

Town Journal



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2006 ALLENDALE • HO-HO-KUS • SADDLE RIVER • UPPER SADDLE RIVER YOUR HOMETOWN NEWS



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

People from all over Bergen County migrate to the Celery Farm in Allendale to watch birds, walk the trails and enjoy nature.

A CROWN JEWEL

Celery Farm celebrates 25 years

The Celery Farm is Allendale's "crown jewel," 107 acres of nature right in our own backyard.

People from throughout Bergen County flock to its trails to glimpse the 325 species that call it home.

We get "up close and personal" with those who are inspired by its beauty. See page 2.

Conservationists recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Celery Farm with a picnic at Crestwood Lake. Page 4.

Sixty acres were saved back in 1981 through the efforts of Marsh Warden Stiles Thomas, former

Allendale Mayor Edward FitzPatrick and other concerned citizens. Additional history, page 5.

Visitors can take in the view at the majestic Warden's Watch or take in some bird watching on the Mayor FitzPatrick Nature Trail. Page 6.

Today, volunteers from the Fyke Nature Association maintain the preserve for the next generation. Page 7.

This issue, *Town Journal* salutes the Celery Farm at 25: the Past, Present and Future of Allendale's Oasis.



Picturesque Brotherton Bridge spans the Allendale Brook at the Celery Farm.



The Celery Farm is "hopping" with wildlife.

CLASSIFIEDS	47	REAL ESTATE	60
DINING OUT	45	SCHOOLS	28
OBITUARIES	20	TEEN BEAT	31
OPINION	10	TOWN SCOOP	21



SPORTS

Tennis team comes up 'aces'. PAGE 35.

YOUR TOWN

Nature lover shares his passion. PAGE 3.



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Celery Farm in Allendale offers visitors splendid views and a nature trail that circles Lake Appert.

A CROWN JEWEL

It's simply 107-acres of 'heaven'

BY JIM WRIGHT
SPECIAL TO TOWN JOURNAL

The Celery Farm is a magical place of water, woods and sky, where great blue herons are commonplace and cell phones are fairly rare.

The Celery Farm means a sense of community, a place with nifty neighbors, a place where my wife and I have met some extraordinary people over the past six-plus years and established lasting friendships.

It means Marsh Warden Stiles Thomas and his wife, Lillian, whose love for both the Celery Farm and Allendale is contagious.

The Celery Farm means we live in a town that 25 years ago had the foresight to put aside what has grown into a 107-acre refuge for humans and all sorts of creatures – and a town that now has the common sense to keep it that way.

The Celery Farm means amazing moments, like a hummingbird flying backward, an osprey snaring a fish in the middle of the lake, or a child thrilled about all the painted turtles and frogs he can see.

The Celery Farm means Lake Appert and that small patch of wilderness that lies just beyond my backyard. It means sitting on a bench and holding hands, or watching nature, or just thinking about matters large and small.

The Celery Farm means a bunch of volunteers who groom the trails and install the benches and add the wood chips and keep the place natural, but spiffy.

It means "The Hour on the Tower" most Sunday

mornings in the summer and fall, where good birders tell bad jokes and see how many different species of birds they can see in 60 minutes – and not a minute more.

The Celery Farm means taking an early-morning walk in fresh snow and being the first one to make tracks – if you don't count the fox and squirrels and deer. Then watching the eager skaters arrive with shovels to clear enough space on the lake for a rousing game or two of pond hockey.

It means taking an early morning walk in early spring, and hearing the peepers and seeing the insistent young skunk cabbage push its way through the ground.

It means taking an early morning walk in summer, and hearing the kingfisher before you see it, and hearing all those Canada geese and wishing you didn't.

It means a bracing early-morning walk in autumn, with fallen leaves crunching underfoot and squadrons of birds taking flight for points south.

Perhaps most of all for me, it means memories of the day my wife and I got married at the observation deck known as the Warden's Watch. In late December. After a snowfall. With family and friends. Who eventually thawed out.

Quite a place, that Celery Farm.

Editor's Note: Allendale resident Jim Wright is the author of "In the Presence of Nature: The Celery Farm Natural Area, Allendale, New Jersey" and "Duck Enough To Fly" and is deputy editorial page editor for The Record.



'The Celery Farm is a magical place of water, woods and sky...'

JIM WRIGHT
ALLEDALE



YOUR TOWN

Town Journal
THURSDAY, September 21, 2006

PAGE 3

'The Celery Farm is just beautiful, and we enjoy walking through nature, learning about the surrounding area and all the species that visit here.'



