

The Mayflower Log

SPRING 2019 VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2

Skywalk art has a tale to tell

There is more—*much more*—than meets the eye in the artwork that lines the skywalk over Park Street at Mayflower.

The nine acrylics displayed on the skywalk walls are lovely representations of many of Mayflower's buildings. They are treasures, by any measuring stick. What makes them even more remarkable, however, is that the artist, Gail Vogt, was a quadriplegic who had the full use of only her left hand.

Longtime Mayflower residents will remember Gail, who lived at Mayflower with her husband, Raymond, from 1995 until their deaths in 2003 and 2004, respectively. They built the Harwich Terrace home at 722 Broad Street.

Those who did not know Gail need to hear her story.

Gail was a young mother and farm wife



MAYFLOWER'S HEALTH CENTER

when she contracted polio in 1952. Unable to walk and with limited use of her upper body for the rest of her life, she was undaunted. She and Raymond had another child, she managed a household (with Raymond's help), and she pursued

(Continued on page 2)



MARTINEK, Dorothy
(* John)



MARTINEK, John
(* Dorothy)



NEHRING, Judith

INSIDE

Community volunteers 3

How Mayflower residents make a difference in Grinnell

Monday was washday 7

A recollection of family, work and routine by Beryl Clotfelter

Skywalk art

(Continued from page 1)

her creative passions – sewing, painting, crafts. Initially right-handed, she trained her left hand to take its place.

Her paintings, on permanent display in the skywalk, were the result of an informal art group organized in the late 1990s by artist and Mayflower resident Netia Worley. The group met at Gail's home.

"I don't know how she did it," Netia says, recalling how Gail's wheelchair had a flat surface attached to an armrest. Gail held the paintbrush in her left hand and anchored the paper with her right elbow. "She was really something else. Talk of determination and guts, she had it all."

The series of paintings in the skywalk came about, Netia recalls, when Gail said she wanted a project. Netia suggested the Mayflower buildings and took photos for Gail to use.

Gail's oldest daughter, Judy Durr of Grinnell, was 9 when her mother contracted polio. She doesn't remember a lot from her early years, she said, but recalls her mother in later life as a very positive person, despite her limitations.

"She never complained about her physical condition," Judy said. "She complained about things like the weather, like we all do, but she never complained about her situation. I know I'm biased, but I thought the world of her."

Mary Schuchmann



MONTGOMERY HALL



HARWICH TERRACE TRIPLEX



BUCKLEY HALL

Photos of the artwork by Selva Lehman

Reaching out beyond the campus

Baking cakes for college students' birthdays! Fighting mass incarceration! Educating citizens about public issues! Overseeing early childhood education in Poweshiek and surrounding counties! Reading stories to students! Acting as an advocate for youth! Sitting with people as they face the end of life! Organizing donations to the local food bank! Performing, directing and working backstage in Community Theater!

Our last issue of the LOG featured volunteer activities that Mayflower residents engage in within the retirement community; this story explores the myriad volunteer activities that Mayflower residents perform in the larger community.

Research shows that quality of life for older individuals links to their participation in and connection to community. From local government to community theater to community organizations to prison programs to politics to food banks, Mayflower residents contribute in meaningful ways that also help them remain connected.

Mayflower residents participate in many church activities: baking cakes for college students, visiting the sick, driving people to doctors' appointments, delivering Meals on Wheels, providing meals, organizing worship and singing in choirs.

In addition, they serve on the governing boards of many local organizations like Rotary, Church Women United, League of Women Voters, Grinnell Regional Medical Center-Unity Point, Friends of International Harmony Steering Committee, Tiger Packs Board, Big Brother Big Sister, Grinnell Area



Catherine Rod, one of many community volunteers at Mayflower, helps at the MICA food pantry.

Photo by Judy Hunter

Arts Council, Iowa People's PAC, Poweshiek County Democratic Steering Committee. And among those who serve in local government, Grinnell's mayor is a Mayflower resident!

