



1982

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

Winter 1981/1982

Ken Avery begins his 24th year as Gardener.

In the winter issue of the Friends newsletter (Vol. 30 No. 1 Winter 1982) it was noted that the winter had been cold and snowy, which was an understatement as the 1981-82 winter set a snowfall record of 95 inches, with 46.4 inches in January alone. The snow depth on Jan. 23rd was 38 inches. This record would only last until 1983-84. The second printing of the new self-guided trail brochure had been done with the Friends contributing another \$2,500 and Prudential Insurance Company the remainder of the cost. Bob Price, husband of Friends Treasurer Caroline Price had made the contact with Oren McDonald of Prudential. The new printing would be available when the Garden opened for its 75th anniversary year and the 30th anniversary of the Friends. One of the newly elected Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) board members was Friends member Patty Baker.

The MPRB had applied to the Institute of Museum Services for a \$5,000 grant to be used in the Garden and the application said this about the Friends:

The Eloise Butler Wildflower and Bird Sanctuary has received much community support throughout the years, particularly from its parent support group, the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., which was incorporated in 1952. This group has grown through the years to its current membership of 225. The basic membership donation is \$5.00 with

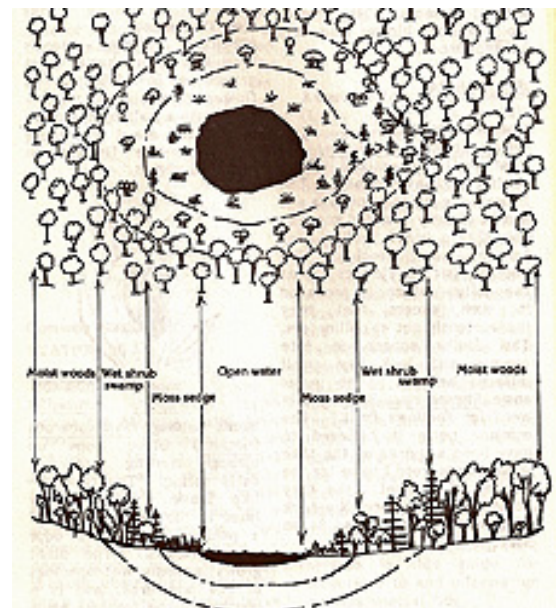


Illustration from the new Guidebook, also used in the 1987 version.

contributions ranging from \$5.00 to \$100.00.

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., have been the major conduit for community and private financial support for the Sanctuary. Since their inception, the Friends have provided the funds to construct the education-visitors building (\$27,000) at the Sanctuary, which was dedicated in 1970. They have also contributed financially in the past for planting, supplies, reference books, slides, and equipment. In 1980 they contributed in excess of \$2,000 for the preparation and first printing of the interpretive guidebook, and in 1981 provided \$2,500 for a second revised printing.

In addition, the Friends coordinate the recruitment and encouragement of volunteers to staff the education-visitors building. In 1981, 32 volunteers staffed the building for 1093 hours of the Sanctuary's 1712 hours of operation.

It is not clear whether the grant was ever approved. Note that in the text the writer still used as the name of the Garden "The Eloise Butler Wildflower and Bird Sanctuary." That name got its start in 1969 when the MPRB approved the Friend's request to add "and Bird Sanctuary" to the Garden name changing it to "Eloise Butler Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary." Whether 'Wild Flower' became 'Wildflower' by mistake or if the MPRB wanted it that way is not known. After 1972 the current name was sometimes used but it was not until 1986 that official action was taken to change the wording to "Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary." Details at end of text.

Spring 1982

The 30th Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden was held in the Garden, on Saturday May 22nd, 1982, in the Martha Crone Shelter, 35 persons attending including MPRB Commissioner Patty Baker. As reported in the Newsletter (Vol. 30 No. 2 Spring/Summer 1982):

Several past-presidents of the Friends were on hand to carry us back over the events in the Garden's history. Kenneth Avery, our fifth president, spoke of his experiences in first working with Martha Crone and then later replacing her as gardener. Cay Faragher, sixth president, spoke of the decisions involved in planning and building the shelter. Bob Dasset, seventh president, covered the years immediately following the shelter's completion. Alex Dean, ninth president, discussed the changes in the garden prompted by the spread of Dutch-elm disease, the initiation of planning for the self-guiding tour of the Garden and the first of the Friends' study grants. Lynn Deweese, eleventh president, finished the reminiscences by bringing us up to 1982.

Three other past-presidents were represented by letters.

