

VAN CORTLANDT PARK

Fall Newsletter 2009

Sports Mecca

The largest annual event Van Cortlandt Park hosts is the Manhattan College Cross Country Invitational (MCXCI). Approximately 12,000 high school participants run the race and hundreds more come to watch. The runners and their spirited fans hail from all over the continent, including schools in Canada, California, and Kentucky as well as the Bronx, Brooklyn and Bayside.

Each year, the local community encounters the temporary inconvenience of crowds and minor traffic jams that are associated with this race, in return for getting on the map as the nation's best cross country running trail. Graced with an exceptional geology perfect for hilly woodlands, this historic running trail has been a cross country mecca since it opened in 1913 offering unparalleled challenges for runners. "As someone who grew up running in Van Cortlandt Park and as the father of a cross country runner son, I can say first-hand that this park has a special significance for runners," said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "Since the cross country running trail was created over one hundred years ago, it has beckoned to runners across the nation for training and competition. The trail is maintained by the Parks Department but we could not do it without the help of all of the people who love this trail and donate their time, energy, and funds to keep it in such excellent condition. With the creation of an endowment, we can maintain this trail as a running mecca for another century."

Gene McCarthy, who holds some of the fastest running times in Van

Cortlandt Park, now serves on the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy board. As a Bronx teenager he aimed to achieve a 4-minute mile and almost made it. "The disciplined, goal-oriented mind frame I learned as a runner made me the first person in my family to go to college and got me to where I am today."

Angela Murdock, who is one of the organizers of the Manhattan College Invitational says, "Many running events in the park lead up to the MCXCI. Kids train here on a daily basis and every weekend in the fall

you'll find me officiating other cross country races. This landscape is a testing ground for the will and discipline of many athletes from across the nation, and it gives college coaches the opportunity to recruit fine athletes."

Van Cortlandt Park is also a sports mecca for cricket. Along with horseback riding and hiking, cricket is one of the oldest sports played in the park. The earliest documentation of cricket fields in the park dates from 1901. Only now is cricket's popularity beginning to rise in the United States. There are four leagues that play in this park: Commonwealth Cricket League, New York Cricket League, West Indian Softball Association, and American Australian League. Nearby Dewitt-Clinton High School is creating a

team. Cricket teams are traditionally called "clubs" and their members hail from ancestries that were at one time dominated by the British Empire. Cricket is popular among Caribbean, Australian, East Indian and Pakistani communities. Players dress in "cricket whites," the standard uniform for the game. Today, the thirteen cricket fields on the Parade Ground are closed for reconstruction and reconfiguration. By

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Gene McCarthy, Under Armour Senior VP (second from left) and Commissioner Adrian Benepe (right) addressed runners at the Catholic High Schools Championship race last year, with Park Administrator Margot Perron and race announcer Mike Rauh.

Photos: top - M. Perron; middle - M. Pinkney; bottom - M. Perron



Fall Calendar 2009

When you see this hat:

Meet with the Rangers at the Nature Center. Enter the park at Broadway & 246 St.



September

Saturday, September 5, 9 am



Birding Club

The first Saturday of every month is dedicated to Birding. September ends the summer and migrating birds get ready to leave. Bring binoculars.

Sunday, September 6, 7 pm



Nature Photography I: The Golden Hour

Photographers refer to the time surrounding sunset as the "golden hour" because of the beautiful, soft light a lens can capture. See the difference dynamic lighting can make in your photographs. All skill levels welcome. Bring your camera and a tripod is strongly recommended.



Saturday, September 12, 11 am



Asteraceae & Solidago

Find out which wildflowers were thought to look like the sun and which cured the runs. Both species are in bloom this month.

Saturday, September 19, 10 am

Nature Stroll of Northeast Forest

Perfect for seniors and families with small children, take a leisurely stroll and learn about the local flora and fauna of the forest, along with some park history.

Meet the Friends of Van Cortlandt

Park at Woodlawn Playground, Van Cortlandt Park East & Kepler Ave.

