



# Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct

*Newsletter*

No. 32, Spring 2009

## Belmay Inc. Employees Clean Up Trail in Yonkers

When one person volunteers to clean up the Aqueduct trail, it's great! When a group volunteers to clean up it's even better! But when the CEO of a global corporation donates employees to work on the Aqueduct it's a truly generous gift that should be known and recognized not only by the Friends but by all who use the trail.

Theodore (Ted) Kesten, president and CEO of Belmay Inc., a company that develops and sells fragrances that are used in personal care and household products worldwide, believes that businesses have a responsibility to give back to the community. Because he is committed to "going green," working on the Aqueduct offered an excellent opportunity to combine these two ideals.

"This was the company's first volunteer effort," explained Lorrie Chiappetta, vice president of human resources. "Last year we contacted the Volunteer Center of United Way with a request to do something that would benefit the environment. The director of corporate volunteer programs, Norman Fulton and his team led by Jeanette Gisbert, worked with Belmay and Groundwork Yonkers to put together a plan for us to do volunteer work on the Aqueduct Trail.

Groundwork Yonkers is part of a network of Groundwork non-profits across the country that initially receive funding from the EPA, and staff from the National Park Service to get established with the goal of improving communities. During the eight years it has been in existence, Groundwork Yonkers has turned vacant lots into gardens, completed two 9/11 memorial gardens and involved nearly 1,000 residents in



*Belmay volunteers (l. to r.): Shernell Lucas, Victoria DeRose, Ooma Angad, Maryann Esposito, Steven Williams, Gladys Jagdeo, Ira Yenko, and Jonathan Penso.*

community improvement projects. It has also received a grant to work with the Friends on the Aqueduct Trail.

Belmay has about 100 employees at its Yonkers site. As many as 12 employees, about 10 percent of its Yonkers workforce, volunteered to clean up the trail. Under the direction of Groundwork Yonkers and Aqueduct Trail Manager Steven Oakes, they worked hard all afternoon on three occasions, cutting down and removing invasive vines, picking up trash and loading it and the vines onto trucks. This amounted to the equivalent of more than 120 work hours. *(continued on page 4)*

## Aqueduct Walks: Two New Guidebooks

***Walkable Westchester***, by Jane and Walt Daniels. Publ. New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Mahwah, NJ, 2009, 428 pp., ISBN 978-1-880775-57-8, \$24.95 (discounts available at [www.nynjtc.org](http://www.nynjtc.org); additional information at [www.westchester.nynjtc.org](http://www.westchester.nynjtc.org)).

This comprehensive volume includes the Aqueduct and other trails and paths in more than 180 parks in Westchester County. Parks and trails are organized into eight sections based on the number of miles of trail. The Aqueduct is in the Linear Corridors section. Icons show permitted activities and accessibility for people with disabilities; contact information and additional resources are also provided. Public transportation options are included where available. There are sketch maps of most parks, and historical and nature notes are plentiful.

A 13-page section on the Aqueduct (Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park) describes in great detail the entire 26.2 length of the trail in Westchester, as in this excerpt: “. . . at 1.0 mile [from the start of the trail segment being described] the Aqueduct crosses Quaker Bridge Road West. Another unnumbered ventilator shaft is at 1.4 miles. After crossing Quaker Bridge Road, the Aqueduct goes through the DEC Croton Gorge Unique Area at 1.8 miles . . . “

The trail is divided into five segments: New Croton Dam to Ossining's Double Arch Bridge (about 5 mi.); from there to Gory Brook Road in Sleepy Hollow (7 mi.); to Walnut St. and the Keeper's House in Dobbs Ferry (6 mi.); to Lamartine Ave. in Yonkers (5 mi.); to the New York City line (4 mi.).

***Fun on Foot in New York: The runners' and walkers' guide to New York City . . . and its surrounds in New York State and New Jersey***, by Warwick Ford with Nola Ford. Publ. Wyltan Books, Aspen, CO., 2009, 370 pp., ISBN 978-097652442-7, \$16.95 (discount available at [www.funonfoot.com](http://www.funonfoot.com)).

The Aqueduct is one of the many routes in the five New York City boroughs, the surrounding metro region, and locations far afield that are described in this book in geographically arranged chapters.

