

Lilacs

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of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

2010 ILS Convention and
Thoreau Thoughts on Lilacs



The Thoreau-Alcott House (now a private residence) on Main Street in Concord, Massachusetts, in May 2010. Lilac bushes are in bloom at the front and the side of the home.
Photo Credit Corinne H. Smith



Peaceful scene at Shelburne Museum
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

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*Cover Photo: Lilacs add to the tranquility at the Shelburne Museum
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf*

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INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY is a non-profit corporation comprised of individuals who share a particular interest, appreciation and fondness for lilacs. Through exchange of knowledge, experience, and facts gained by members it is helping to promote, educate, and broaden public understanding and awareness.

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President's Message

Dear Lilac Aficionados,

Well, another convention has come and gone. We had a wonderful time enjoying the Vermont countryside and the hospitality of Jeff Young, his wife Jan and the members of the Vermont Farm Master Gardeners. Yes, we saw lilacs and more lilacs and yes they were blooming profusely. Actually there were lilacs everywhere the eyes could see—lilacs in all colors in the town itself, in the countryside, at the Hort Farm and at the Shelburne Museum. Our hotel sat directly across from Lake Champlain overlooking the State of New York. The weather was very cooperative; except for a light coat not much more was needed. We scooted around in small buses, so it made for some good conversation.

The ILS board meeting started early on Friday morning and finished in time to leave for Vermont University for lunch and a tour of the grounds. Jeff Young, who is a Master Gardener and a member of the Vermont Legislature, was our guide. The campus was alive with young people walking to and fro. The grass was bright green, and honeysuckle and spiraea were blooming. Yes there were lilacs too. We visited the Fleming Museum. We were greeted in the main hall by a marble statue of Penelope and a statue of Saint George perched at the top of the staircase. The exhibits were a mix of Egyptian, African, and Indian artifacts on one side and 19-century paintings on the other. All along the perimeter of the second floor ran an exhibit of works by Vermont painters. In one of the galleries was a marble statuette of children by Rodin. In the lobby an exhibit on photographs, the kind taken in those booths found on front of stores years ago got the attention of many of us. Posters and early American and Indian crafts were in the other galleries. After visiting the museum the group went to the National Gardening Center and toured the gardens and the tree nurseries.

Dinner that evening was at a Thai restaurant. Warren Oakes, our Membership Secretary, managed to round up a very large group to accompany him on this epicurean expedition. We sat outside the Bangkok Bistro and enjoyed an exotic meal in good company. Next morning we stayed at the hotel for a Panel discussion. Dan Meier of Briggs Nursery, Jack Alexander from the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Joan Speirs from the Experimental Farm in Ottawa, Bruce Peart, Canadian horticulturist and Bob Hoepfl a longtime lilac grower, all lent their expert advice. Bradley Bittorf was the moderator. Many in the audience participated. They asked questions about cultivation, pruning, fertilization etc. Several members were invited to talk about their personal experiences regarding these subjects. The panel discussion was followed by the Annual Membership Meeting and lunch. At 1pm the group left in several mini buses for the

Vermont Horticulture Research Center better known as the Hort Farm. The lilacs were blooming and the sun was hot. The proper way of pruning a lilac was demonstrated by Jeff Young. The grass under the lilacs was left high purposely and the lilacs were in great shape. 'Maiden's Blush' was spectacular as were 'Charles Joly' and many others. Just a short walk away a three acre area was being cultivated by a group of the University of Vermont students to produce food for the hungry. The great news is that no pesticides are used on the crops and the ornamental plants.

Back to our hotel we dressed for the Awards Banquet. Many items for the silent auction were on display at the back of the room. Jan Young had made a special lilac quilt for the occasion. Purple and light green, made up of lilac prints, the large quilt was raffled the Sunday after the convention. One lucky winner took the prize home but the final bid of \$576 went to the ILS treasury. Thank you to Jan for this wonderful gift. Many paintings of Lilacs were on display. They could be purchased. Mr. Allen, the father-in-law of John Bentley, had painted large bouquets of lilacs in vases reminiscent of the impressionists. He generously donated one of his smaller paintings for the silent auction. Mary Lizotte, RVP from New England also sold her elegant paintings of lilacs. At the banquet John Bentley, who is a new member from Salisbury, NH, spoke about the Katie Bentley Memorial Lilac Project. It is named after his young daughter who is buried there. The cemetery is old and after getting the permission and proper approvals John and his wife went forward with the planting of lilacs. What a wonderful project!

Dr. Owen Rogers was not forgotten. We recognized him at the Annual Meeting and again at the President Banquet. Dr. Rogers, a longtime member of ILS is a pillar of our society. A gentleman and an expert on lilacs he has over the years been the person to go to for lilac answers. We were very happy to have him and his wife Marie among us.

Saturday at the second board meeting we welcomed the new board members: Bonnie Culp, Guy L. Giunta, Jr., Mary Lizotte, Marymae Meyer and Bruce Peart. They replaced Nancy Latimer, Franklin (Woody) Barnes, Warren Oakes, Max Peterson and Evelyn King who served three years on the ILS Board. Job well-done thank you to all of you. Bradley Bittorf who finished five years as Executive Vice President has been reappointed to serve another five years. Thank you Brad for your dedication to ILS.

We departed for the Shelburne Museum, which was an extraordinary place to visit. A multitude of buildings full of interesting, intriguing, beautiful things stowed away there just waiting for the visitors. That evening the museum's Executive Director, Stephen Yost, came and told us about the wealthy lady, Electra Havemeyer Webb, who collected all those wonderful things. The

collection is eclectic to say the least but what fun it is to explore each building. From a full size replica of the first locomotive, to a real ship, to impressionist paintings, to a circus in miniature made up of thousands of hand carved pieces, to Dentzel merry-go-round animals, to a new exhibit of Alzheimer's quilts there is always something new to see. No, you cannot visit it all in one day.

After lunch we had our lilac auction under a tent. It was lively and fun and open to the public. Several people joined us. Our auctioneer, the extraordinary Woody Barnes, did an excellent job and got many laughs but also many dollars for the ILS treasury. Thank you Woody. He is giving up his role as auctioneer after many years, so who among us is going to take up the gavel? The ad should read Auctioneer wanted, must have talent for numbers, know his/her lilacs and be fun. Let me know if interested.

The President's Banquet was a nice affaire. As I said the director of the Shelburne Museum was our speaker. He spoke about Mrs. Webb, who was a real collector. She bought everything in large quantities at one time. Can you imagine?

All 18 buildings are needed to house the collections. The most amazing thing is to see the ship the Ticonderoga on the grounds of the museum. It was destined to be blown up and was saved by Mrs. Webb. It was hauled from Lake Champlain to its permanent location strictly by manpower across cow pastures.

We conducted a Lilac Popularity Poll. Nancy Latimer, collected the ballots and tallied the names. This year the number one lilac is again 'Krasavitsa Moskv'y'(Beauty of Moscow)! We had a large number of new attendees. Mary Lizotte and Nancy Latimer co-hosted the Hospitality Room. Good food, drinks and good conversation made those who came by very welcome. What can I say? Conventions are all about the new people you meet, the old friends you meet again and the good times you have together.

