Mrs. Webster Sandford
by
Edith Randall
Mrs. Webster Sandford

It was a bright sunny day for Plainfield’s annual Fourth of July parade. The tree-shaded streets were lined with happy people waving flags and little children carrying balloons. Across from us old Mr. Roach was hawking his wares. A patriotic float had just passed when, all alone, with a bucket and a broom, came a lovely smiling lady. On her bucket she carried a large sign “Auntie Litter.”

That lady was Mrs. Webster Sandford, the chairman of Plainfield’s Beautification Committee and the guiding spirit behind much that is beautiful in our downtown area. Mrs. Sandford has lived in Plainfield over forty years.
She has raised six children and has been a devoted worker for the good of her community. Along the way she has belonged to the Pittenfield Symphony Society, the Mullineux Hospital Auxiliary, and the Board of Republican Women. In recent years most of her effort goes to organizing the programs that are concerned with the betterment of our environment — the Garden Club, Riverside Council of the state, and at present the important Downtown Policy Committee. But always it first and foremost in her interest is the Beautification Committee on which she has been active for many years — to which she has given generously of her time. The city agency was revitalized in 1967 and the
Mayors Beautification Committee. Its purpose was
to effectively recruit and
direct organizational and
individual interest and support
of the city's aesthetic improve-
ment. To assure the continuity
of the beautification effort, to
provide a coordinating agency
for municipal beautification
efforts and to show others
that Plainfield cares. Later other
goals developed but always the
slogan was "Keep Plainfield
beautiful!" In 1972 Mr. Sanford
took over as chairman and has
been its leader ever since.

Board members when inter-
viewed, all agreed that Mr.
Sanford is a very special
person, easy to work with and
always anxious to share the
work and the credit. "She puts
her heart into what she is
doing," commented Mary Wood,
recording secretary. And what
more she thoroughly enjoys what she is doing."

"Barbara really cares about Plainfield and all of its people," said Ann B. Fisher, corresponding secretary. "She's very much concerned about spending money. If she can, she'll do it herself rather than pay to have it done," added Harold Druce, treasurer of donated funds.

"Mrs. Sanford can never be replaced," remarked Helga Roberts, anti-litter chairman. "Plainfield is lucky to have such a concerned woman." "She sees the good in everyone," said Hildegard Bellavance, the first chairman who presently is in charge of our recycling program. "Barbara is very dedicated. It would not be unusual to see her at eleven o'clock at night watering some sad-looking plant."

This could be most anywhere.
That an encroachment has been replaced by a pretty bed of flowers. In fact, almost any warm spring day you can see groups of women kneeling on their knees digging, fertilizing, planting. They are preparing a pleasant spot where weary shoppers can rest awhile or friendly onlookers can sit and chat. Roomy benches, graceful trees, and lovely flower arrangements are a joy to the eye and a lift to the spirit. The mini-park at Park Avenue and Front Street has a gurgling fountain which has a cooling effect even on the hottest day. At the City Hall corner mini-park there is a frost-free drinking fountain provided by the Rotary Club for thirsty passers-by. At Central Avenue and W. Front Street there is another attractive sitting place. Then there are the trees— Plainfield's biggest asset. Even in her darkest hour Plainfield
was called described as a quiet tree-lined town. In the past many trees have been planted by the city, but for the continuing effort and since a vote of thanks to Mr. Sanford and his helpers and to Mr. Dominick Zampello, superintendent of Shade Tree Bureau. Mr. Zampello does all the planting. The trees were placed and paid for by the committee or donated by interested friends of Plainfield. It is interesting to note the variety — locust, elkhorn, catalpa, pear, smooth-toothed oak, and little leaf linden. We should look up and enjoy them. They are a gift to us.

Trees and parks are not the only projects of this active group. If you see a bank of flowers along the railroad tracks, you will know someone has been working there. Tom Jackson and the Kiwanis Club are responsible for the attractive
Landscaping by the railroad station on Watertown Avenue. Parking lots are not exactly a feast for the eye but planters with colorful growing things can raise the eyes above the black asphalt. Outside the shopping area the members of this council have planted 14 organ circles at East Seventh and Franklin Place, the Police Station gardens and have put a Welcome to Plainfield sign on South Avenue. Historic spots have not been forgotten; the Drake House grounds are in their care. In 1976 a Liberty Tree was placed in the middle of Library Park.

A garden for children! That was Mrs. Landford’s dream. In 1973 she proposed exdents presented such a plan to her committee and it has subsequently become her pet project. It was and is
for school age children, nine to twelve year olds and for apartment 

based adults. With them she wanted to share the joy of 
gardening. She feels that "We 
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of gardening that will interest 
them the rest of their lives."

It was a well-planned 
project from the beginning. Outstanding garden experts 
were consulted. Students were 
met in their classrooms and at 
given basic gardening concepts. The 
numbered tools were given to 
the
each prospective gardener. Pupils voted on and chose the name for their own garden club—Elmwood Park Garden. There is a Strip in the East End Berkeley Terrace Garden and more recently the Richmond Tower Garden Club.

Mr. Peter Camper, retired engineer, has been with the project from the beginning. He plans and lays out the individual plots. Working with him is Mr. Nathaniel Henderson, water, fertilizer, and general supervisor. This year the Berkeley Teen Center under the leadership of Mr. Barker has been of great help.

However, to quote one of the children’s slogans, “All the beauty goes unseen when litter makes the world unpleasant.” In 1973 the Beautification Committee and the city decided to establish an
anti - litter division. chaired
by Mrs. Helga Roberts. They set
up an intensive campaign
in the school and the
community at large to move
the people to keep Plainfield
clean. Mrs. Roberts felt that
pride in their town and
their school would be a good
set of values to give our future
citizens.

The anti - litter group pro-
vides trash cans beautifully
painted by students from
Berekeley Wardlaw and Plainfield
High and Jameson High schools. As
they are distributed all over
section, merchants are requested
in keeping sidewalks all over
in front of their stores clean.

Many do not comply but a
notable good example is
Mr. James Henderson Jr.'s
By Donald's restaurant. It
is attractive and always
is clean.
"Pride in community is what it's all about. I said to Sanford and enough. We must have the determination to carry it through. Plainfielders, we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Webster. Sanford and to the large group of volunteers who have worked with her. The best tribute we can give is for all of us to support her with our whole-hearted cooperation.

1. Storm and fall a week
2. Loosen your dirt
3. Water if necessary
4. Be sure your property is attractive
5. Keep our city clean. Plainfield will then once again be the Queen City of the East.