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PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE
WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

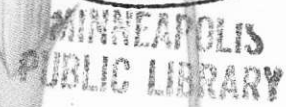
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MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55409

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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No. 1



NOT TO BE TAKEN
FROM THIS ROOM

BB-Brrrrr! It's Cold

Today, January 1, 1974, as I write this it is -30° . We have broken the record for low readings three days in a row and it is supposed to be cold again tomorrow. Last Sunday when it was about 0° , my wife and I went to the Garden to fill the bird feeders. Since it was so cold we parked at the south end, rather than at the Spring, to make a quick trip of it. One car was parked at the gate when we arrived there. As we left our car another car pulled up with two young men with skis. When we left, just thirty minutes later, there were four other cars in the parking spot. At the top of the hill there was a family skiing; while I was filling the feeder some skiers went by; we met two skiers at the back of the Garden, two skiers coming down the hill from the hayfield, and two more skiers as we left the hayfield. (Skiers seem to run in packs of two.) I can't help but compare this with the first few years that I had the Garden. In those days you could spend hours in the park during the winter and never meet anyone. Starting about 1965 a few people started discovering how beautiful the Park was in the winter: and with the rise in popularity of Cross-Country Skiing in the last few years, the winter seclusion of the area has almost vanished.

With this increase in popularity we also have experienced an increase in the problems that come with it. In the past almost all vandalism occurred when the weather was good. One of the most dangerous times in the past has been Easter Vacation when the weather was nice enough to be out and nothing was guarded but in the cold of winter, vandalism was never a problem. Now I am afraid this is over. During the last few years we are finding evidence of vandals at this time of the year.

There has been talk of keeping the Garden open 12 months of the year. I don't believe it would pay to keep it open as we do in the summer but it would be well worthwhile to maintain it as we do in November of each year--partly to guard the area but also to render service to the public and because there is a great deal of work that badly needs doing and that could be done during the winter.

The Curator was assigned to the Garden for 12 months of the year until Mrs. Crone retired as Curator in 1959. It was then classified as seasonal to save money. It is too bad that the Friends didn't object at that time, but I'm afraid that the change was never brought to their attention.

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(Continued on next page)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEPT.

I'm afraid that I haven't reported much about the natural history of the Garden, but I believe this remarkable change in the use pattern is also an important change in its ecology. I believe we must react or be the victim of the change.

KENNETH E. AVERY
CURATOR

MEMORIALS

Two members of the Friends of the Wildflower Garden have died recently - Mr. Alvin R. Witt and Mrs. Gerald Burgess.

Mr. Witt had been a member since 1961. In May of 1973 he was made an Honorary Member in recognition of his valuable services as acting treasurer during the fund drive and construction of the Martha Crone Shelter. When the Volunteer Host and Hostess program was started, he spent many hours at the Garden talking with the visitors. Friends and relatives of Mr. Witt contributed a considerable amount of money as memorials to the Friends of the Wildflower Garden.

Mrs. Burgess died October 10, 1973 in California where she had lived since 1965. She had organized and counseled family-life groups in Minneapolis more than forty years and wrote a column entitled "Let's Be Better" for the Edina Courier from 1950 to 1960.

Our sympathy is extended to the families of these devoted members.

John Greenleaf Whittier has said:

Somehow, not only for Christmas
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others
Is the joy that comes back to you.

Dear Friends:

With this issue of The Fringed Gentian we start the twenty-second year of publication. Along with oddly disparate collections of this and that I boast a practically complete file of "The Gentian". I don't think that it will ever bring a big price at auction, but then it is not for sale.

Clinton Odell, our first President wrote in Vol. 1, No. 1 January 1953: "You will find nothing herein about business or politics, war or sports - so in your home, read it by your friends and become relaxed for a few minutes, in an atmosphere of wild flowers, birds and Thoreausian beauty."

Martha Crone, writing in the same issue: "The Fringed Gentian was chosen as the title for this publication because this flower is considered one of the choicest of American Wildflowers. She went on to quote William Cullen Bryant --

"Thou waitest late and cometh alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end."

More pretentious journals have come and gone since 1953. I suspect others now in the scene will disappear before The Gentian

BUT

The Gentian does not write itself, nor type itself, nor mail itself. Mildred Olson, who has done such a splendid job for the past three years has asked to be relieved of the editorship for The Gentian this coming spring, along with the job as Treasurer. Somewhere among our readers there must be someone who would be willing to carry on, or who knows someone, not necessarily now a member who might be able.

Please give this some thought, and if you have any suggestions please call Mrs. Olson at 825-1464, or write her at 4521 Aldrich Ave. So. 55409. I will be out-of-town for a few months and I hope when I return that someone will have been found to continue The Fringed Gentian.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Dasset, Jr.
President

A Memorial Book is kept at the Martha Crone Shelter and recently the following, written by Mrs. R. N. Beim, was placed there in memory of her father, Mr. Clinton M. Odell.

"As a student of Eloise Butler at Central High School, Clinton Odell was introduced to this area when it was no more than a wild land. He had, from the start, a vital interest in its development as a wildflower preserve and bird sanctuary, and became one of its most devoted friends and benefactors. Over a period of sixty years he gave enthusiastically of his time, his labors and his financial support. In an early journal he noted the great overgrowth of ordinary weeds and the constant need to keep them down so that the wild flowers and ferns might thrive. Jewel weed it seems was an especially hardy menace, as were nettles.

In 1944, Mr. Odell helped to establish the Upland garden where a different kind of wild flower could thrive in full sun. The fence around this area was his special gift at that time.

In 1953 he felt it was time to form a group of interested citizens who could be an on-going nucleus of support to the garden. He was the instigator and first president of this group, named "Friends of the Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary". When Martha Crone began to publish a paper for the group Mr. Odell suggested its present name "The Fringed Gentian". This was an almost extinct wildflower of Minnesota and he hoped this fact would serve as an inspiration and a reminder to workers who followed.

In his day "ecology" was just a word in the dictionary. But he foresaw and noted quite accurately many problems that faced future generations as the city and state grew. As an individual citizen he took what he considered the necessary steps to forestall several of these.

Clinton Odell, founder of the Burma Shave Company of Minneapolis, "Outstanding Conservationist" Award winner, sportsman, and devoted naturalist, lived out his life in dedication to the preservation of our natural environment. Not for himself, but for future generations did he feel the need.

The three granite benches (one is in the Upland Garden) and the birdbath west of the Shelter have been given by friends and family in memory of Mr. Odell and his wife, Amy Hanley Odell, who shared his interest and enthusiasm."

How old do birds get? Would you believe that the Banding Association reports the following:

Common Loon	7 years 10 months	Robin	8 years 6 months
Mallard	15 " 4 "	Starling	10 " 9 "
Common Tern	18 "	Song Sparrow	7 " 10 "
Blue Jay	14 "		

Of course, these senior citizens were lucky. It's a challenge for a baby bird to just make it out of the nest.