One day I hope that every member in ILS attends the same convention. Can you just imagine that would be the greatest Lilac Party ever? So mes amis, think about next year. The convention is in Lombard, IL. Marymae Meyer, our planning hostess, sang us a little tune about the great things that are going to happen there. Prepare yourself for a great time it is guaranteed with Marymae in charge.

Soon the Lilac Culture Booklet by Jack Alexander will be available. Tatiana Polikova has a new lilac book out. Of course it is in Russian but we are going to see about getting it translated, so we can enjoy it too. Our members are industriously working in all directions to promote lilacs, beautiful cities,

create parks, embellish cemeteries, preserve lilac collections, save a lilac, educate the public and sign up new members. After hearing all the efforts about planting lilacs I think we are on the way to make "A Lilac In Every Garden The World Over" a reality. Kudos to all of you.

Mes amities,

PS: The best thing I saw was in the town of Burlington. A street person had two shopping baskets and a bike tied together. He was carrying all his possessions but on the back of the bike was tied a large bouquet of lilacs in a metal container. That was a picture!

*Nicole Jordan
ILS President
Chester, VA USA
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June 15, 2010*

2010 International Lilac Society Annual Meeting, Burlington Hilton Hotel, Burlington, Vermont, United States of America 14 May 2010

President Nicole Jordan called meeting to order at 11:03 AM.

Nicole welcomed old and new friends. She commended the "Lilac Experts Panel" that just took place. She also thanked Jeff Young for hosting the convention. The members of the Executive Board, officers, and regional vice presidents were recognized.

Treasurer Karen McCauley presented the treasurer's report. The ILS has about \$70000 US. A large expenditure of \$3000 was given to Jianhua Ling for research, and results of the research will be published in the journal. Memorial funds will continue to be accepted and acknowledged, but will then go into the general fund, unless the donor stipulates a different use for it.

The ILS will be publishing a new "Lilac Care" booklet which will be for sale soon.

Dr. Owen Rogers was thanked for his service as auditor of the ILS books. He is looking for an assistant to be trained for future help in auditing the books. Please come forward as a volunteer if you are willing to help. [Note: an assistant auditor was found after the meeting.]

Editor Report: Kent Millham was not able to attend because the Rochester Lilac Festival is this same weekend. The audience gave him a round of applause for the quality of the journal. Nicole requested that all members send contributions for the journal. It could be anything, poems, questions, articles, photos, true stories, etc.

Warren Oakes presented the ILS membership report. There are 445 members versus 428 last year. But there are fewer members now than there were in 2003. There are people from all over the world, including many from Russia who have recently renewed their memberships. Warren has also received many e-mails from people through the ILS web site. He often shares the questions with the International Lilac Robin (on-line lilac discussion group) and then shares the information and responses with the inquirer. Warren encouraged each person to attract another ILS member. Consider giving a gift membership to somebody as a way of getting somebody started.

Elections and Officer candidates: Let Warren know if you are interested in running as a member of the ILS Board of Directors. It is not a large burden to be a board member. You can attend Board meetings, express your opinions, and vote.

Tatiana Poliakova was praised for her activities in promoting lilacs in Russia, working with school children to plant lilacs, involving local dignitaries in the activities, and her work in publishing a new book.

Myra Walberg asked whether some of the lilac books written in Russian could be translated to English. Evie King said that Tatiana's sister speaks English and could possibly do a translation. It was pointed out that no current plans exist to translate these books.

Brad Bittorf reported on the ILS web site. He said it is evolving, and all questions and contributions are welcomed. If you are a wholesaler of lilacs, please tell Brad so that we can include you on the wholesaler list.

Warren Oakes reported on the election results for Board of Directors. Winners are: Bruce Peart, Marymae Mayer, Bonnie Culp, Mary Lizotte, Guy Giunta. Congratulations to these new Board members who will serve until 2013.

Nicole thanked the outgoing board members: Evie King, Woody Barnes, and Nancy Latimer, for their service to ILS.

Karen McCauley presented the conventions committee report. The 2011 convention will be in Lombard, IL.

2012 will be in Nancy, France. Because of the additional planning, there will probably be a request for an advanced deposit for the trip. There was discussion about the city of Nancy and the interest of ILS members in attending that convention. The public transportation in Europe is very good. The Lemoine nursery was established there in the 1800s. The dates are May 3-5, 2012. Air transportation will not be coordinated but people may consider traveling as a group to Nancy. A list of accommodation options will be provided at the 2011 convention. It is possible to transfer directly from the plane immediately to a high-speed train and to Nancy, France. We were reminded to make sure that passports are up to date.

The 2013 convention is scheduled to be held in Madison, Wisconsin.

Future opportunities for convention sites where there is local interest in hosting include Cleveland, Montreal, and Capak, Michigan (in 2015 or 2017).

There will be an October meeting at Syringa Plus in Massachusetts. All members are invited to attend this casual meeting. Evie King, Roger Coggeshall, and Mary Lizotte host this meeting.

A deposit was sent to Sabre Gilbert for the purpose of converting historic ILS 8mm tapes to CD or DVD, as per a motion passed at a past annual meeting. According to Peter Ely, it is being done professionally with pictures and captions. This work is underway.

NEW BUSINESS.

There has been a request to reprint the Dvorak "Lilac Study" booklet, featuring drawings and diagrams of lilac florets and leaf and pannicle structure. There were about 20 people who wished to get copies. Gloria Schreiber will get an estimate of the cost to make copies. The International Lilac Society owns the copyright to this publication and can authorize new copies.

Bill Horman requested a copy of membership forms to distribute, and Nicole said she could provide him some immediately. Bill also made a plea that more people volunteer so people aren't doing multiple jobs at the same time.

Peter Ely said that he is acquiring historic material from a number of members

who have passed away. The Arnold Arboretum archivist asked for direction regarding how to use, share, and restrict the use of ILS archives. Direction should be provided to the archivist.

Peter also reminded the membership that local regions can and should hold their own regional meetings. This can be a way to serve more members, especially those who are not able to travel to meetings.

Nicole said that we would address both of Peter's points.

Dr. Owen Rogers was recognized for his many years of service to ILS. He received a standing ovation and was given the honor of being the first person through the lunch line.

Meeting adjourned by President Nicole Jordan at 11:57AM.

