

## Come Out & Play

Discounts For Members. More Info Online.  
[www.Schiffnaturepreserve.Org](http://www.Schiffnaturepreserve.Org)

November 28, 2020 (Saturday) 9:00 - 11:00 am  
**Volunteer Day @ Schiff**

November 29, 2020 (Sunday) 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Hike Off the Holiday**

December 1, 2020 (Tuesday) 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
December 3, 2020 (Thursday) 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
**Homeschooling at Schiff - Preparing for Winter**

December 8, 2020 (Tuesday) 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
December 10, 2020 (Thursday) 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
**Homeschooling at Schiff - Squirrels**

December 12, 2020 (Sunday) 12:00 - 2:00 pm  
**Deer Santa: Celebrating the "Nature" of Christmas**

December 13, 2020 (Sunday) 8:00 - 10:00 am  
**Sunday Morning Fitness Hike**

December 15, 2020 (Tuesday) 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
December 17, 2020 (Thursday) 2:00 - 4:00 pm  
**Homeschooling at Schiff - Squirrels**

December 20, 2020 (Sunday) 4:00 - 5:30 pm  
**Winter Solstice Celebration**

December 21, 2020 (Monday) 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
**Winter Solstice Celebration for Kids**

Please check our website for current calendar offerings.  
Some programs may have since been cancelled.

## WHERE'S SCHIFF?

40° 45' 48.332" N / 74° 37' 15.641" W



## 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 music lovers: Music in the Woods.

# Field Notes

From Schiff Nature Preserve



339 Pleasant Valley Road, Mendham, New Jersey 07945-2922 • 973.543.6004 • [www.schiffnaturepreserve.org](http://www.schiffnaturepreserve.org)

## Like Nature, Schiff Nature Preserve Adapts

By Amalia Duarte, Trustee

"How are you doing?" In normal times, the question would merit an innocuous, "Just fine! How are you?" But during this pandemic, let's face it, no one is truly fine. To some degree, we are all managing challenges, whether it's trying to work from home, keep an eye on our childrens' mental health and their ever-changing school situations, or caring for shut-in, elderly relatives. The list goes on.

Here's a bright spot: Schiff Nature Preserve. Our miles of trails, peaceful woods, and open fields have offered a place for quiet respite. We never closed our trails and the community was grateful. We were the recipient of numerous emails, phone calls, and letters thanking us. We even had a resident stuff a donation check and a note into our mailbox, thanking us for being here.

Meanwhile, we looked at our planned programs and reimagined everything. The requirements for extra staffing and social-distancing protocols made programs such as our Summer Nature Program for Kids (SNP) cost prohibitive, so we developed SNP At

Home Kits. The Environmental Film Festival took a cue from the drive-in movie revival and set up an outdoor screen, and our Music in the Woods, became, well, music in our cozy outdoor woodland amphitheater. Our annual Farm-to-Table benefit dinner went virtual, although our Holiday Plant and Gingerbread House fundraiser will have in person pickup. We can't thank you enough for your support.

As we look to the holidays, unsure of how we can safely celebrate with loved ones, know that Schiff will be here for you, offering a quiet spot to exercise, wander, and reflect in our preserved lands.

### R for Finding Your Way to Schiff

While our mailing address is 339 Pleasant Valley Drive Mendham, NJ 07945, Schiff is a hidden jewel, thus a bit tricky to find. Follow the specific directions found on our website and when using GPS, use *339 Schiff Drive, Mendham, NJ* as your destination.

## Schiff's Response to the Pandemic

By Marissa S. McDonnell, President

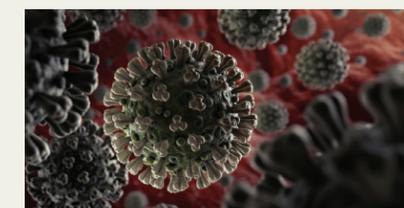
As for everyone, 2020 has been a challenging year for Schiff. It quickly became apparent in March that COVID-19 would require that Schiff revise its budget as we cancelled programs and events until we developed a clear understanding of the parameters under which we could operate. We had to make the difficult decision to cancel our popular Summer Nature Program for Kids and ultimately reschedule and downsize fundraising events.

In response to these challenges, our Board of Trustees initiated a \$20,000 Matching Campaign. Every dollar that was donated was matched by the Board up to our goal of \$20,000. We are so grateful to our community for their generosity and support of this effort in such difficult times.