Mayflower residents stack shelves at the MICA food pantry. They act in, direct, and work backstage for Community Theater productions. They make receiving blankets for newborns at the hospital as a member of the Jewel Box Quilt Guild.

They represent foster children as volunteers in the Court Appointed Special

(Continued on page 5)

Welcome John and Dorothy Martinek

The Martineks have moved into their new home on State Street. They are glad to be there, and the Mayflower Community is glad to have them.

Both Dorothy and John grew up in small towns in Southern Wisconsin—Dorothy, in Edgerton and John, in Cudahy a suburb of Milwaukee. John's grandparents all came directly from Czechoslovakia. He has one younger sister, Carol. John recalled that his family didn't own a car until John was 11, because they didn't need one. Cudahy was pretty self-contained with a grocery, shoe repair shop, drug store, and neighborhood pub—all within easy walking distance. He said that his childhood memories there are happy ones. He grew up across the street from a large city park, and he and his friends spent most of their time there swimming, playing tennis, pick-up baseball, and football. This led to a lifelong interest in sports activities.

Edgerton, according to Dorothy, was a farming community, and tobacco was the main crop. She recalled that the downtown had stores on one side of the street and big tobacco warehouses on the other. She, along with her parents and her older sister, Judy, enjoyed spending many holidays and weekends with grandparents, three of whom came directly from Germany, and extended family. Dorothy felt she had a wonderful childhood playing with neighborhood friends, without much adult supervision. In their little town they were free to wander and enjoy great times playing cowboys, pirates, Tarzan, — whatever they had seen at the local movie house that week.

John and Dorothy met at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater. (John had started out at UW-Madison, but enjoyed that 'party school' a bit too much and transferred.) After graduating in 1965, John received a full-ride scholarship to Tulane to pursue a PhD in Anatomy. Dorothy graduated that same year with a degree in Primary Education. Since the times did not dictate "moving in together," and they did not want to part, they decided to marry that summer, and they headed off to New Orleans for John's 4 years of grad school. While John took classes, Dorothy taught Head Start and kindergarten. When their son Johnny was born, she became a stay at home mom and homemaker, a job she believes to be her most important!

When he completed his degree, John received a faculty appointment at Ohio State, teaching and doing research in anatomy. The couple's second son, Joel, was born in Columbus.

After five years at OSU, John accepted a position at Grinnell College teaching anatomy to first-year med students in the Rush Medical Program. Along with his teaching responsibilities at the college, John also became an assistant football coach, and, when the Rush program ended, made a transition to the Physical Education Department. Dorothy found that Grinnell was full of wonderful people and quickly became involved with new friends and the

(Continued on page 5)

Volunteers

(Continued from page 3)

Advocate (CASA) program, a volunteer job through the Iowa Child Advocacy Board.

They volunteer in the schools, facilitate a program called "Alternatives to Violence" at the Newton Correctional Facility, read to preschoolers at the Drake Community Library.

Through Hospice, they visit with people nearing the end of life. Through private arrangements, they visit with people who have had strokes.

Their reasons for volunteering are wide-ranging. One volunteer says, "I like to know what is going on, something that you can best determine by being in the middle of it. . . . I en-

courage everyone to find an organization whose work/program resonates with them and ask how they can get involved. Worker bees are valued in any organization."

And it doesn't always have to feel like work. One person who has acted in many Community Theater productions did not list that activity as a volunteer role:

You, too, can plug in

Many organizations such as the hospital, schools and library are actively seeking volunteers.

To volunteer with the library, contact Karla Selby, 641-236-2661 or kyselby@grinnelliowa.gov.

To volunteer with the hospital, contact Cara Kenkel, 641-236-2043 or cara.kenkel@unitypoint.org.

To volunteer with the Grinnell-Newburg Schools, contact Judy Smith, 641-236-2700 or judy.smith@grinnell-k12.org.

Some volunteer positions require background checks.