*Submitted by Brad Bittorf,
Executive VP ILS
May 31, 2010*

International Lilac Society Awards 2010 Shelburne, Vermont, USA

President's Award

presented to Beijing Botanical Garden and the Institute of Botany of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

For growing, breeding, and physiologic and taxonomic research done on the genus Syringa

Distinguished Recognition Award

presented to Bradley Bittorf

For your loyal dedication to serving as Executive Vice President for five years

Distinguished Recognition Award

presented to Natalia Bamysheva

For your love and devotion to Syringa vulgaris

Distinguished Recognition Award
presented to Irina Okuneva
For your loyal dedication and promotion of Syringa vulgaris

Award of Merit
presented to John Bentley
For your Lilac planting projects in New Hampshire

Award of Merit
presented to Nancy Hulett
As Director of Vermont Master Gardener Program for her support of lilac education and workshops in Vermont

Award of Merit
presented to Mary Roberts
For your leadership in creating the Schuylerville, New York Lilac Gardening Weekend

Award of Merit
presented to William F Tschumi
For your loyal service as Assistant Treasurer

Award of Merit
presented to Jeff & Jan Young
For serving as hosts of the 39th annual ILS Convention and their contributions to promoting lilacs in Vermont and many other places

Award of Merit
presented to Friends of the Horticulture Farm & Kristina Bielenberg, Kyle Albee, Sarah Salatino, and Judy Goodyear
For their commitment to improving the Farm's great lilac collection and educating the public on lilacs for the garden

Award of Merit
presented to Shelburne Museum and Rick Peters, Jessica Gallas and Stephen Yost
For their commitments to maintaining and promoting the love of lilacs

Treasurer's Report 2010

Fiscal Year 4/1/09 - 3/31/10

KeyBank Checking Account Balance 4/1/10	\$	4,530.78
KeyBank Certificate of Deposit .15%	6,715.41	
Edward Jones Company Investments:		
HSBC Finance 5.00%	5,000.00	
Federal National Mortgage 5.25%	41,000.00	
South Broward HDFB Municipal Bond 6.978%	5,000.00	
Franklin Adj US Govt Secs	8,000.00	
TOTAL	\$	70,246.19

Special Accounts (Included in the above total)

Life Member/Endowment Fund	\$35,562.16
Plant Propagation Fund (Laurene Wishart)	1,551.70
Education & Research	2,013.09
Youth Program Fund	1,206.55
Robert Gilbert Memorial Fund	193.19
Reva Ballereich Memorial Fund	223.19
Total Funds in Special Accounts	\$40,749.88
Total Funds in General Accounts	\$29,496.31
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$70,246.19

Income

Membership Dues	\$	6,114.82
Contributions to ILS	800.00	
Interest Income	2,738.56	
Auction Income	2,616.48	
Misc Income (Research donations, CD sales)	195.00	
Convention Earnings	906.29	
Reva Ballereich Memorial Fund	145.00	
Total Income	\$	13,516.15

Expenses

Journal	\$	9,688.21
Postage	602.68	
Bank Fees	475.70	
Web site expenses	391.46	
Printing/postage for ballots	905.27	
Awards	368.26	
Research grant to Jianhua Li @ Hope College	3,000.00	
Robert Gilbert Memorial Fund DVD conversion	285.00	
Total expenses	\$	15,716.58
Net Income (Loss)	\$	(2,200.43)

Submitted 4/29/10 by Karen McCauley, ILS Treasurer

Editor's Report

For the period from the Summer of 2009 to the Spring of 2010, 136 pages of text were published in *Lilacs*, along with 16 pages of color photos in the center of the journal, along with the color photos on the inside and outside front and back covers. As editor of a diverse plant society, I have tried to present a magazine that will appeal to all facets of our society. The articles have covered a wide range of topics including new cultivars, description of older cultivars in a series called "Lilac Profiles", new gardens and planting projects, such as the Lilac Park in Krivets, Russian Federation, important lilac developments around the world, committee and executive reports, and the happenings at our annual convention. Also covered were descriptions of cultivars developed by specific hybridizers, such as John Dunbar and Mark Eaton.

In the upcoming year, several series of articles that have been initiated will continue, such as the "Ten Questions" interview articles asked by Joshua Miller of noted ILS members, origins of the International Lilac Society, and "Lilac Profiles". The series on the people behind the names of the John Dunbar lilacs (written by Bob Hoepfl, former ILS president) will also continue. Also, more excerpts from the International Lilac Robin will be included. In April 2010, a flurry of questions and answers on our online chat group has opened up some very interesting discussions.

I will once again ask all of the membership to consider writing a short article about their own favorite lilacs, lilacs at their own home, or sending photos of lilacs. Our president, Nicole Jordan, has asked members to write a poem about lilacs, and I already have 2 ready to be published. If you have flowery thoughts about lilacs, consider writing a poem for the journal this year.

In a search for reduced printing costs, I have received several price quotes from several printers, but so far none contacted were significantly cheaper.

Two thousand new brochures have been printed in time for our annual convention, and some will be distributed at the convention. To save time, the brochure is essentially the same as the last brochure, with the membership pricing levels updated, along with a minor text change in one heading of the brochure. At a future date, the brochure may be redesigned to include color on the front page

Finally, Jack Alexander's booklet has been finalized. Several price estimates are currently being obtained, and this long awaited 2nd edition of the lilac booklet will be published shortly after this years convention. It will be in the same 5½ by 8½ format as the journal, and will feature a color photo on the front and back covers.

In the past 4 years I have enjoyed my responsibilities as editor of *Lilacs*, and ask all members of ILS to contribute their thoughts and photos, in order to keep our journal flowing with new ideas.

Kent Millham
ILS editor

Membership Committee Report

As of April 14, 2010, ILS has 445 members. There were 422 at last report. A total membership of 388 for 2006, 396 for 2005, 390 for 2004 and 465 memberships in 2003 were reported. Geographical representation of ILS membership in 2010 is as follows: ILS presently has 344 U.S. members, 54 Eurasian members, 41 Canadian members and 6 Australian members.

One bright note is that a good number of members who had not renewed for several years did so this year. Most or all of the members of the former USSR renewed also.

Warren K. Oakes
Secretary
Submitted April 14, 2010

2010 ILS Convention Trip Report— Burlington, Vermont, U.S.A.

When I arrived, the sun was emerging, and the day was bright. This was a portent of things to come during the 2010 ILS convention at Burlington, Vermont.

The convention opened with the meeting of the Board of Directors and Officers. As I approached the meeting room, I saw the many preparations by the team that had put together the 2010 convention. Jeff and Jan Young, and Clifford Bennett were particularly helpful throughout our stay. The Burlington Hilton overlooks Lake Champlain, and we had views of the lake and the mountains of New York throughout our stay.

The Board meeting itself started a few minutes after the hour because those of us assembling took time to greet our “seasonal family members” whom we only get to see annually or less. The Board of Directors meeting took place throughout the morning and reports of it are listed elsewhere. Meanwhile, some members of ILS took a walking tour of the downtown waterfront. At noon we boarded the various vans that would become familiar sites throughout the remainder of the convention. These took us to the University of Vermont. Once reassembled, we were guided through the Davis Student Center at UVM (hmm, why isn't it just called UV?) where we selected lunch from the many choices. After lunch and visiting at the tables, we went on a walking tour of the campus. The parade of ILS members saw many plantings, and examples of good and bad plant care. For instance, we learned to avoid “volcano mulching” where a pyramidal cone of mulch is heaped against the base of a tree. Oh, and we also saw – surprise! – many lilacs in bloom. The timing of the convention seemed to be ideal, since the lilacs were out and delightful.

