

PUBLICATION OF  
FRIENDS OF THE  
WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

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## President's Report –

### It's a Nature Preserve!

The South Wirth Woods should be maintained and restored as a Nature Preserve, and the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden continue to work towards our goal of restoring the buffer zone around the Garden as a Preserve to be enjoyed and appreciated. Encouraged activities within the Nature Preserve are hiking, birdwatching, nature photography, orienteering, plant identification, traditional cross-country skiing, and other kinds of active observation and enjoyment of the natural woods. Discouraged activities are those that are incompatible, such as mountain biking and ski racing.

The Friends are not opposed to cross-country skiing in the Nature Preserve. We continue to support the recreational activities in the buffer zone area, including hiking, orienteering, and traditional (single file) cross-country skiing. We are opposed to maintaining an unnatural 20-foot-wide swath through the Nature Preserve for once-a-year use for the Loppet ski race. The Loppet wants a 20-25-foot-wide swath through the buffer zone for its ski trail because skiers using the skating style of cross-country ski racing need the wide trail to pass one another on the hills near the Garden. But maintaining this wide path for its once-a-year use for ski racers requires keeping the wide trail clear of shrubs and other understory woody plants that would otherwise grow there. The area next to the Garden in the Nature Preserve is not an oak savannah landscape with large open spaces beneath trees, which some have argued is conducive to skiing without having to remove any plants. Instead, the area next to the Garden is a woodland which, if restored, would look like the landscape within the Garden itself.

At the last Park Board meeting in July, the Board accepted the Friends' proposal to add the Bym Mawr Neighborhood Association and the Audubon Society as participants in the trail discussion group which will inventory all the trails in the Nature Preserve and make recommendations to the Park Board for further trail usage. The other participants in the trail group are the Friends, the Loppet organization, and Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists. The trail committee will start meeting as soon as a GPS survey has been completed, locating every trail within the buffer zone. At the July Park Board meeting, the Board rejected the Friends' proposal that the Loppet be relocated to its original route, as used during the first two years of the Loppet races, which would have moved it a more significant distance from the Garden and corrected the unfortunate mistake of putting the 20-foot-wide trail so close to the Garden.

A recent Commentary piece in the *Minneapolis StarTribune* raised the concern about a "national trend to clutter parkgrounds with activity-oriented focal points," and going away from maintaining parks for their traditional "passive, reflective experiences." Charles A. Birnbaum, founder and president of the Cultural Landscape Foundation in Washington D.C., in his Commentary on October 28, 2005, wrote that Minneapolis is no exception to an attack on our nation's legacy of urban parks:

*"In the age of video games and attention deficit disorder, 'open space' has become a dirty word. Parks are seen*

*continued*



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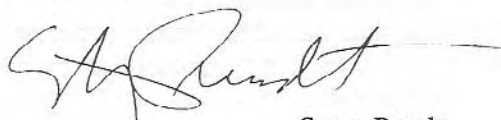
Susan Wilkins, *Gardener/  
Curator (Ex-officio)*

## It's a Nature Preserve *continued*

as a void that must be filled, 'programmed' to amuse all comers.

"Who decided that strolling under a canopy of trees is not a sufficient experience in its own right? Have we stopped valuing the humanizing scale and tactile marvels of nature? Do we still appreciate our history and public gardens?"

The buffer zone around the Garden should be maintained and restored as a Nature Preserve. Activities inappropriate to a Nature Preserve should be discouraged. Wirth Park is large enough to accommodate a multitude of uses, including a golf course and a demonstration mountain-biking trail. The small buffer zone around the Garden (less than 8 percent of Wirth Park) should be preserved for uses consistent with a Nature Preserve.



Steve Pundt  
President

The Buckthorn Battle: Invasive alien buckthorn presents a serious problem to all of the South Wirth Woods including Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. Again in early November Gardener/Curator Susan Wilkins organized a special Buckthorn Removal Morning at the Garden. This event gave volunteers the chance to help in the fight to preserve the natural splendor of the Garden by removing some of the alien seedlings and shrubs. Those who could not participate will have opportunities to do so at scheduled events in 2006.