"I think of volunteering as something I do for others. I do Community Theater for myself."

No matter whether people volunteer to benefit others or themselves, their volunteer work enriches the entire community

Judy Hunter

Martineks

(Continued from page 4)

community. Eventually, she became the head teacher at the Community Preschool located at the United Church of Christ. and served as such for nearly 14 years.

In 1989, John resigned his position at Grinnell. After

several years in athletics, John returned to teaching anatomy at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, commuting from Grinnell.

Just as he left Grinnell College, Dorothy began a new job there as a secretary in Student Affairs and worked with Jenny Erickson at Grinnell's

Forum. John retired in 2002 and Dorothy in 2005. Though moving from the home where they had lived for 44 years was a big job, both John and Dorothy are happy to be settled here at Mayflower.

Betty Moffett

Welcome Judy Nehring

Judy was born in Marshalltown and graduated from Gladbrook Community High School. She attended both Buena Vista College and Central College and taught second grade in Reinbeck in the early 60's. So she is an Iowa Girl!

Judy is also a world traveler. She has visited Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany, where she visited cities of her ancestors: Hamburg and Marne. Forty years after her first trip to Europe, Judy returned with her daughter, Arlene, and they researched family history, revisiting many of the same places and family members that Judy had visited during her earlier exploration, besides the Czech Republic from where her maternal family immigrated.

In 1962 Judy married Lance August Nehring in the Peace United Church of Christ, Gladbrook, IA. Lance and Judy had twin daughters, Arlene Kay and Marlene May. Arlene is Senior Minister of the Eden UCC in Hayward, CA. She is married to Stephanie Spencer who works for the State of California.

Marlene married Dennis Schwerin and they live on a horse and cattle ranch in NW Arkansas. Marlene is not only involved in the business with her husband, but she also has been active in their Presbyterian Church where she is an elder. Marlene is a retired middle school ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Teacher, and now works part time as an adjunct professor in the Teacher Education Department at John Brown University, in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Marlene and Dennis have two daughters, Susie and Chrisie,

both married. Susie and her husband, Nate, have Naaman, 9, and Natalie, 4. Chrisie and her husband, Kaleb, have Paden, 5, and Paxton, 3.

Judy researched and wrote eight family history books! Judy's husband, Lance, lived and worked all of his life on the Nehring family farm, also worked for a plumber and had a corn shelling business for several years. He was a hard worker, and died on his farm in 1975, leaving Judy to bring up the twins.

In 1976 Judy and the girls moved to a new home in Reinbeck, IA, and she returned to the classroom as a teacher's aide in the Reinbeck Nursery School. After her time as a teacher, Judy gained more education at the Business Institute of Technology (now American Institute of Commerce) in Cedar Falls. She held a variety of jobs. Judy makes greeting cards on the computer!

Judy has two brothers, LeRoy Thomsen and Bruce Thomsen. LeRoy is married to Margaret. They have 3 married daughters and 7 grandchildren. LeRoy and Margaret continue to farm and run their farm equipment business in Tama County, IA.

Bruce and Amy Thomsen live in Urbandale, IA. Amy is retired, and Bruce is an accountant for Hope Ministries in Des Moines. Bruce and Amy have 7 grandchildren and another one on the way.

Judy says of her life, "My greatest accomplishments have been learning German, visiting relatives in Germany, creating family history books and my daughters, grandchildren, and great grandchildren."

Karen Phillips

Monday was washday

By Beryl Clotfelter

During the eight years my family lived in Coats, Kansas, the years when I went from the ages of 8 to 16, Monday was usually the day to do the family laundry. The process required the entire morning and perhaps part of the afternoon.

We did not have city water, but behind our house was a well. It was about 100 feet deep, and the water was cold and clean. To bring the water up, we had a windmill. Between the house and the windmill was another house that we called the “wash house,” which held all of our laundry equipment. It was perhaps 12’ x 12’, though it may have been smaller. On one side of the room was an old kerosene kitchen stove that my mother had used in the kitchen before getting a propane stove. It heated the water for the laundry.

