

Meet your neighbors

A tireless contributor to the greening of Highland Park

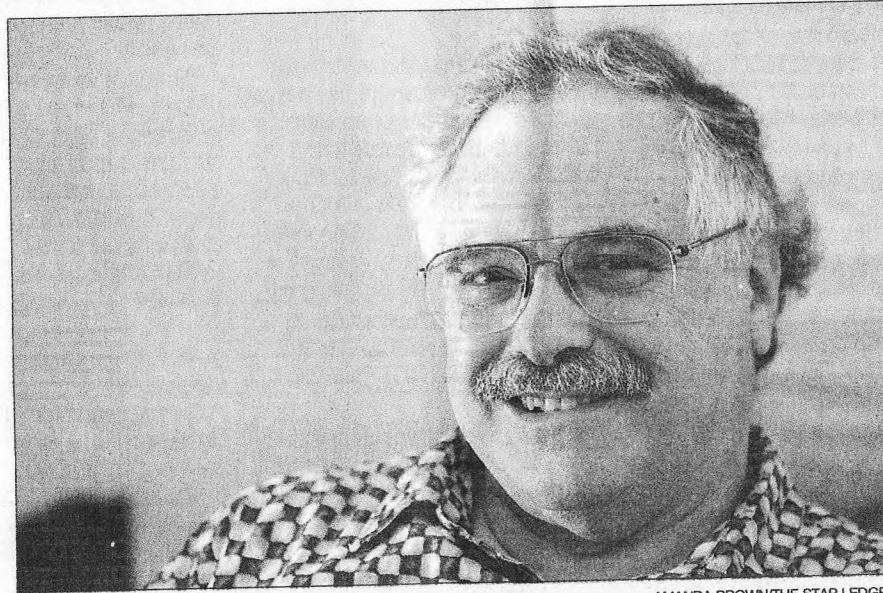
Arnold Henderson
69, Highland Park

Avocation

For more than 15 years, Henderson served on the Highland Park Environmental Commission. He is currently vice-chairman of the group and co-chairman of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. Several years ago, Highland Park honored him as the volunteer of the year. Henderson said his love of the outdoors developed when he was a boy living in Wisconsin.

"I got the bug as a kid. My parents had it, too. I was in the Boy Scouts. I just set it aside while I was teaching," said Henderson, who is a former English professor.

He moved to New Jersey to teach at Rutgers University's Livingston College. When he left teaching, he became an editor for environmental and engineering firms. He is past president of the New York/New Jersey Chapter of the Society of Technical Communications. During his career, he also taught at Rider University and the University of California at Berkeley. After retiring, he continued to write, turning his talents to the subjects he loves. Henderson helped write an environmental encyclopedia for middle-school children and provides the content for the borough's environmental Web site (www.leoraw.com/hpenv).



AMANDA BROWN/THE STAR-LEDGER

Proudest accomplishment

Henderson said he takes pride in having the Raritan River recognized as a "one big environmental unit with natural areas running all along the riverfront." He said one of the most enjoyable parts is the "Meadows" downstream of Donaldson Park, where a network of trails was created. He said the trails stretch for less than a mile.

"But you can walk across the street and feel like you're in the mountains," Henderson said. From the trail, a visitor can see the river, marshlands, woods, a

field and many different species of birds "that seem to congregate on this little island of a natural area."

For nature lovers, Highland Park also offers the Rutgers Ecological Preserve, Johnson Park and native plant reserve on River Road, where the borough is also building the Eugene Young Environmental and Education Center.

The information available at the plant reserves shows the depth of Henderson's love and fascination with nature. Ordinarily, a botanical garden gives the common and scientific names for the plant.

Henderson provided more by giving visitors a short explanation of the plant and how it might have been used by Native Americans.

Education

Henderson is a graduate of Cornell University. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of California in Berkeley after completing a dissertation on medieval animal fables.

Hobbies

Henderson said he enjoys walks in the woods, photography and "puttering in my garden." He planted more than 100 species of native plants and flowers in his backyard. In addition to providing a beautiful refuge, Henderson said the garden attracts more than 35 different types of birds.

"It's important to find a little corner, where you can bring nature in," he said.

His photographs were on display at the Highland Park Library last year and his photographs were also in various international touring shows and in the collection of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.

Family

His wife Natalie is a former art historian who also worked in business research. Their daughter Rachel is married and living in California's Bay Area. She recently earned her Ph.D. in neurobiology.

— Diane C. Walsh

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By DIANE C. WALSH
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

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PHOTO CAPTION: 1. Arnold Henderson 69, Highland Park

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