Following the walking tour, during which we only stopped the flow of University bus and maintenance vehicles a few times as we were observing the nearby plantings, we visited the Fleming Museum, where we saw an amazing array of artwork. Among the highlights: paintings by New England and European artists, Buddhist and Hindu artifacts, a featured show of photo booth art, and Native American artwork and daily items showing surprisingly sophisticated craft work and skill. (Our lilac “humor” was when we encountered a painting with a flower that was dubiously a lilac. The painting was dated from the 1870s. We remarked, “Well, we do know it isn't a Kolesnikov [introduction].”)

We reboarded the vans and returned to the hotel. Several large parties assembled to go to nearby restaurants for dinner. My group sat outside at a Thai/Asian restaurant. Sixteen or 20 of us feasted, met, connected, shared stories, and walked back along a street closed to vehicular traffic that featured many cafes in a European style. I understand another large group dined at another nearby restaurant.

A hospitality room was opened this evening on the top floor overlooking Lake Champlain. Although I was only able to stop in briefly, it looked like a great setting to share experiences and light snacks.

Sunrise revealed that some light rain had taken place overnight, but had stopped for us. After pastries and coffee in the meeting room, we assembled in the Champlain meeting room on the mezzanine level at the Hilton. Convention host Jeff Young and President Nicole Jordan greeted us, and then the room was set up for a "Lilac Experts Panel." This panel was probably one of the more memorable events of the convention.

Recently, members of the International Lilac Robin began a discussion about the concept of a panel to answer common and uncommon questions about lilacs. Jeff and I distilled a set of questions about lilacs, lilac care, diseases, planting, and so on that were the product of things we'd been asked over time. The ILS "on-line community" was instrumental in bringing this about.

Jeff asked the following people to come to the front of the room:

- Jack Alexander, of the Arnold Arboretum, Boston
- Dan Meier, of Briggs Nursery, Washington
- Joan Spiers, of Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa
- Bruce Peart, Horticulturalist, Hamilton, Ontario
- Bob Hoepfl, formerly of Monroe County Parks, Rochester, New York

I was asked to moderate the panel, break up fights, etc. No, just joking about the fights part, although we did expect some controversy in the questions, and we did discover some topics where not everybody agreed.

There were spirited discussions and many audience members participated, either by asking questions, providing answers to questions, sharing their own experiences, or suggesting others in the audience who should weigh in on topics. As moderator, I was glad that I had worn tennis shoes that day as I was kept moving to get the wireless microphone to each of the people who participated. We tried to video record the session, and we are hopeful that we will be able to preserve and share this with other ILS members, perhaps through the ILS web site.

Following the panel discussion and a short break, we held the ILS annual meeting. President Nicole Jordan led the group through the meeting, shared status and updates from the board meeting, and various officers gave their reports. The minutes of that meeting are also available elsewhere.

Then the group had lunch in the same conference room. Another opportunity for connection, discussion, expression, and fun. Dr. Owen Rogers was granted the privilege of being the first person through the buffet line.

Once lunch was completed, we took a short break and once again boarded a series of shuttle vans bound for the University of Vermont Horticultural Farm. Once there, we had the chance to see pruning demonstrations (also recorded

and shareable), as well as roam among collections of named lilac cultivars, a few mystery cultivars, and see the perennial garden. Many photos and much sniffing of flowers took place here. While there I made several new friends amidst such as John and Ned. (Also there was born an emotional attachment to certain lilacs that would later become quite evident during the auction.)

We were once more shuttled to the National Gardening Center, where we received a tour and were told about the TREEage program. This program prepares trees for urban planting. At the facility there were also nature trails, and some of us were able to squeeze in a quick walk on the trail circuit as well. We returned to the hotel afterward, and prepared for the Awards Banquet.

Now adorned in more formal attire, we enjoyed "our room" – the Champlain Room— which was now set up for a banquet dinner and cash bar. After visiting, sharing photos from earlier in the day, and tales of our day, we shared a dinner and had speakers including John Bentley who talked about the Katie Bentley Lilac Project, Nancy Hulett, and Mary Roberts. Then, in a departure from prior tradition, awards were given during the first night of the convention. The Awards report is available separately.

Our Saturday opened to mostly sunny weather. We were shuttled to the Shelburne Museum. This indescribable place features museums, plantings, good food, and wonderful views. I particularly enjoyed the "Alzheimer's Quilts," the carousel animal display, ceramic sculpture displays, the printing demonstration and the fun conversation I had with the demonstrating volunteer, the food, and the talk by the Director of Grounds and Gardens, Rick Peters. We wandered the grounds at leisure and laughed when we saw two specimens of 'Krasavitsa Moskvyy' labeled as 'Sarah Sands'. The right people have been informed and this will be addressed shortly!

After our tour of Shelburne Museum, it was time for an overwhelming feast at the cafeteria—really good food. Then it was time for the auction! We gathered under the white tent behind the round barn for the annual ILS auction of lilacs and comedy show. Frankly, I would attend the auction even if I had no interest in buying something just to see and hear what goes on. We were assigned bidder numbers, but the whole group now moved, "en masse" to a more photogenic site for a group photo. I recall having another group photo taken near the round barn in May of 1999 when we were here previously. Soon we will have another.

We trekked back to the auction tent and the fun began! At the auction, there are always quite a number of lilacs that are difficult to obtain. Some lilacs are valuable because they are appropriate for a particular buyer's climate, wish list, or simply because she or he has fallen in love with them. The auction often spawns some of the best quotations of the entire convention. Mind you, most of these are taken out of context, but that adds to the fun. Personally, I'll never forget John Carvill's famous line when he served as auctioneer. He passed a



Jack Alexander standing next to his outstanding selection
'Purple Haze' at the University of Vermont Horticulture Farm
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Jeff Young, host of this year's convention, giving pruning advice
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



A fabulous array of paintings to bid on at the silent auction
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Dan Meier gives a surprise bid for signed Dunbar book
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Lynn Hunt and Marie Amusk describe the TREEage program
at the National Gardening Center
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



ILS members admire the lilacs at the UVM Horticultural Farm
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



Another tranquil scene at the Shelburne Museum
Photo Credit John Bentley



Evie King and Roger Coggeshall of Syringa Plus
proudly pose next to Gloria Schreiber's very appropriate license plate!
Photo Credit Gloria Schreiber

small blooming lilac under the nose of one prospective bidder and declared, "Just smell the color!"

The descriptions of the plants are stated by lilac experts, or are looked up in lilac reference manuals such as the "Register of Lilacs" or the *Fiala Lilacs: The Genus Syringa* book. But in the case of our auction, the descriptions are often made by those who grow, evaluate, and work with the lilacs on a regular basis—or sometimes by the introducers themselves! On this day, both Dr. Owen Rogers and Dr. Jack Alexander commented on their own lilac inductions. Often, lilac ranges and attributes were updated in real time as people shared their own experiences with the cultivar up for sale. When historic connections were established, the lilacs became even more desirable.

Like all auctions, the real fun begins when several people have a goal of the same lilac. Here are some examples of the quotations from the hectic afternoon and the spirited bidding that took place.