The Westchester chapter includes four routes entirely or partially on the Aqueduct: 1) Yonkers, starting at the train station, entering the Aqueduct at Lamartine Ave., to Main St. in Dobbs Ferry; 2) Dobbs Ferry to Main St. in Tarrytown; 3) Tarrytown to, and including trails in, Rockwood Hall; and 4) a Tarrytown Three-Trail Loop, with a short section on the Aqueduct. Several Rockefeller State Park Preserve loop walks are

described. The Bronx chapter includes a 2-mile loop around Jerome Park Reservoir, and a route starting on the Old Putnam Trail in Van Cortlandt Park and then switching to the Aqueduct trail at Yonkers Ave. in Westchester.

A general overview, a chart assessing four attributes - comfort, attractions, convenience, and the character of the destination - and a map are provided for each route. The emphasis is on access by public transportation. Names of running clubs are given for each area. Some 80 routes are mentioned. —Charlotte Fahn

### Meet Our Newest Board Member, Elisa Zazzera

Elisa was elected to the board of the Friends at the Annual Meeting on April 26.

She and her husband are recent (2005) residents of Hastings. No sooner had they settled in the river community than Elisa became involved in Sustainable Hastings and a campaign to stop cars from idling.

When Elisa found out about the Friends and our projects she called to say that she was interested in our mission of caring for the trail and saving the historic Keeper's House.

An avid biker, Elisa quickly became familiar with the entire trail and especially the Yonkers sections. With unflagging energy and enthusiasm, she took over the planning and management of Aquefest in Yonkers and continues to build a working relationship with Groundwork Yonkers, a group also devoted to improving the trail.

We soon found out about Elisa's talents as a photographer when she risked life and limb on crumbling stairs to give us a photographic record of all corners of the Keeper's House both the interior and exterior. As work progresses, this record will be a reminder of where we started, a story in itself. She has also covered our sessions at the weir in Ossining, photographing students and other visitors as they marvel at the engineering of the tunnel.

Welcome to the Friends, Elisa. We're lucky to have you. — Mavis Cain, President



Elisa Zazzera  
Photo by Kevin O'Connor



## How Charlotte Fahn Came to be Newsletter Editor

Lest readers are worried, although Charlotte Fahn announced her resignation as editor in the last newsletter, she is not leaving the Friends. After 10 years as writer, researcher, editor, publisher, creative director, and above all, loving guardian of the newsletter, Charlotte says she will be happy to be relieved of the pressure to produce the newsletter but will continue to write for it and work on other projects.

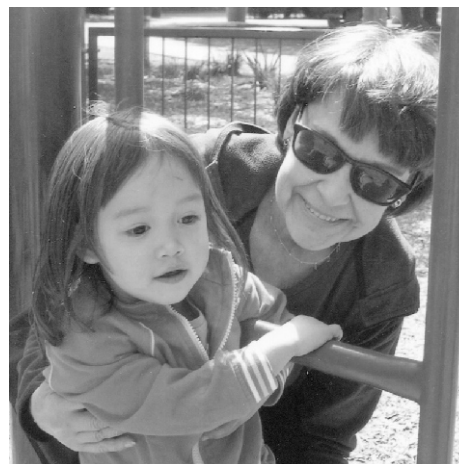
Charlotte first heard of the Old Croton Aqueduct trail as a way for kids from Hastings to avoid Broadway when walking to school. In 1994 she became involved, along with many others, because of a proposal to lay a high-pressure gas pipeline from Dobbs Ferry to Yonkers within the Aqueduct right-of-way. The proposal was ultimately defeated.

Charlotte joined the Friends in the mid-1990s while she was working at the Parks Council (now New Yorkers for Parks), a civic organization that had an active interest in the New York City segment of the Aqueduct. She was an advocate for parks, was in contact with people in the parks system and knew how the public process worked. She had an interest in maps, having worked for the American Geographical Society, and had spent 10 years in editing and production at a medical publishing company. She also had a master's degree in urban planning and was an avid hiker.

At about the same time, to familiarize people with the trail and make it more accessible, the Friends, under the leadership of Fred Charles, were seeking to create a linear map of the Aqueduct trail in Westchester County with descriptions of different features along the way. In 1996 Charlotte offered to lead the project. An all-volunteer team effort resulted in publication less than two years later. The map won several awards, including one from the Preservation League of New York State. "We were all euphoric," she recalls.