Saturday, September 19, 11 am

John Muir Trail Hike

This trail goes under highways, through the forest and past little waterfalls to connect neighborhoods on the east and west sides of the park.

Meet the Rangers at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.

Saturday, September 26, 11 am

One in a Million Tree-mendous Walk

A high canopy of mature trees make a cathedral of branches over trails, while young saplings make a screen of thin trunks and leaves. Walk through both scenes to experience the thousands of trees in the Northwest Woods.

Meet the Rangers at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.

Saturday & Sunday, September 26 & 27, 2-4 pm

Our Lady of Detritus

Take part in an interactive art installation that's also an anti-littering campaign.

Meets at Sachkerah Woods, Jerome Ave. & Gun Hill Rd.

October

Saturday, October 3, 9 am



Birding Club

As birds begin to fly south for the winter, they often stop to rest in our beautiful parks. How many seasonal visitors can you spot in one morning with the Rangers?

Sunday, October 4, 2 pm



Nature Photography II: It's In the Details

Many photographers tend to focus on the big picture while ignoring the tiny marvels and interesting textures all around them. Let's get up close and learn to photograph the smaller wonders nature has to offer. Bring your own camera.



Halloween Events

Saturday, October 31

Celebrate Samhein 1 pm



Do you know the history of Halloween? Join us on an autumn hike and learn about the Druidic and Celtic roots of our modern holiday.

Halloween Fun Run 2 pm

Run like a bunny or leap like a frog. Wear a neat costume and go whole hog! For ages 2-10.

Van Cortlandt Stadium, Broadway & 241 St.

Haunted Manor House: Little Yonkers 4 - 7 pm

Scare up some fun on the grounds of Van Cortlandt House Museum with a merry band of gorey historians - 18th century-style. For ages 10-16. Admission by timed-tickets that must be purchased in advance. \$10 adults, \$5 children. Call 718-543-3344.

Saturday, October 10, 8 am - 5 pm
MCXCI

For the Manhattan College Cross Country Invitational, over 12,000 teenagers run in this national race. Races happen every fall weekend in the park, but this one is the biggest and it's all day.

Meet at the Parade Ground.

Programs are FREE unless noted otherwise. Call 718-430-1890 for information or directions.

Saturday, October 10, 11 am
Wildflower Walk 11 am 🧒

Before the first frosts of fall begin to settle over the Bronx, the asters and goldenrod have their time to shine.

Saturday, October 17
Cass Gallagher Hike 11 am

The sky is blue, the air is crisp, and a soft breeze rustles through the last leaves. This is a great time for a hike in the woods.

Meet the Rangers at Broadway & Mosholu Ave.

Saturday, October 24, 1 pm 🧒
Nature Scavenger Hunt

Fun for the whole family! Play nature detectives as the Rangers lead the way to find hidden treasures in the park.

November

Saturday, November 7, 9 am 🧒
Birding Club

Search for hawks circling high above the park in warm air kettles. It's a fascinating phenomenon of fall migration.

Sunday, November 8, 1 pm 🧒
**Nature Photography III:
Autumn Leaves**

When the weather starts to cool, our trees really begin to glow! Bring your camera to photograph those vivid autumn colors.

Saturday, November 21, 10 am 🧒
Mid-Fall Migrants

Before the winter waterfowl arrive, the last stragglers from fall migration make their way through our parks. Bring binoculars to watch them closely.

Saturday, November 28, 11 am 🧒
Post Turkey Day Super Hike

A Van Cortlandt post-Thanksgiving tradition – take a long hike with the Rangers to work off those extra helpings of stuffing and potatoes! Wear comfortable shoes.



Van Cortlandt House Museum

Saturday, November 14, 2 pm
**Well Behaved Women
Making History**

Join this lecture tour with VCHM Director Laura Carpenter to hear the stories of the Dutch Colonial Revival at Van Cortlandt House Museum. Call 718-543-3344 for reservations. \$10

**Saturday, December 5,
11 am – 3 pm**
St. Nicholas Day Celebration

Learn how the Van Cortlandt family called upon their Dutch heritage to celebrate Saint Nicholas Day. Take a family-oriented tour of Van Cortlandt House, meet the guest of honor, and enjoy a cup of hot mulled cider and cookies around a roaring campfire. Free with regular Van Cortlandt House admission.

