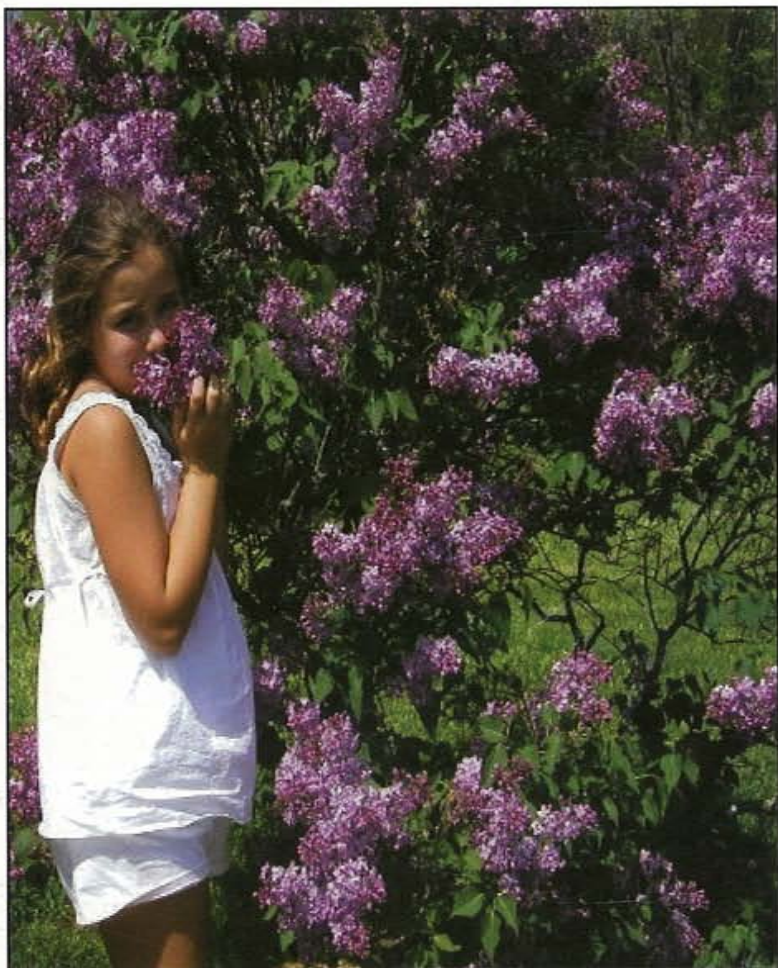


Lilacs

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 4
FALL 2006



QUARTERLY JOURNAL
of the International Lilac Society

IN
THIS
ISSUE:

Lilacs of Finland;
Member Section



Syringa x hyacinthiflora 'Pocahontas'
Photo Credit Charles Holetich



Syringa vulgaris 'Monique Lemoine'
Photo Credit Charles Holetich

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<i>Photo Credit Gene Lupinetti</i>	

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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,

Voila! The summer issue of *Lilacs* came out a little late but with a bang. Hurray for Kent Millham our new editor. The journal looks very professional. The pictures are excellent and the articles very good. Kudos have been pouring in for Kent. By the time you received this issue it will be time again to think about the winter issue. Don't forget you can contribute by submitting articles, pictures and stories of interest to our editor. A journal is for everybody. We have members of exceptional knowledge, hybridizers with fantastic goals and other members who have stories to tell about their lilac experiences and about members that we have not had the pleasure to know. Pick up that paper and pencil or sit at your computer and write these articles. Thank you to Colin Chapman for his tributes to Olga Rudenko and Robert S. Gilbert. The picture of Olga holding on to that huge bouquet of lilacs says it all. She loved lilacs; that is for sure...

Besides the journal, we have now an International Lilac robin. How do I join, you may ask? Easily; send via e-mail your name and a short biography to our Vice-President Brad Bittorf or me and we will register you. The only requirement is that you be a member in good standing. The robin is an avenue for us to talk about lilacs and to get to know each other better. We can now keep the lilac dialogue going between conventions and what fun it is!

I keep saying we are having a Lilac Renaissance. Yes, yes it is happening everywhere. I'm happy to see that even on a very popular television show in the USA did a whole episode on the heroine getting romantically involved after a gentleman friend brought her a bouquet of lilacs. Later at a very posh wedding, all of the centerpieces made up of lilacs graced every table. *Gourmet*, one of the USA's most sophisticated food magazines, sent out an advertisement featuring a big bouquet of lilacs on a table set with lilac colored glasses. The dessert, *Blackberry Buttermilk Panna Cottas with Blackberry Compote*, matches the lilac bouquet.

Bill Horman, one of our members who lives in Michigan, has been approached about doing a Lilac Festival at his farm next spring, a first. This is for real; we are in the midst of a lilac renaissance. Let's seize the moment...

I would like to see lilac clubs being formed. Our Regional VP's could plan a couple of meetings a year and organize a lilac festival in the spring. It would add interest and unite regional members. Already some areas are lucky to have mini lilac events. I know that our lilac nurserymen are there at the forefront. They create excitement for their customers by offering a greater variety of lilac cultivars and they are winning new lilac converts by having Lilac Days. Larger lilac events are being sponsored by arboretum and public gardens. Lilac

festivals are happening all over and I'm talking about the world.

In my first message I reported that "the Board at the 1006 meeting". I went back a long way don't you think? That year the king of France was Robert II le pieux. He had things on his mind like preserving the feudal system. The king of England owned most of France. The crusades had not even begun. I assume lilacs were not on people's minds, even though the ladies of the castles would have gladly used the fragrant blossoms in their nosegays.

Back to the present. The plans for the convention 2007 on Mackinac Island are made. I understand it is beautiful there. See the details in this issue. I hope we have great participation. It is good to attend conventions. We get to know each other, we hear ILS news first hand and it is fun. To top it all, lilacs are to be acquired at the auction. Some specimens are rare and for the first time available. Bill Horman is in charge of soliciting lilacs for 2007. He will have, I'm sure, a wonderful selection to offer you thanks to the generous donors.

The year is moving along and there is much more to be done. Jeff Young is working on the ILS web page. The Lilac Care Booklet will be at the printer soon. I want to thank all the members who renewed their membership for 2006 and those who joined for the first time. In a society everyone is important. Just by paying your membership you are giving your support to ILS. Don't forget to help our membership grow. Bring in a new member to ILS today.

Now that we are into fall, our thoughts turn to planting lilacs, surviving the winter months and looking forward to spring. Lilacs will again burst in the landscape and declare that spring has really arrived. "A lilac in every garden the world over"; what do you think about this for our slogan? Imagine the possibilities. A simple goal that we can all help achieve. Give a lilac. There are million of gardeners out there who would appreciate receiving such a gift. Have you thought about approaching your town or city and asking them to plant lilacs in public places? Sometime all that is needed is to point the way. "A lilac in Every Garden the World Over". Hmm...Let's make it happen. Then we won't need to imagine a world full of lilacs; it will be a world full of lilacs! How wonderful that will be...

*Amities,
Nicole Jordan
ILS President
Chester, VA
September 15, 2006
Njordan236@aol.com*

Editor's Message

The temporary crisis we faced two months ago by losing our longtime printer Erie Park Press has now passed. Empire State Weeklies has proven to be a very admirable replacement, and the color and crispness of the photographs they printed were superior, appearing to have been printed on photographic paper.

In this issue, several new features have been instituted. The member section has been started off with two articles about favorite lilacs, and next issue will include one about a member collection (mine). I am hoping in the future that all members will be willing to contribute to the member section, since as lilac lovers, all in this society have a favorite lilac or a lilac collection at their home that is of interest. Feel free to tell about your home and the lilacs and other plants that surround it, and the other details that make your home so special. And of course, contribute an article or paragraph about your favorite lilac or sentimental favorite, and what it means to you.