Marion Gottlieb
Ramsey

'We love to visit the Celery Farm to see the different birds that migrate here. We're here today because the kingfishers are out.'

Russell Ditchfield-Agboh
Maywood



'I come to the Celery Farm to walk. I like the trail and at the same time, it gives me an opportunity to see all of the birds. We just saw a blue one on the trail.'



Nicole Hernandez
Allendale

A nature lover shares his passion

Q&A with the Celery Farm's Marsh Warden

BY JOE OLIVIERI
OF TOWN JOURNAL

Stiles Thomas is a friend of the woods.

For 50 years Allendale's Marsh Warden has been urging others to take good care of the Celery Farm, starting in 1956 with a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Wetlands are hard to find these days," he wrote.

In the late 1970s, he and former mayor Edward FitzPatrick spearheaded efforts to protect the unique nature preserve. They went to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation to convince the group to purchase the land.

Thomas was dubbed "Marsh Warden" soon after the borough bought the property and he has been the authority on all things natural in Allendale ever since.

He continues his decades-long advocacy of wildlife to this day, leading bird tours, where visitors might view some of the more exotic species.

Viewing Thomas is much easier - a welcome station dedicated to him greets nature lovers as they enter the Celery Farm.

Thomas talked with *Town Journal* to discuss the future of the Celery Farm, what 25 years means to him and how it all began.

TJ: After 25 years, what does this anniversary mean to you?

ST: Well, it does mean an awful lot to me. The place started out as 60 acres initially in 1981 and we've, one way or another, secured additional land and it's now at 107 acres.

This has given us the impetus to give us a few more acres in the near future, I think.



ANTHONY VASSALLO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Marsh Warden Stiles Thomas, the authority on all things natural in Allendale, poses with the beloved Celery Farm.

The one thing that gives me the most pleasure is the hundreds of people who have made new friendships there. This could go into the thousands, but certainly hundreds of people who are interested in nature and land preservation have made the acquaintance of kindred souls and they have developed friendships that they haven't had before.

Another thing that has given me great pleasure is that all the work at the Celery Farm, except the heavy, heavy work, is done by volunteers. I could single out two or three who work there tirelessly, some almost every day in improving the trails in different ways. And we've had much help from the Boy Scouts in Allendale.

TJ: What do you see for future anniversaries of the Celery Farm?

ST: I hope that next time we'll have an anniversary...we've been successful in acquiring more acreage, either directly or through

conservation easement.

I am going to be going before the council in October along with a fellow in town by the name of Charlie West. He is chairman of the Fyke Nature Association Conservation Committee.

And he and I have a proposal which we're going to present to the council. Our idea will not cost the borough taxpayers one penny. It'll all be taken care of by the Nature Association.

TJ: This will be going for more acres?

ST: Yep. I can't go into any more detail because I have to advise the council of this. It would be premature.

TJ: How does the 25th anniversary compare to the first one, or when it was getting started?

ST: Of course the attendance at the Celery Farm is so much greater than in 1981. We did have a grand opening officiated by the late may-

or Edward FitzPatrick, for whom we wouldn't have the Celery Farm if it weren't for Ed.

His daughter cut a ribbon of celery to enter the farm, which is sort of fun. Celery strung together.

TJ: Who were the VIPs at the picnic?

ST: We had houseguests come up from Maryland - people who used to live in Allendale. People come down from Maine and Pennsylvania, New York state. A lot of the old-timers. Conservationists.

Two of them, two ladies, Martha Webster and Tepe Sjolander, prepared part of the application that went to the DEP to secure Green Acres funds.

TJ: What part of your job as marsh warden do you enjoy the most? Take the most pride in?

ST: Showing people birds along the trail.

TJ: Why is it important to pre-

serve the Celery Farm and open space?

ST: You know as much as I do how important it is. Because they're all disappearing so quickly and for our children and our children's children.

TJ: Obviously the Celery Farm means a lot to you. What about the Celery Farm jumps out at you and makes all the effort seem worthwhile?

ST: From time to time as I walk around, it just hits me how beautiful it is. Might be my mood, or the day, or the sun just comes through or the sun coming through the mist.

I enjoy meeting people along the trail and seeing their enjoyment. Sharing their enjoyment.

