



# Field Notes

From Schiff Nature Preserve

Please consider becoming a member of Schiff and support your local Nature Preserve!

339 Pleasant Valley Road, Mendham, New Jersey 07945-2922 • 973.543.6004 • www.schiffnaturepreserve.org

## Gala Celebrating Schiff



Brookrace Manor

What a glorious evening it was when the moon and stars aligned to bring Schiff supporters together to celebrate and raise funds for Schiff. The Gala, held at Brookrace Manor, the home of Marissa and Michael McDonnell, featured a private tour of the house by W. Barry Thomson, co-author of *New Jersey Country Houses – The Somerset Hills* books. Barry led three private tours through the lower level of the manor and shared its architectural and familial history. With a trove of historical documents and artifacts gathered for

the event, guests were able to see the evolution of the manor, from its early owners to its prominent role with the Boy Scouts of America to its eventual transition back to private ownership.

The remainder of the evening featured live and silent auctions, a wine pull and giving tree as well as live music provided by Ben Krauss and the jazz band of Morristown-Beard School under the direction of John Girvin. Most importantly, the attendees honored John Pellecchia, a long-term Schiff trustee. After serving for 16 years on the Board, John stepped down this past spring. John played a leading role in steering the Schiff Natural Lands Trust through a period of rapid growth as Schiff more than doubled the acres of open space owned and under management.



John Pellecchia

## What Community Means to Me **Marissa McDonnell**

People have asked me “Why did you decide to open your home up for a gala?” My response has been that it seemed the natural thing to do. So many elements of my personal and professional life coalesced into the idea of hosting an event to support the longevity of Schiff Natural Lands Trust. Schiff Nature Preserve forms a gorgeous backyard and protects us from future development right in our backyard. What a gift to walk out the door and hike here. This is one of the reasons that led us to the decision to buy our house.

Our home and Schiff are inextricably linked by their history. Michael and I had learned a bit about the time period when the property was sold to the Boy Scouts of America to use as its National Training Center, but it was not until we attended a Schiff ice cream social at Alan and Judy Weinstein’s home that we were able to really appreciate the long-term connections and delve more into the home’s history. Alan introduced us to W. Barry Thomson, a tenacious local historian, who unearthed new information about the Williams family who built the house and the history of its architectural modifications. Barry found more in six months than I could have in six years! Our appreciation for our home and its past deepened, as did our relationship with the Schiff staff and trustees. They are a genuine, dedicated group of people who have been effective stewards of this land. It just made good sense to us to offer this idea of a gala in support of their efforts. As a physician, I value the health benefits of open space. From hiking to playing to viewing wildlife, the outdoors provides opportunities to maintain our cardiovascular and mental health, both requirements for our longevity. Supporting the open space owned and managed by Schiff provides us all with a local spot for these activities. I hope that others will find their own connection to Schiff and help maintain its place in Mendham’s future.

### Support Schiff with a Recurring Membership

There are SO many fun and educational events being offered at Schiff for all ages. Please help us spread the word about Schiff by:

- **Telling your friends and neighbors** why you chose to become a member of Schiff. Ask them to support Schiff. We rely heavily on revenue from membership.
- **Showing your friends and family** our new and improved website, Facebook and Instagram posts. Please share our posts and events.
- **Taking pictures when you visit.** Use the hashtag #schiffnaturepreserve OR #supportschiff.
- **Taking friends to the preserve** to check out our trails, nature center, and programs.
- **Attending (and bringing your friends to) our Special Events,** like our Environmental Film Festival, our Annual meeting or our event for dog lovers: Paws for the Preserve.

## Scout's Service to Schiff Nature Preserve is Invaluable

### Board of Trustees

**Alex Battey**  
President  
Mendham Township

**Jeanne Rice**  
Vice President  
Gladstone

**Joseph Gomeringer**  
Treasurer  
Mendham Township

**Pat Charney**  
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**Amalia Duarte**  
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**John Eade**  
Mendham Township

**Marissa McDonnell**  
Mendham Township

**Ken Rendall**  
Peapack

**Bill Sandelands**  
Mendham Township

**Janis Slutsky**  
Mendham Borough

**Alan Weinstein**  
Mendham Township

### Staff

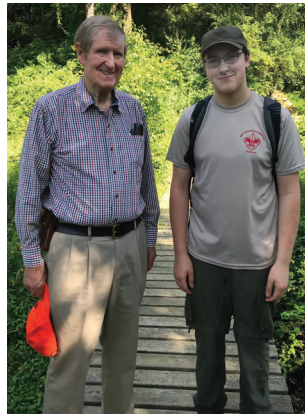
**Dorian von Aulock**  
Executive Director

**Joshua Del Rio**  
Land Steward &  
Volunteer Coordinator

**Holly Puleo**  
Membership &  
Outreach Coordinator

**Lauren Theis**  
Environmental Educator

**Jenny Chmura &  
Christi Lorenson**  
Summer Nature  
Program Co-Directors



These past few months, Schiff has been the fortunate recipient of three Scout Eagle and Gold Award projects. Each project was conceptualized by our Conservation and Stewardship Committee and is intended to

improve the outdoor experience for our visitors.