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*The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary is an untamed garden and sanctuary for wild native flora and fauna. It is officially open from April 1 to October 15, barring heavy spring snows. The Garden entrance is located just off Theodore Wirth Parkway close to the intersection of the Parkway and Glenwood Avenue.*

*Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., is a nonprofit organization of private citizens whose purpose is to educate by enhancing visitors' appreciation and understanding of Minnesota's native plants and their natural environments. It aims to enhance and safeguard the interests of the Garden.*

*The Fringed Gentian is published on a quarterly basis for members and supporters of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Editor is Lisa Locken, 1227 Edlin Place, Minneapolis, MN 55416. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. E-mail: ldlocken@goldengate.net*



*Notes from the Gardener/Curator—*

## Tremendous Trees of the Wildflower Garden

*by Susan Wilkins, Gardener/Curator*

What would the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary be without the hundreds of grand and glorious trees found growing within the wild Garden's gates?

It is difficult to imagine the Wildflower Garden without the woodlands' majestic canopy of oaks, maples, and poplars or the grove of hemlocks near the back gate. What about the tamaracks glowing in their own golden light right now in the wetland or the oaks of the upland garden with their open arms stretching every day a little closer toward the sunlit sky. Gracing every corner of our 15-acre Garden, the myriad species and specimens of trees quietly soaking in the rays and nourishment of the summer sun and willfully watching the winter hours pass make the Garden what it is. The importance of the wildflower Garden's trees cannot be overstated—they are the heart and soul of our nearly 100-year-old Garden. Ensuring the continuation of their health and well-being is a task that ranks second to none in the management of this rich and wonderful wildflower Garden.

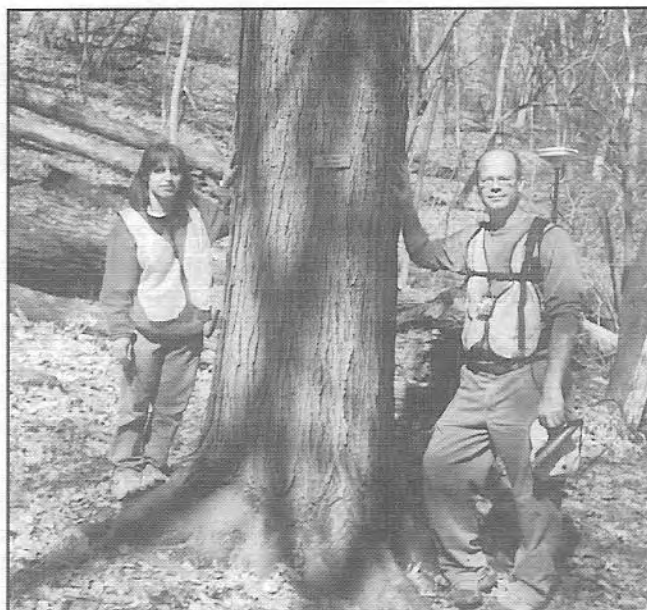
To take care effectively of the hundreds of mature trees found in the Garden, a system for recording and keeping current information regarding the location, size, species, health, implemented management practices and disease concerns for each and every one of the Garden's mature trees became necessary. To this end an inventory of all of the trees greater than approximately 8 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) was completed last May.

### **The Lone Oak at Top of Hill is Still Alive (at left)**

*Majestically perched in the upland garden, a lone white oak stands tall despite the loss of its companion, a nearby red oak, last year. Although generally the roots of red and white oaks don't graft together, the fungus that causes oak wilt disease spreads through grafted roots. This white oak was injected with a fungicide as a preventative measure to protect it from possible infection. Leaves on many of the oaks in the garden did not look healthy this season, but this was due to a non-fatal fungal infection called anthracnose.*

### **Global Positioning System (GPS) System Is Used (at right)**

*Joe Walton and Mary Johnson, employees of Kunde Associates, carried out the first-ever tree inventory of Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, a project assigned to them by the Forestry Dept. of the Park Board. Because of the GPS system used in the inventory, this portion of the work was done in early spring before the leaves had come out fully. During the inventory Joe and Mary identified every tree over 8 inches in diameter within the Garden. (Note Joe's GPS antennae.)*



The inventory information was recorded in a database using Inven-Tree software created by Kunde Company. It can be updated as often as is desired to account for growth, death, health-status change and such things as selective pruning, disease or pest control. In addition, new trees can be added to the database.