Joe Olivier's e-mail address is olivieri@northjersey.com or phone 201-612-5430

ADVERTISING 973-569-7280
FAX 973-569-7259
CIRCULATION 888-504-4280
FAX 201-794-3259

CLASSIFIEDS 1-888-827-0117
FAX 973-569-7440
EDITORIAL 201-612-5434
FAX 201-612-5436
townjournal@northjersey.com

Town Journal

41 Oak Street (entrance on Walnut Street)
Ridgewood, NJ 07450-3805
©2006 North Jersey Media Group Inc.

Town Journal USPS 2312 publishes every Thursday. Circulation offices are located at 12-38 River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410-1802.

Yearly subscription rate in New Jersey is \$65. Single copy: 25¢. Periodical Postage paid at Ridgewood, NJ 07450 and other offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Town Journal, 12-38 River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410.

Photo Reprint Service and PDF Full-Page Sales We will reprint most staff and freelance photos and PDFs of pages that appeared in this newspaper since 1/1/02. Photos and PDFs are sold for personal use only. All commercial and/or other uses are strictly prohibited and may subject one to civil penalties. Photo prices: \$15 for 5x7, \$25 for 8x10. PDF files: \$30. Prices include sales tax. Call 973-569-7077 or e-mail reprints@northjersey.com

TOWN JOURNAL THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

Picnickers praise preservation pioneers

BY JOE OLIVIERI
OF TOWN JOURNAL

Nature lovers migrated to Crestwood Lake over the weekend to celebrate 25 years of preserving the Celery Farm.

Steady rain didn't stop approximately 85 guests from sharing bird-watching humor, reminiscing about past conservation events and taking pictures during the catered picnic at the Red Barn last Friday.

It was a homecoming for some and past and present environmentalists praised the efforts of those who brought them together.

Master of Ceremonies James Wright recognized hardworking volunteers during his welcoming speech.

"Not only has (The Fyke Nature Association) done a great job now for a quarter century, but it also has provided a wonderful sense of community, and for that we are all grateful," he said.

Picnickers applauded the Celery Farm's first advocates.

Distinguished guests included

Martha Webster and Teppy Sjolander, who worked on the original Green Acres application to buy the property.

Past Fyke Nature Association presidents presented Marsh Warden Stiles Thomas with a nature book for his dedication.

"I only wish the late Mayor FitzPatrick was here," said Thomas, referring to Edward FitzPatrick, who helped Thomas preserve the Celery Farm. "He would have loved this."

Hugh Carolla, of the Hackensack Riverkeeper, said he drew inspiration from those who have protected the land. "It is such a unique thing, the Celery Farm," he said. "When I go around to the different municipalities, I tell them, 'If you care about what is special about your town, if you are thinking about the future and what can be done to preserve it, look at Allendale and the Celery Farm.'"

Joe Olivieri's e-mail address is olivieri@northjersey.com or phone 201-612-5430



JOE OLIVIERI/TOWN JOURNAL

From left, Martha Webster, Marsh Warden Stiles Thomas and Teppy Sjolander pose with next year's fundraising calendar at the Celery Farm's 25th anniversary picnic. The three environmentalists helped apply for the Green Acres grant that preserved the Celery Farm for future generations.



Master of Ceremonies James Wright sprinkled bird-watching humor into his welcoming remarks.



Peter Szwed, GRI, CRS, ABR, e-PRO
Broker/Sales Associate



Lorraine Zito
Sales Associate

Erin Farley
Sales Associate

info@PeterAndLorraine.com

Working from the Hub of West Bergen County
Call Us Direct at 201-848-3422
www.PeterAndLorraine.com

Real Estate is Our Only Business!
Representing Buyers and Sellers



Just Reduced... Quiet Street, Lake Rights... Magnificent Landscaping. Updated Kitchen... Perfect for Entertaining... All This Can Be Yours. Call Today for a Personal Preview! Oakland... Offered at \$565,000

Each home is unique & needs a customized Marketing Plan... Call/Email today for your complimentary Consultation. We are a team of full time professionals here to help you! Franklin Lakes Office 201-891-7600



RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

Diamond in rough becomes 'crown jewel'

Making history at the Celery Farm

BY JOE OLIVIERI
OF TOWN JOURNAL

There is a time machine on Franklin Turnpike.

The Celery Farm transports its visitors to a time when woods were the norm.

Younger residents have grown up with a protected Lake Appert. Others moved into town after the marsh was preserved.

But those who have watched the Celery Farm evolve - from an actual farm to a fish hatchery to a wildlife preserve - have seen their 1,800-acre town expand while one corner remains the same.