Since this journal is the representative society of the genus *Syringa*, we must strive to keep the proper nomenclature. Two small mistakes appeared when going between different formats: The trademark symbol was dropped in the table of contents from Fairytale™ series, and the italics were dropped from the scientific name *Syringa meyeri* 'Palibin' H *Syringa pubescens* subsp. *microphylla* 'Superba' on page 94 (my fault when putting Freek's article into PageMaker).

Also, several typos slipped through, and Knight Hollow Nursery should have been given credit for donating the 'Old Glory' and 'Declaration' lilacs, on page 80.

The other new feature will be snippets from the International Lilac Robin. Topics discussed will be featured, along with quotes from the contributing ILS members. This feature will be a teaching tool all year about lilacs, and all will benefit from these discussions.

Next Issue Deadline

The deadline for the Winter Issue 2007 will be December 8, 2006. This issue will include the current Membership list of the International Lilac Society.

More Reports

In the pages directly following are some regional reports and committee reports which were not included in the Summer 2006 issue of *Lilacs*.

Archives Report 2006

[This is an excerpt from the Archives Report presented at the April 2006 Board Meeting in Woodland Washington, and explains the evolution of the decision to transfer the ILS archives from RBG, to their temporary home at Highland Botanical Park, and then transfer to the Arnold Arboretum.]

Summary of events leading to archives retrieval

4/26/05: contacted RBG with intent of examining archives.

4/26/05: Dennis Eveleigh responded, stating that many decisions were being made by management related to the library without asking staff questions, and the library with the archives would be moved to an undisclosed location; possibly to University of Guelph (where ILS had no agreement with for housing the archives.) He stated that ILS executives should be alerted and consider moving archives.

5/06/05: Dennis Eveleigh terminated by RBG, leaving no ILS representative to monitor situation of archives on site.

5/18/05: I contacted Steven Oliver, Chief Operating Officer of RBG, to arrange pickup of archives for temporary storage at Highland Botanical Park. He agreed to release archives to Archive Committee.

5/25/05: Bob Hoepfl and myself went to RBG to retrieve archives, and transfer them for temporary storage at Highland Botanical Park. We received from Dr. David Galbraith a transfer of ILS archives document, stating an inventory of all materials being transferred, and signed by David Galbraith, Kent Millham, and archivist Marie Minaker.

Proposed transferal of archives to permanent site of Arnold Arboretum

5/05/05: Jack Alexander made tentative offer to house archives at Arnold Arboretum during discussion at Board Meeting.

5/31/05: Jack contacted me stating that archivist at Arnold Arboretum is willing to house archives, and asked approximate linear space of material, which I provided.

6/24/05: Jack forwarded correspondence between himself and archivist Sheila Connor. She stated that upon transferal of archives to AA for holding, a transferal agreement would need to be established. Arnold Arboretum terms of access to archival holdings are that materials are available to all researchers. However, the director (or chairman) or office of origin (ILS) may place restric-

tions on use of some or all of its records. Archives must be used in the reading room, and not removed from library. Arnold Arboretum holds archives for other noteworthy organizations such as American Horticultural Society, Edward A. Upton, Royal Botanical Garden, Kew, etc.

4/19/06: [added to report after April 2006 Board Meeting] Decision made to transfer ILS archives to Arnold Arboretum. Kent Millham will personally deliver the archives to eliminate the chance of loss or damage to them in transit by a shipping company. This transfer will be done sometime before the next convention.

*Submitted by Kent Millham
Archives Chairman
April 2006*

Youth Report 2006

I send notes of welcome and encouragement to several youths who spent the day participating in lilac activities during Lilac Day at Syringa Plus Nursery. David Gressley reported that Nick Iocooa is ILS 's youngest member. His grandmother paid for the membership. To my knowledge we have two official youth members. At present we have no way to identify if there are others. I want to commend Syringa Plus Nursery for their efforts in getting youth involved with lilacs.

Policy Statement of Youth Chairman:

Responsible for determining the needs and interest of ILS youth members and to convey the findings to the Board of Directors.

Coordinates activities and encourages attendance and participation at local, regional, and national levels through articles in regional newsletters and the ILS Journal Lilacs.

Responsible for the publication of a Youth Newsletter, within budget guidelines.

Oversees the selection process for youth scholarships funded by a Youth General Fund

Oversees a Youth Web Page; working with the Webmaster.

Procedures:

Defining what is a youth member by deciding at what age does a person stop being a youth member.

Deciding on a dues rate for youth members.

Establish a budget for the Treasurer for approval by the board.

Establish scholarships to encourage the study of horticulture with emphasis on woody plants and lilacs in particular.

Arrange for youth activities during convention. Encourage the Host Group to discount the registration fee for youth members.

Create a Youth Web page. Youth are very internet savvy and appealing to them through this media is only natural.

*Submitted by Nicole Jordan
Youth Chairman
April 2006*

Atlantic Regional Report

The hectic days of lilac sales have passed but the fun lingers on. There is much to do, especially as many of our lilacs near 18 years of age.

We try to promote lilacs, lilac perfume and ILS year round. We make planting instructions, brochures, literature and even photos and magazines available at all times.

People, Places & Plants magazine did a great article on us in their Early Summer 2006 edition, generating much interest. It is a fine magazine full of color photos, current information and ads that you will read in entirety. My ego caused me to order 60 issues and I am re-ordering. Call or write me for a subscription card or even a magazine.

The manufacturers of Highland Lilac Perfume and I published an informative colored brochure on the fragrance, Highland Park and care of lilacs. Write me for a free copy. It is a fact that lilacs are now enjoying immense popularity. Over a dozen collectors have visited us, hungering for the rare and unusual. It is an exciting time, indeed.

Nicole Jordan writes that a worldwide Lilac Renaissance is taking place. It certainly is here in New York with Governor Pataki signing a law making the lilac the official bush of the State of New York.

*Ted Collins V.P.
Atlantic Region
2366 Turk Hill Rd.
Victor, NY 14564*

Northwest Region

Members in the Northwest get a bonus this year with the International Lilac society convention being held in Washington State. For ILS members who have never visited Washington, it is a large area. With the convention in Woodland, WA, those of us inland that belong to Spokane Lilac society will travel around 350 miles to attend the convention, or 6-7 hours by car. At this time, I believe we have nine out of our 50 members attending it.

Our own lilacs in the Spokane area bloom about 10 days to 2 weeks behind Klager's or the coast lilacs. Walla Walla is the exception inland with a milder climate. This area is also noted as wine country. Between the Yakima Valley and inland through the Tri-Cities area, one can choose many wine-tasting vineyards to visit.

It has been most interesting hearing from different members of ILS in my region this past year. Members from Alaska, British Columbia and Woodenville contacted me, wanting information on securing lilacs or lilac collections to visit.

Last year, I wrote in my report about the grand introduction of the new lilac 'Spokane'. We quickly sold out all 700 of our small plants at the plant sales. By limiting the sales to one per person or family, Spokane Lilac Society felt they were distributing the new lilac to many more gardens. This year, the society will have around 400 'Spokane' lilacs to sell, along with other varieties donated by members. Spokane Lilac Society recently donated a 'Spokane' lilac to the University of Idaho Arboretum collection in Moscow, Idaho.

Speaking of the above, The University of Idaho Arboretum Associates has a fundraiser each spring that benefits the arboretum. This year's event takes place April 26th, 7:00 P.M. at the Law School Courtroom. Guest Speaker is Alan Tower from Tower Perennials, Spokane, WA. Alan travels the world selecting the most rare and unusual cultivars for his outstanding nursery. The Arboretum Associates also have a huge plant sale on June 3rd. You can visit their web site for further information, www.uidaho.edu/arboretum. This website has a new Bulletin Board page with a new "Plant of the Month" by Paul Warnick.

A special thank you to Brad Bittorf for his assistance in trying to help the Manito Park gardeners with the disease problem in the Manito collection. Brad visited in June of 2005. Since then, the gardeners have pruned out a lot of dead wood, and treated areas of disease with several applications of fungicides.

