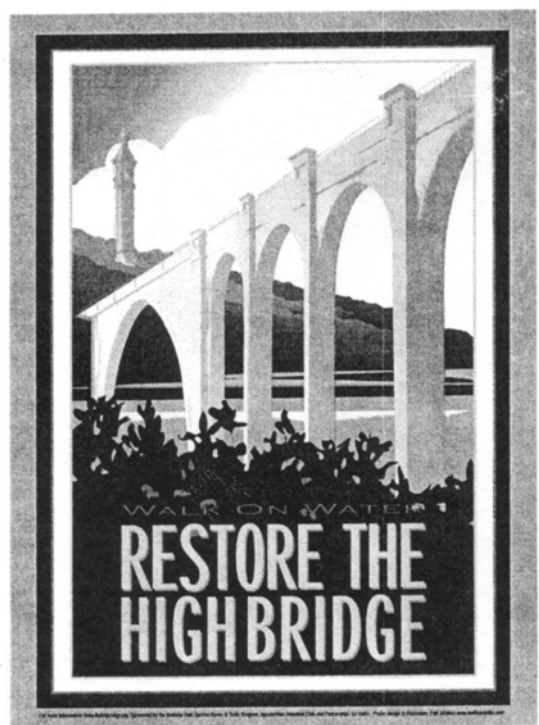
The concert marked the 160th anniversary of the Aqueduct.





## High Bridge Campaign Launched

A new poster, "Walk on Water: Restore the High Bridge," gives graphic force to the campaign by the High Bridge Coalition for restoration of the great Aqueduct bridge across the Harlem River as part of the city's interborough greenway system. The Friends have been part of this coalition of public agencies and nonprofit groups since its start over a year ago with support from the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers & Trails Program, Appalachian Mountain Club, and Partnership for Parks. The poster was sponsored by NPS and designed by Patti Mollica.



The 1848 landmark span could provide a unique experience for walkers and bikers because it is a dedicated pedestrian crossing; it does not have, and never had, vehicular lanes or traffic. Walkers can stroll from one side to the other at will to enjoy stunning views in all directions, high above the water. Unfortunately the High Bridge has been closed to the public for decades and is now in need of major restoration. At the request of the Parks Department, which is responsible for the bridge, the city's Department of Transportation is investigating the engineering and cost aspects of restoration.

Just how many friends the bridge has around the city became clear at a coalition-sponsored June 14th conference for city agencies and nonprofit groups at the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site in Manhattan. The conference, "Walking on Water: A Vision for Restoring the High Bridge," drew high city

officials. City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe said he considered himself part of a large hidden fraternity of High Bridge devotees and applauded the dream of reopening the bridge, however long it may take. Commissioner Christopher Ward of the Department of Environmental Protection, which is responsible for the city's water supply, noted that the Croton Aqueduct itself was the realization of a great 19th century vision for the city. He also encouraged the present campaign, seeing potential for the bridge to become a "pastoral middle ground."

Also speaking were Sidney Horenstein of the American Museum of Natural History, who gave a history of the Aqueduct; Deputy Parks Commissioner Amy Freitag, who spoke on the historic preservation aspects; and Jeff Olsen of Trailblazer, Inc., on the exciting greenway possibilities. Dr. Horenstein noted that public promenades were an integral part of the original Croton system. The High Bridge became a compelling destination, and people came in droves.

For further information on the High Bridge campaign, call Maria Luisa Cipriano at Partnership for Parks, 718-430-4641, or Joanne Dittersdorf at Rivers & Trails, 212-677-2003

## Highbridge Memories

The following excerpt is from Charles J. Casazza's "The Story of My Boyhood Days in Highbridge," in *The Bronx in the Innocent Years 1890-1925* by Lloyd Ultan and Gary Hermelyn in collaboration with The Bronx County Historical Society, 1985. The Aqueduct runs right next to, and sometimes directly under, present-day University Ave.

"The neighborhood derived its name from the High Bridge, which spanned the Harlem River. The bridge was a water carrier to Manhattan. This was, up to 1895, the only way that Manhattan got its water supply. No vehicular traffic could pass over this bridge and no road approach to the bridge was in evidence. The bridge itself had a set of pipes in which the water flowed. . .

"On University Avenue, on many occasions, one could find cows browsing nearby. At this time, University Avenue was a dirt road, twenty-one feet wide at most, and was called Aqueduct Avenue. On each side was plenty of fine green grass. . . .

"When I was a boy, I used to enjoy a walk through the daisies, violets, and black-eyed Susans on the aqueduct, which was the water tunnel that supplied water to the High Bridge from Croton Dam, many miles north of The Bronx. This aqueduct, especially at the spring of the year, was beautiful. We boys picked many bunches of the various blossoms and sold them to the many rich people who came there for their vacation."