Agrarian Beginnings

Former Allendale Mayor Curly Shaw moved to town a little before 1948. "There must have been only 2,000 people there at the time," he said.

Back then, the Celery Farm had gotten its name from the original use of the land. A local family had been farming celery not long before Bob Pirie moved to town 50 years ago.

"It was a real peet bog and marshland with water in the pond that was used for irrigating the celery and any other types of crops



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Celery Farm visitors climb to the top of platforms to see birds flying over majestic Lake Appert.

that were there," he said.

"I think they still had a couple of hot houses where they prepared and probably got the celery ready

SEE JEWEL, PAGE 43



JEWEL

FROM PAGE 5

to plant," he said. "It was an open space, as we had a lot of open space at the time."

Playing in the Shadow of Industry

Business had wound down at the farm from the 1950s into the 1960s. Grassy Forks Fisheries had replaced the fields of celery on a part of the land.

Residents describe the property in those years as a sleepy place, largely forgotten by industry and embraced by children.

"I remember it was a great place for my kids to go fishing and find goldfish," said Bud Blide, American Legion Post 204 commander and a 42-year Allendale resident.

"There was a goldfish (hatchery) down farther towards town and the goldfish always seemed to get free and float upstream," he said. "And my children would catch them and bring them, which was fine."

"They would play down there summer, winter, fall and so on," he added. "It was a great place to go and the water was never deep enough to where you had to worry about them drowning."

Council Member Jim Strauch fondly remembers bicycling and walking through the trails.

"Grandpa (John) Bajor was still doing some farming operation at what is now the end of Fox Run and it was pretty much vacant land," he said. "The kids were pretty much playing, losing boots in the mud that seemed to sink forever."

He said people rode horses on the property as well.

The Path to Preservation



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Neighbors of all ages can appreciate nature at the Celery Farm, which is maintained by the Fyke Nature Association and the borough of Allendale.

He said people rode horses on the property as well.

The Path to Preservation

By the 1970s, Allendale naturalist Stiles Thomas had already been advocating preserving the Celery Farm for decades.

But the Celery Farm's future would change after Thomas teamed up with then-Allendale Mayor Edward FitzPatrick.

Blide was a member of the borough council from 1975 to 1986. "A few years later, FitzPatrick came to the council and said, 'You know, we ought to see if we can't hold this wonderful piece of property down there,'" he said.

"And he had been speaking to Stiles Thomas," said Blide. "Now Stiles was 1001 percent for something we could do."

Time was working against the conservationists because J. Nevins McBride wanted to sell the property.

"We went through hell's half-acre a couple of times because McBride... would have sold to anybody had they given the right figure, but he and FitzPatrick were very, very good friends," said Blide.

He said FitzPatrick had worked as a lawyer for the real estate entrepreneur and had gotten to know him over the years.

"Since (McBride) owned most of the property, he gave us what I thought was a pretty good price," he said.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Green Acres

Strauch said the borough did not have the money to purchase the Celery Farm outright, regardless of the bargain.

"What happened, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation stepped in, realizing the borough could not fund the purchase," he

Neighbors of all ages can appreciate nature at the Celery Farm, which is maintained by the Fyke Nature Association and the borough of Allendale.

said.

On Oct. 24, 1979, the foundation would acquire 64.4 acres of the Celery Farm from Grassy Forks Fisheries at a value of \$248,500.

It would hold the properties on Block 801, Lots 18, 1 and 10 for three years as the borough got its finances in order.

Allendale applied for New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres funding, which would help preserve open space and recreational development.

And on Jan. 19, 1981, the state approved \$124,250 to help the borough.

Blide said the borough took out a bond for the rest of the money and soon the Celery Farm belonged to Allendale.

Growth and Appreciation

The Celery Farm has since grown from that initial purchase.

Strauch said in the past, developers would deed property to the borough to contribute to the preserve.

"For example, Meadow Lane, which is off of Cottage Place, when they developed that, they gave three acres to the Celery Farm," he said.

The most recent acquisition was a seven-acre tract donated by the Laino Brothers, whose buildings were among the latest to be developed in town.

Strauch said he was only 12 or 13 at the time of the Celery Farm's purchase. Back then, there was so much open space that few people were thinking about preservation.

"The loss of the Celery Farm

then was inconsequential," he said. "The loss of it today would be devastating."

"Since acquiring the Celery Farm, we've lost over 300 acres," he said. "That's a lot because we only have 1,800 acres in Allendale. We're not a big town."

