



The Trillium

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

Annual General Meeting in Ottawa

By David White

This past June, I represented the Piedmont Chapter at the NARGS Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Ottawa, Canada. For those of you who are not familiar with the AGM (which included me this time last year), this is the annual meeting of NARGS officers and chapter chairs at which the state of the society and plans for the coming year are reviewed (i.e., committee reports, budgets, etc.). The main topic of discussion at this year's meeting was the continuing decline in membership (due to aging of current members and slow influx of new members) and what can be done about it. This is a problem that other garden groups are also experiencing (see story on p. 4 about changes to our local meeting format to address this issue).

Of local interest, the \$2,000 grant request from the J.C. Raulston Arboretum for enhancements to its roof garden was approved during the meeting (the grant request was prepared by chapter members Bobby Ward and Charlie Kidder).

In addition to the administrative meeting, the Ottawa Valley chapter (the AGM host) organized several lectures and field trips on the geology and flora of the Ottawa area. Field trips included visits to Gatineau Provincial Park

(located at the junction between the mountains of the Canadian Shield and St. Lawrence Lowlands), Purdon Lake Conservation Area (home to over 10,000 pink lady slippers [*Cypripedium reginae*]), and several locations in the limestone-rich lowlands. Given the proximity of Ottawa to Montreal, I also took the opportunity to visit the Montreal Botanical Garden, one of the best botanic gardens in North America. ❧



Photo by David White

Rock Garden at Montreal Botanical Garden



*This obituary, written by Pam Johnson, friend and executor, is from the April-May issue of the Berkshire Chapter of NARGS. Many of us remember Geoffrey's visit here several years ago and his amusing tales of gardening with Norman Singer as they both became older. We also enjoyed his entertaining and informative book *The Opinionated Gardener*.*

Geoffrey Charlesworth September 29th 1920 – May 14th 2008

Raised in a Yorkshire, England mining village, Geoffrey Charlesworth won a scholarship to Cambridge University from where he was recruited by Alan Turing to join the war time code breakers at Bletchley Park. There he met Norman Singer and formed a partnership that lasted almost sixty years until Norman's death in 2001.


After a short time teaching in Egypt, Geoffrey immigrated to the USA where he made a thirty year career in mathematics teaching (receiving an Excellence in Teaching award in 1960) and administration at Hofstra University. On Long Island, Geoffrey developed an interest in rock gardening that was to become a life-time love, shared with Norman. After they bought a summer home in Sandisfield, MA in 1968, they joined the Connecticut chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS). As Chairman of the chapter, Geoffrey was obliged to write a column for the monthly newsletter. Those columns became the basis for *The Opinionated Gardener* which won the Garden Writers of America's Quill and Trowel Award in 1987. Eventually, Norman and Geoffrey co-founded the Berkshire chapter based at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge, MA. Many people joined just for the articles in the newsletter, amongst which were Geoffrey's ever informative and often wry musings on plants, the joys and perils of gardening and life in general. From these came *A Gardener Obsessed* in 1994 including a verse response to, "Why did my plant die?", the suggested "first one hundred alpine plants" and much advice given with self-deprecating humor.

The 5-acre Sandisfield garden, including an arboretum, perennials and most especially many beds of rock garden plants, attracted visitors from all over the world. Sowing more than one thousand seeds a year and studying a succession of species in depth,

Geoffrey became an expert plantsman and sought-after speaker and was invited to make presentations across the USA and in Europe. In 1987 he received from NARGS their *Award of Merit* and in 1990 the *Carelton Worth Award* for "distinguished writing on rock gardening and rock garden plants." In a section of the special centennial edition of *Horticulture Magazine*, April 2004, they listed their "top 100" books" and #3 reads: Geoffrey Charlesworth, *The Opinionated Gardener* "Take equal measures of dry, acerbic wit, sharp intelligence, consummate plantsmanship, and philosophical speculation and you get the uniquely satisfying blend contained in '*The Opinionated Gardener*', written by one of America's most respected rock gardeners. Although there's much here about alpine plants, there's also much that is universal: "Being happy is dirt under your fingernails, wearing old clothes, having a good idea get better the longer you work at it, starting a new bed, giving plants away, and listening to rain." "

Geoffrey's other interests included composing music, playing the piano, folk dancing, painting and writing poetry, all of which he studied and performed to a high standard. The final chapter of his life was spent in the retirement community of Kimball Farms where his interest in both music and art was re-invigorated and he made many new friends.

