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# The Pipeline

This issue edited by Robert B. Clark, Cattle Landing Road, R.D. 1, Box 288, Meredith, N.H. 03253

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TREE LILACS PLANTED ON ARBOR DAY 1976. Three Arbor Day ceremonies this U.S. Bicentennial Year will feature planting of Japanese tree lilacs: Arbor Lodge at Nebraska City, the homestead of J. Sterling Morton, founder of Arbor Day and the person for whom Morton Arboretum is named. No. 2 tree at Clyde, New York (14433) post office, official address of I.L.S. And no. 3 tree at the Hilton Inn on the (RIT) Campus, 175 Jefferson Road, W. Henrietta, New York, headquarters of our Fifth Annual Membership meeting, May 21-23rd.

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IN THE SPIRIT OF 1776, a past to remember, a future to mold. This is our lilac heritage theme during the U.S. Bicentennial upcoming convention at Rochester, New York, May 21-23rd.

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PLEASE PREREGISTER. Help the convention committee by preregistering. We offer a package registration including transportation plus five meals (except breakfasts) for \$40. per person. Where else can you get a deal like that for a three-day outing of such magnitude !

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LILAC AUCTION. Saturday evening is scheduled for the benefit auction of lilac plants and other lilac memorabilia -- items with lilac motifs. Walter Eickhorst is the auctioneer (remember Morton Arboretum last year). The proceeds go to the Education and Research Funds. Bring your lilac donations. Take home a hard-to-come-by lilac treasure. We can't promise a Floyd Swink this year, but we do promise an evening of fun.

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PERSONALIA. Honorary lifetime director ANNE ROBINSON now lives at Apt. 9-04, Meadow Lakes, Hightstown, New Jersey 08520, and would enjoy your call should you be passing through the Garden State. DONALD M. LUPOLD, Muncie, Pennsylvania 17756, is recovering from cataract and retinal detachment operation.

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THE LILAC is the title of an article by Sandy Marvinney which appears in the current number of "Conservationist" (50 Wolf Road, Albany, New York 12233). Besides a brief history of the common lilac Miss Marvinney speaks of our upcoming 5th annual meeting at Highland Park, Rochester, May 21-23rd.

## The Lilac



by Sandy Marvinney

THE lilac evokes images of bushes blooming by the front porch along small town shady streets, little girls carrying bouquets to the teacher, and grandmother's favorite color. Anticipation of that first fragrant whiff is one of the undisputed rites of spring.

Then too, lilacs are part of our pioneering history, one of the earliest plants brought to the new world by English settlers in the early seventeenth century — a favorite reminder of the gardens back in the mother country. George Washington writes of transplanting a "clump of laylocks" at Mount Vernon in his diary of March 3, 1785, and Thomas Jefferson also planted this beautiful and hardy shrub at Monticello.

Lilacs are so hardy that long after many early homesteads were abandoned and foundations crumbled, the lilac bushes bloomed on. You may even come upon a clump in the middle of woods that have grown up where a farmhouse once stood. "Still grows the vivacious lilac," Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "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 traveler. . . ."

The lilac has been in cultivation for at least 500 years and is botanically part of the genus *Syringa*, a plant of the Oleaceae or olive family. There are 28 different species of lilac which have been cross bred and hybridized to produce hundreds of different varieties, including double petalled. Lilacs bloom in many colors — white, blue, purple, pale yellow and rose-tinted as well as the familiar soft violet shade most common in backyard gardens.

Part of the fascination of lilacs is the mystique of their origin. The common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) was first noted in the gardens of Constantinople in the mid 1500's by the ambassador of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria. It was soon

brought to Europe along with the tulip for cultivation.

Not until the early 1800's did botanists discover that the common lilac was actually native to the mountains of the Balkan peninsula. While our common lilac thus traces its wild ancestors to Europe, virtually all other species are native to Asia. In northern China the *Syringa oblata* variety has been cultivated from time immemorial. The lilac traversed the heart of Asia along the ancient silk road, brought by caravan from China to the shores of the Caspian Sea along with silk, musk, spices, and the peach, apricot and other exotic plants.

It is not surprising, considering the lilac's long and widespread history, that it has been in different times and places a symbol of both good and bad luck. In some areas hanging lilac branches over a doorway was thought to guard against misfortune. In England, many view the flower as an omen of ill luck, associating its purple color with the hues of mourning. An old English proverb declares that a woman who wears lilacs will never wear a wedding ring, and sending a spray of lilacs to a fiancé was a delicate way of breaking an engagement.

Luck may or may not be in the mind of the beholder, but the lilacs are nevertheless a versatile plant for the garden. They do best in open, sunny sites in a loam soil that is neutral or slightly alkaline. Lilacs grow and bloom with little care, though they do respond well to careful pruning.

