

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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W I N T E R

I love winter so --
Crackling fires to leap and glow,
Hungry flames to feed;
Call of friends I long have known,
Or, whenever left alone,
Books to read.

From: Ever and Always I Shall Love the Land
By Clell G. Gannon

The above lines from a little book of poetry to which I often return can be my pretext for reporting on a recently completed project at the Shelter.

To increase the heating efficiency of the fireplace we have had glass fire shields (doors) installed. This was done after endless hours of consultation between Mrs. Ray Beim and heating engineers. We are all indebted to her for her efforts. My own thanks go to all of you members who through your continuing support have made this and

so many other projects possible over the years.

Our garden doesn't bulk large in terms of size, but judged by what it has meant to people over the years it does indeed assume great significance. We will never know for how many this sanctuary has been a discovery of the real world.

Consider these lines from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

In a little precious stone what splendor meets the eyes!
In a little lump of sugar how much sweetness lies!

A pepper corn is very small, but seasons every dinner
More than all other condiments, although 'tis sprinkled thinner:
Translation, Praise of Little Women from the Spanish of
Juan Ruiz de Hita.

A Happy New Year to you all.

Bob Dasset, President
FRIENDS of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.

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IN WINTER, CURATOR FINDS SPRING!

Guess what -- the spring is running again! The spring which I declared officially deceased in my report of March 1973 is running again. Actually I was wrong when I made my pronouncement as it never was completely dead, and even that year of 1973 it rose but it did so so

late that I had already decided on its demise and had written its obituary. I think that the annual fluctuations of the spring are interesting and, assuming you will find them of some interest too, I will go back over its history.



The first time I remember seeing the spring was in 1951 when I went through the Garden with a class from the University. At that time there were four springs in the area that were running-- There was one at the lower end of the Garden, one just outside the Garden toward the picnic ground (where, I'm told, people used to have parties on spring water and gin), and there was one kitty-corner to the present spring at Glenwood Avenue and Glenwood Parkway. By the time I started in the Garden in 1954, all had dried up except for the present spring, but the water level there was some five feet higher than it is now, and there was a fountain there at that time. There was also the tiniest trickle of water coming from the spring in the Garden. The next year the trickle in the Garden was gone and the plumbers didn't replace the fountain.

During the next fifteen years the spring flowed at different rates depending on the rains and on the season. It dried up two or three times during droughts and each year the average level of the water was lower than the year before. Then in 1970 it dried up in mid-summer during a little drought as it had done in the past, but it was establishing a new cycle. That year it didn't come back until mid-November.

Then the next July, just as it had the previous year, it dried up. This time we hadn't even had a good dry spell, and it didn't come back until the first week in December. The next year it ran a little less and then in 1973 it didn't return until mid-April after I had declared it dead. Last spring it came back equally late but it lasted a little later into the summer before it dried up. Now it's back running again. I found the first trickle of water coming from it on the 5th of December and it is running fairly well now. Until this year my feeling that the area was slowly drying up explained all, but its actions this last year have me puzzled.-- I guess I can add it to that book I'm compiling of natural phenomena that I can't explain.

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I saw the pileated woodpecker again this fall right on schedule. It seems every fall one has to fly through a few times to laugh at me and raise my hopes that they are back as permanent residents but then I never see them there in the summer.-- Well, maybe this time.

Kenneth E. Avery, Curator
Eloise Butler Wildflower
Garden and Bird Sanctuary, Wirth Park

WELCOME WORD FROM MRS. CARROLL BINDER
TO CAY FARAGHER

Mrs. Carroll Binder, past President of the Friends of the Wildflower Garden, has maintained her active interest in the "Garden" since its inception. A long letter from her brings us up to date.

Mrs. Binder, with daughter, Debby, moved to Oakland, Calif., in 1971, where she has successfully battled her Parkinson's disease with the magic drug EeDopa. In spite of other problems plus a cataract operation, she has been finishing her husband's "papers" as well as those of her father for the Minnesota Historical Society. Her daughter Mary Kelsey and husband are in Oakland, and their four grown children are a great source of pleasure with their brilliant careers. The highlight of this year was a fall trip to Washington, D.C., to see son Dave and family, just returned from six years in Germany with the New York Times.

After some moving about, Mrs. Binder is now settled at the Mark Twain Retirement Center, 2438 - 35th Avenue, Oakland, California, 94601.

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NOTE from Cay Faragher: I am a member of the Events and Festivals Committee of the Bi-Centennial. It does seem that our organization should participate in this 1976 celebration. Some one of our members may have a great idea. Let us know and we can get to work on it.

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS RECORDED SINCE
OCTOBER "GENTIAN"

Mr. Gary Marvin, St. Paul, 55116
Mr. Andre' G. Mandel, Wayzata, 55391

We'll look forward to meeting you in the Garden in the Spring!

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A VOLUNTEER WILL BE MISSED

Mrs. George L. Peterson, of Wayzata, died shortly before Christmas. She was one of the "steadies" once a week for three years; then last year came to the Garden less often.

FORMER NORTHROP SCHOOL TEACHER - "FRIEND"

Mrs. Maude Lockwood died in May 1974. We were just informed recently by the attorney for her estate.