Today, the Celery Farm remains a treasured piece of Allendale's past.

Pirie said the majority of townspeople were in favor of acquiring property for the preserve.

Shaw said the borough preserved the Celery Farm "mainly for people to have walking trails. Growing up, I remember the kids and parents could take walks and kids could fish."

He said Thomas helped create the 1.5 miles of trails through the preserve, which have allowed people to enjoy it.

The Fyke Nature Association has been instrumental in its preservation since the beginning. Charlie West, vice president of conservation, said although the town owns the property, the Association was unofficially charged with maintaining it, with a little help from borough employees.

The town recognizes what it has in the Celery Farm. The unique wildlife sanctuary is visited by thousands of people each year and is discovered by naturalists of all ages who fall in love with its beauty.

"It's one of Allendale's crown jewels," Strauch said.

Joe Olivieri's e-mail address is olivieri@northjersey.com or phone 201-612-5430

Points along the trail

BY JOE OLIVIERI
OF TOWN JOURNAL

The size of the Celery Farm can be daunting, whether it's your first or 50th visit.

There are 1.5 miles of trails to explore, as well as two ponds, bogs and woods to see.

No one wants to miss anything, yet tiny scenes of nature seem to be going on everywhere you look. Each change of the season brings new wildlife and a completely new experience to the visitor.

While it might take some time to take it all in, here are a few noteworthy spots along the trails.

Must-See Locations

■ **Warden's Watch.** The best view of 10-acre Lake Appert is this platform near the entrance of the Celery Farm. The Watch juts out into the lake, accessible by a narrow peninsula shaded by trees. This is the hotspot to watch birds soaring above or perched on birdhouses in the lake. Bring a camera - it's worth it.

■ **Pirie Platform.** This platform boasts a spectacular side view of the lake. Those birds in the distance from Warden's Watch might be ready for their close-up over here.

■ **The Pauline Oxnard Butterfly Garden.** It seems surprisingly structured after walking around in a wildlife refuge, but the colorful flowers and awaiting bench make it a great rest stop. It's also next to a historic tractor.

Great Views

■ **Bob Norman's Bench.** There are several benches dedicated to people at the Celery Farm and are often set up near picturesque views. The bench dedicated to Norman looks out on a particularly scenic view on Lake Appert along Mayor FitzPatrick Nature Trail.

■ **Babbling away.** The Allendale Brook lines the eastern section of the Mayor FitzPatrick Nature Trail. There are numerous places to stand or sit to watch the water pass by.

■ **Osprey Platform.** Built as a local Scout's service project, this spot is on the opposite side of the lake from Warden's Watch. You can see over the tall plants near by.

Take a Closer Look

■ **Blue Heron Pond.** By turning right off Brotherton Bridge and walking toward mile marker 25, visitors can find a beautiful pond off the beaten path. It would seem like the place birds go when they don't want the public to see them.

■ **No reflections here.** There's a bowl-shaped inlet of the lake in between Bob Norman's Bench and



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

There are countless points along the trail where visitors can glimpse expansive views of the 10-acre lake at the Celery Farm.

the John F. Brewster Holly Garden. Trees frame the view of the rest of the lake. A large rock on the ground looks inviting while gazing at green vegetation that makes the surface look flat.

■ **Pick a direction.** Two paths branch off the Mayor FitzPatrick Nature Trail before Pirie Platform. One leads to a quiet spot near the Allendale Brook under a gnarled tree right out of "Grimm's Fairy Tales." The other path leads to more great shots of the lake.

■ **Brotherton Bridge.** The Celery Farm has a bunch of small wooden footbridges that capture the imagination, especially close to Phair's Pond. This one crossing the Allendale Brook is particularly evocative.

■ **Still in Allendale?** Want to forget you're in the suburbs? No traffic can be heard or buildings seen when standing in the middle of a fork along Suzie's Woodland Trail. Lake Appert cannot even be seen from here - it's all woods.

■ **The Dead Zone.** A long bridge over unstable ground is all that separates the well-traveled visitor from the parking lot after completing the Mayor FitzPatrick Nature Trail. Branches reach out of the mud. Ponder its name while watching your balance - there is no railing.