"In the meantime, as a way to strengthen the trail's public constituency and because I thought it would be fun and interesting, I proposed starting a newsletter," Charlotte says. It would be hard to imagine someone with a more perfect background for the role of the Friends' first newsletter editor. The first issue, a joint effort by Charlotte and Mavis Cain, today's president of the Friends, came out in April 1998, several months before the map was published.

What has she enjoyed most about producing the newsletter? "I loved the creative challenge in assembling each issue, in selecting items to illustrate the Aqueduct's varied geography, its beauty as a walking



*Charlotte Fahn with her granddaughter Susan*

path, its history, and the amazing engineering required to construct the water conduit at that time. And it was stimulating to work with other Aqueduct devotees who generously contributed articles from time to time, lending the newsletter a variety of voices and viewpoints."

One article that stands out in Charlotte's memory was entitled "Location of a Manhattan Ventilator Discovered, or Can a Family Have the Aqueduct in its Genes?" It was about a long vanished ventilator on the Manhattan segment of the Aqueduct. "Bill Logan, one of our board members at the time, lives next to the Aqueduct in Westchester. Bill was going through some old family photos when he came across a negative that showed his great-grandparents' house on St. Nicholas Ave., next to what appeared to be, and indeed was, an Aqueduct ventilator," she recounts. "The clarity of the picture was extraordinary, and I enjoyed telling the story of how five generations of Logans have lived next to the Aqueduct."

"Two exciting moments recorded in the newsletter also stand out," Charlotte says. One was the award of a federal grant to the Friends, in partnership with State Parks, to transform the Keeper's House into a visitor and education center. The second was the stunning announcement by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg on Earth Day 2007 that the city would fund the restoration and reopening of the High Bridge, the 1848 crossing that carried Croton water across the Harlem River to Manhattan, a project in which she is especially interested. She was gratified to end her tenure as editor with publication in her final issue of a photo she had long sought, showing the original Aqueduct crossing of Route 9 in Archville.

And what will Charlotte do with all those "free" hours? Continuing all her other activities with the Friends has already more than filled the hours she devoted to the newsletter.

## EXHIBITS AND TALKS

### The Future Beneath Us

The New York Transit Museum and the New York Public Library of Science, Industry, and Business jointly feature a current exhibit called ***The Future Beneath Us***. It explains and illustrates eight underground public-works megaprojects that are planned in New York. The show is shared between the Science, Industry, and Business Library branch of the New York Public Library at 188 Madison Avenue, and the New York Transit Museum branch in Grand Central Terminal.

Two of the projects featured and the Science, Industry, and Business Library are related to New York City's water supply. These are the Croton Water Filtration Plant under construction in Van Cortland Park and the City Water Tunnel No. 3. There are wonderful photos of both projects.

The exhibit closes July 5. Further information is available at the Science, Industry, and Business Library's web site, [sibleref@nypl.org](mailto:sibleref@nypl.org). The phone number at the library is (212) 592-7000.

— Jean Horkans

### Belmay, *continued*

Ira Yenko, human resources administrator, was one of the employees who volunteered to work on the trail. "There are different ways of 'going green'," he said. "At Belmay, we decided to donate human resources. We feel that we are enriching employees by encouraging them to help out in the community. I don't come from Westchester County. I had never been on the Aqueduct before. After we had cleaned up, the neighborhood was transformed, it looked beautiful. Most of us would go back again to work on the trail. However, this year's project has been deferred to later in the year because of the economy."

The impact of Belmay's hard labor is still being felt. The trail sections they worked on — off Walnut Street and just north of Lamartine Avenue — remain noticeably cleaner because, as Steve Oakes notes, "any effort to clean things up inspires other people to do the same. The mountains of trash were too daunting for individual property owners along the trail to tackle. But now the hardest part has been done, trail neighbors are taking pride in how it looks."

*Recent drilling in the New Croton Aqueduct. Courtesy of Scott Chesman, speaker at the Friends' 2009 annual meeting, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.*





## Our Annual Meeting Featured a Sandhog, a Bassoon and a Flute

On the hottest day of the year, so far, our Annual Meeting on April 26 pulled in an eager and appreciative crowd.