The *Inland Northwest Homes & Lifestyles* magazine April/May issue 2006 has a special feature "In Love with Lilacs" by Megan Cooley, editor. She recently moved to Spokane from Boston, MA. Megan interviewed Geri Odell and MarvaLee Peterschick for the article, and she quotes them as lilac experts for the area. Geri will be giving a lilac talk on Mother's Day, May 14th with Sundays

in the Park series-Manito Park.

As Regional VP for Northwest, it would be great to add to ILS membership. With only about 30 members, we can do better. I challenge all Northwest members to be ambassadors for ILS. Please request the membership brochures and distribute them at any lilac events such as plant sales, lilac open houses, etc. LET'S GO-LET'S GROW WITH THE LILACS.

*Submitted by MarvaLee Peterschick
Regional VP, Northwest Region
April 2006*

News about the Lilacs in Southern California

2005/2006 will go down as a time of learning and watching the future unfold. Among the volunteers we still pride ourselves for the 2002 lilac season as the highlight of the Descanso lilacs. We were indeed happy being able to present and share our good luck at the ILS Convention with members and friends of the ILS.

Perhaps mother nature called upon the weatherman to be less generous with us from there on. Indeed we had some lessons to learn and we are still learning. While for the general public there are not too many changes visible, for us there is room for improvement.

The positives of the last 10 years are that it was a great idea to include more *vulgaris* varieties with our *xhyacinthifloras* to create a longer blooming season, and to bring more color into the garden. In the years gone by, we generally had a mass of flowers for a relatively short (2-3weeks) blooming season. We now have with various late bloomers a 6-8 weeks season or more.

Our demand for the care of irrigation still has a few bugs to be ironed out. Descanso has its own water supply from the nearby hills, but the old worn out cast iron pipes need to be replaced in the near future. In writing down our experiences, we may hopefully give other lilac growers some tips for the future. They are to realize that a successful lilac planting is a long-range project.

The heavy rainfalls in the 2004/5 season was another experience to reckon with the weatherman. We had over 40" of heavy rain with a great deal of precious water going literally down the drain that was built in the wet 1930s. We also lost close to 50 mature Live Oaks, but we still have some patriarchs in and around the garden; some about 200 years old. The lilacs didn't mind the generous rainy season, and a heavy new growth followed that late spring, but it turned practically overnight into an early summer and caught us by surprise. The next blooming season was at stake and did show how unprepared we were

as we entered into one of the longest/hottest years ever recorded. Yet we had a fairly good blooming season this past 2006 spring.

Now going into fall, we have to roll with the punches and adjust to whatever comes next. Looking into the future we must. Our seminars over the last 10+ years have brought a great deal of interest from the members and visitors, and we average sales of 300+ lilac plants annually. So we can find lilac plants in local gardens.

When we initially formed the Southern California Lilac Council, we did not know how much knowledge there was among the members. Perhaps the fact that the founding was at Reva Ballreich's mountain paradise was a great blessing for us all, and having Dr. Louis Erickson as the dean of our group and Honorary Chairman made us all aware of the blessings of mother nature's input for a successful working relationship among all of us.

Finally, the crowning of our efforts is the fact that various lilac enthusiasts started to plant more than one or two plants. Whether it is for the love of our favorite plant, or that so many visitors at Descanso are saying the very same words: "my mother loved the lilacs so much"; it is worth our efforts wherever we are.

One final thought that lilacs grow practically everywhere is proof of the hardiness that they represent. This brings to mind that some enthusiasts plant multiples of up to 10 plants. It was a few years ago out in the high desert where I discovered a lonely street sign reading LILAC LANE that had been there for some 30 years. It is next to a large Orchid Nursery.

So in cooperating with the owner, we planted 10 lilacs to do justice to the sign and whoever was the first must have had some thoughts and connections in relationship to our dream plant.

*Rudy Schaeffer
Descanso Gardens Volunteer Curator
LaCanada, CA
September 2006*

Membership Renewal Time

All memberships expire on December 31st.

Please refer to inside paper cover for
rate of membership level and where to
send your dues.

2007 ILS Auction Update

Dear Fellow I.L.S. Members,

I trust that all of us realize the great importance of our Society's annual lilac auction, featuring fine plants and lilac related memorabilia. It is held as an exciting part of our annual meeting, which will be on beautiful Mackinac Island next June. Funds generated by the auction's success greatly help our Society continue to meet our expenses and goals, including research, and other worthy functions.

Since I live close to Mackinac Island, and have helped stage the ILS auction there before, I have volunteered to serve as the auction coordinator to secure donated lilacs for our auction and I NEED YOUR HELP!

This year your Auction Committee will focus on offering bidders the rarest and most unusual lilacs available without duplication. OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE DONATIONS OF OUR MEMBERSHIP! This will allow the most diverse possibilities within the twenty plus species and will provide some relief for the same few members who have solely, kindly and generously provided most of the auction plants lilacs for the past several auctions.

As soon as possible, and before the end of next January, whether you have one lilac or hundreds of different named kinds, PLEASE MAIL ME YOUR LIST OF LILACS THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO DONATE FOR THE '07 ILS AUCTION! Upon receipt, members of the Auction Committee will select the preferred plants for the auction. Don't be complacent or bashful. If you have only one lilac and it has a rooted sucker to spare...IT MIGHT BE THE ONE WE ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO OFFER!

I will respond to all who send me their list, letting you know of the committee's decision. In addition to the plant's name, please also indicate its approximate size and any additional information about it that you would like to share, such as why it's a favorite or unique. Telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses will be appreciated. Six inch to 30 inch sizes are preferred, with emphasis on the smaller sizes.

Thank you for your consideration, generosity and extra effort in helping to make our Society's next auction very successful, fun and special!

Sincerely, your friend and fellow ILSer,
Bill Horman
2007 Auction Coordinator
5745 Kensington St.
Detroit, MI, 48224
Phone: 1-313-886-9343 (Detroit)
1-810-387-2765 (Farm)
E-mail: wm_horman@talkamerica.net

ILS Convention 2007

Mackinac Island, Michigan

(Convention Wed. June 6 to Sat. AM June 9, 2007)

ILS will be returning to Mackinac Island in June 2007 after having first convened there in June 1997. We found that "this fairy Island, with its endless sky, tall white cliffs, majestic buildings and dense woods, seemed so untouched by the modern world that it makes you feel as if you've gone back in time." Plan to arrive on Wed. June 6, 2007 for a Welcome reception, Registration and Board of Directors meeting in the afternoon, as well as a musical presentation in the evening. June 7 and 8 we will have two days of ILS activities, Lilac related tours, programs and our Famous Annual Lilac/Plant Auction. There will be leisure time throughout the program to enjoy the Island's charm and many attractions within the setting of beautiful homes and gardens. Our hotels are situated in the downtown area, near the waterfront and shops, all surrounded by numerous displays of large and old lilacs. "The moment you arrive, you will realize that this is a special place." Time seems to stop in this serene environment, where there are no motorized vehicles, only horse drawn wagons for transportation. "The Island weaves a magical spell, and once you experience Mackinac, it is a part of you forever." We will have our festive President's Dinner and Awards banquet as two of the highlights of our convention. On Sat. morning, June 9, 2007, we will depart for home and leave the magic of this place and its numerous and vast lilac collections, as a memory to hold forever.

If you desire to come earlier or stay later, make your plans very early with the hotels and Mackinac tourist bureau. The Island is mostly handicapped accessible, with individual Electric Scooters for rent on a daily or hourly basis. We will be transported by horse drawn wagons to our lilac activities and programs. We strongly encourage everyone who would like to visit this Island to please consider attending and we will endeavor to make the visit as easy as possible for you. If you have special needs or any Convention questions or concerns, please let Peter Ely know(1-203-888-2628) or email SEly634929@aol.com and he will try to accommodate those needs.