Joe Olivieri's e-mail address is olivieri@northjersey.com or phone 201-612-5430

GRANITE SPECIAL
CORINTHIAN
CUSTOM COUNTERTOPS
Countertop Replacement Specialists
GRANITE • MARBLE

SILESTONE® • CAESARSTONE® • ZODIAQ® • CORIAN®
QUARTZ SURFACES SOLID SURFACES

Large Selection of Stone Slabs
240 West Crescent Ave. Allendale, NJ 07401
201-760-2170
866-86-STONE
FAX: 201-760-2177
www.corinthianmfg.com
Showroom Hours Monday-Friday 8-5
Saturday By Appointment

FREE Sink Offer

Inventory Special! Save on Select Colors. In Stock



The town scoop

Calendar sales from the The Fyke Nature Association's 2007 Celery Farm calendar will be placed in the Celery Farm Land Trust account and earmarked for preserving several more acres around the park. The cost is \$15. All photographs in the calendar were taken in the park and contributed by Fyke Nature Association members. The calendar can be ordered on the Web at www.lulu.com/celeryfarm.

Family Portrait Fundraiser is being held by The Upper Saddle River Youth Guidance Council with Park Ridge MotoPhoto. Portraits will be taken in the studio at Park Ridge MotoPhoto. Appointments are required. To make an appointment, call

CALENDAR YEAR | THE EYES HAVE IT



PHOTO COURTESY OF FYKE NATURE ASSOCIATION

The Fyke Nature Association is selling its 2007 Celery Farm calendar, which features colorful pictures of Allendale's 107-acre nature preserve. Proceeds from the sales of the calendar, which cost \$15 each, will be placed in the Celery Farm Land Trust account and earmarked for preserving several more acres around the park. The calendar can be ordered on the Web site, <http://lulu.com/celeryfarm>.

Volunteers help 'crown jewel' shine

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2006 TOWN JOURNAL



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Neighbors of all ages can appreciate nature at the Celery Farm, which is maintained by the Fyke Nature Association and the borough of Allendale.

'That's one of the things that defines this town. That 107 acres of nature defines Allendale to the people who live here, so that's special.'

HUGH CAROLA

FYKE NATURE ASSOCIATION LAND TRUST DIRECTOR, ON THE CELERY FARM

BY JONATHAN CHIN
OF TOWN JOURNAL

It's a group of people who do good deeds without pay and with little recognition.

But if the Fyke Nature Association and its dedicated volunteer efforts did not exist, neither might the Celery Farm in Allendale.

An organization comprised of approximately 500 families from Allendale and other communities, the Fyke Nature Association serves as the caretakers of the beloved Celery Farm.

Each year, volunteers from the group clean up litter, maintain trails, spread woodchips to make walking easier and paint signs at the nature preserve.

"We're the stewards," said Hugh Carola, the land trust director of the Fyke Nature Association. "A steward is somebody who looks after a place for the benefit of the place itself."

"The Celery Farm is not a park, it is a preserve," added Carola, a member of the group since 1990 and president from 1993 to 2002. "It is a place where animals live and we visit."

According to Carola, the Fyke Nature Association was founded in 1952 by residents from Allendale, Mahwah and Ramsey.

It was the perfect time for the group to form; pursuits such as bird watching and nature study were becoming en vogue, said Carola.

"The Second World War was over and a lot of folks were looking for pursuits, nearby, close to home," he said. "It was a bunch of people who came together who

shared a love of nature, a love of the outdoors."

Members pooled their resources and purchased a property, naming it Fyke Park, after a brook. The land has since become Campgaw Reservation. The group would adopt the name "Fyke," which is a net used to catch eels.

Carola explained that the Fyke Nature Association is a group of amateur naturalists. They have a

number of responsibilities, but are most known for their management of the Celery Farm.

Save for major construction, the group is involved in numerous projects. "If it involves trail maintenance, maintenance of the nesting structures for wood ducks and all that, we do that," said Carola.

"Our volunteers, we do at least

SEE VOLUNTEERS, PAGE 9

Janice Bryer, Ph.D., NBCCH
NJ Hypnocoselor,
Board Certified Hypnotherapist

201.757.4000
60 W. Ridgewood Ave.
Ridgewood, NJ 07450

- ◆ stress-related illness
- ◆ stop smoking
- ◆ compulsions
- ◆ weight loss
- ◆ addictions
- ◆ phobias
- ◆ chronic pain syndrome

W16045-01

Cheesecake Aly Fundraisers



Over 25 varieties of gourmet all natural cheesecakes including: SUGAR FREE & LOW CARB

• Best Chocolate Chip Cookies on earth

VOLUNTEERS

FROM PAGE 7

one or two cleanups a year there, so we maintain that 107-acre nature preserve, in partnership with the borough of Allendale," he added.