Dr. Scott Chesman, sandhog and geologist gave a fascinating presentation on New York's massive Third Water Tunnel 600 feet below ground and 60 miles long. He patiently answered all the questions from those



*Speaker Scott Chesman emphasizes a point.*

of us who knew next to nothing about the work as well as from those better informed about the mysteries of the underground world. One of our members commented, "I'll never ride the subway again without thinking of the levels of tunnels under us and wondering if it's quite safe." Thanks to the skill of people like Scott Chesman we can be reassured that it is. Scott kindly brought some artifacts recovered from the excavation of the New Croton Aqueduct.

As a prelude and postlude to the talk, Janet Grice, composer, played excerpts from her "Hudson Views" symphony with flutist Kevin Willois. This is the first time we have had music at our annual meeting and it was a big success. The music encouraged visitors to linger and we were all able to exchange thoughts on the



*Mavis Cain asks Scott Chesman a question.*



*Janet Grice, composer and bassoonist, accompanied by flutist Kevin Willois.*

presentation as well as the many projects of the Friends.

A new board member, Elisa Zazzera, was elected and those officers who were up for re-election were approved for an additional term.

We thank all who came out to the meeting on that hot day and for their enthusiastic response to the speaker and musicians. And, of course, a big thank you to Scott Chesman, Janet Grice and Kevin Willois.

## Letters

*Friends' President Mavis Cain often writes personalized "thank you" notes to members and those who donate to the Keepers House, especially when they live far from the Aqueduct Trail. Some people who receive the notes respond.*

Dear Mavis,

Thank you for your note inquiring about my membership in The Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct.

I was born and brought up in the Dunwoodie section of Yonkers not far from the section of the Aqueduct bordering Tibbetts Brook Park. I crossed the Aqueduct many times to get to the park and hiked along the Tibbetts Brook section with my father. Also, my husband and I planned to hike the whole Aqueduct from Manhattan to the reservoir. We probably got involved with the Friends when we sent for a map and I regret that we never did get to hike it.

I'm glad that the Aqueduct is being maintained as a greenway all the way from Manhattan to Croton and I'm pleased to be a small part of that for such a small donation.

I enjoy getting the newsletter and hope to attend one of the Friends events sometime. Thank you again for your note and your interest. — Pat Kelly

## Spano Sponsors Community Cleanup On The Aqueduct Trail

The clean-up of the trail continues. Assemblyman Mike Spano, long-time supporter of the Friends and Aqueduct enthusiast, would like the Yonkers segment of the trail to be used as a regular footpath through the community. To that end, he organized an Aqueduct Trail cleanup on May 16. The work took place on the trail between Walnut and Summit Streets in downtown Yonkers near St. Casimir Church and Nepperhan Avenue. Among the groups that participated in the cleanup were Scout Troop Yonkers #5 including two scouts who are working for their Eagle Scout badge, the Yonkers Fire Department, Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct and members of Assemblyman Spano's staff. Thank you, Mike Spano.



*Mike Spano*



*Below: Temple Beth Shalom volunteers picking up debris along the Aqueduct Trail in Hastings*





## Walks, Talks, and Tours

**Sunday, May 31, 9.45 am — Yonkers.** Old Croton Aqueduct from the Hudson River Museum to Tibbetts Brook Park. Route is partly on city streets. Meet in the parking lot of the Hudson River Museum on Warburton Ave. in Yonkers. Accessible from Glenwood station, Metro North, Hudson line. 5 to 6 miles round trip. Bring lunch. Contact: 914-478-3961 or 914-275-2217.

**Sun., May 31, 2pm. Walking tour of New Croton Dam.** Assemble at Croton Free Library, 171 Cleveland Drive, for historical overview; then carpool to the dam, where discussion will focus on 1842-1910. Walking shoes recommended. Sponsor: Croton Friends of History. Leader: Carl Oechsner. Information: 914-271-6612.

**Thurs., June 4, 7:30 pm. The mouth of the Croton River: An environmental history.** A talk by local historian Scott Craven. Croton Free Library, 171 Cleveland Drive. Sponsor: Croton Friends of History. Information: 914-271-6612.

**Sunday, June 7, 10.30am, 1.00 pm and 3.30pm — Lyndhurst.** Part of the Lyndhurst's Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial. Choose to go north or south from Lyndhurst on the Old Croton Aqueduct, with the option to drop out along the route. About 2.5 miles round trip.