Each May, Highland Park in Rochester sponsors a "lilac time" festival to show off more than 1,600 bushes of 552 varieties blooming in every shade from white to delicate lilac and deep purple. This year the International Lilac Society will hold its convention at Rochester May 21-23 in conjunction with the festival. For information on the society and convention contact: Mr. Robert B. Clark, R.D. 1, Box 288, Meredith, N.H. 13253. ☉

State of New York, Department of Environmental Conservation  
50, Wolf Road, Albany, New York 12233.

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INTERNATIONAL LILAC SOCIETY - 1976 Rochester Convention.

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1976.

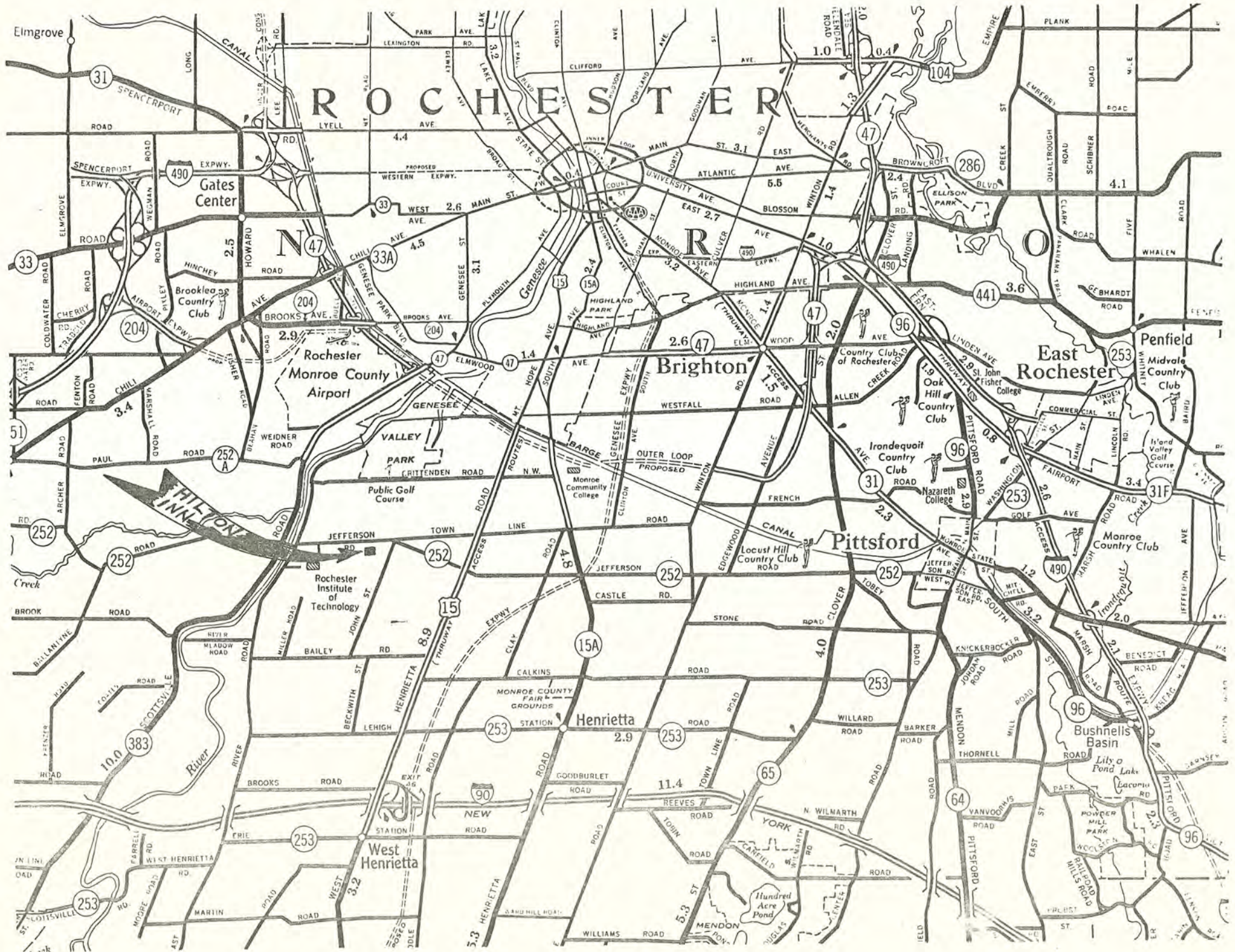
- 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon Board Meeting at the Hilton Inn on the Campus.
- 10:00 a.m. REGISTRATION at Hilton Inn.
- 2:00 p.m. Speakers Program at Hilton Inn:  
Welcome from Parks Department  
Welcome by President Robert Clark  
History of lilacs at Highland Park - Alvan Grant.  
History of lilacs in America - Audrey H. O'Connor.  
A Patron for the Lilac Society - Bernard Harkness.  
Lilacs of the Future - Father John L. Fiala.
- intermission-
- Effect of pollutants on lilacs and resistant cultivars -  
Dr. Craig R. Hibben (Brooklyn Botanic Garden)  
Dr. Jerry T. Walker (University of Georgia )
- 6:30 p.m. PRESIDENT'S DINNER at Hilton Inn  
Official Welcome from Monroe County  
Annual Meeting:  
Reports by President, Secretary & Treasurer  
Election of new board members  
Consideration of amendments and proposals  
Photography and Lilacs - Arthur Trimble.
- Everybody Welcome - Hospitality Suite.