Details of our Convention schedule will be published in the next *Lilacs*.

Note: Please remember that our convention begins on WED. afternoon and concludes on SAT. morning. This is a change from previous years.

Peter Ely
Convention Chairman
September 16, 2006

Travel Directions to Mackinac Island

Mackinac Island is easily accessible by either car or plane. If you wish to fly, Pellston, Michigan is the closest major airport. Fly from most places to Detroit on an airline of your choice. From Detroit, Arrange to fly to Pellston, MI via Northwest Airlines (1-800-225-2525). From Pellston airport there is taxi/shuttle service to the Mackinaw City Ferry Docks (about 25 miles) by either the Mackinac Shuttle (1-888-349-8294) or the Wolverine Stages (1-800-825-1450) where you will be taken to the ferry for Mackinac Island. Both are located at Pellston airport, costing about \$45, round trip and be sure to arrange this transportation ahead of time. Ferry information will be in a future issue of the Journal.

Charter airline service to Mackinac Island Airport (1-906-847-3231) via Great Lakes Airlines (1-906-643-7165) can be arranged from Pellston for about \$85, or from St. Ignace, MI, to Mackinac Island for about \$25. Also, you may fly a private plane into Mackinac Island airport from your home (1-906-847-3231 airport) and (1-906-847-3778 weather report.)

By car, I-75 is an excellent, direct route from the south (Toledo, Ohio and Detroit, MI) or from the north (Sault Ste. Marie, Canada) to Mackinaw City. Watch for the well-marked exit signs to the Ferry Docks in Mackinaw City along the road. A ferry to Mackinac Island also leaves from St. Ignace. There is ample parking at the Ferry Docks.

A free guide to Michigan travel, including a map and information, can be requested from the Michigan Travel Bureau (1-800-543-2937). The Mackinac Island Tourist Bureau is happy to assist in making your travel to, and stay, at their island most enjoyable. Feel free to call them at (1-800-454-5227).

Miles to Island

Chicago	390
Cleveland	430
Detroit	280
Indianapolis	460
Toronto	470
Minneapolis	500
Sault Ste. Marie,	55
MI or Canada	

Peter Ely
Convention Chairman

Exploring Mackinac Island, Michigan

Note: ILS will be holding its Convention in June 2007 on Mackinac Island in upper Michigan. Walter Eickhorst shares part of his exploration of the old lilacs that exist on the island in this report. This article from *Lilacs*, Fall 1995 was reprinted with permission from the author.

Antiquity and history abound in the Island of Mackinac (Mackinaw), dating from the 1650-1670 era when one Father Jacques Marquette (priest, leader, explorer) established a new mission on the island in the spring of 1671.

Today there are many, many lilacs growing here, some few are younger plants which have been established (estimated) within the last 15-20 years, but at the same time there is strong evidence of established plants having been here for some period over (well over) 100 years. Many of the old specimens are exhibiting short trunks that exceed 15-18 inches and aged stems that are 8-12 inches; supporting heights and width of 20-25 feet and in some instances the plants are well rounded with limited bloom almost at eye level. Blooming characteristics exhibit a degree of flowers rarely seen in the modern day garden, in that the current seasons vegetative growth is well within the flower display, thus giving a magnitude of color rarely observed among the more recently introduced cultivar selections.

Most of the older plants appear to flower within a range of pink/pinkish, rose/mauve, bluish/lavender and white-almost a total lack of the darker purple ('Andenken an Ludwig Späth', 'Hugo de Vries', 'Hiram H. Edgerton', 'Monge', etc.) plants of the more recently named cultivars. None of these old plants carry labels and to the best of our knowledge, there is no one presently living on the island possessing any information relating to there ever having been names or labels associated with these plants. Likewise, at this point in time, most of the newer additions carry identification tags, but on the other hand, those people presently responsible for the planting of newer selections on both private property and/or public parks are accepting the fact that if this location is to occupy its rightful recognition of a Lilac Collection, such new plants will be properly and adequately identified. [In 1997, ILS members donated many named lilac plants to the Island.]

(Suspicion/assumption/opinion)- that one or more of the earliest recordings of lilac cultivars would direct one's attention to such plants as *Syringa vulgaris* 'Gloire de Lorraine' and *S. vulgaris* 'Jacques Callot' (Lemoine 1876) being among the first named French hybrid lilacs. If that is the case, I would strongly suspect that most of the old specimens located at this site are part of a seedling "swarm" (open-pollinated) of plants, perhaps grown by the Lemoine Nursery during a period of years prior to 1876. These seedlings may have been distributed within the limited sales area of that era, at a time when much of the

immigrating populace, seeking a lesser repressed land of opportunity, did not infrequently bring with them sprigs of plants with which they were familiar; a bit of the 'motherland' so-to-speak. Hence the arrival of lilacs other than the common wild forms of purple and white.

Thus I further suspect that it would be almost humanly impossible, and totally unwise to enter into an in-depth effort of attempting to identify or otherwise affix names presently within the nomenclature of the genus *Syringa*. Any such endeavor would have to follow the prescribed trying task of taxonomically describing these individuals; most of which would probably be *Syringa vulgaris*. The floral color identity would consume many, many hours of laborious comparison of the endless Color Chart shades, only to learn that these aged plants would probably not match any of the already named cultivars, but rather would be hitherto unnamed entities with present day names affixed.

In conclusion I feel compelled to suggest that Mackinac Island without a doubt offers the only opportunity in North America where ILS members can enjoy and drink in the grandeur of aged lilac plants like few other places in the world. These specimens have already survived many, many decades and more than likely will outlive most persons now living on this earth- an opportunity of a lifetime.

*Submitted by Walter Eickhorst
Reprinted from Lilacs Fall 1995*

More Memories from Woodland 2006

Day 1: Registration



Setting up
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



Woody, Giles and Jack relaxing
Photo Credit Noel Johnson

Day 2: Lelooska, Cedar Grist Mill Welcome Dinner



Listening to talk at Lelooska Museum
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



This way to Ceremonial House
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



Our guide describing the operation of the Cedar Grist Mill
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



The mayor of Woodland greeting ILS
Photo Credit Noel Johnson

Day 3: Hulda Klager Lilac Garden



Our greeter at Hulda Klager Lilac Garden
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



Awaiting the next bid at the Lilac Auction
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



Nicole Jordan, Mary Lizotte, Ellen and John Thurlow
at the Oak Tree Restaurant
Photo Credit Noel Johnson

Day 4: Holland America, Peterson's



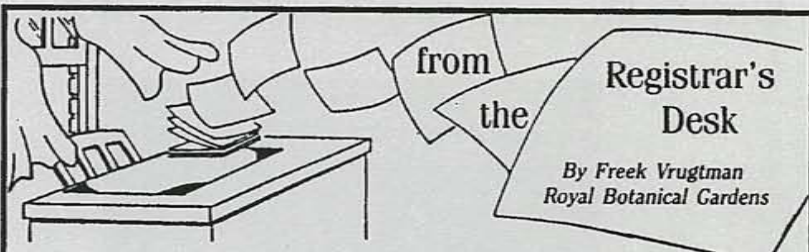
Benno Dobbe describes bulb production at Holland America
Photo Credit by Noel Johnson



Benno Dobbe and Noel Johnson
Provided by Noel Johnson



Are Mary, Margaret, and Bill discussing
the bluebells on the table rather than lilacs?
Photo Credit Noel Johnson



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Kees Sahin 1944 - 2006

Želimir Kornelije Tvrtkovic-Šahin was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on 15 June, 1944; he died at Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands, on 9 September, 2006, at the age of 62.

Although Kees was an ILS member for only a brief period, he always had a soft spot for lilacs. Without any doubt this was due to his admiration for his aunt, Martine Spaargaren (1916-1991), who had been plant breeder at the Aalsmeer Proeftuin from 1936 to 1940, originating five new lilac cultivars (*Lilacs - Quart. Jour.* 28(4):103-104; 1999). Kees was also familiar with the *Seringenpark* in Aalsmeer and the lilac trials at the Boskoop Research Station.

