

A Quarterly Publication of the Mayflower Residents Association

The Mayflower Log



SUMMER 2021 VOLUME 21, NUMBER 3

MAYFLOWER IN BLOOM



Dan Van Weelden is responsible for a great deal of Mayflower's impressive landscaping, which is looking particularly beautiful this Spring.

Dan's interest in landscaping began early. He grew up on a farm near Oskaloosa and New Sharon, where he had "freedom to fix things and solve things," and he received his degree in Landscape Architecture from Iowa State University. For the last 33 years, he has worked with Country Landscapes in Ames and has been involved in all kinds of projects (he counts 3,000!) including installing the newer plantings at the Des Moines Botanical Center.



Dan Van Weelden

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Mayflower in bloom

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In 2004, Dan began to talk to Ted Mokricky, then Mayflower's Executive Director, about **The Buckley Garden**, which many consider our community's most appealing feature. Projects that enhance Mayflower are the result of generous gifts. Dan recalled that Jack Morrison and Ted and Kathy Mokricky contacted Country Landscapes to discuss the proposed garden. Ted wanted something "interactive." At that time, the "garden" consisted of a large patch of grass and a shuffleboard court located between Buckley and Pearson. From the



Before the Buckley garden was created, a shuffleboard court was located west of the building.

start, Dan worked with the slope that was already there. His make-over began with the main stream and the north pond; then, he took out the shuffleboard court and put in the south pond. He explained that his goal was a garden that would "look good in a January blizzard and in redbud time, a place that would look different every day." He chose plants that would offer different sensory experiences—fragrance (a dwarf lilac, for example), color, height—and plants that would last.

Another attraction was the goldfish, which some people declare they have seen swimming upstream and over the

waterfalls like salmon. As to the oft-asked question "What happens to the fish in winter?" Dan explained that when the water cools to 50 degrees, the fish stop eating and live off their fat reserve. Ben Pearce thoughtfully leaves them in the pond and changes the pump so as not to lose water. The fish, according to Dan, are "happy campers."

Asked about challenges during the creation of the Buckley Garden, Dan said the installation was "messy, loud, and dusty for a while," and "Understandably, residents did drop by with suggestions." But he had the advantage of Jack Morrison's support—and "there were no budgeting challenges," which Dan found "amazing."

In response to the question "Would you have done anything different?" Dan answered, "Shade is important. Maybe we should have tried for more shade. Ben Pearce does a great job watching out for that. Maybe we should have added a small pergola."

Dan said he is glad that many residents and visitors enjoy and admire the Buckley Garden, with its three-tiered waterfall, meandering stream, wooden bridges, and handsome rocks. He recalled sitting on a bench with Ted Mokricky one day after school had let out ". . . watching the grammar school kids who often cut through the Mayflower campus jump the stream, bounce on the rocks, and run around. This is the best thing," Ted said. Other areas that Dan has worked on and transformed at the Mayflower include:

The Secret Garden between Montgomery and Pearson, which residents Beryl and Deena Wellborn did so much to nurture. In addition to abundant flowers, It now has tables and chairs and a little waterfall.

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Mayflower in bloom

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The Sail Garden and Water Feature

to the right of Pearson's main entrance. The area, which was an unattractive alley—in Dan's words "Not the most appealing spot," is now a pleasant place for residents to gather; often, visitors' first impression of the Mayflower campus is of "a garden, water, 'funky' sails." The attractive horizontal sails supply shade, and the area is furnished with good-looking and comfortable furniture. Charlaine Ewan, who had initiated the call, commented that in the afternoons, residents often go there to read and talk. And Bill Pollak, photographer for *The Log*, added that "the curving of the path makes it much more appealing. It's better not to be able to see the end from the beginning—makes you want to explore."

The Watertower Square Garden

Dan said, "Jack told us Mayflower was putting up a new apartment building, and then he turned us loose on this and gave us a blank slate with a few guidelines: "Pretty, various, and interesting plants. Mix it up and have some fun....This was a fun one to work on—from a bare patch of ground to a pleasant place to sit." Now, on the west side of Watertower Square there is a handsome and comfortable courtyard with a water feature and an area for grilling. Dan explained that "the trees will get big—green the area up and soften it." The garden is used a lot, particularly by folks on the west side and the first floor.

At the end of the interview, Char asked Dan, "When you're building gardens, do you look ahead to what they will become?"

Dan responded with a definite "YES." He explained that "We measure, measure, measure ahead of time, and then pretty much stick to the plan." Then he added, "It's always been fun working at Mayflower. I wish I could spend more time there."

We are grateful to Dan for the beauty he has brought to this campus, and we hope he continues to return to Mayflower.

Betty Moffett

Gardening at Mayflower has deep roots

Mayflower has always been in bloom. Long before a professional landscaper designed the Buckley Courtyard Garden, individual residents planted and tended their own small flowerbeds around the apartment buildings.