**Saturday & Sunday
December 19 & 20, 4 – 7 pm**
Christmastide in the Colonies

Candlelight tours take you through Van Cortlandt House with period re-enactors dressed in Holiday finery.

Call 718-543-3344 for reservations.

\$10 adults, \$5 children

December

Saturday, December 5, 9 am 🧒
Birding Club

Find out which birds overwinter in the park and their methods to keep warm and fed.

Saturday, December 19, 1 pm 🧒
Holiday Eco-Crafts

We'll stay warm and cozy in the nature center and create fun, holiday-inspired crafts. Bring the kids!



Monday, December 21, 5 - 6:30 pm
Solstice Candles

Light up the darkness with luminaria candles along the lake's edge, then take in the crisp, cold calm of this earliest night on a walk up the Putnam Trail.

Meet at the Golf House.



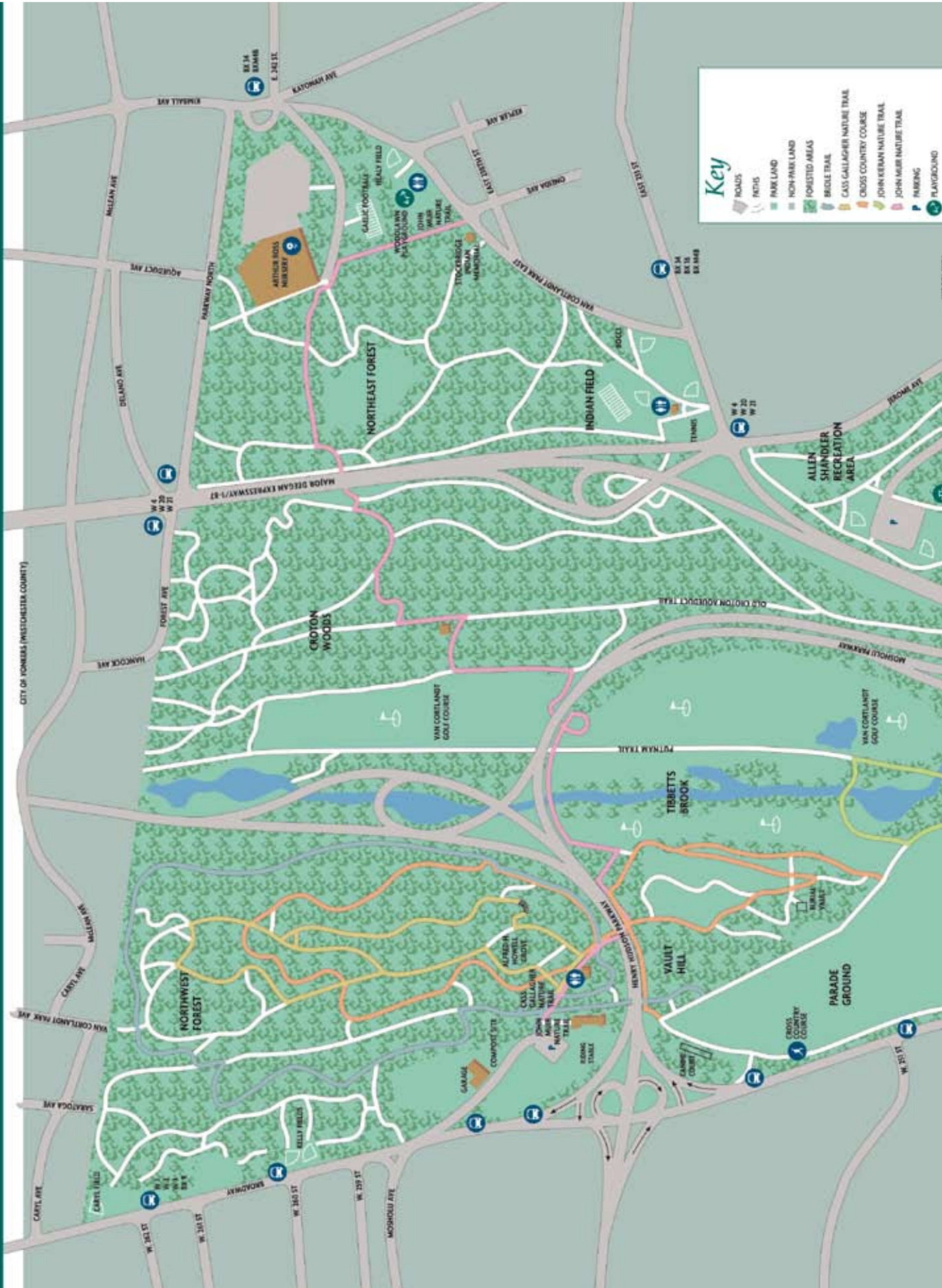
Van Cortlandt Track Club

Every Saturday, 8 am

Explore jogging routes through the park and lower Westchester. Beginners welcome.

Meet at the northern entrance to the Van Cortlandt Stadium.

Van Cortlandt Park





Directions

By Car: The Major Deegan Expressway has two park exits: Van Cortlandt Park South, which serves the south and west portions of the park and East 233rd Street, which serves the north and east. The Henry Hudson Parkway's Broadway exits also serve the park. Moshulu Parkway links Van Cortlandt Park with the Bronx River and Pelham Parkways. Broadway runs along the park's western perimeter; Jerome Avenue and Van Cortlandt Park East border the park on the east side.

By Bus: The Bx9 travels along Broadway on the western edge of Van Cortlandt Park. The BxM3, an express line serving Manhattan, offers access to the park's western border. The park's east side is served by the Bx16, Bx 31 and Bx34. Westchester bus lines – numbers 1,2,3,4,20 and 21 also serve the park.

By Subway: The northern terminus of the IRT #1 train at W. 242nd Street is near the Parade Ground.

The IRT #4 train's last stop at Woodlawn serves the park's southeastern area.

Phone Numbers

- Administrator's Office & Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy 718.430.1890
- Friends of Van Cortlandt Park 718.601.1553
- Moshulu Golf Center 718.655.9164
- Park Enforcement Patrol 718.430.1815
- Riverdale Equestrian Center 718.548.4848