Walter Lehnert, our third president, extended greetings to us through a letter from his wife. Moana Beim, our eighth president, sent greetings and memories from her years of service, but also recalled the years when her father, Clinton Odell, our first president, worked with Martha Crone in establishing the Friends to assist in the preservation of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary."



Outgoing Friends president Lynn Deweese. Friends photo.

There were 11 recipients of study grants for a total of \$1,620. All the names are in the spring/summer 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.

Marie Demler read the names of 39 persons on the shelter volunteer list. Included for the first time was Shirley Schultz who, in later years, would be on the Friends Board and would be volunteer coordinator.

Directors elected were: Cindy Berg, Betty Bridgman (new - 2nd term), Betty Bryan, Robert Dasset Jr., Marie Demler, Lynn Deweese, Emil Elftmann (new), Doris Larson, Janet O'Leary, Caroline Price, Patricia Thomesen (new).

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

Leaving the board were Lynne Holman, Susan Warde, George Weiss.

Ken Avery reported that many trees had come down in the winter storms, and that due to MPRB budget cuts he was now working alone in the Garden, with Richard Wick available only as his substitute. Having helping hands cut to none was a great cause of frustration to Ken as were the topics he wrote about in the newsletter back in 1980.

Betty Bridgman, new Board member, but not new to working with the Friends as she had been a director in 1961, '62, and '63, and also served on past nominating committees, had written a special poem for the 30th anniversary of the Friends, titled "*Ode for the 275 members of the Friends of the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden and Bird Sanctuary.*" It was read at the beginning of the meeting. Betty was a well-known regional poet. Poem follows this text, but here is one stanza:

Friends say to them,
"What! You're volunteering on behalf of worthless weeds
nobody needs?
Think what beautiful homes would fill the scene
in that ravine!
Think of the expanse of lawn
When the clutter is gone!
The happy homeowners out with their mowers
and snow-blowers,
Their dandelion-diggers—

The line about homes in the ravine is appropriate since the original plat of the Saratoga Springs Addition to Minneapolis, where the Garden and Wirth Park now reside, was already platted for homes when the Board of Park Commissioners acquired the property. Platted streets named Abbott, Beard and Zenith ran north/south while Aonian and Arra made a circle around where parts of the Garden now exist. When Glenwood Park was later established the original concept for a parkway followed the



Board member Betty Bryan, shown here in the early 2000's. Friends photo

placement of the current Garden entrance and exit drive but the parkway was actually built to circle the west side of Birch Pond instead.

At the Board meeting following the annual meeting, officers elected were: Caroline Price, President; Patricia Thomesen, Vice President; Betty Bryan, Secretary; Doris Larson, Treasurer.

Lynn Dewesee and Janet O'Leary continued the duties of editors of *The Fringed Gentian*TM but Mr. Dewesee asked to be relieved. Pat Thomesen also took on the new role of historian.

It was announced in the summer that founding director Russell Bennet had died and also the Friends 3rd president Walter Lehnert. Mr. Lehnert had been continuously active and had just sent his greetings in a letter read at the annual meeting.

Summer 1982

In the summer issue of *The Fringed Gentian*TM (Vol. 30 No. 3 Summer 1982) new Friends President Caroline Price wrote about upcoming projects of the Friends such as adding a telephone answering device for the Shelter and the purchase of a wood chipper for the Garden.

It was announced the Mrs. Clarence Tolg (Ebba) has passed away. She was a board member in the early years of the Friends from 1953 through 1968 and vice president from 1962 into 1966. She was known to Martha Crone for many years prior to joining the Friends board, appearing in Martha's records twice in 1942, with Martha noting she had not been in since 1940. The connection was wildflowers.

She was known as "Ebba" and also called Betty. In 1939 she had helped form the Golden Valley Garden Club, gave gardening talks and maintained a good sized wild flower garden at her home on 206 Meadow Lane North in Golden Valley, just a short distance from the Wildflower Garden. She was on the Minneapolis Campfire Girls Council in 1940s. Her husband, Clarence, became well known in the 1960s as "Uncle Fogey" on WCCO radio.

Betty Bridgman's poem mentioned above was printed in its entirety in the summer newsletter.

Autumn 1982

At an October Board meeting the Board set the criteria for placing a name on the new Lydia W. Eliason "Honor Roll Plaque" in the Shelter. Lynn Dewesee retired as newsletter co-editor after the autumn issue and Betty Bridgman joined in, taking on the sole responsibility for the newsletter beginning in 1983.

Natalie Adler was helping Marie Demler with volunteer coordination.

After the Garden closed in the fall, Park Board workers put in new steps from the parking lot down to the front gate. This project had been delayed since 1975.