Once recorded, the information then can be used to analyze just about anything relevant to both individual trees and populations of trees categorized by species, size, health, and distribution. This information will allow us to understand the dynamics of species distribution in the Garden and general health of individual species. Then we can begin to assess the ecological health of our Garden's ecosystems from the top down. Understanding the big picture will allow us to care for the Garden's many ecosystems in a meaningful way. We can make informed decisions regarding new plant selection and planting locations. We can better speculate how a species-specific disease or pest may spread. Having this information recorded and in an easy-to-use database with analysis tools is really the first step in caring for the Garden at the caliber it deserves.

Because this is a mapping-based system, it is possible to generate maps from the information based on specific categories such as species, diameter breast height (dbh), and health. That means that if I would like to look at all of the red oaks in the Garden with a dbh of 12 inches or greater that are in good health, I could! This is a wonderful tool for taking a closer look at the many layers of data now recorded!

Information is one thing; action is another. With this information we can then, in turn, make sound management decisions to protect our existing trees and to preserve the legacy of the Wildflower Garden by enhancing the health of our diverse ecosystems. Doing our utmost to protect the existing trees from avoidable ill-health caused by exotic diseases and pests is fundamental to the management of this resource. Planting the critical "next-generation" of saplings to supplement regeneration of native tree species in their appropriate habitats is one way in which we can preserve the ecosystems that we have now. Selecting the appropriate species is key to ensuring that we will have healthy, diverse, and ecologically suitable habitats into the future.

Finally, we also can locate and map specimens and populations of invasive species that we need to control. Thus, we can monitor our eradication efforts and over time we can analyze the results. Not only will this information be useful to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board natural resource managers, but it also will have the potential to be interpreted and applied to a variety of situations throughout our region.

The opportunities that we will be afforded with this new way of recording and analyzing data regarding the trees in the Wildflower Garden are many. The proactive and positive actions that we can take based on this information to protect, preserve, and enhance the wildflower Garden will ensure that the Garden, adorned with her glorious trees, will continue to be the place that we know and care so deeply about.

# The Friends' Vision for South Wirth Woods:

## *from Historical Roots to 21st Century Preservation*

by Constance Pepin, Friends Historian, and Pam Weiner, Vice President

*"The wilderness is near, as well as dear.... Our lives need the relief of such a background, where the pine flourishes and the jay still screams." -- Henry David Thoreau*

This season, thousands of people visited the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary to enjoy the marvels of woodland and prairie wildflowers and migrating and resident birds. This unique and special place, the crown jewel of Theodore Wirth Park, is treasured as the oldest public wild flower garden in the country and home to hundreds of species of flowering plants, birds, and mammals. Some visitors liken the area to Walden Pond, where the quiet beauty of nature can be experienced without the disturbances and noises common to other areas in our park system.

As reported in our President's letter in this issue, the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden soon will begin a dialogue with several other organizations about the future of the Nature Preserve around the Garden (bounded by Glenwood Avenue on the north, I-394 on the south, Theodore Wirth Parkway on the west, and Xerxes Avenue on the east). This natural 'buffer zone' protects the Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary, while bringing year-round enjoyment and environmental education to hikers, birdwatchers, and students, young and old alike. Including the fenced Garden, this area comprises approximately 75 acres, or less than 8 percent of the total acreage of Theodore Wirth Park. Recent developments have provided a valuable opportunity for the Friends to reflect on our vision for the Garden buffer zone, just as previous Friends have done, in order to fulfill our mission "to educate the public about Minnesota's native plants and to safeguard the integrity of the Garden." In July, we formally submitted *The Friends' Vision for South Wirth Woods: From Historical Roots to 21st Century Preservation* to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Simply stated, the Friends' vision for these 60 or so acres of woods around the fenced Garden is to restore and protect the area as a Nature Preserve for environmental education and low-impact recreational enjoyment. This vision excludes biking and ski racing trails in this area because of the adverse effects of constructing, maintaining and using trails that would disrupt and diminish wildlife habitat and current uses of this parkland. Sometimes called "passive recreation," current uses actually involve active observation, study, and enjoyment of the woods, for hiking, bird watching, nature photography, orienteering, open-air drawing and painting, environmental education, and the identification of trees, plants, and wild flowers.