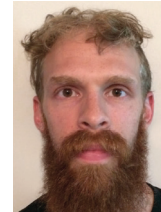
K. Sapio from Mount Olive Girl Scout Troop #4221 completed a Mural Guide, naming and describing the many NJ native plants and animals

featured on the mural on the exterior Nature Center. K. Briney, of Chester Girl Scout Troop #81307, is completing her Gold Award with the development of a new guided walk (Tyke's Trail) for our youngest of hikers. Finally, R. Watkins of Boy Scout Troop #555 of Basking Ridge completed his Eagle Project by blazing a trail extension to the "Farrelly Oak". He also made a clearing around the tree, built and installed a bench, and finished the installation of a sign communicating the Farrelly's contribution. The family of Lois Farrelly donated the 28 acres that became Schiff Natural Lands Trust. This oak is significant to the Farrelly family as it was seen from the kitchen window of their original standing home. Thank you to all of the Scouts for their service.

### Schiff Volunteer Days bring us closer to our supporters



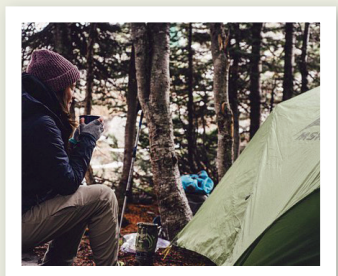
Several times throughout the year, Schiff hosts Volunteer Days where members, friends, and neighbors can demonstrate their commitment to the environment and Schiff by volunteering to assist us in a variety of land steward tasks. This past fall, we had a large turnout of members from our deer management program for a Volunteer Day. The group tackled a variety of landscaping tasks at one of the cottages in preparation for the arrival of our new Land Steward on November 1. Please join us for our next Volunteer Day on Sunday, March 31, 2019 from 9-11 am.



### New Land Steward Joshua Del Rio begins November 1

We are excited to announce and welcome our new Land Steward, Joshua Del Rio. Prior to coming to Schiff, Joshua served two AmeriCorps terms building trails in Texas and New York. Most recently, he led the Taconic trail crew of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, whose main work site was Breakneck Ridge in the Hudson Highlands State Park. A New Jersey native and outdoor enthusiast, his hobbies include experiencing live music, traveling abroad, hiking, rock climbing, reading science fiction and natural history. He is very excited to work with the local community to keep Schiff an important source for outdoor recreation and environmental education.

**GLAD  
YOU  
ASKED!**



### Q. Does Schiff Allow Camping on the Preserve?

A. Schiff Natural Lands Trust permits camping for our Scout member organizations only. In an effort to provide Scouts with a hands on primitive camping experience, Schiff honors a limited number of camping requests per season. Camping at Schiff Nature Preserve allows the Scouts to select one of two suitable sites, set up their own tents, make a fire in the fire pit, and enjoy the privacy and solitude of an overnight on the preserve. Many Scout groups request and complete a small land steward project when they are here. Here is a sample of some of the FAQ's that can be found on our website.



## SAVE THE DATE- Maple Sugaring Open House- March 3, 2019

Last winter, after a long hiatus, Schiff board members Ken Rendall and Janis Slutsky brought back the Maple Sugaring program at Schiff. Boy Scout Troop #28 from Chatham helped kick off the event by helping to locate maple sugar trees near the Great Meadow as part of an overnight camping service project. We eventually located some 20+ sugar maples on the preserve property, set the taps, and patiently waited as mother nature toyed with our wishes for a long and steady sap flow. Prior to setting the taps, one of the members of our deer management program, master welder Chet Komoroski, repaired our boiler and constructed a brand new evaporator pan. Now we were in business! After many hours of processing and filtering; a fine, small batch of maple sugar was completed! Visitors to the program got to see, smell, and taste the final product!

This year, Schiff plans to partner with The Maple Store of Chester for consultation and advice in improving our process and product. Maple Store owner, Jon Rybkiewicz will be on hand as we set up the taps and plan the evaporation. We thank him in advance for his expertise. The Maple Sugaring Open House will occur on Sunday, March 3, 2019 from 1-4 pm. Please join us for a tour of the collection system, viewing of the evaporation process, Q & A with our Board members and tasting of several snacks made with Schiff's own maple sugar.