The last issue of the newsletter for the year (Vol. 30 No. 4 Autumn 1982) summarized those things and reprinted the following from the journal of Friends Founder Clinton Odell:

Thanksgiving day today - the turkey is in the oven - and real winter weather has descended upon us. There is a howling gale - and snow straight from the north. So I did what I love most; I put on overshoes, winter coat, muffler and heavy gloves. And I walked over to the Wildflower Garden. Down into the glen I descended where it was very still, with snow flakes falling straight down - thought the wind was still roaring thru the tree tops above. Really beautiful down there. I looked for my owl but could not locate him. And I could not help but wonder why mortals huddle around their radiators when they could go abroad and enjoy this delightful specialty of

winter - snow flakes sifting down thru the spruce trees - and the wind roaring over head. Maybe I'm just different. NOV. 22, 1944

Photo top of first page: Tamaracks in the Eloise Butler marsh in October. Photo G D Bebeau

References:

Meeting Minutes and correspondence of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden

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

Note: All issues of the Friend's newsletter were numbered out of sequence this year. The correct volume numbers are used in the text.

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Friends founder Clinton Odell with wife Amy and on left, Moana Odell Beim, Friends eighth president. Family photo.

The Garden and the Friends name variations over time:

In the 1907 petition to the Park Board to create the Garden it was proposed as a "natural botanical garden" and that is the term used in the official documents establishing the Garden. Once organized the teachers immediately called it the "Wild Botanic Garden" and when Eloise had the small office building built in 1915 the sign near the door said "Office of the Curator - Wild Botanic Garden." Shortly later it became commonly known as the Native Plant Reserve (sometimes the word 'Preserve' was used by Eloise Butler). Eloise Butler later wrote in her history "It was soon found that the term 'Wild Botanic Garden' was misleading to the popular fancy, so the name was changed to 'Native Plant Reserve'." (EB 1926 - The Wild Botanic Garden - Early History).

Nevertheless, newspaper accounts of the Garden and its Curator from 1913 to 1924 still called it the Botanical Garden of (or sometimes "in") Glenwood Park. Kirkwood's 1913 article in *The Bellman* is titled "A Wild Botanic Garden."

Martha Crone and Ken Avery always referred to it as the Native Plant Reserve and the sign near the office door did not change until some time in Martha Crone's tenure when the word "botanic" changed to "flower."

In 1929 the Park Board re-named it the "Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden" with a dedication ceremony at the Garden. Most Park Board correspondence and printed material after that usually uses "Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden", with "Wild Flower" as two words, with a few exceptions of course such as a 1931 Park Board brochure which called it "the Eloise Butler Plant Reserve."

Then in 1968 the Friends got into it: At a meeting of project committee (for building the Crone Shelter) on Sept. 5, 1968 Building Fund Chair Alvin Witt suggested that the name be changed to "Eloise Butler Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary" in order to recognize the role the Garden played in the bird world, but why the choice of word arrangement making the word 'sanctuary' cover both birds and flowers? - not known. The idea was presented to the Park Board and at a meeting on March 25, 1969 in the office of Superintendent Robert Ruhe, Mr. Ruhe said the Park Board was agreeable to the suggestion of changing the name as requested. However, when put into use the name came out with "wildflower" as one word substituted for "wild flower." Much correspondence and many newspaper articles from that period use that name. Examples - Mpls Employees Newsletter from 1971 and the text of address Gordon Morrison, Coordinator of Environmental Education at the Park Board made to the Friends at the annual meeting on May 13, 1972. He stated "Here in the Eloise Butler Wildflower and Bird Sanctuary and elsewhere in the Minneapolis parks' natural areas is one of the most outstanding collections of native wildflowers ..."

The Friends used that name after that when referring to the Garden but it was not consistently used. Sometime after this other variations came in use. When Ken Avery wrote articles in *The Fringed Gentian*TM beginning with Vol. 22 #4 in 1974 he signed his articles with "Curator, Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary" - the current terminology. But when he prepared his 1977 list of spring plant bloom times he reverted to the 1969 terminology.

We have an article about the Garden and Ken Avery from the *Minneapolis Star* dated August 29, 1978 using the current terminology but with Wildflower as two words - Wild Flower.

In 1980, The Friends issued a document with the title PROPOSALS FOR THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF THE ELOISE BUTLER WILDFLOWER AND BIRD SANCTUARY - the old terminology - as did the 1982 MPRB application to the Institute of Museum Services for a \$5,000 grant for the Garden - all indicating that name was still been in use at that time. Documents show that during this time period from 1969 to the 1980s the re-insertion of the word "garden" after wildflower continued to crop up. Apparently enough writers thought that it should be a wildflower garden not a wildflower sanctuary.