Tim McCauley, while holding and showing a large potted lilac that had just been sold, asked, "How about if I just set it over here?" Harry Latimer responded, "Watch out, he'll sell it again later." Brad added, "It will have a different name."

"If you can't raise your hand [to place a bid], GET OUT OF THE TENT!" —Jan Young to Jeff Young

"There. Now you're officially addicted." —auctioneer Woody Barnes to a new buyer

"It blooms very well in half day of sun, and in full sun, it blooms its brains out!" —Mary Lizotte describing 'Maidens Blush.'

Woody Barnes: "'Virginia Becker' was by Becker. It was named for a wife or a loved one." "Or both!" —yours truly

During particularly spirited bidding for the plant that fetched the highest price of the day, one bidder resorted to stretching the truth to try to dissuade the competition from further bidding. She stood and intoned (with a grin), "I have a sick husband." The auctioneer's immediate response was, "Does it run in the family?" This brought howls of laughter from most of the crowd but didn't stop the bidding from continuing.

For anybody who hasn't gotten to attend one of these, the humor is certainly in good-spirited fun. We don't re-sell the same plant or anything like that. Sometimes, though, in the heat of the moment, there are some mistakes. We readily admit these and try to make amends as well as we can. In fact, one standing joke became, "Don't worry, if anything happens to it, Bill [Horman] will replace it!" This was a testament to the generosity of Bill Horman and Sunny Fields Farm, which have long been ILS donors and which have provided some replacement plants through the years.

The auction finally drew to a close, and everybody lined up to pay for their

purchases, which were slowly but surely transferred by cart, car, and human to the parking lot so they could be driven back to the hotel. Lilacs and humans made the short drive north back to the Hilton, where we once again gathered for a banquet dinner.

The President's Dinner began with welcome messages, announcements, and recaps from Jeff and Jan Young. As we concluded the enjoyment of our meal with merriment, the last few auction items—a signed Dunbar book and a “mini-color chart” of the Royal Horticultural Society, were auctioned. Both renewed the spirited bidding competition, and in the case of the book, it turned out that the final three bidders were seated next to one-another at the same table! Marymae Mayer, Gloria Schreiber, and Dan Meier exchanged amazed, determined and shocked looks during the process, as the rest of us could resist laughing with them at the drama among friends (? I hope?!).

Next, our keynote speaker was introduced. Stephen Yost, Executive Director of Shelburne Museum, began as we finished our desserts. His talk, illustrated with many slides, showed passion and compassion, intelligence, and confidence. We learned more about the area, its history, and benefactor Electra Havemeyer Webb and her family. We connected more deeply to the things we had seen earlier in the day. The talk was well received and will be long remembered.

Finally, Marymae Mayer welcomed us to Lombard, Illinois for the 2011 convention. She concluded her presentation with a song and enthusiasm. Following a few concluding announcements, the convention broke up...but only gradually, as many of us lingered late, making plans for future meetings and other gatherings, talking of lilacs, life, and fun. A convention never really breaks up after all. Rather, our contact diminishes a bit for a while until two or more of us find ourselves together for the next meeting, be it large or small. I am eager to meet again in Lombard, or to see members sooner. I only hope there will be time to do all the great things we talked about before then!

Brad Bittorf
ILS Member

Postscript: Less than an hour after I finished the first draft of this report, I found myself in an ambulance on the way to Resurrection Medical Center near O'Hare Airport. If you've ever wondered how quickly somebody can go from “healthy” to “filthy sick,” I can attest that it is less than an hour. Hot sweats, nausea, dizziness. I stumbled to the gate and asked for help. By the time the paramedics reached me, I was on my hands and knees holding onto a railing. I couldn't move and I felt horrible. Five hours later I was discharged from the emergency room, with several drugs and an IV in me. (The diagnosis was “acute vertigo.”) My thanks to the men of Chicago Fire Department squad #59 and the Emergency Room staff at Resurrection Medical Center. This delayed my return home by a full day, and somehow I lost my cell phone, but fortunately I feel fine now. The only bright spot—on a shuttle to the Chicago hotel, I saw several lilacs in bloom.

Lilac Cultivar Popularity Poll 2010

Beauty of Moscow™ 30

'Maiden's Blush' 21

'Sensation' 13

'Charles Joly', 'Monge' 8

'President Lincoln', 'Mrne Lemoine' 7

'Paul Thirion', 'Katherine Havemeyer', 'Agincourt Beauty', 'Miss Canada', 'Lilac Sunday', 'Congo' 5

'Assissippi', 'Frederick Law Olmsted', 'Nadezhda' 4

'Agnes Smith', 'Miss Kim', 'Ivory Silk', 'Sweetheart', 'Tinkerbelle™', 'René Jarry-Deloges', 'Purple Haze' 3

'Andenken an Ludwig Späth', 'Wonderblue', 'Président Grévy', 'Agidel', 'Lucie Baltet', 'James MacFarlane', 'Buffon', 'Avalanche', 'Mt. Baker', 'Albert F. Holden', 'Frank Klager', 'Lavender Lady', 'Rochester', 'Palibin', 'Bloomerang™', 'Bridal Memories', 'Sarah Sands' 2

45 others with 1 vote

Convention Corner Calendar

October 16, 2010 ILS New England Fall Roundup

Presented by the New England ILS members
Syringa Plus Nursery, West Newbury, MA

April 28-30, 2011 ILS Convention in Lombard, Illinois (Details TBA
in the Fall Journal)

May 3-5, 2012 ILS Convention in Nancy, France

May 2013 ILS Convention in Madison, Wisconsin

If you're contemplating having a convention in your area, please contact me. We're always on the lookout for new sites and would welcome revisiting sites from decades past. Discussions are underway with local members wishing to have a convention in the following locations: Detroit, Michigan, Montreal, Quebec and Cleveland, Ohio. Thanks for your cooperation.

Karen McCauley
Convention Chairman
952.443.3703
mccauleytk@aol.com

International Lilac Society Presentation May 2010 Katie Bentley Memorial Lilac Project

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is John Bentley, I am from Salisbury, NH, and I am here to tell you about the Katie Bentley Memorial Lilac Project.

My daughter, Catherine Ann Bentley, died in 2007 from complications of pneumonia. Her birthday was on Halloween, October 31st, and despite heroic efforts by the medical staff at Boston Children's Hospital, she died three weeks before she would have turned five years old. She is buried in a cemetery just down the road from our house, a very old cemetery, where many of my family members and friends are buried. On Memorial Day in 2009, when we were planting some flowers on her grave, we noticed the conspicuous absence of any flowers blooming in the cemetery. I thought about what kind of flowers we could plant that would look good year after year, that would require little maintenance, and would be in bloom around Memorial Day. Since purple was Katie's favorite color, the obvious choice to me was lilacs. On that day, I was inspired to plant hundreds of lilacs at that cemetery, as a living memorial to my daughter, and The Katie Bentley Lilac Project was born.

Because of the great number of lilacs that this project would require, I started looking around for wholesale quantities of plants. During the course of my research, I found the website of Syringa Plus, a lilac nursery in West Newbury, Massachusetts. I sent an email, and then I called a few days later. My world changed that day, when Evelyn King answered the phone.