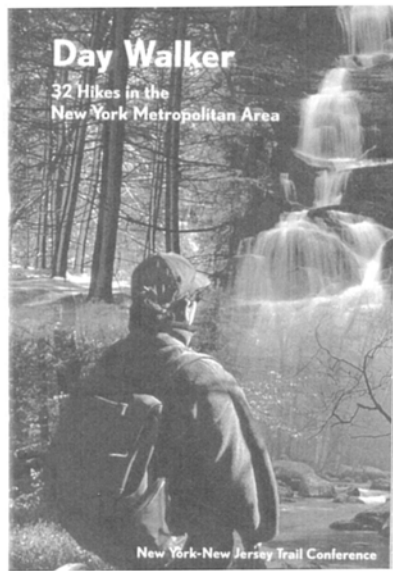
## Publications

*Review by Dale Ramsey*

"Old Croton Aqueduct," pp. 104-119 in **Day Walker**, Second Edition. 2002, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430. 301 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 1-880775-28-X.

In the Introduction to the new edition of *Day Walker*, a hikers' guide to 32 excursions in the New York metropolitan area, the editor, Joyce Barrett, comments that the first edition had been published to encourage people to enjoy walking in the city's numerous outlying green areas accessible by public transportation.

That is exactly the purpose it once served for me. Indeed, the first edition, published in 1983, was like manna from heaven when I had to rely on buses and Metro-North to go hiking. Using it, I discovered Blue Mountain Reservation, found my way to the Long Island Greenbelt, and explored the Old Croton Aqueduct from Lyndhurst to Glenwood. Now we can vociferously congratulate the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for revising the book and publishing it themselves as a nonprofit venture. The new edition, which includes four more hikes than the old one, has been nicely designed by Margaret Trejo. (But I do rather miss the old line drawings by Richard Edes Harrison, now replaced by photos.)



Chapter 12, on hiking the Aqueduct, describes in detail a longer hike than the earlier book did — from the Croton Dam to Lamartine Ave., in Yonkers. To its credit, the previous edition tried to instill, however sketchily, an awareness of the walking possibilities of the entire route of the Aqueduct, including

sections in the Bronx. But mainly it started you out in Tarrytown and sent you south. This time around, the guide gives you directions for both a south- and a north-bound hike. There are two pages of crisp new maps by Liz Puhl — and I presume she benefited from the exemplary map made by the pioneering Friends of the Aqueduct (highly recommended in the new edition).



*Old Croton Aqueduct, Irvington, New York, by Richard Edes Harrison, from the first edition of Day Walker.*

The text of the new edition is simpler than the first edition. While it is sometimes more accurate in the bargain, as in its superior description of the waste weirs, it is sometimes less so, as when the author guides you onto the grounds of Lyndhurst and then confuses you with a comment about the digression from the right-of-way already behind you.

This point prompts me to make a pet pronouncement: With any guide, ideally the text will be written from the perspective of someone who has no prior knowledge of the trail whatsoever, and will thus be tailored precisely for someone who is stopped on the footpath looking at unfamiliar terrain and interpreting the directions literally. In Ossining, the walker does cross the intersection of Washington and Edward Streets, as the book says, but that's academic: in point of fact, there are no street signs at that intersection — so, like a puzzled Felix the Cat, the walker looks around with a question mark over his or her head. Farther south, where the text mentions the crossing of Gorey Brook Road, the walker on the scene only knows that he or she is crossing a road, for the only signs visible at that spot say Ridge Street and Dead End.

The few errors I noticed include the misspelling of Philipsburg, and Villa Lewaro is rendered Villa Leward. I trust the Friends' map when it locates the bridge where Ichabod Crane encountered the Headless Horseman behind the Old Dutch Church; I don't think Irving's hero made his fatal crossing of the Pocantico near the 90-foot-high Aqueduct farther north, as the new guide has it. But these are very minor flaws. Newly added items include Villa Lewaro, Lenoir Preserve, and the Overseer's House. Since this guide has always provided good tips on making Metro-North connections along the route, I am glad it now dissuades the hiker from trying to go from the trail to the Croton-Harmon train station.

*Continued on page 7*

## Publications (continued)

The Aqueduct's history, usefully highlighted, is given less space here, deleting tidbits such as the labor unrest among the Irish immigrants who did the backbreaking work of building the system. Even so, the history text now mentions Aaron Burr's self-serving Manhattan Water Company, the inadequacy of which led to the plan to tap the waters of the Croton River for New York City. And this edition relates the gladdening fact that the northernmost section of the Aqueduct was returned to use in 1988 to bring water to Ossining. If you already love walking this historic trail, conscious of the berms and the engineering over the streams and hollows, it just seems right that the tunnel beneath your feet - at least some of it - still serves its original purpose.