The gardeners were organized and supervised by a Garden Committee that was part of the Mayflower Residents Association. Committee members also faithfully cared for other plantings on the campus.

The Garden Committee was formed not long after Mayflower was established in 1950. Within a short time, the committee had a budget and regular meetings that were documented with detailed minutes, receipts for committee purchases, and maps of the locations of individual gardens and their gardeners. The gardens were called "plots."

Participating gardeners were responsible for their plantings, which were usually located near their apartments or in view

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The Gardens at Mayflower

**THE MAYFLOWER
COMMUNITY GARDENS**
(buildings & distances
not drawn to scale)

Map by Bill Pollak

Jewel
Garden



WATERTOWER
SQUARE

BROAD STREET

EDWARDS

MONTGOMERY

1st
A
V
E
N
U
E

2nd
A
V
E
N
U
E



Sail Garden

PEARSON



Secret Garden

Mayflower Lane

B
E
E
B
E



BUCKLEY

ALTEMEIER

PARK STREET

HEALTH CENTER



Health Center
South Garden
(ENLARGED)



Health Center
North Garden
(ENLARGED)

Early Mayflower gardens

(continued from p. 3)

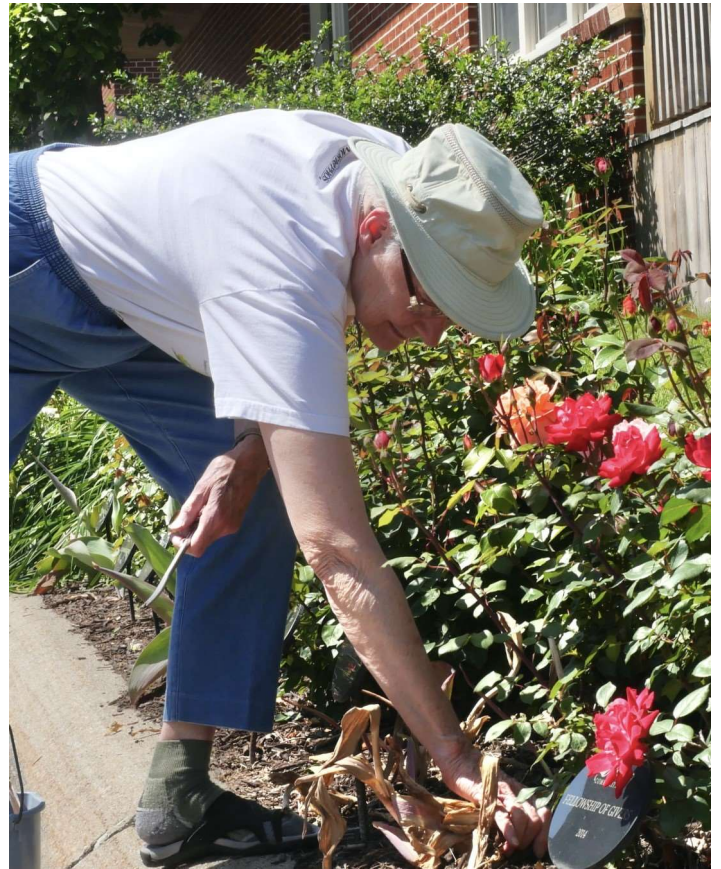
of their windows. An array of garden tools could be found in the basement of each building for the use of the gardeners. When a gardener was no longer able to garden, the spot was passed on to someone else.

Remnants of those early gardens are visible today. Some of them are still associated with a former gardener. Others are an anonymous legacy of someone from years past.

For example, the hosta garden on the slope north of the Buckley entrance on Park Street was started in about 2002 by Gayle Strickler, father of current resident Gayle Strickler Jr. Gayle Sr. lived on the ground level of Buckley (Buckley 107) and wanted a small garden outside his window. Some of the first hostas came from Gayle Jr.'s yard in Marshalltown. The one-of-a-kind birdhouse (still there) was a gift from his granddaughter in San Francisco, with whom he had a special bond. Gayle Jr. said, "For my father, the garden brought together his love of plants, birds and his granddaughter."

The Fellowship of Givers border of roses along Mayflower Lane began as a small rose bed planted by an Altemeier resident. When the resident could no longer care for the flowers, she asked Al and Marie Eisenman, then new residents, to take over. The Eisenmans adopted the roses and planted more. Today, Mayflower staff plants, waters and fertilizes the roses, and resident Nancy Brown (and Dot Anderson before her) regularly adds TLC.

No article about past Mayflower gardeners would be complete without the name of Warren Loudon, a retired farmer who never lost his love of the land. Warren gardened for years at the southeast side of Pearson, where his trellis and peony



Nancy Brown tends to the Fellowship of Givers rose garden.

bushes are still growing strong. One current Mayflower resident said she can still picture Warren puttering in the space for hours at a time. When he moved to the Health Center, the Mayflower staff built Warren a raised bed in the courtyard so he could garden from his wheelchair.