THANK YOU, MR. TUSLER, FOR MEMORIAL GIFTS

In memory of two of his old friends, Anne Benton RIEBETH and Margaret GUTHRIE. Appropriate letters have been sent to the members of the Riebeth family.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MRS. MARTHA CRONE, "FRIEND" and Honorary Life Member.AVID GARDENER ALSO AVID TRAVELER

We're sure many FRIENDS have been on interesting trips we don't hear about. Miss Elizabeth Bond, an avid gardener for years, this fall re-visited Salzburg friends, with her brother, as well as Vienna, Paris, and places in between. (She had previously been in Salzburg four and a half years as librarian for the Seminar in American Studies)

NORTH PARK NATURE CENTER IN FRIDLEY TO BECOME A REALITY

One day last fall our eye was caught by the title accompanying some photographs in the Minneapolis Tribune: "'Hard-core nature nuts' in Fridley defeat golfers." Now we've nothing against golf courses - we have quite a few around the Twin Cities - but the Fridley resident backers were fighting to maintain their "North Park" as a nature center, described by visitors as a "bucolic blend of woods and marsh, creeks and ponds, hills and dells." Some of the politicians in power, and some of the residents wanted it converted into a golf course. A referendum vote showed a decisive victory for the "nature nuts"; but it was an advisory referendum, not binding on the city council. Last January the city council gave preliminary approval to designating the park a golf course. Then both camps went into heavy campaigning.

In November 1974, a dramatic happening! The Fridley City Council voted to rescind its past actions that would have turned the park into a golf course. (Tribune, 11/19/74)

MR. LITTLE SAVES PENTSEMON FROM THE PLOW

We have Philip Little's permission to quote from his letter of October 14:

"The past Fringed Gentian reminded me that possibly you would like some pentsemon seeds for the Wild Flower Garden.

"About 1920 the fields around Fridley in the spring were covered with pentsemon flowers. We often came back at noon with arms full that we took to the hospitals.

"As progress advanced they were covered with buildings and when I started my wildflower garden I went up there, ten or more years later. There were none, only buildings. I hunted every place I had gotten them before but none --

"One day driving from Anoka to go fishing in Wisconsin..., I spotted some in a field in front of a farm house. The man was mowing the field, and when I approached him and asked if I could purchase some of the pentsemon, he said, 'I wish I could get rid of the darn things...help yourself!' I did and now have quite a few plants, and this year have one freak, all white. It's too bad wild flowers get in the way of progress!"

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We're sure Ken Avery will have no trouble finding a home for these seeds.

We recently telephoned to City Hall in Fridley to learn more of developments. From a most enthusiastic secretary we learned that the new mayor, Bill Nee, will be sworn in January 6; and they now have a naturalist, Dan Huff, employed to develop the nature center. WE WISH YOU WELL, HARD CORE NATURE NUTS!

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SILENT WORLD

Woodlands are spectral
with their hosts
Of hooded spruce and
hemlock ghosts;
Snowlight and moonlight
are as one,
Beneath the trees where
paths are gone --
No white bough stirs
with wind or wing,
The silent world is listening --
Waiting for something
Swiftly and shy
And beautiful to hasten by.
----Lillah A. Ashley in
Passing Summer

"Snow time is when we can take a fairly accurate inventory of the wild creatures around us, barring those which hibernate. Birds that are only migrants or summer visitors may be lacking, but the animals usually remain pretty much in one vicinity all through the year. Those which I miss in the valley during winter are the woodchuck who vanishes in October and sleeps until late March or April in one of his safest burrows, the timid little bat, the jumping mouse who is a notoriously heavy sleeper, the chipmunk who stays in his basement, and the skunk, the last named not being greatly missed. The light sleepers are the opossum and the raccoon who come out only in warmish, thawing weather when they can find the kind of food they prefer.....

"The hopping bird has long toenails like those of the canary, and his tracks are in pairs with considerable distance between each pair. The birds that walk and run leave footmarks that are spaced like a man's in walking and running."

From Animal Neighbors of the Countryside
by Joseph Wharton Lippincott
(Pub. J. B. Lippincott Co.)

The busy member quoted below we sought out, remembering having seen a lovely poem she wrote for the dedication of the Martha Crone Shelter on May 13th, 1970. As you may well be aware, she "wears many hats," -- wife, mother, grandmother, poet, essayist, generous contributor of time to her Church, traveler, with interests in geology, botany, sociology, and snorkeling! Betty Bridgman (Mrs. Donald Elliott Bridgman) has made a gift of her book of poetry, This is Minnesota (North Central Publishing Co.) from which the following were selected:

C O M P A N I O N E D

We climbed across the crusted field
and broke a thin drift on the hill.
Over whatever fences reeled
by wood or road we went, and still

only a little tired -- a mile
of Winter is worth five of Fall,
but with your hand at every stile
I could not think it hard at all --

so long as I could cheerfully
look ahead, above, below --
but not behind me, lest I see
only two footprints in the snow.

We only wish that we could show also the beautiful script form of calligraphy in which all these poems were hand-written by Ruth Justus (Mrs. Roy Justus) for publication.

Anyone need a green GENTIAN file folder?

A p.c. to the Sec'y will bring one.