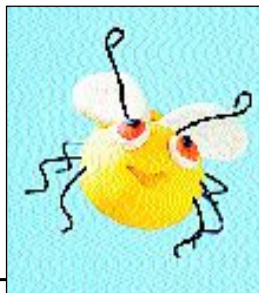




SECTION D
HERALDNEWS

Sunday,
April 30, 2006

Life



Clay critters

With polymer clay, kids can model a world of creatures.

sneakers, D8



Nadia Soldatovic prepares greenery for an arrangement at the Morningside Greenhouse in Haledon. Owner Brian Fischer and co-workers were readying some blooms recently for the Greater New York Orchid Society's international show at Rockefeller Center.

Photos by ELIZABETH LARA/Herald News

SPRING IS IN BLOOM

By TIM NORRIS
Herald News

Across Passaic County, in and around Paterson, a late-April shower spatters windows and windshields, streams from pavement, plumes from spinning tires, spills from drainpipes. Even amid urban counter-rhythms, its drumbeat joins the first big pulse of spring.

To feel that pulse, to register it in the marrow, Brian Fischer is saying, people in the crowded upper corner of the nation's most densely populated state should seek places where the season concentrates, like pith in a plant stem, blood in the vessels.

Consider four sites: greenhouse, bait and tackle shop, suburban farm, wildlife sanctuary. They offer, their overseers suggest, an intersection between nature outside and the animal within. They can bring harried urbanites back in touch with what matters most, starting (and maybe ending) with family.

In Morningside Greenhouse in Haledon, as in greenhouses and garden centers across the region, spring's Technicolor explodes through the bleak shell of winter. That morning Fischer, the owner, is attending a customer, showcasing the subtle brightening of the inner petals of a rose, so his daughter, Tara Fischer McInerney, leads a visitor from the sales floor into the upper greenhouses. The twin glass enclosures shelter a green and multi-colored uprising of flowers and plant succulents and, for the moment, an impending miracle.

"See this succulent (plant) here?" she

says. "It has flowers that bloom once a year — and one of them might open this afternoon!"

Her grandfather, Benjamin Fischer, left a job at the former Paterson Rose Company (near where The Brownstone stands now) in 1941 to found Morningside, and he built the first of its greenhouses back when the shop opened onto Central Avenue. When the entry shifted down to West Broadway, the family built the second greenhouse, to the west. Against the glass, the rain sounds like a brook dancing over rocks. Color, scent, rarity and flamboyance all draw people to flowers, McInerney says, and sometimes they inflame a lifelong passion.

"There's a lot of hard work, sure," she says, "but this is also a place you can come to get your head back together. Our greenhouse manager (Mike Mazur, nicknamed Paplote) usually has some music going. In spring, everybody seems to have a little up-step in their walk."

Easter used to mean thousands of corsages, she says, but habits change. Lilies prevail now, and hyacinths and forsythia. Orchids, once abundant, are rarer in New Jersey, though some varieties can root nearly anywhere. The state once led the nation in growing orchids and roses, too; now, her father says, many arrive by air from Florida and Ecuador. Still, gardeners and florists keep growing their own.

Brian Fischer relishes spring. "For everything that's out there," he says, "it's a rebirth of life."

A member in good standing of the

Please see **SPRING**, D10



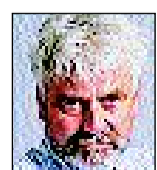
Gloria Williams converses with Eddie Turner of Clifton, a customer of 15 years, at the Bait and Tackle Shop on Albion Avenue in Paterson.



Irene Kuehm and her family work and run the Farms View Roadside, which has been in the family for generations in Wayne.

Farewell, First Lady of the Neighborhoods

This is one in an occasional series of columns by Jonathan Maslow.



Jonathan Maslow

Paterson lost a friend last week. Passaic, Clifton and Garfield, too. All New Jersey's orphaned cities lost a friend when Jane Jacobs died, though she never lived or worked here.

Jacobs, who died Tuesday in Toronto at age 89, was the best friend North American cities ever had, a writer and community ac-

tivist whose homespun wisdom about what constitutes a good and livable city re-deemed them from the powerful clutches of big plans, big government, big money and bigness in general.

In the late 1950s, when social conformity, big government and the male cult of highway building

and mega-development projects were becoming part of a civic religion in the United States, Jane Jacobs broke the commandment "You Can't Fight City Hall."

She began to oppose a major highway project planned to cross lower Manhattan, which would have damaged, if not destroyed, neighborhoods including China-

town, Soho and Greenwich Village, where she lived. She organized, spoke out and attended planning board meetings, several times getting arrested for her obstreperous behavior. She said no one listened to her when she was polite.

After 12 years, her leadership stopped the highway plan. The

neighborhoods she helped save are today some of the most desirable real estate in the world. After moving to Toronto, Jacobs led a fight to stop another expressway plan there, and again helped preserve some of the most lively, desirable neighborhoods. Wherever a city is torn by a big highway — as Route 80 tore Paterson from Garet Mountain and Route 20 divorced Passaic from the river — she'll be remembered.

In 1961, Jacobs published "The

Death and Life of American Cities," attacking the idea that came to be known as urban renewal: bulldoze the slums, build new highways and high-rise towers surrounded by sterile open spaces and suburban divisions. Instead, she championed dense, diverse neighborhoods, where "the ballet of the streets" formed the core of city life. Don't let planners and politicians ruin cities

Please see **BEND**, D10