The Fyke Nature Association also provides free environmental education opportunities for all ages. It meets the fourth Friday of the month, from September through May, except for Decem-

ber, at the Wyckoff Library.

In addition, the organization coordinates field trips to the Celery Farm, DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, Garrett Mountain Reservation in West Paterson and other locations throughout the state.

Most members come from Allendale, Mahwah, Ramsey, Ridgewood, Waldwick and Wyckoff, but they also hail from Hackensack, Moonachie, Teaneck and even Passaic County.

Carola decided to join after getting into birdwatching. He was

looking for field trips and people to learn from and heard about the Celery Farm.

"I thought it was amazing that this little gem of a natural oasis was right here in the middle of Bergen County," said Carola.

Referring to a painting of the Celery Farm on Allendale's Centennial Wall, he said, "That's one of the things that defines this town. That 107 acres of nature defines Allendale to the people who live here, so that's special."

He stated that being part of the

organization has "been a lot of fun, a lot of great people. A lot of people who are today real leaders in New Jersey's environmental movement came through there."

Carola and other members of the Fyke Nature Association take their responsibility of helping preserve the Celery Farm very seriously.

"It's an honor that we have," he said. "It's also neat because so many people come there, people with little kids, people of all ages and everybody enjoys it!"

"They're taking time out of their busy day and it's quiet, they're taking a relaxing walk, they're looking at birds, they're enjoying what there is to see there," he said.

Annual dues for the Fyke Nature Association are \$20 for a family membership, \$15 for a single adult. Those interested in joining can send their name, address and check to Fyke Nature Association, P.O. Box 141, Ramsey, NJ 07446.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2006



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Allendale resident Christa Mott with a drawing of a barn at the Celery Farm in Allendale, drawn by her late husband, John.

A CROWN JEWEL

Artist drawn to Celery Farm's charm

BY JONATHAN CHIN
OF TOWN JOURNAL

The Celery Farm in Allendale was a source of beauty and inspiration to a late artist.

Before passing away three years ago, Allendale resident John Mott had drawn several different scenes from the Celery Farm.

Mott would visit the nature preserve and using pencils and brown ink – like Leonardo da Vinci – sit and create various images, includ-

ing that of a barn, a butterfly garden, the lake and the trees.

The Celery Farm meant a great deal to Mott, according to his wife, Christa, an Allendale resident who herself is an artist and art teacher, sometimes giving spinning demonstrations at The Hermitage in Ho-Ho-Kus.

"It was really his love," she recalled. "He used to spend a lot of time during the day walking around the Celery Farm. It was just really, really important to him."

Christa said John once spent over a year riding a bicycle through Europe and cited freedom as to why he was so interested in the Celery Farm.

"You could actually walk around there, you could spend your time there to watch the animals," she said. "But I suppose it was probably most the freedom of being able to work without having to see any cars or buildings."

SEE ARTIST, PAGE 44

ARTIST

FROM PAGE 8

"He was a very free spirit," she added. "He would like the Celery Farm because of being a free spirit and liking to be unhampered."

Like John, Christa is passionate about the Celery Farm. The couple would visit the Celery Farm to take in the sights and sounds of birds.

"I have actually a photo somebody took while we came down the stairs from one of the lookouts and they were kind enough to mail

me one of the photos," she said. "It was really very nice, because it was just before he died."

John's drawing of the butterfly garden was sold to a member of the Fyke Nature Association for \$250, said Christa.

She has some of his other Celery Farm drawings in her home, framing her favorite - that of the barn, which was torn down in the mid-1990s.

Christa has also kept a story he had written about the origins of the Celery Farm. "When he had an exhibition, he would put the pic-

ture up and then he would put the story up with it," she said.

She had met John at a Ridgewood art school, where she was modeling and taking classes. The two lived in Ridgewood and moved to Allendale in 1963.

Artistic talent ran in John's family, according to Christa. His brother was an artist and his grandfather worked for Thomas Edison as one of the draftsmen for the light bulb.

"He didn't get a third of the profits from the bulb, so he quit," Christa said of John's grandfather. "Unfortunately, because he just didn't want to have 3 percent."

"We would be wealthy if he had taken the 3 percent," she laughed. "He was supposed to get 3 percent of the bulb invention investment."

In addition to drawing scenes from the Celery Farm, John, a Navy veteran, painted a Mediterranean scene as well as ships. Some of his work can be seen at BeanTowne Gourmet in Allendale.