I hope the Trail Conference sells a ton of these guides and that anyone inclined to make the same discoveries I did years ago will latch onto it and set out along the Aqueduct trail, and all the other hiking routes as well.

## Lower Hudson Conference Salutes Brian Goodman

At its Annual Meeting and Awards for Excellence program, held on October 11 at Bear Mountain Inn, the Lower Hudson Conference of Historical Agencies & Museums honored Brian Goodman's achievements as manager of Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park. The special recognition award cited Brian "for contributing to a sense of shared regional history in the Hudson Valley by promoting the Aqueduct as a 26-mile linear cultural resource and for being 'Keeper' of the trail's value as a green corridor for recreation and environmental study."

## MEMBERSHIP COUPON BE A FRIEND!!

Your tax-deductible contribution helps to protect and preserve the trail.

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Please make check payable to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Send it with this coupon and your name, address, and day and evening telephone numbers to the Friends at Overseer's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109.

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*Please let us know if you would like to volunteer.*



## Aqueduct Map Makes Easy Gift

The Friends' award-winning map and guide of the Old Croton Aqueduct published fits conveniently into a holiday stocking or regular business envelope. It can be purchased at the following stores:

**Cornelia Cotton Gallery**, 111 Grand Ave., Croton-on-Hudson

**Art Barn**, 211 North Highland Ave., Ossining

**Ossining Heritage Area Visitor Center**, Joseph G. Caputo Community Center, next to trail, Ossining

**Hudson Office Supply**, 21 Main St., Tarrytown

**Tarrytown Cycles**, 11 North Broadway, Tarrytown

**Becker's**, 57 Main St., Irvington

**River Gallery**, 39 Main St., Irvington

**Cary's Pharmacy**, 105 Main St., Dobbs Ferry

**Corey Glass Picture Framing**, 3 Main St., Hastings-on-Hudson

**Good Yarns**, 8 Main St., Hastings-on-Hudson

**The Office Ink**, 572 Warburton Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson

**Hudson River Museum Shop**, 511 Warburton Ave., Yonkers

**Posman Books**, Grand Central Terminal, Manhattan

**Urban Center Books**, 457 Madison Ave., betw 50th and 51st Sts., Manhattan

By mail, send a check for \$5.25 per map (includes shipping and handling) to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Overseer's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522.

## Forthcoming Walks

**December 21st:** Sleepy Hollow Circular

**January 25th:** Mercy College - Tarrytown.

Westchester Trails Association.

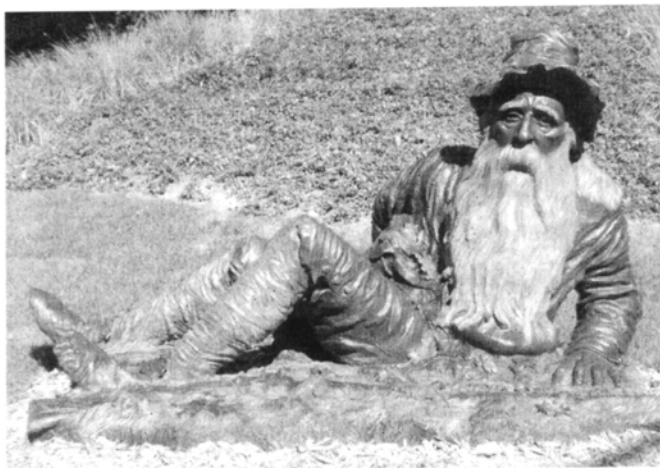
For details, call Herb Hochberg, 914-472-3525

**For inquiries about the trail and Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, call 914-693-5259.**

**Until a new Aqueduct manager is appointed, calls will be automatically forwarded to**

**Elizabeth Woodard, Manager of**

**Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park.**



S. Fahn

*Rip Van Winkle has joined the Aqueduct scene. On Sept. 21, Irvington unveiled a bronze sculpture of the sleepy star of Washington Irving's story, just waking from his 20-year nap. The life-size piece, by sculptor Richard Masloski, is on the north side of Irvington's Main St. between Village Hall and the Middle School, a few steps downhill from the trail.*

**Newsletter:** Charlotte Fahn, Editor. News items, reminiscences, and comments welcome: 914-478-3961 or czfahn@yahoo.com or by mail c/o the Friends.

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Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct  
Overseer's House  
15 Walnut Street  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

**Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct** is a private, non-profit, volunteer organization formed to protect and preserve the Old Croton Aqueduct. The Friends work to raise public awareness of the Aqueduct and trail, and to secure the resources that will enable this historic greenway to remain unspoiled in perpetuity. Address: Overseer's House, 15 Walnut Street, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109; telephone 914-693-4117.

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