

The Beauty of Windsor Gardens

by Harry Zirkelbach

A friend recently left his home of many years, moved to a newly completed Assisted Living complex. It has amenities galore; furnishings are completely new. His wife died a few years ago; the location and comforts are what he desires.

His monthly fee exceeds a year's monthly fee of a larger Windsor Gardens unit. New furnishings, food, sure can become expensive. Got me to recalling some benefits Windsor Garden residents are graced with.

Often these services are seen daily, not given a second thought. Those recalled here, solely relate to intangibles provided by Ground Maintenance personnel throughout Windsor Gardens acres.

More than 2000 trees of 134 variety grace Windsor Gardens' property. No one variety predominates. The once popular Cottonwood have been reduced in quantity; as each must be removed, none is added. The Emerald Ash borer brought to America accidentally from Asia threatens all the popular Emerald Ash; if an enemy to this pest is not found, all those trees would share the Cottonwoods' demise. Healthy trees throughout these acres is the daily goal of those maintaining these grounds.

In 2014 there are 15 grounds maintenance personnel; in 1982, there were 40. This reduction was achieved by management techniques, and replacement of hand labor with machines and tools. Every work-hour of the grounds personnel is scheduled daily, the result recorded. Between seasons' major tasks, summer for grass care, winter for snow removal, tree trimming is scheduled; where trees were once trimmed yearly, trimming is scheduled for at least once every four years; larger trees are challenging to prune.

In spring, one man tests the coverage of each of the 976 sprinkler heads to be sure water coverage is adequate, make schedule changes winter weather may have necessitated. This reduces the use of water and the cost.

In summer the lawn at every building is cut on schedule, as are grasses of the golf course fairway and greens. Yes, water conservation has improved. And good bugs like the lady bug are bought annually to protect plants, shrubs and trees from threats.

Annually Windsor Gardens buys more than 30,000 flowering plants. The once popular Inpatiens have fallen victim to mildew, is no longer planted. A replacement, an improved geranium plant has proved hearty and equally beautiful.

The grounds crew is supervised by Dana Cusack, who replaced Bill Walsh when Bill became Facilities Maintenance Manager. Both began working here in the Ground Maintenance Department, promoted from within their work force. All personnel have a feel for the work they do, speak at least two languages.

As a residents you are sure have visitors throughout the year. Certainly some will complement

the beauty of our property. I try to remember to pass these compliments to Dana Cusack.

As my friend knows, Windsor Garden property was not designed to serve those requiring Assisted Living. But for the 3500 or so calling this home, the flowers and trees can be a delight, summer and winter, a constant changing scene outside their unit window as seasons are replaced, when walking the property, or meandering the path along the Highline Canal.

Every season of the year enhanced by our Grounds Personnel.