



President's Report Autumn 2007



Dear Friends:

As I write my first letter as president, I experience a mixture of emotions: I am genuinely excited and happy to have the Friends' organization, along with the Garden itself, of course, as a major focus of my energies and my life. And, I have a special feeling about being asked to serve during the Garden's 100th anniversary year. At the same time, I'm taking this task quite seriously, aware that our ability to fulfill our goals in the months ahead may be critically important for the well-being of the Garden well into the future.

I am fortunate to follow in the footsteps of Steve Pundt, who held this office for 8 years, longer than any other president in the 55- year history of the Friends. Steve has always been thoughtful, patient, calm and very generous with his time and energy for the Friends, and I hope to be able to maintain some of these qualities as we go forward. I have learned so much from many other Board members, as well, and I've been especially blessed to work with people who have guided the Friends for decades.

Allow me to mention another special teacher who has been important to me, the Garden's 4th Gardener, Cary George, who retired in 2004. His deep instinctive connection to the Garden he tended with such care, was a kind of spiritual example for me as I became aware of the depth of my own appreciation. He never said these words, but his whole demeanor spoke to me, and I heard, "... if you love this place, then work to keep it alive...."

Knowing that there are many others among the Friends who care very deeply about the Garden is an additional inspiration. Perhaps one of the best 'Friends' the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary has today is its current Gardener/Curator, Susan Wilkins. An energetic and knowledgeable professional, she exhibits a dedication to her work that is genuine and creative. Her stewardship is a wonderful foundation for the future of the Garden, and her support for the Friends will be of immeasurable value as we face the challenges ahead.

Future letters will address these challenges in detail. Of course, the threat of invasive species is paramount, with complex and expensive implications for our organization. We must also continue to advocate for the conservation of South Wirth ecosystems, seeking appropriate use guidelines and an adequate buffer zone for the Garden. Please, if you have ideas or questions about these issues, or any aspect of Friends' activities, I would welcome the chance to hear from you. I can be reached at 612 377-3573 or via email.

Finally, my thanks go to the Board for this opportunity to become part of the Friends' history of purpose in service to the Garden, nature education and the public. I look forward to meeting more of the members and volunteers who embody our cause and our commitment.

Sincerely,
J. Pam Weiner, President