Jonathan Chin's e-mail address is chin@northjersey.com or phone 201-612-5433



DJMC
Entertainment & Disc Jockeys
Corporate Events • Bar/Bat Mitzvahs • Weddings
"THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT SERVICE"
973-759-7880
www.djmcentertainment.com

W231810-01

EDITORIAL

Protecting the future

The Celery Farm in Allendale – one of the last sanctuaries from the teeming hustle and bustle of North Jersey suburbia – celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

Back on March 30, 1981, the borough of Allendale acquired what was then 60 acres of undeveloped, untouched and unspoiled marshland.

Using Green Acres funding and with the help of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the town bought the land from a developer.

The land could have been developed for any number of uses. And it would have brought its fair share of ratables to the town.

But Allendale naturalist Stiles Thomas and former Allendale Mayor Edward FitzPatrick didn't see it that way.

They led a concerted effort to purchase the property, which is now a rarity in an increasingly overdeveloped area.

It's a lasting reminder of the way Bergen County used to be – before it became perhaps the most densely populated county in the most densely populated state in the nation.

But that's not all. The Celery Farm could be getting even bigger and better. Plans are in the works to increase the size of the Celery Farm, which now spans 107 acres.

It all begs the question – could what happened 25 years ago happen today? Obviously, there's a lot less undeveloped land now than there was in 1981.

However, residents need to nudge borough officials to get on the ball and protect what is left of open space.

Sure, stringent COAH requirements put pressure on local governments, forcing them to find space for affordable housing units.

And developers have the law on their side, having taken governing bodies to court time and time again so that they can develop properties.

But borough officials and residents need to think creatively and demonstrate the same foresight that brought about the purchase of the Celery Farm 25 years ago.

Communities also need to work with and support organizations such as the Fyke Nature Association, a group of naturalists who have become the caretakers of the Celery Farm. The organization has also worked tirelessly to obtain and preserve lands.

Using open space for active recreation is all fine and good. But there also needs to be a portion of it that remains as is – just like the Celery Farm – for passive uses.

In any case, towns need to take action now – before there's nothing left to save.

Letters to Editor Policy

Letters may be edited and may be published, reproduced, or distributed in print, electronic, or other forms. The views and opinions expressed in letters to the editor are not necessarily those of *Town Journal* or its affiliates. Submissions must include a phone number for verification.

Letters which cannot be verified or are anonymous will not be published. Not all letters will necessarily be published. Please send your letters to the editor by e-mail to townjournal@northjersey.com, by fax to 201-612-5436 or by mail to *Town Journal*, 41 Oak Street, Ridgewood, NJ 07450.

Picture perfect!



GARY JUNG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A lush, inviting trail beckons nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts alike to the Celery Farm in Allendale. Share your favorite photo with our readers. E-mail the Editor, Debi Pittman Wilkey, at wilkey@northjersey.com and we'll publish in future issues of *Town Journal*.

'If I had known all this was only a mile and a half from my house, I would have come to the Celery Farm more often. Today I'm here for some photography. There's a good opportunity to see the birds, take a few photographs.'

Chris Gottlieb
Ramsey



STREET TALK

Question: "What brings you to the Celery Farm?"

STREET TALK/JOE OLIVIERI



"We're here mostly for photography. Seeing the wildlife."

MICHAEL CASSIDY
OAKLAND



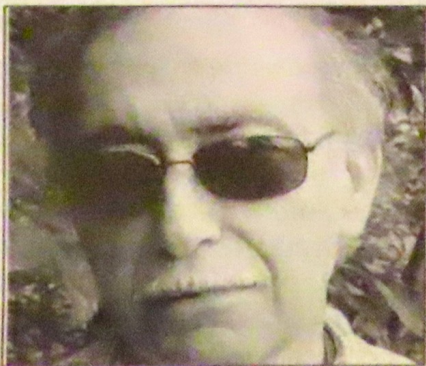
"It's a nice place to walk and get exercise."

RON FILOMENO
WALDWICK



"This is my first time here and I enjoy the birds. It's a beautiful piece of nature in the middle of the suburbs."

ABINA WOOD
NEWARK



"I come here regularly. We're walkers and like nature."

ANGEL HERNANDEZ
ALLENDALE



"Birds!"

DAVE RISAVY
POMPTON LAKES



"We're not particular to what kinds of birds. We're open to seeing anything."

VICKY RISAVY
POMPTON LAKES