In the early 2000's individually tended gardens were gradually replaced by professionally-designed and staff-managed plantings. The Garden Committee was also phased out.

But that doesn't stop green-thumbed residents from placing a container or two of lush blooms on a balcony or patio. Or digging a dandelion or deadheading a spent flower. Mayflower residents continue to have a hand in gardening.

Mary Schuchmann

SPRING SURPRISE

Joan Landkamer kept a secret from fall 2020 to spring 2021. The secret? Last fall she donated approximately 900 tulip bulbs to be planted around the Mayflower campus. Ben Pearce and his grounds crew quietly did the work.

"I was so excited," said Joan, a Mayflower resident since 2013 who lives



Joan Landkamer admires her tulips on the west side of Buckley, near Beebe Circle. Her gift of tulips was planted throughout the Mayflower campus.

now in the Health Center. "I could hardly wait until spring."

Just as she hoped, as soon as the snow melted and the sun warmed, those 900 bulbs began to poke up in rows and clusters around Mayflower. Joan's vision was going to be a reality.

Joan's love of spring bulbs was initially evident in her first Mayflower home, at the corner of Broad Street and Second Avenue, in Harwich Terrace North. Her yard in spring was filled with bright-colored spring flowers, mostly tulips. For several years, Joan also tended a small plot in the Mayflower vegetable garden, right behind her house.

When Joan moved to Buckley and then to the Health Center, she wanted to share her love of tulips with the entire Mayflower community. With Ben Pearce's help, she ordered bulbs from Holland. She and Ben's wife, Amanda, chose the varieties and colors. Ben and his staff tucked the bulbs into existing gardens around the campus.

Fortunately, pandemic restrictions lifted in time for Joan to get outside and see the new tulips for herself. With the help of her son, John, and her daughter, Sue, she was able to see the flowers up close.

For Joan, her long-awaited spring lived up to her expectations. "It has been a joy," she said. "Next year I'm going to plant more."

Mary Schuchmann

Welcome, Mary Murray!

Mary Murray has just moved to Mayflower (Buckley 203) from her home in Urbandale. She is downsizing from the house she lived in for five years next door to her daughter there.

Mary is no stranger to Iowa, having grown up in Des Moines. In her early years, she was adopted by a couple from Des Moines, but, after her adoptive father died, Mary went to live at a boarding school run by nuns in Des Moines, visiting her adoptive mother at home only on weekends. She lived at the school until she graduated from high school.



Mary Murray

She married at age 18, which she says was "too young," and had four children before the marriage ended in divorce. Before and during her first marriage she worked as secretary at a seed company.

She remarried and gained three stepchildren in addition to the four children she already had. Her second husband was a policeman who loved to build model trains. Together they travelled around the country taking pictures of trains. That marriage too ended when he died suddenly.

Later she also took several cruises, one with her children, which she enjoyed greatly. She particularly enjoyed the Disney cruise, and remembers when a picnic on an island was interrupted by rain. Everyone had to run back to the ship for shelter, and she was in a

wheelchair! "Funny picture!" she remarks.

Her move to Mayflower was motivated at least in part when her son, Michael McClelland, took the job as police chief in Grinnell. He and his family now live in the community; he has three children. The two boys have graduated from high school, and the youngest, a girl, is enjoying attending Grinnell High School.

Mary's second husband was a policeman, as is one of her stepchildren, now retired, but she's not sure what motivated son Michael to join that profession. He has a long military background and was previously employed by the police department in Aurora, Colorado.

Her other children include Greg, a maintenance supervisor at Kroger's in Colorado; Teri, a massage therapist in Urbandale; and Patrick, a salesman who lives in Iowa but travels a lot.

Mary likes watching TV; she particularly enjoys watching QVC, a shopping channel, though she is trying not to buy anything more. She also enjoys reading on her iPad. She does Bible study and has learned a lot about the Bible. In addition, she enjoys reading mysteries. She looks forward to getting a library card from Grinnell so she can read more books electronically.

She also loves to sew. She enjoys making fleece jackets for her relatives.

Mayflower welcomes Mary to the community!

Judy Hunter



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Complementary Laments

I miss the freedom of walking
without a mask, of breathing
without restraint, of knowing you
by your face alone.

I miss sipping coffee at Saints Rest,
having a pint at Solera,
making pottery at the Stew, and
chatting with you on the street.

I miss the calm comfort of not being
threatened by the near approach
of another person, by fear of their breath,
and by my doubts about how much
or how little they care.

I even miss the momentary un-
certainty of whether hugging you
might be merely uncomfortable,
rather than outright dangerous.

And yet, once normalcy returns,
I will miss our little pod at dinner,
streaming British cozy mysteries,
and delightfully frequent contact
with physically distant family.

I will miss the comfort of my home—
the reassuring stability of life
writ small, our obligatory
and praise-worthy solitude.

I'll miss the quiet. The reassuring quiet.

Chris Hunter