An official change occurred in the Fall of 1986. Mary Maguire Lerman, Coordinator of Horticulture wrote a memo about recent Garden activities to Friends President Gloria Miller, dated May 29, 1987, in which she states "PPS: The MPRB action taken last fall changes the Garden's name to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary" with 'garden' reinserted.

AS TO THE FRIENDS:

Meanwhile, back in 1952 the Friends had adopted Wild Flower as part of their name to match that of the Garden but chose not to refer to Eloise Butler, so today, to outsiders, it might not be apparent as to whether we are a friend of a particular garden or to wild flower gardens as a generic catchall name. At the June 5, 1969 board meeting of the Friends Building Committee chair Wilber Tusler requested, that in the interest of consistency, the Friends should use "Friends of the Wildflower Garden, Inc." (wild flower as one word) on all their published documents. Motion approved. That was used on documents until the early 1980s but with no consistency whatsoever. The newsletter continued to use "Friends of the Wild Flower Garden" throughout the time period. However, that wording change was never done officially as far as state and federal registration is concerned and the issue apparently dropped off the radar in the 1980s and that is why the Garden name and the Friends name diverge yet today.

Gary Bebeau

Ode
for the 275 members of
"Friends of Eloise Butler Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary"
on the occasion of their 30th anniversary –
and the 75th of the establishment of the Garden*
Betty Bridgman (1916 - 1999)

These people: Let me present them.
Mother Nature sent them
into this world of Real Estate,
of too-little-caring-too-late,
of weed-eradicator promotion,
particulates and pollution.
of mopeds and snowmobiles.
They take care
lest the forest floor be trodden bare,
and the prairie tracked and packed by RV Wheels.
These people are fervently, ecstatically, passionately, irrationally,
obsessively, fiercely, militantly, unequivocally, irreversibly,
non-negotiably, one thousand per cent
in favor of wild flowers.
No pallid sentiment,
no live-and-let-live toleration,
no "make-it-if-you-can-but first comes access and recreation."
Friends say to them,
"What! You're volunteering on behalf of worthless weeds
nobody needs?
Think what beautiful homes would fill the scene
in that ravine!
Think of the expanse of lawn
When the clutter is gone!

The happy homeowners out with their mowers
and snow-blowers,
Their dandelion-diggers–
Sales in six figgers!”
These people care all the more
for seed and spore
because at 45° latitude and above
they have a short season for their love.
Here, flowers are few.
They count three British Soldiers, one Sundew,
Compared with the orchid riot
Of steamy jungle, these woods are quiet.
One Calopogon is a summer when they spy it.
The Buck-eye dapples
a spread of May-apples
and imparts a glow
they bask in when it’s twenty-five below.
A high holy-day of their year:
when Showy Lady-slippers appear,
when the gooseberry is ripe
or they find an Indian Pipe.
These benefactors
would lie down in front of tractors
to save a virgin patch of prairie
or a bird sanctuary.
They storm the legislature
to keep one marshland safe for nature.
They ask for grants
to bully bull-dozers and rescue pitcher plants.
A soft cry of delight will pass
from their lips when Ken mentions Blue-eyed Grass.
It brings a flush to their cheeks, and stepped-up pulse
to think that Ken would label any flower “false.”
They want our ditches
filled with Dutchmen’s Britches.
They scold
pluckers of Marsh Marigold.
They won’t pull a stalk
of Spatterdock.
Better not injure
Eloise’s Ginger.
Their efforts won’t slacken
for hillsides of Bracken.
They dote on the woolen
stalks of Mullein.
They’re ready to champion
Bladder Champion,
and keep things from getting worse
for Shepherd’s Purse.
They won’t let Boneset

ride off into the sunset.
They enshrine Eloise Butler.
No Park Board budget-cut can scuttle her.
They know time will tell
our city's debt to Clinton Odell,
and they'll make known
the long devotion of Martha Crone,
the bravery and slavery
of Kenneth E. Avery,
and his side-kick,
Dick Wick,
Kay Faragher's amazing
shelter-fund-raising.
It's high time
we salute Moana Beim;
and those with effort and intelligence
who keep up the fence, and the defense.
Eloise, you of the trowel and duff-stained knees,
you'd have loved knowing such as these.
The garden that was all yours
endures.
From wood-chip paths and ostrich-fern-lined ways
rises our praise.

*We use the title as Betty wrote it with the slightly incorrect and incomplete name for The
Friends.

Poem ©Betty Bridgman.