



1980

History of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.

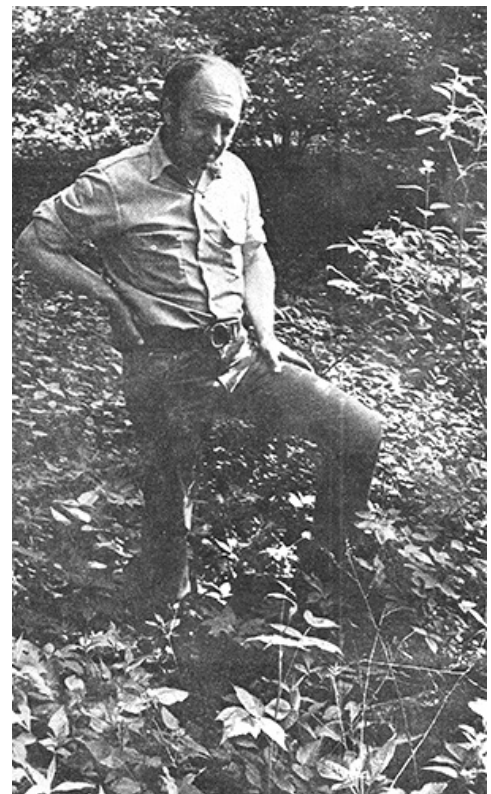
Winter 1979/1980

Ken Avery begins his 21st year as Gardener.

In The Friend's Newsletter (Vol. 28 No. 1 Winter 1980), Ken Avery writes about an important change that has been made to the Garden - a change partially accomplished by him, part by the Park Board and part by the Friends.

"A few years ago it was the "trendy" thing to say that the winds of change were blowing across America. This phrase isn't as fashionable as it once was, but the winds are still blowing and to adjust to them, the Wildflower Garden is about to set a different course. Few people realize the shift that took place when I replaced Mrs. Crone in 1959. The Garden stands as a steadying force --- never changing much from one year to another --- masking any change. But beneath the calm exterior the Garden had changed course; not much, but it had started to veer in a different direction.

One change was in my (and the Garden's) relationship to the Park Board. Mrs. Crone's official title was Curator. When I replaced her; there was no change in the duties which I assumed, and I must admit that I received the same pay. Everything seemed the same, but titles are important, and I have always been the Gardener at the Wildflower Garden. Another more subtle change took place when I replaced Mrs. Crone. The Garden has always reflected the personality of its Curator. I'm sure it reflected Miss Butler's personality and I know that it was



Gardener Ken Avery -newspaper

the reflection of Mrs. Crone's, when I first worked here under her.

While I have never purposely made any changes in the Garden, nature is never static and as changes were demanded, naturally they were mine. Shortly after I assumed this position, I reflected upon what the Garden should be and I made two decisions. First: It occurred to me that since the opening of the Arboretum [Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska] the side interest the Garden had in testing the hardiness of exotic plants was no longer warranted. I decided to concentrate on reintroducing the plants that had once grown in the area and to a lesser extent to attempt to grow all plants native to Minnesota

Secondly: I decided to institutionalize the Garden --- that is to remove the Curator's personality as an important element in its makeup. I feel that the Garden prospered under my hand. As I look back on it now the zenith of this period was just prior to the building of The Martha Crone Shelter by the Friends. The building of the shelter heralded another change in the direction of the wind; the Park Board seemed to discover the Garden and started to assert its influence. Oddly enough this accomplished my second decision --- that of institutionalizing the Garden. This also was a time when the Garden's patronage increased tremendously, and I lost one of my two helpers - permanently. The Shelter added more work particularly for the first few years; then Dutch Elm disease added more work; and the increased attendance demanded more attention. Through it all we have been scrambling just to keep up. It is now beginning to look as though we are going to make it.

Now another wind of change is blowing through the Garden --- his name is Mike Ryan. Mike is the Coordinator of Environmental Education. Mike, in assuming this position, is asserting more influence over the Wildflower Garden. I have not had any long conversations with him but I am sure that he is going to emphasize the growing of native plants in the Garden. He has already shown interest and concern for the wild areas owned by the Park Board. A concern that I have had for all these years. I sincerely wish him well!"

[This was the last article Ken would write for the Newsletter. Perhaps it touched some sensitivity with his superiors, but when the Park Board staff expressed the desire to review content in the Newsletter (see Summer section below) it may have had some bearing on whether he would contribute articles. The result was that information of what was happening in the Garden now came via once-removed sources. Fortunately, Cary George, when he succeeded Ken, would resume the practice of contributing articles.]

It was announced that Whitney Eastman, long-time Friends Board member, had passed away last Dec. 3rd. He had attended almost every Annual Meeting from 1961 up through May 1979. He was a director from 1961 - 1968 and an honorary director through 1975.