SATURDAY, MAY 22, 1976.

- 8:00 a.m. Organizational meeting of new board.
- 9:00 a.m. Limousines leave Hilton Inn every few minutes for Highland Park.
- 12 noon LILAC LUNCHEON.  
p.m. Guests of Monroe County Parks Department - Highland Park.
- 5:00 p.m. BUFFET DINNER at Warner Castle served by Rochester Herb Society.  
Transportation to Hilton Inn.
- 8:00 p.m. AUCTION of rare lilacs, trees etc., Hilton Inn Solarium.  
Hospitality Suite open.

SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1976.

- 7:30 a.m. Catholic Service - Mass served by Father Fiala, Hospitality Room.
- 9:00 a.m. Buses leave Hilton Inn for tour -  
Tour Monroe County Parks Dept. Nurseries at Smith Road,  
Conducted by Richard Fenicchia.
- 11:00 a.m. Leave for Sodus Bay.  
LUNCH - Sodus Bay Heights Golf Club.
- 12:30 p.m. Leave for Clyde.  
Tour of Grape Hill Farm lilacs - Mr. & Mrs. William Utley.
- 2:00 p.m. Leave for Canandaigua.  
Tour Sonnenberg Gardens - Planting of Lilac Tree (S. reticulata)
- 4:00 p.m. Leave for Hilton Inn.
- 5:30 p.m. Poolside Cocktail Hour - cash bar.
- 6:30 p.m. AWARDS BANQUET  
Presentation of awards  
Dr. Clarence Gehris (Brockport SUNY) will share his  
experiences of his visit to Leningrad for the International  
Botanical Congress and his trip to the Caucasus.



Bickelhaupt Arboretum of Clinton, Iowa, is looking for sources of the following lilacs: Dr. Chadwick, Maidens Blush, Maud Notcutt, Mount Baker and Royal Purple. Please communicate with Mr. R.E. Bickelhaupt, 340 South 14th St., Clinton IA.52732.

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Walter Oakes reports that 'Agnes Smith', a late blooming white, is superior in his Dixfield, Maine, garden to 'Anna Amhoff', both of which were released by the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station. (What a humiliation for Anna to be less well esteemed than Agnes ! Ed.) Nevertheless our columns are open to cultural notes from our readers.

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LILACS, the March 1976 number, contains a 24-page report of Dr. James S. Pringle's 1960 study of thermal-neutron radiation of lilac seeds. The publication of this scientific bulletin was made possible by the joint financial support of I.L.S. and Royal Botanical Gardens. The cover is a montage of lilacs in various stages (top left clockwise): Syringa vulgaris 'Pom', seeds of S. tigerstedtii, pods of 'Pom' and S. villosa, inflorescence of S. villosa, segment of graph (fig.5), and a variegated seedling (at Royal Botanical Gardens) from an interspecific cross in Villosae series.

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#### LETTERS TO EDITOR:

"Dear Sir: I must say that my ideas about 'Who is honored?' are quite different. Naming plants after great people, or at least well-known people, has always been a good way to make these people interested in plants, gardening, horticulture. If these people are known by the general public to do gardening, to be interested in plants, this speaks to the imagination of the general public, and this general public may experiment with gardening as a hobby, which helps our horticultural industry, which helps these people find a healthy and happy hobby that makes sense.

Another advantage of naming plants after people is that the name reflects an era, if one knows who was the man after whom the plant was named. Finding this out is fun, but not always easy. You ask 'Who was Leon Gambetta ?' Already at the age of 22 he was a member of the Paris bar. Became a famed and feared orator. At 31 he became the leader of the republican opposition in Parliament. After the surrender of Sedan to the Germans in the 1870-1872 Franco-Prussian War, he proclaimed the Republic together with Jules Favre. In the first Republican Cabinet he was the Minister for Home Affairs. On October 7, 1870 he fled Paris, which was besieged by balloon!, to organize and lead the resistance against the Germans. His republican party won every election. Gambetta twice refused to become the President of the French Republic, but he was every time the Cabinet-maker.

I do sincerely hope that many plants and trees in the future will be named after great and well-known people in general and to patrons of horticulture in particular -- especially so for the more timeless ornamentals of which the Lilac is such a splendid example.

Zelimir Sahin, Aalsmeer, Holland."

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