Fortunately, our trails were the perfect place to hike, bike

or horseback ride and remain socially distanced. Our community was very grateful for this access, as we remained open while all state and federal parks were closed during the "stay at home" portion of the pandemic.

We have seen Membership in Schiff increase over the last six months, a silver lining in this uncertain time, as membership dollars are a significant annual source of support for our operations, which include land conservation and trail maintenance. As a current member, you can help by inviting friends to hike at the preserve or join you at one of our educational and recreational programs. Many of our new



members have found us this way. Don't forget to like us on Facebook and Instagram or use our new geotag on Snapchat! We look forward to seeing you on the trails soon!

## Board of Trustees

**Marissa S McDonnell, MD**  
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Mendham Township

**Bill Sandelands**  
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**Joseph Gomeringer**  
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**Chet Komoroski**  
*Land Steward & Volunteer*  
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**Holly Puleo**  
*Membership & Outreach*  
Coordinator

**Jennifer Chmura**  
**Christi Lorenson**  
*Summer Nature Program*  
Co-Directors



## Schiff Launches a NEW Fundraiser for the Holidays



Schiff is launching a new fundraiser that might just be a saving grace to many folks in many ways. The Plant and Gingerbread House Sale may become an annual event, providing our community an easy way to support its local nature preserve, enjoy one-stop shopping for holiday plants, AND have a fun and creative family activity. The Schiff Chateau Gingerbread House Kit comes pre-assembled by the baker on a decorative foil covered base with ten types of traditional and holiday

candy, icing and a piping bag, a handcrafted gingerbread tree and reindeer, as well as gum paste fox and toadstools for a woodland touch. Plant options included Amaryllis, Paperwhite, and Poinsettias with a choice of handmade bows to compliment one's décor. We're hoping to see lots of entries on social media on the Schiff Plant and Gingerbread House Sale Facebook event page showing how folks decorated their Chateau Gingerbread House. Submit entries through December 31, 2020. On January 1, 2021, the picture with the most "likes" will be deemed the winner of the (soft) contest and receive free admission to our January, 2021 Full Moon Hike Program.

## 11th Annual Environmental Film Festival



Neither pandemic nor weather could deter us from holding our annual Film Festival on Sunday, August 30. Reimagined as an outdoor event, some 35 members and friends gathered at Wood Badge Lodge to watch "Just Eat It," a quirky and humorous film about one couple's journey to reduce waste by surviving only on foods that would otherwise be thrown away. The eye-opening look at our obsession with expiry dates, perfect produce, and portion sizes left us all discussing ways we could reduce food waste.

## NEW Homeschooling Series for Our Littlest Stewards

Schiff has taken a fully outdoor approach to "back to school" as a new homeschooling series has met the needs of many families opting for educational alternatives. Our naturalist educators have taken the natural science lessons outdoors with experiential hands-on learning to explore a different seasonal topic every week, focusing on what is happening in the many habitats of Schiff. Held completely outside, homeschoolers of all ages walk the trails as activities, scavenger hunts, scientific inquiry, modeling, and deductive reasoning expand the minds of our students. Topics range from Dragonflies & Damselies to Bears, Tracking in Camouflage, Classification to Migration. There is so much to explore as each week brings new discoveries.

## Schiff Nature Preserve at Home Kits

This past year has provided us all with many challenges and hurdles to jump, but it has also provided us with the push to get a little more creative! Our Summer Nature Program At Home Kits were so much fun to create and a great success with families across the county! Looking forward to 2021, Co-Directors Christi Lorenson and Jenny Chmura are as motivated as ever to provide endless amounts of in-person, nature-based fun for children ages 4-13, ensuring every child's experience is one that inspires, builds confidence, creates friendships

and ever lasting respect for the environment. 2021's nature-themed programs will include "The Cycles of Life," "Superheroes of Schiff," "Shape Shifters" and "Are You Awake?" Children will explore the natural world as they hike the many trails of Schiff searching for signs of wildlife, sweep-netting insects in the meadow, exploring life in the river, picking wineberries, building shelters, and much more including Schiff's signature tie-dying! We can't think of a better way to enjoy the sights and sounds of summer than with friends, fun and learning outside!