As some of us know, real time for hobbies arrives only at retirement. And so it would have been for Kees. By the time he reached the age of sixty his seed business, K. SAHIN, Zaden B.V., had established business contacts and trial plots for his introductions on all continents. Lilacs, however, always remained on his mind. When establishing test plots in Romania, Kees took time out to see the native stands of *Syringa vulgaris*. Our last communication took place late last winter; it was all about having digital pictures taken of the native lilacs in full bloom. — It was not to be.

Freek Vrugtman

New Lilacs from the U.S. National Arboretum

The U.S. National Arboretum released two new lilac cultivars in 2006 to follow the 2000 release of *Syringa oblata* 'Betsy Ross'. The lilacs, 'Old Glory' and 'Declaration', are the results of long-term ornamental breeding efforts by the

Arboretum's Research Unit. Both plants came from the same controlled hybridization of *Syringa x hyacinthiflora* 'Sweet Charity' x *Syringa x hyacinthiflora* 'Pocahontas', but have markedly different traits. 'Old Glory' was selected for its abundant fragrant bluish-purple flowers, rounded growth habit, and disease tolerant foliage. In the Washington D.C. area, it reaches a mature size of approximately 12 feet tall by 13 feet wide, and shows good field tolerance to *Cercospora* blight and *Pseudomonas syringae* in warmer climates where these diseases are a problem. 'Declaration' was selected for its large fragrant, striking dark reddish-purple inflorescences and open upright growth habit. In Washington, D.C., its mature size is 8.5 feet tall and 7 feet wide. It performs best in traditional cooler lilac-growing regions. Both cultivars have been tested by cooperators throughout the U.S. and are currently being propagated by growers for expected retail availability in 2008.

The cross that produced 'Old Glory' and 'Declaration' was one of 117 *Syringa* hybridizations made in 1978 by the late Donald Egolf. Most of these crosses involved named cultivars that were hybridized in many permutations to recombine traits of interest such as flower display, disease and pest tolerance, or adaptation to environmental stress. A total of 230 seeds were sown from this particular cross, and 'Old Glory' and 'Declaration' were selected from the resulting plants in 1984.

The National Arboretum's lilac breeding program has been in existence since the 1970's, with the objectives of developing lilacs that are adapted to warmer climates, have good mildew tolerance, and exhibit a showy fragrant floral display. Controlled hybridizations using several different species, including *Syringa oblata* var. *dilatata*, *S. vulgaris*, and *S. x hyacinthiflora* have resulted in selections with various habits, flower colors, and environmental adaptations. Currently there are over 300 accessions in the National Arboretum's lilac collection (including cultivars and germplasm), and over 600 hybrids that are in various stages of evaluation. Although few new crosses are being made in this program, several promising selections are under evaluation for possible release in the next decade. Of particular interest are selections that perform well in warmer climates (USDA Zone 7 and warmer), but still have the familiar "old fashioned" lilac fragrance and floral display.

For more information on the Arboretum's lilac or other cultivar releases, including full-color fact sheets, please visit the web site at www.usna.usda.gov

Margaret Pooler
USDA/ARS U.S. National Arboretum
3501 New York Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20002
September 18, 2006

Common Lilac Cultivars in the Green Areas of the City of Helsinki, Finland

Syringa vulgaris (L.), the Common Lilac, is one of the most commonly cultivated lilacs in Finland. It is hardy in most parts of the country, but not further north than the polar circle. Common lilac cultivars can be grown only in the very southern part of the country. The species flowers in June (Hämäl-Ahti et al. 1992).

The first common lilacs were probably imported to Finland from Stockholm, Sweden to the city of Turku, SW Finland, in 1728 (Dahlström 1952). In about 1750, the species was also introduced to the fortress of Suomenlinna, Helsinki, from France (Suominen 1986). From Turku and Helsinki, the Common Lilac then spread rapidly over the rest of the country. For a period of time in the 19th century, the Common Lilac was the most frequently cultivated ornamental shrub in Finland (Elfving 1897).

The first cultivars came to Finland at the end of the 19th century. On the basis of literature, old catalogs and other archives, approximately 50 Common Lilac cultivars have been used in Finland since 1877. 'Andenken an Ludwig Späth', 'Marie Legraye', 'Michel Buchner' and 'Mme. Lemoine' have been the most popular *vulgaris* cultivars for over a century. In the beginning of the 20th century, after Finland gained national independence in 1917, Common Lilac cultivars were at their hottest. Since 1980, the amount of cultivars available in Finland has been rather limited. Only a few new varieties have come to the market, such as 'Krasavitsa Moskv', for example.

Cultivated Common Lilac clones are frequently found growing in the old parks and mansion areas in Helsinki (Fig. 1). The cultivar identity of the shrubs, planted decades or even a century ago, is no longer known, as the names of the planted cultivars were usually not written down, or the documents have been lost. The author studied some of these plants in the summer of 2005. The work was supported by the Public Works Department of the City of Helsinki. The main aims of the study were to determine cultivar names to the shrubs studied, to evaluate the ornamental and historical value of the plants, and to gather information on the history of the Common Lilac in Finland. The author prepared her master's thesis on the issue for the University of Helsinki in spring 2006 (Hauta-aho 2006).

62 individual plants were studied in summer 2005. Thirty variables, of which the majority was morphological characteristics, were measured from each plant, mainly from their inflorescences and flowers. The results of the measurements were then compared to cultivar descriptions found in literature. The plants were clustered in 31 groups representing different types of *S. vulgaris*. 25 of these seemed to represent cultivated clones, while the remaining

6 groups consisted of plants that may be some old small flowered cultivars or included in the natural variation of the species. Nine of the groups resembling known cultivars were named accordingly. To avoid misleading vocabulary, the rest of the groups were given a code name, such as A21, with a letter and number.

The most frequent types of common lilac found were the ones resembling 'Andenken an Ludwig Späth', 'Mme. Lemoine', and 'Michel Buchner'. The most beautiful individual shrub met was an old plant resembling 'Katherine Havemeyer' (inside back cover). Historically, most interesting were the lilacs growing in the fortress of Suomenlinna, and the ones resembling 'Prince Notger' - one of the first cultivars in Finland. Also, plants resembling 'Belle de Nancy', 'Lemoinei', 'Krasavitsa Moskvyy' and 'Charles Joly' were found.

The most noteworthy lilacs with code names were: K17 with huge, single and beautiful pink flowers; M56 with single red flowers and pointed corolla lobes; M36 with huge, single and deep blue flowers; and A20 with single red flowers and very cucullate corolla lobes (inside back cover).

The diameter of the flowers studied varied from 11 to 31 mm, being 21mm on the average. Flowers over 26 mm in diameter were very rare and considered "huge". The length of the clusters studied varied from 10 cm to 27 cm, being 18 on the average.

There is a lack of accurate information on many Common Lilac cultivars in the literature. In addition, the influence of environmental conditions on the morphological characteristics of cultivars is poorly noted. Because of this, only 9 cultivar names were discussed in this study.

The old plantings are to be replaced by new ones one day. Because the Public Works Department of the City of Helsinki wants to retain the original flora in certain parks and mansion areas, the most remarkable plants studied should be taken for vegetative propagation. Plants that have survived almost without any care for 40 to 100 years are certain to be suitable to our climate.

The study will be continued at the University of Helsinki, by applying DNA techniques for characterization of the cultivar groups. Agrifood Research Finland is making an effort to micropropagate some the oldest and prettiest plants. A few commercial nurseries have already shown interest in taking some of the forms in cultivation.