Mike Ryan, MPRB Coordinator of Environmental Education. Photo courtesy Lynne Holman



Whitney Eastman, ca. 1953

The third installment of an interview with new Parks Superintendent Charles Spears was printed. The first segments are highlighted in 1979 and you can read the entire interview at the end of the 1979 text. The segment published in this issue included this comment of Mr. Spears:

“Because of inflation our actual spendable money after operating expenses has declined and so we have had to examine our priorities and in some cases make cuts. We don't like to cut services, but we do have to cut something. This will be a continuing problem. Probably the greatest challenge is that we are going to have more demand because of energy and less money to do it with. And I don't know how we will make those two meet. People are going to have to take on part of the burden if they want the level of services they have been used to.”

Additional sample text for the new self-guided brochure was printed in the Winter issue. Naomi Loper was elected president of the Minneapolis Park Board - its first woman president.

Spring 1980

The Annual Meeting of The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden was held in the Garden, on Saturday May 17th, 1980, in the Martha Crone Shelter, 34 persons attending on a lovely spring day, including Mary Maguire Lerman and Mike Ryan from the Park Board.

Kenneth Avery gave his report of the status of the Garden. He reported that the Bloodroots were the most affected by the loss of the elm canopy. Mary Maguire Lerman and Mike Ryan brought samples of the new self-guided Garden brochure. Part of the new guide would include ‘station’ numbers, referencing numbered posts placed along the various paths in the Garden. The guide would have text about some of the plants found at each station. The Friends issued them a \$1,500 check for printing. They also announced that the road to the front gate parking lot would be made one-way for the first time allowing parking along the edge of the road. The road closest to Glenwood Ave would be the entrance and the section closest to Highway 12 the exit. That’s the way it exists today (2018)

Below: Grouping of Bloodroots (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) in the Woodland Garden. Photo G D Bebeau



There were 14 recipients of study grants, 5 to college students at \$200 each and 9 to high school students - 1 at \$100 and 8 at \$50. Dr. Norman L. Busse of the Minneapolis Public Schools, who was also in attendance at the meeting thanked the Friends and invited them to visit Dowling School to see what the students were creating. Their names are in the Spring issue. The Friends had established two study grant programs in 1978: One would be to establish scholarships for a few high school students to pursue the natural sciences. The second was to make tuition grants for grade school teachers in the Minneapolis Public School system to take a Nature Study course or an Audubon camp each summer. Twenty volunteers were on the list to be shelter volunteers. The Friends assets totaled \$6,704.

Directors elected were: Moana Beim, Jean Chamberlain, Robert Dasset Jr., Lynn Deweese, Lynne Holman, Walter Lehnert, John Murtfeldt, Caroline Price.

Ex-officio member: Kenneth Avery. Martha Crone as honorary life member.

Leaving the board were Dr. Marian Grimes, Alexander Dean and Mildred Olson. Dr. Grimes also asked to be relieved of volunteer coordinator duties at the end of the coming year.

At the Board meeting following the annual meeting, new officers elected were: Lynn Deweese, President; Lynne Holman, Vice President; Secretary - open; Caroline Price, Treasurer.

Lynn and Pat Deweese would continue with the duties of editors of *The Fringed Gentian*TM through the fall issue. The position of secretary was being filled on an ad-hoc basis by Jean Chamberlain.

Summer 1980

In the Summer issue of *The Fringed Gentian*TM (Vol. 28 No. 3 Summer 1980) President Lynn Deweese recalled his first experiences with the Garden going back to 1959. There was also listed a summary of where Garden visitors had come from - 20 different countries and 30 states in 1979. The long-promised self-guided tour brochures were taking longer to produce and would now not be ready until 1981. In addition the cost was going up and the Friends added \$500 to the amount already given for printing to cover 5000 copies. Mary Maguire Lerman wrote an article on Wild Sarsaparilla and a request was made for a new newsletter editor now that Mr. Deweese was Friends President. Also the position of Secretary needed to be filled.

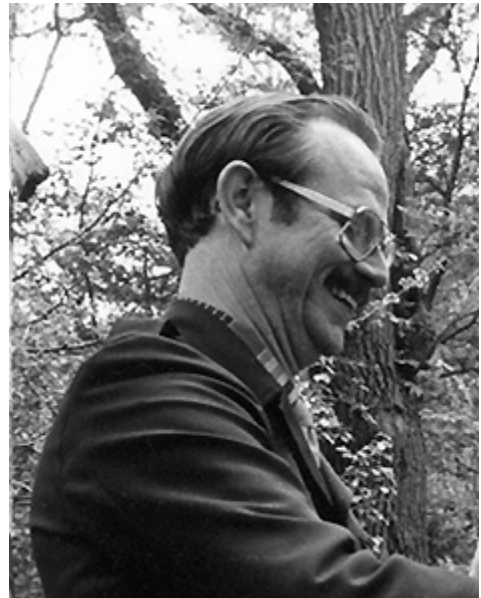
The Deweese's circulated a letter to the board members about finding a new editor and noted that while the Friends have established more communication with the Parks staff in the past two years and that they were apparently reading the newsletter regularly, they have expressed the desire to control some of the content of the newsletter. The Deweese's stated that since this was a newsletter of the Friends, not of the Park Board, that could not be allowed to happen. They also expressed concern about how much the newsletter printing and mailing should cost relative to the basic \$5 membership in the Friends - a concern that would occur in the future also.