The historical record leaves no doubt that the South Wirth Woods has been dedicated, after nearly a century of effort and negotiation, to remain in its natural state as a "native conservatory." More than a hundred years ago, the Park Board began to acquire tracts of land in an effort to preserve their natural character. As the city of Minneapolis grew rapidly, the establishment of the Garden in 1907 reflected Eloise Butler's view that this land should be preserved as a "last resort for the lovers of nature." As Theodore Wirth Park grew to 957 acres, the Park Board has continually stated its commitment to maintain the natural

character of large areas of the park. In 1964, the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners "approved the request of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden that additional areas in Theodore Wirth Park be added to, and considered part of the Eloise Butler Wild Flower Garden, so that these areas may remain in their natural state." In the decades since then, numerous Park Board planning documents and projects have reinforced a primary objective "to preserve, enhance, and protect the natural resources of the park."

Today, the Friends' concern about the well-being and survival of the Wild Flower Garden and Bird Sanctuary results, in part, from threats that expanded uses of the buffer zone would present to current uses of the area by both human beings and wildlife. For example, noise and human activity disrupt avian courtship, reduce successful rearing of young, and increase the vulnerability to predators. Frequency, intensity, and persistence of noise and proximity of human activities during breeding and growth periods are important factors that affect wildlife. Some species of birds and animals are vulnerable to even minor habitat losses or short-term disruptions and may not successfully breed in noisy locations or where human activity occurs.

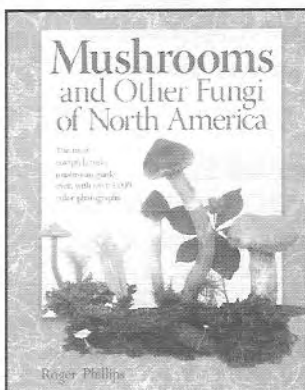
Invasive species are another major threat to the Garden and Bird Sanctuary. In 2000, a Park Board study concluded that "invasive exotic plants have caused Theodore Wirth Park to be inhospitable to plants native to the park and have also lowered the woods' value to wildlife. Studies have shown, for example, that birds suffer much higher nestling mortality when they nest in exotic Buckthorn and Honeysuckle shrubs than when they nest in native vegetation, because their nests are more likely to be destroyed by predators."

Despite serious threats, the South Wirth Woods offers a unique and irreplaceable opportunity to restore and preserve the forest and wildlife habitat for the benefit of all Minneapolis park users. The Friends' vision recognizes the need to protect sensitive areas and balance human demands within Theodore Wirth Park, consistent with the Park Board's environmental policy and goals. The Park Board study in 2000 affirmed "through clearing of invasive species, replanting, and reseeded, and a maintenance regime, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has the opportunity to restore the splendor and diversity of the plant communities once present at [Theodore Wirth Park]. Restoring the regional character of these sites would greatly increase their interest and value to park users and to wildlife." The same study acknowledged that "without active management, natural areas become smaller, more fragmented, and have fewer native species, with the ultimate result being diminished value to Minneapolis residents and visitors."

Theodore Wirth Park, because of its huge size, satisfies the demands of many park users, for diverse activities such as golfing, biking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, wide-track ski racing, swimming, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and environmental education. No one single area of the Park, however, can sustainably accommodate all these uses. The Friends' vision supports the Park Board's historic designation of the South Wirth Woods as a conservation zone, which allows for low-impact activities such as hiking and traditional cross-country skiing on ungroomed trails. Other areas within the park can be used for active sports, such as biking and ski racing, without disrupting or damaging the nature preserve and threatening the integrity and viability of the Garden and Bird Sanctuary.