S. x henryi is the most common and winter hardy lilac species in Finland. Also, *S. josikaea*, *S. x prestoniae*, *S. reticulata*, *S. x chinensis* and *S. x josiflexa* can be grown, at least in the southern parts of the country. Other species are very rarely met (Hämet-Ahti et al. 1992). In summer 2005 the botanical garden of the University of Helsinki held a collection with 15 lilac species.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the International Lilac Society for the information and the mental support they gave me during the common lilac studies. I also want to thank Ph.D. Leena Linden, my supervisor at the University of Helsinki, for comments regarding this article.

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Rochester Lilac Bloom of 2006 and Digital Photography

On May 9th, I picked up my friend Dr. Zelimir Borzan at the Rochester International Airport. He is a professor of Dendrology and Forest Genetics at the Faculty of Forestry, University of Zagreb, Croatia. I led him through Highland Botanical Park of Monroe County to do some digital photography of lilacs and other plants, and eight days later continued our photo trek at the RBG Lilac collection in Hamilton, Ontario. This was his first encounter with a truly large and magnificent lilac collection at its best. The best I consider is when the majority of inflorescences were half in buds and half open, with no blemish on the petals. The *vulgaris* group was at its best and *x hyacinthiflora* slightly over its peak.

For me, it was the seventh visit to the Rochester collection, but also when the collection was at its best in its superlative show displayed by individual shrubs, groups, volumes, size and shape of flower inflorescences, as well as individual details of the floret composition. During lilac bloom development of 2006, the days were on the cool side, resulting in a slower growth, but often

development of gigantic inflorescences, with vibrant colours and prolonged duration of bloom.

Kent Millham, our new ILS editor, and manager of the Lilacs and other plant collections of Monroe County Botanical Parks, gave us the initial introduction of the collection, its layout and basically set us up on our photography spree. He was very occupied with a superb organization of the forthcoming Lilac Festival, with other individuals I am sure, working and helping behind the scenes.

Our primary task was to take, with two digital cameras, as many photographs as we could, for a book on Lilacs we are preparing in Croatian language first, and perhaps later on in English, if sufficient interest and funds to support the project are found. Manipulation of digital images is simpler, I am told. It gives the author more opportunity to participate in its preparation for the book and its organization on a CD.

Digital photography is a wonderful new innovation in making photo images. It gives one the opportunity to manipulate on the computer screen the whole or part of an inflorescence, change or fine tune the colour, transfer it on the disc, make a test print, and I am told still do further adjustment before final printing. The problem I found in digital photography when compared to classical film photography, was in the red or magenta and purple group of colour, deviation from natural colour is very pronounced to the point that when images are reviewed, one often feels as they are looking at a new cultivar never seen before.

Another pronounced and detectable deviation of colour in digital photography and also in film photography to a lesser extent, is that the print of the same cultivar differs considerably if taken on a sunny versus a cloudy day. Slight difference of colour was also detected between Nikon with 11 million pixels, versus Pentax with 7.5 million pixels, under the same light conditions. As you can see, with welcomed technological pluses one gets unwanted minuses, just to make the whole process more interesting and challenging.

Technology offers procedure in digital photography in JPG mode that is most frequently used and in RAW mode. There may be others that I am unfamiliar with. The difference, however, being that one gigabyte capacity memory photography card could store in JPG mode about 300 images, while in RAW mode using the same capacity card, only 35 images could be stored. Imagine how many memory cards we would have to have if all photos were taken in RAW mode. I am told that the RAW mode is more precise, more detailed in colour and composition etc., all of which I have to see before I full understand the total scope of application. [editor's note: JPG mode saves space on memory card by compressing information; thereby allowing more images to be stored. RAW mode is an uncompressed photo, allowing much more digital information to be stored, and also allows more manipulation of this information. RAW

mode contains approximately 15/16 more resolution than the JPG format.]

A helpful tool in photography is the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) colour chart. RHS values may be collected in the field, recorded and then again compared to colour on the screen images, for purposes of what I call, fine tuning of colour. The unfortunate part is that we do not have, to my knowledge, a library of all lilac cultivar colours at various stages of their bloom.

While Mr. Vrugtman wrote in one of our recent publications about availability of a new abbreviated version of the colour chart, I am finding the expanded version too small and incomplete, in that predominant colour is often found between values of two colour chips. For purposed communication and translation into other languages, I am finding the RHS colour chart much simpler since they are described in a code such as 58C or 81B, etc., which is simple to follow even when one communicates in different languages, providing both parties have a colour chart in hand.

An array of descriptive colours in words such as "pale cinnabarin" or "tourmaline" in various hues, saturation, brightness and chromes are very difficult to follow and more difficult to translate. Ever changing colour names from industry to industry is as confusing as it can get. This kind of "precise" interpretation is, in my opinion, perfectly fitting to diplomacy, where at the outset an attempt is made to confuse the subject.

Since colour in lilacs changes so rapidly; being influenced by climatic and soil conditions, it would be nice to have at least 3 colour readings for each lilac cultivar, taken at each larger collection during various stages of the bloom. It seems to me, the luxury of getting funds for such research survey have vanished, however we still retain the privilege of dreams and hopes, which is precisely what I often practice.

Colour deviations are known to be influenced dramatically by age of the inflorescence development such as first, third, fifth, etc., day of bloom, that makes the task of photography and collection of quality photographs during one blooming season a difficult task. In Rochester alone, we managed to take about 1500 images, of which at least 150 close-ups should be crisp and clear, but perhaps in need of some colour rectification. Whenever possible, we tried to secure a photo of the whole shrub, in particular if it had rich and showy groups of tightly positioned inflorescences, but also the individual inflorescences.

Kent Millham explained that mulching (a very important part of maintenance) in the Rochester collection is done mostly by volunteers. The grass is being cut by the park's employees; however the pruning (which is perhaps the most important maintenance factor) is being done mainly by him alone, with occasional help of trained or trainable personnel. Most of the plants have young, medium and old wood intermixed with 15-20 or more blooming stems.

This arrangement may be the major reason for such a good display of lilacs during this spring of 2006.

In comparison, at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Canada the pruning during past 3-5 years was anywhere from sporadic to nonexistent. Furthermore financial constraints created a situation where lilacs were not mulched, though mulch was readily available. Growth of weeds was controlled by use of Roundup® and other herbicides, which suppressed the growth of young shoots, hence the rejuvenation replacement wood was not and is not available. One should keep in mind that lilacs, though resilient plants, have shallow roots and are more susceptible to damage when herbicide is used, more than many other ornamental plants.

When an error, such as lack of proper maintenance occurs during a period of several consecutive years, it will take at least 3 years of fertilization, mulching and extra care before the collection is full recovered or becomes as good as that of the one in Rochester.

After spending four full days in Rochester, we went to Hamilton, Canada and had to wait from the 14th to the 21st of May to continue our photography. The lilacs were just not developed sufficiently. Days were cloudy, often rainy, but most annoying was the wind, not allowing the branches to remain still, thus interfering with our efforts to obtain close-ups with sharp and crisp delineations. Nevertheless, by May 26, we managed to take an additional 1200 shots of lilacs in hope that at least 15-20% will be useable for printing and screen presentation purposes.

If everything goes as planned, I may see you next year at Mackinac Island, select a few hundred images, label them on the screen by cultivar name, and place it on 10-15 second automatic image advance lilac show for all interested to watch, enjoy and/or suffer watching during evening hours with a drink in their hand.

Charles Holetich
June 3, 2006

International Lilac Robin

To talk about lilacs all year, contact Nicole Jordan or Brad Bittorf (their addresses are on first page) to learn how to join the new ILS chat group.

Member Section

This newly instituted department will feature member ILS news. Articles about members' favorite lilacs (cultivars or actual specimens), members' collections, members' personal news and milestones, and member profiles will be featured here. Also, excerpts from the new lilac chat group International Lilac Robin will be included. As any chat group, this will include a wide range of topics related to the discussion of lilacs. Every member may participate in this feature, and all are encouraged to contribute.