For information about the walks: 914-693-0529. For information about parking and possible fees, call Lyndhurst in June: 914-631-4481

**Saturday, June 13 — Continuous tours, 10.00am to 3.00pm,** Ossining Village Fair. Meet at the weir chamber, which is a short walk north along the Aqueduct from Main Street, Ossining or, alternatively, go to the Ossining Community Center, 95 Broadway. Turn west from Highland Ave. (Rte 9) opposite Croton Ave. (Rte 133). Contact: 914-762-4082. Sponsored by the Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, [www.aqueduct.org](http://www.aqueduct.org)

**Saturday, June 13, 10 am. — Untermyer Gardens (Greystone) to Van Cortlandt Park.** Half-mile walk uphill to Untermyer Park gardens in Yonkers, then quick-paced hike on the Old Croton Aqueduct to the Bronx, with interpretive stops. Bailouts possible in Yonkers. Train from NYC: take rear car of 9:20 Hudson Line from Grand Central or 9:40 from Marble Hill to Greystone, arr. 9:56 am. Drivers park at Untermyer Park entrance, North B'way, Yonkers. Hike ends about 3:45 at No.1 or A Line Subway. Led by Mike Graff, [litigator@nyc.rr.com](mailto:litigator@nyc.rr.com), 917-902-7979. Calls only on day of hike after 7:30 am. Sponsored by the Appalachian Mtn. Club/ Sierra Club. All walks and tours are free. Reservations are not required.

## Map Orders



The Friends' color map-and-guides of the Aqueduct in Westchester (Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park), and of its route in New York City, are available by mail. The maps are \$5 each (members, \$4). Add 75 cents shipping and handling for the first map, 50 cents for each



additional map. Please specify which map(s) you want. Send a check for the total to the Friends at 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522. Or download an order form from our website: [www.aqueduct.org](http://www.aqueduct.org). Questions? Call 914-693-0529.

## Our New Editor, Ruth Gastel

Board member, Ruth Gastel, has stepped into the breach as editor. Fortunately, Ruth has had experience with newsletters for an insurance association and has been an editor for an organization that helps explain insurance to the public for more than 20 years. We're so lucky to have someone who can continue making the newsletter our regular communication with members. Thank you, Ruth.

— Mavis Cain, President

**For inquiries about Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park or to report trail conditions, call Park Manager Steven Oakes at 914-693-5259; mailing address: 15 Walnut Street, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522.**

## MEMBERSHIP COUPON

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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal          | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$20      | <input type="checkbox"/> Students & retirees \$10 |
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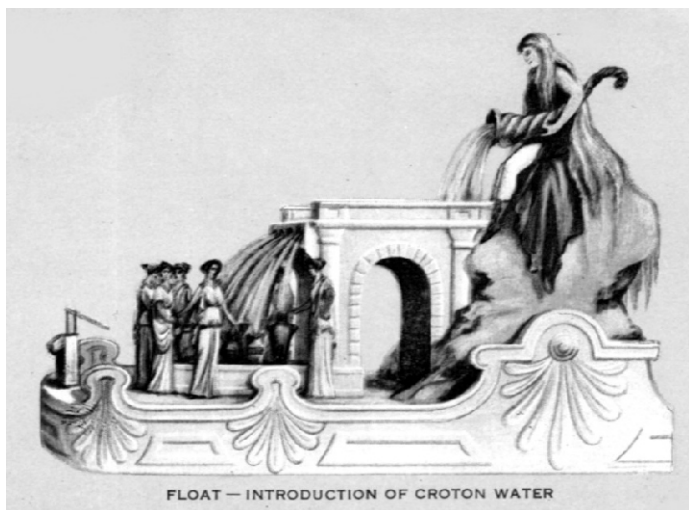
Please make check payable to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Send it with this coupon to the Friends at Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109.

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



*"Introduction of Croton Water." A float celebrating the opening of the Old Croton Aqueduct was part of New York City's 1909 Hudson-Fulton parade. (Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission Official Post Card No. 49, courtesy of Charlotte Fahn.)*

**Newsletter:** Ruth Gastel, *Editor*. News items, reminiscences, and comments welcome: 914-479-1414 or [ruthg@iii.org](mailto:ruthg@iii.org) or by mail c/o the Friends.

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**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:* Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St. Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109; *telephone* 914-693-4117, [www.aqueduct.org](http://www.aqueduct.org)

### Board of Directors

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