He will be sadly missed by a legion of friends including those in the international rock gardening community and at Kimball Farms and by his family. He is survived by his sisters Margaret and Olive residing in England and Phyllis in Canada and was pre-deceased by his brothers Norman and Stanley and sister Mabel, all of England. He will also be missed by his nephews and nieces and their children, many of whom visited him in Sandisfield. Funeral arrangements private. A celebration of his life will be planned within a few months. Donations in Geoffrey's memory may be made to the Berkshire Botanical Garden, PO Box 826, Stockbridge, MA 01262

Obituary prepared by Pamela Johnson,
friend and executor. 

**Proposed Rock Garden Program
Fall 2008-Spring 2009**

September 20, 2008

Frank Hyman
Durham, NC
“Moss Gardening”

October 18, 2008

Mark Weathington
Raleigh, NC
“Underused Species: Plants That Missed the Marketing Push”

November 15, 2008

Russell Stafford
South Lancaster, MA
“Bulbs” {topic to be announced}

January 17, 2009

Bobby J. Ward
Raleigh, NC
“Rock Gardening in the South”

February 21, 2009

Scott McMahan
Clermont, GA
“Plant Hunting in the Himalaya and Vietnam”

March 21, 2009

Pam Beck
Wake Forest, NC
“Small Space Garden Design”

April 18, 2009

Lisa Bartlett
Atlanta, GA
“Container Gardening: Tricks of the Trade”

Photos from David's Ottawa Trip



Photo by David White

Cypripedium parviflorum



Photo by David White

Cypripedium reginae



Photo by David White

Lillium philadelphicum



Excerpts from July 19, 2008 Minutes of Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting

Present: David White, Bobby Ward, Bobby Wilder, Marian Stephenson, Dave Duch, Marlyn Miller, Kirt Cox, Tom Harville, and Patricia Scolnik.

Treasurer's Report: Chapter expenses were \$4,514 and income as \$4,721 for the 2007-08 fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Slightly over half of the net income was from plant sales (\$2,391 with the Sept meeting plant sale accounting for almost half at \$1,018). The major expenses were speakers (\$2,476) and national meeting reimbursements (\$1,396). The bank balance as of June 30 was \$9247.98.

NARGS Annual Meeting: David White, chapter chair, attended the annual meeting in Ottawa. The major topic of discussion at the NARGS Board meeting was the decline in membership over the past several years with ideas for increasing membership. A grant request for \$2,000, prepared by Bobby Ward for the roof garden at the JCRA, was approved.

Chapter Meetings: Bobby Ward reviewed the speaker plans for the year. The list includes four local speakers and three from out of town. The board approved the proposed program. There is a potential meeting date conflict for the NCBG meeting room which Bobby will contact NCBG to resolve. Kirt Cox will coordinate the Sept meeting plant sale.

Trillium Publication: Marian Stephenson discussed plans for Trillium publications this year. She has contacted all speakers for articles and heard from four to date. She is especially interested in getting plant profiles for sunny and shady locations and hopes for increased chapter member participation.

Contributions: The board approved \$1,000 in donations to the following gardens in our area: \$600 to NCBG, \$100 to JCRA, \$200 to PJCiener BG, and \$100 to the Elizabeth Lawrence Foundation. The donation to NCBG is in appreciation of the access to NCBG visitor center for our meeting. The JCRA donation was reduced from prior year's level

with consideration of the NARGS \$2,000 award for the roof garden which was initiated by our chapter member. The funding to PJCiener BG is in appreciation of the plant donations from PJCiener BG to last Sept's plant sale and of Todd's support of chapter activities. The donation to the Elizabeth Lawrence Foundation is for their Garden Conservancy fund raising campaign.

Meeting Changes: See details in below.

Other: Bobby Wilder wants to reduce his workload, mainly maintenance of name tags. Kirt offered to take over this responsibility. Bobby's role will be limited to Treasurer. Patricia Scolnik agreed to greet visitors and new members. Marlyn Miller offered to help with this.

NARGS Annual Meetings: The Eastern Study Weekend will be in Washington, DC in 2009 (Jan 30-Feb. 1). The Western Study Weekend will be in Portland, OR (March 13-15). This meeting will be combined with the NARGS Annual Meeting.