Favorite Lilacs

"The Lilacs I Enjoy Most"

For each of us, the choice of favorite lilacs is a special and personal one. There are some lilacs which have gained wide renown. There are lilacs that are known for their traits or their history. And there are lilacs that fit into a place in a person's life. It is here that I start, because it was here that I started my lifelong love of lilacs.

While I was growing up in Wisconsin—a place that is known for cold and snow in the winter, snow continuing well into April, and leaves dropping already in September—I became aware of lilacs. Lilacs were a sign of spring, the end of the school year, and the advent of the season of fun and change that was our all-too-brief summer. Each year, about this time, we would drive to the home of my maternal grandmother, Ann Seiler, in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Grandma kept a garden and it featured two things—tulips with their many-colored centers and deep rich petals in all combinations, and lilacs! Now mind you, when I was young I thought all lilacs were light purple only. Then I was exposed to a few white ones—rare (I thought) white ones. But now, here at Grandma's house, there were not only the classic "lilac" colored lilacs, but also white and a dark purple plant! They all smelled delicious, and sometimes cuttings of each would be brought into the house to serve as both background and the signature fragrance of spring. Of course they would seldom last two days as we didn't know the techniques for longer cut-flower preservation. This frailty increased their value though, as we knew their presence would be but fleeting.

So this was my introduction to the variety of the world of lilacs. Shortly afterward I discovered that my paternal grandfather also had lilacs in his yard. One year, my parents dug one out and took it to our home where it was transplanted. It took hold and grew for several years. Alas, it was over our septic tank, and one winter there was an emergency dig that uprooted it forever. I believe those lilacs do still exist at the house in Egg Harbor, Wisconsin. Though the house is no longer in our family my grandfather is buried within sight of the area.

Today my tastes are different, although my current “happiness index” does still play a factor in the choice of favorite lilacs. During a particularly happy time in my life, I first saw a specimen of *S. vulgaris* ‘Sovetskaya Arktika’ at The Holden Arboretum. It has ever since been a favorite of mine. It is not the whitest, not the showiest, but it is a steady lilac. To me, it represented a fairly rare introduction of Leonid Kolesnikov. It had to travel from the Soviet Union through paths and couriers unknown to reach where it is now. It was at once both distant and very near, like seeing a moon rock up close.

Because of its connection to Wisconsin, I enjoy seeing *S. vulgaris* ‘Silver King’ which was actually introduced by Dr. Lemke, a dentist from my home state. Likewise, *S. x henryi* x *S. tomentella* ‘Prairial’ holds a special significance for me because my parents were once given an “unusual lilac,” and at the close of my quest to learn just what cultivar they might have in their yard, this was my best choice. I also learned much about lilacs during this quest, and that was more important than the identification itself.

When I first learned that there were tree lilacs, and that they too smelled like lilacs, they were a secondary favorite of mine. *Syringa reticulata* subsp. *amurensis* is a lilac I appreciate because it helps me cling to the scent of lilac another month beyond the traditional blooming season.

Because it has been my experience that pink lilacs do not often have the “traditional fragrance” of lilacs, I enjoy *S. vulgaris* ‘Edward J. Gardner’ because it does “smell like a lilac” while still blooming pink.

Another favorite must certainly be the specimen of *S. vulgaris* ‘Sensation’ located on the grounds of the Mackinac Island, Michigan *Town Crier* newspaper. This particular ‘Sensation’ is a perfect teaching tool. It exhibits the frequent trait of “sporting” that we see in some cultivars. A large branch of that plant divides to three smaller branches, where we can observe simultaneously 1) panicles of white blossoms, 2) panicles of dark purple blossoms, and 3) the characteristic white-edged purple blossoms that define ‘Sensation.’ The single-colored blossoms remind us that the plant has not forgotten its own history prior to its signature mutation.

At a future time, I can take up the merits of particular lilacs, and the favored varieties for hardiness, showiness, color, size, growing ease, drama, and history. To paraphrase an oft-quoted adage from our members, my favorite lilac is the one woven into the tail of the horse I’m looking at right now! (If you haven’t ever seen a lilac woven into a horse’s tail, then you must attend the end of a Mackinac Island Festival and see the parade!)

Ultimately, should I ever introduce a worthy lilac, my first choice for its name would be ‘Ann Seiler’. This tells you where my heart lies.

Brad Bittorf
September 2006

A Lilac for Baby Ronald's Grave (a true story)

Fortunate are they who have venerable old bushes of lilacs as part of their family history. Lilacs evoke nostalgic memories of childhood and family as no other plant. There are numerous nostalgic stories about lilacs, and this is another one.

The fortunate from early childhood have nuzzled their little faces into lilac blossoms and thrilled to the fragrance, softness and coolness of the blossom. The memory of this experience is powerful and is registered in the mind forever. All of our lives we continue to press our noses into lilac blossoms to enjoy their fragrance and to wonder at their simplicity and their magnificence.

My first lilac experience must have been with the shrub in front of my grandmother's house on the homestead. All of my life I have associated old-fashioned lavender lilacs with my Swedish grandmother. Was it because I had seen the beauty of that impressive shrub in front of her house in full bloom? It was etched indelibly into my little brain. Or did lilac flowers remind me of Grandma because she often wore dresses the color of lilac or lavender. Or was it a combination of both these memories? My grandmother looked wonderful in lavender with her snowy white hair.

For some reason we did not have a lilac shrub at our house but we did have one on my brother Ronald's grave. His little body was interred in a cemetery behind a charming little rustic country church, seven miles from our home. I never knew who planted the lilac on the grave nor when it was planted and I never thought to ask. It had always been there with the little homemade headstone that my father had made.

Throughout my childhood, my parents, siblings and I would visit baby Ronald's grave. He died at eleven months old, five years before I was born. On my first few visits to the cemetery I was undoubtedly a babe in arms. At some point I became old enough to understand that the plant on the grave was a lilac, a lilac like the big one I knew at Grandma's! With great excitement, I anticipated the day this lilac would become as big and beautiful as the one that grew in front of grandmother's house!

Every year I looked forward to seeing that lilac. In my childhood innocence, while totally oblivious to the pain and sorrow my parents must have felt at the gravesite, I had to deal with my own pain and disappointment. The lilac did not grow. Every year it seemed to be the same size as it was the year before. Throughout my childhood I eagerly looked forward to seeing that lilac but year after year I was terribly disappointed and dismayed to see that it had hardly grown at all!

By the time I reached my teen years I felt there was something seriously wrong with that plant. It was stunted. A stunted lilac in poor soil does not have a chance to flourish. I lamented that it would never become like the lilac in front

of Grandma's house!

How unfortunate that whoever chose that plant had gotten a sickly one. I sadly and reluctantly gave up on the lilac. There was no hope for it.

Throughout my adulthood, in the 60's 70's, 80's and 90's I would make my periodic pilgrimage across Canada back to the country church: the little country church that my Swedish grandfather had helped to build for the community in the early 1900's. Since all of the family farms and homesteads have been sold out of the family, the church and cemetery represent the one place I can go to touch base with my roots and visit the graves of my four grandparents, aunts, uncles and of course baby Ronald's grave.

It makes one feel whole and complete to touch base with one's roots, to understand one's own unique niche in the world, especially, since in my case, like the shallow-rooted lilac shrub, my roots in Canada are not deep. My grandparents, homesteaders and farmers, from Sweden on my father's side and from Scotland on my mother's side were of hardy stock – like lilacs – tough. Survival was a measure of achievement as was the better life they gave to succeeding generations.

The lilac on my brother's grave although small, was also tough. The writing had worn off the little gravestone but the lilac lived on. It survived but it did not seem to flourish. It remained stunted. It always gave me a twinge of pain and disappointment whenever I visited. I never saw it in bloom – if it ever did. It was so small. It may have bloomed but it was difficult to get to the cemetery in spring, at lilac time, because of the sticky, muddy "Alberta gumbo" roads.

