

# Northern Valley: Letters March 3

Thursday, March 3, 2011

LAST UPDATED: THURSDAY MARCH 3, 2011, 1:24 AM  
NORTHERN VALLEY SUBURBANITE

Remembering [Tenafly](#)'s green past

TO THE EDITOR:

As we celebrate The [Tenafly](#) Nature Center's 50th Anniversary, it might be of interest to remember the acquisition in 1976 of 300 acres of land abutting the Nature Center. That was some 35 years ago and was a part of Tenafly's history marked by the effort of Tenafly residents to preserve as Open Space forever the East Hill property which was under siege to be developed by Centex Corporation, the largest developer in the United States at that time. The Nature Center Board had asked me, the liaison from the Mayor and Council, to seek New Jersey's Green Acres funding to approve monies to pay Centex's court awarded asking price of \$8.5 million for this plot of land for Open Space on Tenafly's East Hill. Not only did the Mayor and Council under both Mayors Walter Hartung and John Manos, adopt the idea wholly, but took up the "Standard" to join with the residents and seek help far and wide. Articles in The New York Times brought our endeavor to the forefront resulting in pledges from across the Country..

This was coupled with the Nature Conservatory, the Palisades Interstate Commission, and like-minded agencies to our cause. One source was a local benefactor who guaranteed the pledges coming from town residents and even those from outside our borders. The Court had approved Centex's offering price and we had to meet or even exceed the amount through a bonding ordinance of \$4.3 million. Along with this was Governor Byrne's arrival in [Tenafly](#) by helicopter to present Tenafly with the Green Acres Award of \$3.2 the largest grant awarded up to that time. The final amount of \$1 million for meeting this judgment came from The Jewish Community Center. We had won! This saga had many twists and turns, as one and another plan was proposed then abandoned, the euphoria of this victory still resonates to this day and we thank The Nature Center for taking up this Standard to preserve the now expanded acreage with the additional acquisition of adjoining property. The Nature Center now has the privileged duty to preserve and protect this land for future generations. We can be most proud of Tenafly's historic moment and know it is now forever in good hands.

Bruce O. Baker