For more than 50 years, the efforts of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden have reflected our consistent vision to protect and restore the nature preserve surrounding the fenced Garden area. As we approach the centennial of the Garden's establishment, we Friends look back with appreciation and wonder at the foresight of Eloise Butler, Martha Crone, and our Friends' founder, Clinton Odell. We applaud the integrity and vision of Theodore Wirth and other Park Board leaders who procured and preserved these lands for the benefit of Minneapolis citizens. We hope that the future of the Garden and South Wirth Woods is a continuation of their wisdom for the sake of our children and our community. The Friends' vision reaffirms a century of preservation in order to protect the legacy of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary for today's grateful visitors and generations more to come. Let us make sure to pass on the treasures we have in our care, by sustaining this unique wild garden and the land that protects it. In the words of the Iroquois nation: "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

## BOOK CORNER



### Mushrooms and other Fungi of North America

by Roger Phillips,  
Firefly Books, 2005

Reviewed by Diana Thottungal

Birdwatching is almost a competitive sport, since the birds simply don't sit still very long. Plants, on the other hand, are quite patient while you key them out or come back tomorrow or next week for another chance.

And for both, there are plenty of field guides at varying levels of quality and specificity so everyone can play.

None of the above works for mushrooms. They mostly sit still but are often quite evanescent... here today and gone tomorrow. The shape and color of mushrooms can change between morning and evening of the same day or before and after a rain. And mushroom guides of any completeness are few and far between.

That makes it a major event when a book comes out that addresses any of these situations. This book, eagerly awaited by amateur mycologists, is a reprint from 1991. It should become a standard, like Newcomb for wildflowers or Sibley for birds, and it is hoped, will stay in print a long time.

Having said that, I also emphasize that this is a coffee table book, not a field guide, reflecting the reality that one of the main ways of identifying mushrooms is through spore prints.

The author of this book was able to use portrait-photography techniques to create clear and detailed images of each mushroom from various angles and in various stages of development. The 1,000 pictures are more than are provided by any other mushroom book. Often a bit of leaf, log or moss is included to provide size orientation as a supplement to the notes.

A creative feature sets up the index so that the specific names are listed separately rather than under the relevant genus. This was probably inspired by the fact that recent studies are changing the known generic, and sometimes even family relationships, among fungi. According to the naming rules in the past, *Mushroomus weirdus* in 2007 might be re-named *Fungus weirdus*, and this index feature gives you two chances to find your fungus. Since all the members of the same genus are on adjoining pages, this is a completely practical arrangement.

Each description includes all the necessary information not obvious from the photograph: cap and stem notes, taste, odor, season, habitat, spore details, edibility and other comments.

There has to be a down side and there is. High tree dwellers that did not lend themselves to being picked and brought to the studio are missing, and in a book this complete one would expect to find them. We also all know that there are not an even 1,000 species, but there may be three times as many, so, even with this book, one may not be able to key out many of the sightings of a mushroom hunting day.

Nevertheless, for any amateur this is the best mushroom book going.

*Diana Thottungal is a naturalist who works exclusively at the Garden where she has documented and photographed 100 varieties of mushrooms this year. She leads seasonal mushroom walks and is developing a "Walk & Talk" program for future seasons at the Garden*

## Volunteer News

by Harriet Betzold, Volunteer Chair

It's been another great season by volunteers in the Martha Cronc Shelter. Thank you for the hours you donated. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by everyone – the visitors, the Minneapolis Park Board and the Board of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. You have provided a wonderful service to the Garden and can take pride in having your name listed below:

Alfred Anderegg	Judy Jones
Mary Kay Arthur	Roberta Jordan
Harriet Betzold	Cynthia Kroening
Nancy Bjerke	Kristen Larson
Blair Bjerke	JuanitaLussenhop
George Bridgman	Joanne Michalec
John Bridgman	Gloria Miller
Betty Bryan	Mankwe Ndoti
Leah Carlson	Joseph Schmidt
Kathleen Connelly	Constance Pepin
Susan Dean	Jim Proctor
Jenny Dechaine	Sally Pundt
Marie Demler	Steve Pundt
Launa Ellison	Betsy Schiller
Chris Felbeck	Mary Jo Schifsky
Katie Fournier	Mary Steinbicker
Ann Godfrey	Phoebe Waugh
Larry Gravitz	Carol Weber
Jean Herzberg	Pam Weiner
Lis Isebrand	
Marguerite Harbison	

A huge "thank you" to Mary Jo Schifsky for her contributions to the volunteer program for the short time she assisted this past season. Her suggestion to use e-mail to set up the calendar was a big help, and we think e-mail will be a valuable addition to telephone communications with the volunteers. Mary Jo will be unable to continue in this position next year.