When I retired I became a full-time passionate gardener. I happened to buy a book on lilacs (*Lilacs: The Genus Syringa*), a tome of information. I learned there were thousands of named hybrids created from twenty-three species. There are also numerous people around the world passionately involved with and devoted to lilacs. I had encountered *Lilacdom!* (Fiala's word)

One day while enjoying my lilac book, I read about dwarf lilacs. Suddenly it occurred to me that perhaps the lilac on baby Ronald's grave was a dwarf! Never in my whole life had I ever knowingly encountered a dwarf lilac! I did not know they existed. What was the likelihood that a dwarf lilac could have reached a remote cemetery in Alberta in the late 1930's or early 1940's? Dwarf lilacs, originating in Asia had arrived on American shores about 1910. I found my photos taken on the most recent trip to Alberta in September 2002. With new eyes I studied the lilac in the photos. The lilac, now in my eyes looked perfectly healthy and showed characteristics of a dwarf – red leaves in autumn and still not three feet high after more than sixty years! Likely a dwarf, I thought in surprise! At the revelation, I wanted to cry and to laugh at the same time.

What a delightful joke Mother Nature played on an unsuspecting, late blossom-

ing gardener. My entire life I had harboured unreasonable expectations for that lilac to grow and terrible disappointment that it did not – never realizing even the possibility of it being a dwarf! The lilac had done what it was supposed to do – grow slowly! And unbeknownst to me, as it was growing it slowly embodied the spirit of my brother until I did not know if the sadness I felt at this gravesite was because of the lilac that would not grow or because of a brother I had never known. Lilac and brother had become one.

Someone in my family, likely my maternal grandfather, who was a great gardener in the Scottish tradition, had wisely chosen a small shrub for a tiny grave. Was it not appropriate to plant a little lilac on a baby's grave? The lilac had kept its identity secret in full view all of these years. And just as every old-fashioned lavender lilac embodies the spirit of my grandmother and reminds me of her – the little lilac embodies the spirit of baby Ronald and reminds me of the poignant visits to the cemetery and the well kept secret of the little shrub hidden from me in plain view for most of my life.

Ode to the Little Lilac
"on baby Ronald's grave"

Little Lilac, slow to grow
Wisely chosen, lovingly planted,
Proportions right for a tiny grave
Embodying spirit
Of a loved one.

Little Lilac slow to grow
How did you come here?
So far from your home in China
Your identity showing for all to see
In full view – how can it be?

Little Lilac, slow to grow
Teaching patience to those who know
Guardian of my brother's grave
And as enduring as a gravestone.
Slow to grow, slow to grow.

Baby Ronald was born July 25, 1937.
He died of pneumonia June 12, 1938.

Myrna Walberg
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Tribute for a Friend

I have met many wonderful people as a member of the International Lilac Society. Attending my first convention in Rochester in 1988, I met many of the founding members still active and contributing their time along with other academics, hybridizers, nurserymen, curators and lilac collectors, like me. Of course there were the other lilac addicts and tourists present but not to be discounted. Although I wanted to spend more time with all these folks when I think back on them, no amount of time would have been enough. By the fortune of copious quantities of fermented refreshment in the hospitality room during Boston's 1992 convention, I came to know Colin Chapman in conversation that lasted farther into the night than I cared to remember at the following 6:30 A.M. board meeting. During that late night, I learned thankfully that a copy of Father Fiala's benchmark publication, *Lilacs: The Genus Syringa* found its way into Colin's hands, changing his life and enhancing the life of this little society. I recall also tearing open a beer container to use the inside of the packaging to scribble the names of lilacs I never before heard about that came from Ukraine and Russia, thinking I had to have those lilacs for The Holden Arboretum. Consequently, I have grown to admire Colin more than anyone else I can think of through all the days I can remember in the society and throughout my life.

Colin is a rare individual in life, who combines his intelligence, wit and humor, and then wraps it in a Shakespearean flare, before delivering it in a confidently assured East Anglia dialect. Colin, in no short order, connected with the most learned and accomplished people in the society; imbibing their knowledge, experiences and anything willingly shared in conversation. Colin wasn't long a member when he became noticed and was elevated to a lilac celebrity, augmenting the pronunciation and description of auction lilacs. Recall how everyone perked when Colin rose to describe a lilac; how the bidding became cutthroat and how the final price greatly increased when Colin robustly described it as one of the best!

Colin has an energy that generates excitement. Go back and read his European Newsletter in the past journals. I greatly miss those installments since that was the first article I routinely sought when I opened each issue of the journal (and I cheated because I received advance copies from the printer reading it at least a week before anyone else received their copy). For those of you who recall having individual conversations with Colin, recall the passion and excitement Colin delivered as he spoke of a new lilac or about his life in England. Didn't you really want to see that lilac he spoke of, or didn't you wish that you could have been with Colin looking at the Queen's lilacs with her fat little corgis barking madly in the magnificent gardens behind Buckingham Palace, and then accurately identifying the unknown specimen lilac for the head gardener?

One of my greatest pleasures came when Colin and his lovely wife Shelagh

hosted us for our summer holiday in June 1997. The Chapman's were more than gracious, hosting my wife, daughter and I, but they also welcomed Ole Heide and his family for an evening during our stay. Somehow, we all fit around that inviting dining room table and greatly enjoyed Shelagh's cuisine. Staying in their thatch roofed medieval home, Nessa and I shared the bedroom with the priest's hole that protected Roman Catholic clergy during the English Reformation. The Chapman's house is a text of England's history with the property boundary markings on the doorpost; the ship bow beam incorporated into the wall structure, the upstairs bedroom door gnawed by rats hundreds of years ago when grain was stored in the room, windows plastered over to avoid a once decreed window tax, the horse hair and cow dung plaster snug between the great beams, the warmth from the comforting aga in the kitchen.[editor's note: Dave explained to me that an aga is an oven that burns aga briquettes; which is the second hardest mineral. Door compartments may be opened to release heat of varying temperatures, depending on their distance from the main heat source.]

I consider Colin and Shelagh as rich and warm as their home in the English countryside. I admire their energy to the commitment they give to lilacs and daffodils, creating only one of three nationally registered lilac gardens with NCCPG (National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens) in the UK. Colin and Shelagh give great care to preserve existing plants and to enhance the natural environment of Norman's Farm. Their efforts have been rewarded with rare plants and animals that they have documented.

Colin is now the most published author and recognized authority on the genus *Syringa* (L.) in the UK. This stage of Colin's life is a great tribute for someone whose earliest memories are from the Second World War. Immersed in jazz, Colin played as a musician and taught mathematics before finding his greatest triumph with lilacs. Lilacs fit right into the scheme of this chapter of Colin's life and I couldn't be happier for Colin. I'm also grateful that he found the International Lilac Society at the same time that I happened to be active with the society.

Although we may not read as much from Colin now that he is no longer president of this society, I'm sure he would be happy to hear from you as your life continues. I, for one, am greatly honored and blessed to have Colin as a friend, treasuring the memories, staying in contact and looking forward to meeting again. As I end all my e-mails to Colin and many of you, cheers!

Dave Gressley
September 20, 2006



Past President Colin Chapman enjoying his visit
to the California Coast
Photo Credit Brad Bittorf

News Flash!!!

New England Regional Meeting was held at
Syringa Plus on Saturday, September 23.

Almost 30 people attended and had a blast
as they discussed lilacs and enjoyed each others
company. More details next issue.

International Lilac Society

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An old Common Lilac resembling 'Katherine Havemeyer'
Photo Credit Laura Hauta-aho



Common Lilac named A20 growing in
surroundings of Villa Anneberg
Photo Credit Laura Hauta-aho



Syringa x hyacinthiflora 'Old Glory'
 Photo Submitted by Dr. Margaret Pooler



Closeup view of 'Old Glory'
 Photos submitted by Dr. Margaret Pooler



Closeup view of 'Declaration'
 Photo submitted by Dr. Margaret Pooler