I told her my story, and that I wanted to buy a whole bunch of lilacs to plant around the cemetery in memory of my daughter. Evelyn enthusiastically supported the plan, and threw many ideas at me during that first conversation. With one phone call, I knew that this was the right place for me to do business with to make my project happen. At last, I had found my lilac Muse.

It would be hard for me to overstate the importance of working with Evie. She has a way about her that is hard to articulate, except to say that her organic, down to earth manner is welcoming, her expertise is sound, and her enthusiasm for our project is sincere. She applied her experience with the various cultivars, helped me with the plan, even drove two hours to survey the cemeteries with her partner, Roger Coggeshall. Evie and Roger welcomed me at the nursery as though I were an old friend. I felt comfortable from the start with both her and Roger, a key component in any business relationship. I declare this expertise and extra effort to be the "Value Added" component of dealing with a reputable nursery for a project such as we are conducting, something we don't get from a mail order catalog or the big retail stores.

At the same time, I was busy with the project planning in Salisbury. I determined that the first thing to do was to make the town cemetery trustees aware of my ideas, to see if they would assent to my plan of planting lilacs in the cemeteries at all. I talked to them, and they all agreed it was a good idea. I then went to the selectmen, to make sure they were aware of it, and they also agreed it was a good idea, and voted to support it.

Evie put me in touch with Guy Giunta Jr., the Chairman of the NH Governor's Lilac and Wildflower Commission, who also supported the project, and, later, supplied us with some donated lilacs.

Next, I made a poster that had a picture of Katie on it, a picture of lilacs on it, and the story of what we were doing, with a request for donations in any amount. Each poster had a tear off pad attached, with the information on where to send the money. We put some posters up in the local area, including our town Old Home Day celebration, and donations started coming in.

As news of the project got around, people started calling me with ideas for planting lilacs. Everyone that I talked to supported the idea, and many people wanted to plant lilacs on their land, land that abutted the cemeteries, to enhance the effect. One of my friends, a landscape contractor who lives on the road to the cemetery, planted 43 lilacs along his entire 450 foot long fence line next to the road. We chose nine different varieties and alternated them every ten feet.

Katie's preschool supported the idea, and I talked to the administration about planting lilacs there. I met with the Facilities Director, who is an old friend of mine, and he was very enthusiastic. We may plant as many as 400 lilacs at the school Katie attended, and we are working on a plan to put lilacs at all the schools in the entire school district, perhaps 1000 plants, or more, over the next five to ten years.

After the course of many phone calls and emails, and a field trip to the cemeteries in town, we finally agreed upon a course of action for planting. Evie and Roger determined the sizes of the varieties, the spacing, and the various cultivars to use, choosing varieties that would have overlapping bloom times, some early, mid-season, and late flowering types. We did not want to overwhelm the old cemeteries, simply enhance them, so knowledge of growth habits and size is important to be able to do that. In late August, we received our first delivery of plants, and I planted them in early September.

In late September, I got another shipment, and Guy Giunta delivered a large order, courtesy of the NH Governor's Lilac and Wildflower Commission, and we planted them through early October. In total, we planted 131 lilacs at four locations in 2009.

Perhaps the most inspiring of all our initial plantings is one we did at Katie's school. The teachers there installed a granite bench in her memory in the courtyard of the school. Syringa Plus supplied us with a mature 'Maréchal Foch' lilac,

one that was so big that I split it, and I planted it on either side of her bench in the garden in front of the school. As it happened, right at this time, the librarian had commissioned an artist to paint a mural on the vaulted ceiling in the library. The artist painted the lilacs and the bench into the mural, and appropriately so. However, the librarian was so excited about the concept of planting lilacs all over the school grounds, that she had the artist paint lilacs into the mural in places that I had not yet installed any plants. This is what happens when lilac fever strikes.

In the spring of this year, I met with two of my alma maters, both of which approved of the idea of planting lilacs. In April, we planted the first 20 of many hundred to come at New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord, NH, as the first part of the Katie Bentley Lilac Project there. More locations are added each month, at schools, towns, businesses, churches, and other institutions, resulting in hundreds and hundreds of lilacs being planted. What a wonderful response has been generated by our simple lilac project.

The points to take away from our experience are few and very simple. We know that lilacs are hardy and tough, and require very little maintenance. We know that in wholesale quantities, they are relatively inexpensive to purchase and install. And we know that they fit with almost any landscape plan.

We have learned that nearly everyone has a favorable impression of lilacs. Many of these impressions date back to their earliest memories of flowers, and they always mention their grandparent's lilacs. Most people tell me that lilacs are their favorite flower.

We have learned that planting lilacs in public places is an idea that people embrace. And we have learned that people will donate to a project like ours.

Every community in America has lost a loved one. What better way to memorialize a lost loved one's life than with a lilac garden in a public place in their town? I am working with several other towns in my area to do exactly that, and I encourage all of you to do the same. For our New Hampshire members, we have the bully pulpit of the New Hampshire Governor's Lilac and Wildflower Commission, and the Purple Lilac is the State Flower of New Hampshire. Guy Giunta has been very helpful with our project, we are lucky to have him promoting lilacs in New Hampshire.

For the rest of us, the charge is this: think of someone you know in your community who you think would be well remembered with a lilac memorial. Partner up with a reputable lilac nursery, and call me if you need help getting started. Contact the cemetery commissions and other town and city boards with your idea. Contact the school board, or the principal of your local school. Call your local Veterans associations. And, if you know them well, contact the family of that lost loved one, and float the idea of a memorial lilac project to them, if you think enough time has passed since their loss. In my experience, time is the only

thing that really helps us come to grips with such loss. Whether it is a memorial project for a lost loved one, or simply a beautification project to enhance existing landscape plans, there is always room for a few lilacs. Bring an application form for the ILS with you, and encourage people to join. Your enthusiasm and love of lilacs will show through, and you, too, can start a lilac fever in your town.

Visit www.katiebentleylilacproject.com for updates on our progress.

*John Bentley
June 2010*

Editor's Note: The above article is adapted from the talk that John gave at the 2010 ILS Convention, with a few additional points added to the text.

Creating a Scrapbook of Memories

Lilacs are memories of our past and I wanted to create a scrapbook of memories for our history. A new beginning for our society to cherish and come together as one.

I have had so many stories from great people in the past. One to share is about Lourene Wishart; ring a bell!! A lilac named after her, she used to show up at conventions in fancy clothes in a pink convertible Cadillac. These are stories that should be recorded and put into a simple print book we could make available to our members. Losing some of members in the past few years has made me think deeply about our past and our future. Who will offer these stories if they are not recorded.

Our dear Editor is always looking for someone to contribute information, tidbits, stories and other important information about lilacs. We need to record more of our history for future ILS members. Why was the society started? What were their visions of the society?

We still have some important figures around that can tell some beautiful stories. It could like sitting around a campfire sipping hot chocolate and reminiscing about lilacs whenever we wanted to.

I would like a time line of all information being sent by October 31st 2010. This would give me some time to put the stories and anecdotes together. If you have old photos that could be included also it would be a wonderful asset. I will put the info together and turn it over to ILS to decide if they want to have something printed officially.