## Schiff Welcomes New Board of Trustees Member Marissa McDonnell



This past spring Schiff Natural Lands Trust Board of Trustees welcomed a new trustee, Marissa McDonnell of

Mendham. Marissa is a pediatrician who earned her B.S. in Biology and her M.D. from Georgetown University. After training there in Pediatrics, she enjoyed practicing in Littleton, CO. After moving back to Washington D.C. area, Marissa became involved with Georgetown University and she began serving on the Board of Regents in 2015. She is presently the Vice Chair. She mentored medical students in professionalism and mindfulness

and taught in the Physician Patient Communication curriculum.

Once she and her family moved to Mendham, Marissa quickly came to know about Schiff Nature Preserve, as it is literally in her backyard. The McDonnells have three daughters. Their youngest, Whitney, attends Morristown-Beard School and has volunteered at Schiff, helping to research the rich history of the manor house in preparation for the recent gala event. Since joining the Board, Marissa has served as the gala co-chair, where her keen organizational and community building skills made for a most successful event. We are so lucky to have such kind, hard working, and thoughtful board members. Thank you to Marissa!

## Support Schiff through a Wish List purchase

Wondering what it takes to care for our amazing preserves? Please see our WISH LIST tab on the **Get Involved** page of our website.

Wondering what to give?

Here is a list of items we can ALWAYS use to improve our visitor experience and reduce our consumable costs. Your gift makes a BIG difference.

- **Batteries**  
*AAA, AA, 9 Volt*
- **Digital frame** *large*
- **Drills** *corded and cordless*
- **Folding bar top tables**
- **20 Headlamps**
- **iPad**
- **Kraft paper roll**
- **Laminating pouches**  
*3mm, 5mm*
- **Laptop computer**
- **Large "Post It" pads**
- **Rustic sandwich board**
- **Snowshoes** *all sizes*
- **Storage bins**  
*plastic, 3'x2'x2'*
- **Tool box on wheels**
- **"Wall Wallie" dry erase surface**
- **Wooden magazine wall mounted rack**

### Q. Is there potable water available at the camp sites?

A. There is not. We do not provide water at the campsites. We do have water available at the Nature Center, your check-in location.

### Q. Where are the bathrooms?

A. There is a primitive latrine near Woodbadge Lodge. The Troop is responsible to bring toilet paper.

### Q. Are there picnic tables at the site?

A. Both camping locations have picnic tables. The Woodbadge

Lodge area has 5-6 tables with seating capacity of 30.

The Lookout Point area has one picnic table with seating capacity of 6. Up the hill from the Lookout Point area at 711, there are two picnic tables with seating for 12.

### Q. Is there a trash can/dumpster for trash? A recycling receptacle?

A. There is no trash can or recycling container at the sites. All trash and recycling is to be taken off the nature preserve with you. Please leave no trace.

Schiff Nature Preserve  
339 Pleasant Valley Road, Mendham, New Jersey 07945

## Come Out & Enjoy Schiff

Discounts for Members. [More Info @ www.schiffnaturepreserve.org](#)

### #Optoutside with Schiff

November 23, 2018 Thursday 10:30 am-12:00 pm

### Full Moon Hike

November 24, 2018 Saturday 7:00-9:00 pm

### Singing Bowl Meditation

December 1, 2018 Saturday 7:00-8:15 pm

### Fitness Hike

December 2, 2018 Sunday 8:00-10:00 am

### Monthly Gong Meditation

December 8, 2018 Saturday 7:00-8:15 pm

### Baby and Me Hike

December 12, 2018 Wednesday 10:00-11:00 am

### Sew a Burlap Medicine Bag

December 12, 2018 Wednesday 6:30-8:00 pm

### Yoga Hike

December 16, 2018 Sunday 9:00-11:00 am

### Family Time-Make a Pine Cone Owl

December 20, 2018 Thursday 4:00-5:30 pm

### Final Full Moon Hike of 2018

December 22, 2018 Saturday 5:00-7:00 pm



## Select Schiff Natural Lands Trust as your charity of choice on AmazonSmile

The sustainability of the Schiff Nature Preserve relies heavily on membership dues, program fees, grants, and generous donations from our members and friends. When considering a donation on an in kind item, please visit our Wish List web page and shop with AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile)), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers. Choose Schiff Natural Lands Trust as your charity of choice when donating in kind Wish List items to Schiff. There is no cost to you, but you are still helping us out in a big way! THANKS for your support!

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