It was also noted that Parks Superintendent Charles Spears left the position in August for other employment, after having been appointed only early last year.

At a board of directors meeting Susan Warde was appointed as a new Board member.

Autumn 1980

Doris Larson volunteered to help with the newsletter and helped produce the Fall issue (Vol. 28 No. 4 Autumn 1980). Mary Maguire Lerman contributed an article on White Snakeroot.



Friends President Lynn Deweese. Photo by Lynne Holman

A volunteer appreciation event had been planned for Sept. 27 but of 40 invitations sent out there were only 4 replies from volunteers and 6 from board members, so the event was cancelled. 25 volunteers were on the list as having helped during the season.

During the year Lynne Holman, Lynn Deweese and John Murtfeldt, with help from past president Moana Beim, were preparing a statement of what the Friends believed to be the long-range plan for the Garden and to let the public know what the Friends position would be on certain issues. The document was finished in the fall and printed.

Here is the text:

PROPOSALS FOR THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF THE ELOISE BUTLER WILDFLOWER AND BIRD SANCTUARY

This paper has been drawn up by the Friends of the Wildflower Garden, Inc., an organization of private citizens who, for the past 28 years, have contributed much time and money in cooperation with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Department towards the development and preservation of the Eloise Butler Wildflower and Bird Sanctuary. This group of private citizens has a keen and vested interest in this unique preservation of land. Believing that our relationship to this area should periodically be reviewed, we have compiled these statements.

I This Garden was created in 1907 to provide an educational site in the Twin Cities area where citizens - students of all ages, educators, and tourists - could conveniently experience the diversity of indigenous Minnesota flora.

II This Garden, to be truly educational, should remain an environment containing as many of the plants (Non-woody and woody) that are truly native to Minnesota as can be managed in a setting approximating a natural wilderness. Emphasis should be placed on those plant species occurring within a 150 mile radius of the Twin Cities - including adjacent portions of Wisconsin and Iowa. In evaluating the present status, we propose that a plant census of the site be conducted and evaluated during the 1981-82 growing seasons.

III. This Garden should include a collection of plants grouped symbiotically in as many natural environments (woodland, bog, prairie, etc.) as is feasible to this site. However, we firmly believe that it is better to maintain one or two environments well, than many poorly.

IV. This Garden will require a continuing management, which we hope can be minimal (or at least leave that appearance) and which will favor techniques that do the least environmental damage. The preservation of an extensive collection of flora will always require some suppression of aggressive species for the protection of less hardy ones. A reasonable balance of species within the total collection is desirable. Some native Minnesota flora will never be feasible at this site.

V. The educational value of this Garden is enhanced by a diversity of animals and birds - migratory and resident. Plans for planting changes should always consider encouraging this diversity.

VI. The educational role of this Garden dictates the identification of all flora species by their scientific name primarily - and where appropriate by a regionally popular name. We suggest that where non-



White Snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*) Photo G D Bebeau

indigenous species are identified they be indicated in some manner (perhaps by signs in a different color).

VII. This Garden in the years since its inception has served several purposes which are no longer appropriate. One of the most notable has been the use of some areas as testing grounds for the hardiness of garden exotics (a role now better served by the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum). Therefore we propose that future management of this area should gradually eliminate the exotic species during the decade of the '80s.

VIII. This garden is a unique environment. To protect this, we suggest that the unmanaged areas surrounding the present Garden (and associated with it in the Park Board action of 19)^[sic.] be preserved as an unfenced semi-wild buffer zone. A future possibility would be to manage certain limited portions of this outer area to stop the natural woodland development in order to show the different stages a Minnesota savannah passes through in becoming a woodland.

Realizing well that all this is not a simple project, we, The Friends of the Wildflower Garden, Inc., now, as in the past, are prepared to help but not to replace, the Park Board in the achievement of these goals.

Realizing also that this particular garden cannot be the whole picture of virgin Minnesota, we would urge groups of citizens around the state to work to establish in their own counties, gardens of the plants native to that area. Thus could be established a network of preserves that could collectively recreate the picture of a virgin Minnesota.

Photo top of page: The Wild Plum on the hillside in Upland Garden. Photo ©G D Bebeau

References:

Meeting Minutes and correspondence of The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden

Historical Climatology of Minneapolis-St. Paul Area by Charles Fisk.

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