## Schiff Thanks Jeanne Rice for her Service



With over 11 years of service as a Trustee and another 3 years as Executive Director, we couldn't be more thankful for all the contributions that Jeanne made during her time at Schiff. Jeanne, a communication and marketing professional with a passion for environmental protection, lives with her family in Gladstone, where they continue to enjoy hiking Schiff's trails and contributing their time and talents towards Schiff's success.

## Mt. Paul Preserve and Wood Badge Latrine Improvements

Each year, Schiff is the proud and grateful beneficiary of Eagle and Gold Scout Award projects. This year, we were fortunate to have three young men select Schiff as their benefactor. The latrine at Wood Badge Lodge has been completely renovated by Troop 1 member, Matt Messina, to include an improved walkway, aesthetics, and facilities. Currently, this latrine is the only permanent restroom on the trails within the preserve and thus we are very happy to offer a comfortable stop for our visitors and guests who hike and enjoy programs at Wood Badge Lodge. A second major project was accomplished cooperatively by Chris Amoresano from Troop 9 and Brian Jamer from Troop 1 at the Mt.

Paul Preserve off of Rt. 24 in Chester. Take a visit to this preserve and notice the widened trails and blazes throughout, newly installed footbridges, and a recently cleared scenic overlook, complete with a bench for long views and rest. We are ever thankful for their fine work and dedication, and congratulate all three young men on their achievement of Eagle Scout.



## Music in the Woods Held Outdoors

While normally set in our Nature Center, Music in the Woods this fall was held in the magical setting of the Woodland Amphitheatre. With a newly widened trail bringing attendees to an outdoor stage and stadium-like seating, a great time was had by members and new friends alike who joined us for several afternoons of live music literally "in the woods." While you may have missed

Cirotti Trio, Playful Banter, Attention Span Limited, and Alexis von Aulock, we look forward to having several shows outdoors in 2021. Stay tuned!



## Farm to Table Benefit Dinner Goes Grab and Go

Schiff's popular Farm to Table fundraising event inspired a number of memorable pop-up dinner parties around the area on October 10th as guests used the opportunity to share this special to-go meal with close family and friends in the comfort of their own homes. The delectable meals were created by the master chefs at Monterey Fine Foods in Bernardsville using locally sourced foods and beverages. This year's menu included a field greens salad garnished with a goat cheese crouton and maple syrup brittle (see recipe in box); dressed in a coriander, white pepper, and maple syrup reduction; a beef and sage sausage cassoulet with Long Island duck confit and veal reduction; gratin of root vegetables; and fall fruit pie for dessert. Schiff encourages you to eat local whenever possible and to support our valued partners year-round: Alstede Farms in Chester, Riverbend Farm in Far Hills, Wet Ticket Brewing in Rahway, and Monterey Fine Foods.

## GOAT CHEESE CROSTINI & SCHIFF MAPLE SYRUP BRITTLE

### Ingredients

#### For the Crostini

1 loaf French or Italian Loaf Bread  
Olive Oil  
Salt & Pepper to taste

#### For the Goat Cheese Spread

6 oz Goat Cheese  
2 oz Cream  
2 oz Fresh Thyme

#### Crostini

Slice bread 1/4 inch, brush with olive oil, sprinkle with salt & pepper and toast to desired crispness.

#### Goat Cheese Spread

Mix goat cheese, cream, and thyme with a whisk until smooth. Set aside.

#### Brittle

1. Spray a baking sheet with non-stick spray and line with parchment paper.  
2. Stir together the sugar, corn syrup, and maple syrup and 1/2 cup water in a medium saucepan with a candy thermometer in the pan. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, then continue to boil until the mixture

#### For the Brittle

2 Cups Sugar  
1/4 Cup Corn Syrup  
1/4 Cup Schiff Maple Syrup  
1/2 Tsp Baking Soda  
1/2 Stick Unsalted Butter  
(1 1/2 Cups Nuts of Choice)

### Procedure

is golden brown and reaches 340 degrees F, about 15 minutes.

3. Working quickly, remove the pan from heat and stir in the butter and baking soda until smooth. Stir in nuts if desired and distribute evenly.  
4. Pour all onto the baking sheet and quickly smooth with a rubber spatula. Let harden uncovered at room temperature until cool. Break into desired pieces.

#### To Prepare

Spread goat cheese on crostini. Sprinkle the maple brittle on the crostini and serve with a salad.