I am very happy to welcome Ann Godfrey as the new volunteer coordinator for the 2006 season. Ann is a long-time volunteer and serves as a member of the Friends' Board. She recently took an early retirement from an elementary teaching career which will allow her time to take on this important job scheduling volunteers for the Martha Cronc Shelter.

## Children as Naturalists

by Launa Ellison

Children learn by doing. Our Garden walks and "please touch" table are ideal for expanding their understanding of our natural world. Ideally, children would visit each week from the April opening to October, keeping a sketch book and notes about what they observe. A thoughtful adult would ask probing questions.

What an educational luxury! What a beautiful natural way to learn! Beauty impacts both heart and mind.

For more than the 40 years I've taught in our public schools, I collected many science materials. Science and the world are the reason for learning to read, write, draw, and understand math. Thus, when thinking about retirement last spring, I began to think about the best use of my treasures. I couldn't count on the next teacher to see the beauty of my box of bird nests. I didn't know if my insect collection would be valued. So I met with our Gardener/Curator, Susan Wilkins, and together set aside treasures for future educational usage at the Shelter.

A librarian parent had given me an old Microfiche reader that is delightful for a small group to use. The children can look at a butterfly wing or the edge of a leaf or the miniature creatures in our pond water. Small vials, given to me many years ago, are fine instruments for comparing pond water with flowing stream water. The large magnify lens is easy for a preschooler to use, and now the Shelter has enough smaller lenses for a small group. Nature books and insect books joined our children's collection. It is rewarding to see my contributions being used to support children's learning.

Years ago, Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard, identified eight types of intelligences important worldwide. Too often our stressed teachers don't see beyond reading, writing, and

arithmetic. Wealthier parents are able to supplement their children's learning in music and kinesthetic sports intelligence. At the Garden we have the opportunity to develop children's naturalist intelligence -- and have fun doing so.

I am thankful my contributions to the Garden have a good home. I look forward to volunteering to help children -- and parents -- develop their natural intelligence.

*Launa Ellison is a member of the Friends Board and a Shelter Volunteer. She is a retired teacher and the author of several books.*



*Not yet 4 years old, a junior scientist named Zaydra studied details of an oak leaf on an October Garden visit.*

### Memorials to the Friends

by Gary Bebeau, Memorial Chair

Thanks to all of the following for caring and sharing:

*Memorial gift for G. D. Wallace  
from Max and Marie Demler.*

*Gift in honor of:  
Helen Hudachek Thueraof  
and Patricia Thuerouf Spychaj  
from Louise Hotka.*

*Memorial gift for Janey Leck  
from Carolyn Brunelle.*

*Memorial gifts (separately made) in  
memory of Mike Nauer from:  
Bernice Stuart,  
Pitlik Studio,  
Joe Paczkowski,  
Maura Smith and Randall Seitz,  
Julia and David Peterson.*

Your memorials and other gifts to the Friends are much appreciated and constitute a very important part of keeping the Garden a special place for generations of people to enjoy.

*Note: Memorials and gifts to the Friends are tax deductible. When sending a memorial, please give the name and address of the family being honored so that we can acknowledge that a memorial has been received. An acknowledgment also will be*

*provided to the donor. Memorials should be sent (and checks payable) to: Friends of The Wildflower Garden, c/o Gary Bebeau, 716 West 5th Street, Red Wing, MN 55066.*

### Memberships

by Joy Davis, Membership Chair

Welcome, new members!

Lucille Anton, Minneapolis  
Mary Kay Arthur, Golden Valley  
Stephen and Sandra Flaherty, Outing  
Cheri Desmond May, Minneapolis  
Gibbs and Tina Maynor, Minneapolis  
Barbara Nygaard, Minneapolis  
Liz Puhl, Minneapolis  
Will Schroeer, Minneapolis  
Tom and Pat Scott, Minneapolis  
Kathleen Stout, Eagan, Minnesota  
Jacqueline J. Wells, Golden Valley  
Susanne West, Minneapolis  
George Will, Minneapolis

Please note the form on the back page for your new and gift memberships. For changes of address, please notify Joy Davis, 1089 Cedar View Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55405.