- Urban Park Rangers & Nature Center 718.548.0912
- Van Cortlandt House Museum 718.543.3344
- Permits – Special Events 718.430.1890
- Permits – Sports 718.430.1840
- Events and General Information 311**



City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner

Hector M. Aponte, Bronx Borough Commissioner
Margot Perron, Van Cortlandt Park Administrator

Cliff Harris, Designer

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In cooperation with the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, jill sigman/thinkdance presents *Our Lady of Detritus*, a portable performance installation about trash and transcendence conceived by choreographer/visual designer Jill Sigman and composer/vocalist Kristin Norderval. Imagine an old-fashioned hot dog cart that collects and recycles words, sounds, and actions from the public to create an ongoing performance. Come support the green movement; see your actions affect outcomes
Saturday & Sunday, September 26 & 27 2-4 pm. Admission is free.
 By using improvisational move-

**What Goes Around,
 Comes Around:
 Artists Take on Trash**

ment structures and an interactive sound system powered through a combination of rechargeable batteries, solar panels, and human-generated power, *Our Lady* will raise awareness about waste management and recycling. The piece will also examine our personal relations with re-invention, garbage, and throwing things away.
 Described by The New York Times as an artist of “prodigious imagination and intelligence,” Sigman transforms simple actions into complex statements about self, society, and human experience.
 For more information please visit www.thinkdance.org.

Latest News



**Coming Soon...
 Van Cortlandt Park's
 Official Website**

The Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy is creating an official website for the park. The site includes park maps, construction updates, a seasonal calendar of public programs in the park, a listing of groups participating in the Community Council, and ways to make donations. Viewers can also submit online comments to help make the park even better. Look for the Conservancy's new logo to identify the website and brand all new developments in the park. Check it out at: www.vcpark.org.