Reported by David White, Chairman ☞

Piedmont Chapter Meeting Changes

One of the issues affecting NARGS at the national level as well as in the Piedmont Chapter is the decline in membership due to aging combined with the decreased influx of new members. This is a problem faced by gardening and outdoor recreation groups in general. At the summer meeting of the chapter board, several changes in meeting format were discussed to address membership retention. The following changes in meeting format were adopted by the board:

Changing the meeting start time to 9:30 starting with a 30-minute social period for member interaction prior to the speaker presentation. We have had a social period at the beginning of your meetings, but many members – and visitors – come just before the meeting start time. Changing the official start time is a simple change, but we hope it will provide more opportunity for visitors, new members, and established members to interact and get to know each other.

We have had plant auctions for a number of years. However, many of us probably have plants in our gardens that would be of interest to other chapters members (especially new members and visitors), but we

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Piedmont Chapter, NARGS



Please take this opportunity to renew your Chapter membership. It is very helpful to the Treasurer to receive membership renewals as soon as possible, preferably by August 15. Thanks.

Circle one: Single Membership \$15/Year Household Membership \$20/Year

You can pay dues for multiple years. Check the number of years paid. One year ___ Two years ___ Three years ___

Not sure if you are due to renew? The label on your Summer 08 issue of *The Trillium* indicates the date your membership expires.

Please print clearly:

NAME #1 _____

NAME #2 _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ State/Zip _____

Email _____

Are you a member of the North American Rock Garden Society? Circle one: Yes No

Membership in NARGS is: \$30/year. You may include it in your check and it will be sent to NARGS secretary.

Checks made payable to: Piedmont Chapter, NARGS

Mail to: Bobby Wilder, Treasurer, 2317 Elmsford Way, Raleigh NC 27608

Phone: 919-755-0480 Email address: wilder@nc.rr.com

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don't view them as being "unusual" enough to merit auctioning. To encourage plant sharing, the board agreed to have two plant sales at coming meetings. Plant sales will be held during the social period starting at 9:30 of garden worthy (but relatively common) plants that would be sold at a set price rather than auctioned. Our traditional plant auction of new plant introductions and rare plants will be held after the presentation. This change will also help reduce the amount of time spent after the presentation that can make meetings run long.

Visitors have always been invited to our meetings, but we would like to provide a greater sense of "welcome" by having a couple of members serve as greeters at the meetings and to provide some follow-up to encourage them to become new members. Marlyn Miller and Patricia Scolnik have agreed to serve as greeters this coming year. Please assist Marlyn and Patricia in our efforts to make visitors welcome and become interested in joining our chapter.

The board also decided to declare our October meeting as "bring a friend day." We all probably have friends and neighbors who are enthusiastic gardeners. If you think they would be interested in joining the Piedmont Chapter, please bring them to the October meeting. Offer to give them a ride – the cost of gas combined with not knowing anyone when they walk in the door can deter lots of potential members from coming the first time. The \$5 visitor charge will be waived for this meeting. ❧ David White



Piedmont Chapter Meeting

Totten Center
NC Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill

9:30 am September 20, 2008

Frank Hyman
Durham, N.C.

“Moss Gardening”

The Trillium, Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter
The North American Rock Garden Society
1422 Lake Pine Drive, Cary, NC 27511

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OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox
Refreshments:Gwen and Maurice Farrier

JCRA Symposium, September 26-28, 2008

"Surround Yourself with Shady Characters"

Speakers: Thomas Bonnicksen, William Cullina, Dave Demers,
John Grimshaw, Sean B.Hogan, Richard T. Olsen, Larry Stanley
There are many activities during the symposium. Please review the
schedule for timing of all events.

Registration is now open. Use the downloadable registration form on the
website jcraulstonarboretum.org or call
(919) 513-7005 to register.

Chapter Annual Fall Plant Sale

Our September 20th meeting and plant sale will soon be upon us, so it's time to get your contributions divided and potted up. Good plants of all sizes, shapes and seniority are needed. We encourage you to pot up your contributions early, so they will have some time to establish, rather than waiting until the day before.

Bring plants in clean pots and label each pot; we don't have time to do it that morning. Remember to have the labels complete, accurate and legible.

We will start setting up when the Totten Center opens at 9:00 am, and will be eagerly accepting plants at any time between then and the start of the sale. The program starts at 10am with the sale beginning immediately afterwards. Remember that contributors will lead the way at the start of the sale.

For more information, contact me at 919-489-7892 (H) or by email (kirtley@ncrrbiz.com).

Kirt Cox 