Please send the information to frankmoro007@yahoo.com

Frank Moro

“From Massachusetts to Mackinac Island: Henry David Thoreau on Lilacs”

by Corinne Hosfeld Smith

New England Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) may be best known for choosing to live “deliberately” for two years in a small house perched at the edge of Walden Pond. Some folks remember that he also spent a night in jail for non-payment of taxes. Still others may admire the pithy philosophies that have been printed on calendars and on posters. The notions of following different drummers and marching confidently in the direction of one’s dreams have helped to seal this author’s literary reputation.

Yet it is Thoreau’s botanical observations that have attracted the scrutiny of today’s researchers. For whenever he “travelled” throughout his hometown of Concord, Massachusetts, Henry Thoreau noticed each piece of vegetation as it progressed throughout the seasons. In the pages of his journal and field notebooks, he recorded the dates when specific plants emerged from the earth and when they bloomed. He documented when each tree began to leaf and what colors its foliage turned in autumn. No plant was too small or too common to attract his attention. A century and a half later, his commitment to detail has proven valuable in charting the long-term effects of global warming.

The lilac bushes in his own neighborhood did not escape Thoreau’s notice. Admittedly, he was more intrigued by native or wild species. Ornamental shrubbery that was obviously planted by man was somewhat tame in comparison. Still, Thoreau saw the lilacs in various stages of advancement. On select days in March or April, he noted that the buds were beginning to “look swollen” or to “show a little green.” On April 19, 1852, he wrote: “The buds of the lilac look ready to take advantage of the first warm day.” Almost a month would have to pass before they reached full flower that year.

In the Concord of the 1850s, the lilacs unfolded most often in the date range of May 17 to May 22, according to Thoreau’s records. “The lilac is scented at every house,” he wrote on May 22, 1853. Those simple words bring to mind at once the delightful, perfume-heavy air of a northeastern spring.

But Thoreau’s observations continued throughout the year, and away from the thickly-settled center of Concord. He understood that these bushes were markers of human residency. Once the people were gone, the lilacs that remained provided clues to the histories of the properties.

He wrote about this very phenomenon in the “Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors” chapter of *Walden*. Whenever Thoreau explored the fields and light

forests that surrounded Walden Pond, he came upon abandoned plots that were once occupied by former slaves and emancipated black freemen. The “former inhabitants” had died or had moved away many years earlier. Their shelters had already been removed or reclaimed by the earth. But it wasn’t difficult to find the spots where they had once stood:

“Still grows the vivacious lilac a generation after the door and lintel and the sill are gone, unfolding its sweet-scented flowers each spring, to be plucked by the musing traveller [sic]; planted and tended once by children’s hands, in front-yard plots, — now standing by wall-sides in retired pastures, and giving place to new-rising forests; — the last of that stirp [ancestral line], sole survivor of that family. Little did the dusky children think that the puny slip with its two eyes only, which they stuck in the ground in the shadow of the house and daily watered, would root itself so, and outlive them, and the house itself in the rear that shaded it, and grown man’s garden and orchard, and tell their story faintly to the lone wanderer a half-century after they had grown up and died, — blossoming as fair, and smelling as sweet, as in that first spring. I mark its still tender, civil, cheerful, lilac colors.”

Thoreau’s discovery of this ownerless copse would eventually prove useful in his scientific studies.

In his later years, Henry Thoreau became even more enthralled by Nature’s processes; and most especially, by the dispersion of seeds and by tree succession. He wanted to know the intricacies of every species. He documented how each one reproduced and which conditions it required for optimal growth. On October 25, 1860, he decided to learn more about lilacs. He walked to one of those abandoned properties and lobbed off a branch. Then he recorded his findings in his journal:

“Cut one of the largest of the lilacs at the Nutting wall, eighteen inches from the ground. It there measures one and five sixteenths inches and has twenty distinct rings from centre, then about twelve very fine, not thicker than previous three; equals thirty-two in all. It evidently dies down many times, and yet lives and sends up fresh shoots from the root.”

More than a decade earlier, he had casually predicted in *Walden* that these bushes were at least a generation old. Now he had scientific proof of that fact. He had counted thirty-two rings in the cutting.

During the subsequent winter, Thoreau caught a cold that further aggravated his symptoms of consumption (tuberculosis). Since medical knowledge of the disease was then limited, his doctor recommended a trip to a different climate as a curative measure. In those early months of the Civil War, it would have been

impossible for a Northerner to travel anywhere south of the Mason-Dixon line. Thoreau chose Minnesota as his recuperative destination.

He and friend Horace Mann, Jr., spent two months traveling by railroad and by steamboat, from Massachusetts to Minnesota and back. Their return route led them steaming across both Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Along the way, they stopped to explore Mackinac Island. The outcropping was a major harbor and was also in the early stages of becoming known for its own healthy environment.

By this point in their journey, Thoreau and Mann were accustomed to “botanizing” at every opportunity. Seventeen-year-old Horace had brought his shotgun along, in order to “collect” animal specimens, in the tradition of the scientists of the day. Thoreau was prepared with his spyglass, his plant press, a few botanic manuals, and a 100-page field notebook for jotting down species names and for recording unusual sightings. He had already made dozens of observations and had created original lists of Midwestern flora and fauna.

From June 30 to July 4, 1861, the two men walked and climbed around the island. They collected plant specimens around Fort Mackinac, Arch Rock, and the bubbling waterfall now known as Dwightwood Spring. Thoreau developed his own written inventory of the botany of Mackinac. Amidst his sightings of *Arborvitae* (*Thuja occidentalis*), Hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), and Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*), he wrote the words “Apple in bloom,” followed by “& lilac.” He later circled them. The positioning of the two lines implies that the lilac bushes were also in flower during his visit.

Thoreau filled that page on one of his first days on the island. He no doubt found the phenomenon interesting because of the date. He was used to apple trees and lilacs blooming more than a full month earlier back in his hometown of Concord. He should have understood that the island’s location above the 45th parallel would result in a much shorter growing season. Perhaps he also realized that none of his meticulously-prepared logs from back home would have applied to the schedule of the greenery of this northern habitat.

The lilacs of Mackinac Island are now so large that residents refer to them as “trees.” Because of their size, a mythology of sorts surrounds these lilacs. Did the French missionaries – or even Father Marquette himself – introduce them to the area, almost 400 years ago? Or does Mackinac merely provide the ultimate in favorable lilac growing conditions?

Some islanders have recently attempted to solve that puzzle. Brian Leigh Durnigan, the author of *A Picturesque Situation: Mackinac before Photography, 1615-1860*, “read every possible description of Mackinac up to 1860,” in the course of his book research. He found no references to lilacs. He dismisses the idea that they were brought by French missionaries. He theorizes instead that the trees “came with the New England Protestant missionaries of the 1820s, or the early cottagers of the 1860s-1870s.” When presented with the information that

Henry David Thoreau saw them during his brief visit, Brian writes: "If Thoreau mentioned them in 1861, his might be the earliest reference."