Early Monday morning my father filled a large copper boiler with water, put it on the stove and lighted the burners. By the time we had eaten breakfast and were ready to begin work, the water was boiling hot. We used bar soap – P&G or Ivory – that was reduced to shavings with a paring knife. I do not recall ever handling the boiling water myself. I think that he often also did the shaving of the soap, but he probably was occupied during the day so that the bulk of the washing labor fell to my mother and the children, primarily me.

In the middle of the room stood the washing machine, a Haag. Its tub was round, instead of the squarish shape of more familiar Maytags. My mother always said that her Haag machine was superior to Maytag washers, even though Maytags were more popular, because the Haag had a double tub and kept the

water hot longer.

The machine was of the wringer type, which means that on a post at the side of the machine was a wringer, a device with two rollers squeezed together by a spring and turned by the power of the engine driving the washing machine.

We positioned the wringer with one side slightly over the machine and then fished the items being washed out of the hot water in the machine with a stick and fed them item by item into the wringer to squeeze out most of the water, which ran back into the machine. As the pieces went through the wringer, they fell into one of two tubs next to the washing machine that was full of cold water, and we squished the clothes around by hand to remove most of the soap. Then the wringer was rotated to a position between the two rinsing tubs, and the clothing was fed through it again. That time the items fell into another tub of cold water, but this one contained some bluing.

White cotton clothing washed repeatedly with soap acquires a slightly yellow cast. Modern laundry detergents contain brighteners to combat that yellowing but before brighteners, one commonly put a blue dye, called “bluing,”

(Continued on next page)



**A Haag washing machine, circa 1930.
(Photo courtesy of Westbank
Museum, West Kelowna, BC, Canada)**

Beryl Clotfelter is professor emeritus of physics at Grinnell College. He has lived at Mayflower since 1994. This piece comes from the Wine and Writing class held this winter at Mayflower led by Betty Moffett.



Steve Langerud, Executive Director
616 Broad St. Grinnell, Iowa 50112
641-236-6151
www.mayflowercommunity.org

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Grinnell, IA
Permit No. 130

LOG Staff

Alice Breemer
Char Ewan
Judy Hunter
Betty Moffett
Karen Phillips
Bill Pollak
Mary Schuchmann
Gene Wubbels

Washday

(Continued from previous page)

into the second rinse water to cover up the yellow.

Finally, after the clothes had been kneaded and sloshed around in the slightly blue water to remove the remainder of the soap, they again were fed through the wringer. This time the person feeding them into the wringer caught each piece and placed it into a basket which was then carried to the clothes line to hang up to dry in the wind

On cold days the freshly washed pieces might freeze stiff as they were attached to the clothes line, and then they freeze-dried. Many people do not realize that clothes that are frozen stiff on the line still dry – it just takes a little more time. Hanging up clothes when the temperature is low enough that they freeze immediately was not really fun; I can recall times when my hands got so cold that I would pause in the work and stick them into the wet, warm clothes in the basket to warm them for a moment before going back to the cold line. In the afternoon, after

the items had dried, they were taken down from the line and folded or laid aside to be sprinkled in preparation for ironing.

Items that had to be ironed included almost everything made of cotton or linen except underwear. Shirts, dresses, handkerchiefs, sheets, pillowcases, overalls, and work pants all had to be ironed. Washday had not ended until all those items had been sprinkled with water and put down for the night. We had a bushel basket of the sort that apples or other fruit were shipped in, and it was lined with an oilcloth liner. My mother took the freshly washed items that were to be ironed and spread each on a table for sprinkling. Then she rolled up each piece tightly and placed it in the basket so that during the night the moisture could distribute itself throughout the garments. When all the clothes to be ironed had been sprinkled, washday had ended and the stage had been set for Tuesday, when the ironing was done. That occupied my mother most of another day, although before we moved away from Coats, I was assisting with the ironing.