**Closed for
 Renovations**

Four sites in the park will be closed for renovations this fall and winter: the Parade Ground fields, Shandler Picnic Area, Shandler Ballfields and the comfort station at Broadway & Manhattan College Parkway. Please pardon the temporary inconvenience; the final results will be well worth the wait.

Sports Mecca

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next spring, there will be six grassy, full-sized fields with proper grading, clay pitches, irrigation and space for four more fields.

There is no other park in the country with ten cricket fields in one location. The International Cricket Club, which hosts the World Cup Invitational, has never been held in the United States, but with state-of-the-art fields about to open in Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx is poised to be the next location for the international Invitational.

Lesly Lowe of the Commonwealth League and Milford Lewis of the New York Cricket League have dedicated



Cricket on the Parade Ground, circa 1914

themselves to the sport, organizing hundreds of players for over 20 years in this park and other parks throughout the city. Their teams or “clubs” are collaborating with Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy’s Community Council to raise awareness of the need to protect

the fields and the park so the new fields will stay in good shape.

Make Van Cortlandt Park your sports mecca by coming to the park to exercise any way you can or relax on a bench to get some fresh air and sunshine. You’ll feel rejuvenated just by being here.

Saturday Volunteering

Dig It! October 3

Timberland and Parks join forces! 400 volunteers will pitch in to help paint light posts and benches, ward off graffiti, plant trees, and remove weeds in the Van Cortlandt Park Northeast Forest, Indian Fields and Shandler Recreation Areas. All volunteers will be given a t-shirt, hat, and lunch! Pre-registration is required. To learn more and to register, visit us online at www.nyc.gov/parks.



Join the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park for the following plantings, clean ups and special family days. Dress ready to work and bring water and a snack.

Work Days

Fall Volunteer Kickoff

September 26, 10 am

Meeting locations are: VC Riding Stables, Last Stop of #1 Train, Last Stop of #4 Train and Woodlawn Playground.

It’s My Park! Day on the John Kieran Nature Trail

October 17, 10 am

Meet in the park at Broadway & 242 St. near the last stop of the #1 Train.

MillionTreesNYC Fall Volunteer Planting Day

October 24

To learn more and to register, visit www.milliontreesnyc.org after Sept. 1.

Eastern John Muir Volunteer Day

November 7, 10 am

Meet in front of the Woodlawn Playground at Van Cortlandt Park East & Kepler Ave.

Family Days

Nature Center Garden

September 12, 11 am-2 pm

Enter the park at Broadway & 246th St.

NeighborWoods Weekend: Forestry Fun

Saturday, October 24 &

Sunday, October 25, 10 am-1 pm

Enter the Park at Broadway & Mosholu Ave, then follow the path up Rockwood Drive to Howell Grove.



Saturday Volunteer Days are made possible by Timberland, New York Community Trust, Con Edison, MillionTreesNYC, The Home Depot Foundation and the New York Restoration Project.

LOOKING BACK AT SUMMER



Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy's First Fête was a delightful lakeside dinner before the **New York Philharmonic** Concert (top left photo). **Commissioner Benepe** introduced NYP's President **Zarin Mehta** as the guest of honor (top right photo). Actor/environmentalist **Matthew Modine** enjoyed meeting the Board of Directors (bottom left photo-he's in the back row, middle). Chairman **Tony Perez Cassino** served a sumptuous dessert from **Lloyd's Carrot Cake** and beer from **Ibiza Lounge**; tables were adorned with gorgeous bouquets from **John's Botany Bay**; and the **Community Preservation Corporation** made possible the delicious Middle Eastern food from **Sqweez** (bottom right photo).

More Outdoor Music & Dance



At the Playground Performances sponsored by Horace Mann School, "Thaddeus Rex" (left) rocked with the kiddies. At Barefoot Dancing (below), fathers and daughters boogied together...

and a fire dancer played tricks (right).