During the lilac festival of June 2007, botanist and year-round islander Patricia "Trish" Martin had the opportunity to work with three members of the International Lilac Society, in an effort to determine the age of selected trees. She got permission from local property owners who appeared to own the largest lilacs. Then Zelimir Borzan, Charles D. Holetich, and Freek Vrugtman took small bore samples from the trunks. The resulting numbers confirmed what Trish had predicted: that the ancient Mackinac lilacs might be no greater than 130-140 years old. They would have been planted on the island properties between 1870 and 1880. The specific trees and branches that Thoreau and Mann saw might no longer be sprouting.

The lilacs of Mackinac Island have quite a following. The mid-June festival attracts a large number of experts and aficionados each summer. But Henry David Thoreau never had a chance to write about them or to see them again.

After he and Horace returned to Concord, Thoreau was to live only another nine months. During that time period, he and his sister Sophia worked together to finalize several book and essay manuscripts. They never got around to creating a narrative from his notes on his 1861 "Journey West." Otherwise, we might know more about his reaction to seeing the purple blossoms in northern Michigan so late in the season. That's a shame. For as far as we know, that short line in Thoreau's field notebook may be the earliest written documentation of the existence of the lilacs on Mackinac Island.

Today, visitors who drive through Massachusetts in early May will notice lilac in bloom on many residential properties. Even the Thoreau-Alcott House on Concord's Main Street, Henry Thoreau's last home, has white lilacs growing along its side wall and violet ones growing by the front door. They are probably not old enough to date to Thoreau's time. But just as in his day, the lilacs indicate that someone once lived at that site ... and perhaps, he still does.

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Editor's Note: Corinne Hosfeld Smith is a librarian at Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts. She is at work on a manuscript that details Henry Thoreau's 1861 trip to the American Midwest.

A Lilac Search

On March 30th 1991, Anna V. Pikaljeva, who was the supervisor of Lilacs at the Botanical Garden of Moscow State University at the time, sent me a document which changed my life completely. Anna had summarised what she knew about the distribution of lilac cultivars, both foreign and native, in most of the regions of the USSR. In one of the mega-understatements I have encountered in my life, Anna wrote: "I feel that (this) information may be of interest for lilac breeders in the West". The document was subsequently published in two parts in two editions of "LILACS" in 1994.

In the document there was much that has fed my interest from that day to this. It not only listed the cultivars but, where known, it gave their locations also. As a result it started my great interest in Eastern European lilacs but it did something else: for reasons incomprehensible to myself she mentioned two lilacs which grabbed my imagination and tickled my fancy ever since. One of them was *S. vulgaris* 'Altaiskaya Rosovaya' bred by one "Luchnik" in a place called "Bernaul". Correspondence later established that "Luchnik" was the breeder Zinaida A. Luchnik of the Research Institute for Horticulture at Bernaul, a city near to Novosibirsk in Western Siberia. Well, despite my passion, I have not had one single glimpse of that lilac from that day to this.

However, I said that there were two but the other one was more enigmatic. It was simply listed by Anna as 'Kruzhevni~~tsa~~' with the added point that there was one specimen in the Moscow University collection. There was no description and no attribution as to origin. There was not even a clue as to if it were single or double. Then, four years ago a scion named 'Kruzhevni~~tsa~~' came my way. I grafted it and the graft took. I grew it in isolation for two years and then last year I planted it out. This year it flowered for the first time, raising the great question of how could I show that it was indeed the plant the label claimed it to be.

Thus I consulted the definitive word of the Grand Vizier of the International Lilac Society. I have a copy of the 1992 Lilac Register (Work in Progress) and from this edition I found that Grand Vizier Freek had discovered two things in correspondence which had me whooping with joy. 'Kruzhevni~~tsa~~' was bred by the very same Z. I. Luchnik (date not known) at Bernaul in Western Siberia. The other fact was that it was "double lilac pink" so it was, hence, classified as DIV/V. Since I have no reason to doubt my own source and, as the Register entry concurs with what I have growing, I think I can be assured that the lilac I show today is, truly, *S. vulgaris* 'Kruzhevni~~tsa~~'.

Colin Chapman.
Plant Heritage (NCCPG) National
Collection of *Syringa*
Wyverstone, Suffolk, UK.

ILS Needs A New Logo

Perhaps you have never seen the ILS Logo or maybe you have. It was designed when computers with all their fancy fonts and their abilities to design anything were not available. Our challenge is to come up with a new logo or an updated logo. Some of us have the talent, the skills and the programs to design a modern logo or transform the present logo. It must be a simple design easily printable on all type of materials. It will mostly be printed in black ink. We may want to do t-shirts, cups, caps, etc. and for this purpose we will do the logo in color. So limit the number of colors.

Once decided the new logo will become the one and only official logo of ILS. Please put you thinking caps on and sharpen your drawing skills. Send all ideas to Board Member Gloria Schreiber at gsyringa@aol.com. The ILS Board will vote on the new logo. It will be unveiled at the 2011 ILS Convention in Lombard, IL.

Nicole Jordan
ILS President

Editor's Deadline

- Please submit any articles or photos by September 20 for publication in the Fall Issue 2010
- Please submit any articles or photos by December 15 for publication in the Winter Issue 2011

Thank You!

Lilacs of Beckwith

by Myrna Walberg

*There's something in the soil of Beckwith
All lilacs do imbibe
An elixir of life it seems
Brings lilac seed alive*

*They grow in wild abandon
No rows or beds or hedges
And seedlings very densely show
Along the laneway edges*

*These lilacs speak of olden days
When pioneers did bring
And planted shrubs to give them joy
The fleeting flowers of spring*

*A lilac at each settler's door
When fragrance wafted in
Brightened lives so filled with toil
Brought sumptuous joy each spring*

*Oh lilacs wild of Beckwith
Please tell us what you know
Of folks so hardy long time gone
While you still bloom and grow*

*Escaped to fields abandoned
And take up space quite ample
Just like your settler sponsors
You follow their example*

*Oh lilacs wild of Beckwith
Receive no coddling care
No mulching, liming do you see
No pruner's saw does dare*

*You're tall and short and wide and thin
Growing everywhere
Beside a pine or apple tree
Still offer blossoms fair*

*And so you do proliferate
O'er acres that are free
And give so generously joy and pleasure
To all who come to see.*

*Oh let me amble through your thickets
Like birds and butterflies and bees
To search and find your precious secrets
Of doubling flowers —please—*

*Oh lilacs wild of Beckwith
Tenacious forest elves
A wildling's life, and without care
E'er fending for yourselves.*

Myrna Walberg
Dunham, Quebec
Feb. 2010



Our host, Jeff Young, at the 2010 Convention leading a walking tour
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

International Lilac Society

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MEMBERSHIP

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The first flowering for the very rare
S. vulgaris 'Kruzhevitsa' at Norman's Farm
Photo Credit Colin Chapman



A very fine specimen of *S. vulgaris* 'Marie Frances'
at the University of Vermont Horticultural Farm
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf



A mixture of colors in the lilac row at Shelburne Museum

Photo courtesy of Brad Bitorf