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The Newsletter of the Alumni Association of the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture

HORTICULTURAL HERALD

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Coming Events

Annual General Meeting

NPC School of Horticulture

Saturday, February 7, 2015

9:30 am

Please register in advance.

Lunch \$20



Above: The opening of the Legacy Prairie Garden on September 13, 2014 at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens. Officially cutting the natural "ribbon" are (left to right): Charles Hunter '95, Tom Laviolette '81, Janice Thomson (Niagara Parks), Chris Ziemski (OPA), Zenia Buzanko '03, Tom Clancy '61, and Jay Todd '84.

Legacy Prairie Garden Grand Opening: An Ecological Unveiling

By Kasia Zgurzynski '12, Special Events Coordinator

On a misty Saturday in mid-September, over 100 alumni and friends attended the official unveiling of the Legacy Prairie Garden. This event had been much anticipated by staff, students, and donors, because it represented an ecologically significant contribution to the collections of the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens.

With pollinator populations in rapid decline, and biodiversity threatened, creating habitat is more than just a mere pleasure. It's a responsibility. This garden space now performs the important role of helping biodiversity and encouraging pollinators, being a collection of prairie and meadow plants native to North America. These plants were chosen for their ecological merit as well as their ornamental value, and it is this plant selection which gives this garden an accessible wildness.

[continued on page 3]

Support Your Association! Come to the AGM on Feb. 7th

Officers for 2014-15

Honorary President: Bill Snowden '58
President: Zenia Buzanko '03
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Vice President: Jon Peter '04
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Historian: Dylan Muileboom '12 & Melvin Dell '69
Horticultural Herald: Melissa Spearing '13 & Anne Van Nest '83
Social Media: Jon Peter '04
Student Liaison: Heather Skrypnik '15

Executive Secretary

Karen Michaud '84
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Next Deadline: March 15, 2015

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The Horticultural Herald is published 4 times per year. It is published for the benefit of Association members. Views expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of its Officers or Board members. Letters on any horticultural or Alumni issues are welcome. Submissions may be edited for length.

Foundation Board

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Alumni Association of the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture Foundation
P.O. Box 263, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6T3



**Alumni Association
of The Niagara Parks
Commission School
of Horticulture
Foundation**

Alumni Association Mission Statement

The Alumni Association is a diverse team of graduates and friends who celebrate their affiliation with the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture through a variety of programs and services designed to support its members, the School and the highest professional standards of horticulture.



From the President

By Zenia Buzanko '03

Dear Alumni,

Happy New Year! Best wishes for a happy, healthy, and successful 2015.

At this time of year we reflect on the old year gone, and charge ahead with energy and good intentions. Our Association's brightest reflection from last year was surely our Grand Opening of the Legacy Prairie Garden. It was a day to remember. This garden now stands as

testimony to what we can achieve because of our roots, our connections, and our determination — all for the sake of how precious we hold those attributes. On behalf of the Alumni I thank all who made it possible. We can be proud of this accomplishment and enjoy it for years to come. There will be future opportunities to contribute to this garden so watch for more developments.

On a personal note, as my first year as President comes to an end, I want to thank the Board of Directors, the Foundation Board, and students and staff of the School for their endless assistance and constant support that made this year a success, and definitely a joy. I had to ask a lot of everyone and you all came through for me! A huge thank you in particular to Past President Charles Hunter '95 for constant support through all the challenges of this year, and facilitating all School-related details.

New Year resolutions? Our 2014 membership revenue was at an all-time low. We can do better! There are expenses to running an Alumni Association, and our coffers can reflect our support, so if you're working please get those dues in. If you're waiting for the new season before you can pay that is fine too, we will keep sending reminders. We will help and make it easier for you to pay your dues; we're working towards enabling members to pay online, so check the website regularly for payment options and other new features!

And about fresh beginnings! We need new members to join our board of directors. There is a reason I have been involved with this Board for 10+ years now — it is endlessly rewarding. We share a unique history of achievements, of individuals, of brilliant connections that continues to develop in surprising ways. It's always a pleasure to meet a SOH grad I haven't met before. If you want a piece of that action get involved! You won't be disappointed. We welcome new energy and ideas to keep us dynamic and valuable.

[continued on page 15]

Legacy Prairie Garden Opening

[continued from the front cover]

During the opening ceremony, Zenia Buzanko '03, President of the Alumni Association, told us the story of the garden as it was being conceived and built with eager minds and hands. On behalf of the Alumni Association, she also presented Tom Laviolette with an Honorary Life membership, for his contributions and dedication to the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture, as well as his direction in the conception of this garden. Tom Clancy '61 spoke of our many donors who generously contributed, and reminded us that there is still a need for resources to continue in the development of this project.

The Student Association prepared lunch, and it gave old and new friends an opportunity to mingle and catch up. It was an absolute delight to see so many alumni in attendance, something that Charles Hunter '95, Past President of the Alumni Association and Superintendent of the Botanical Gardens, noted sentimentally in his speech.

Once the event was brought outdoors, plaques were unveiled which pay tribute to the donors who have helped make the vision of the garden a reality. Members of Ontario Parks Association and the Niagara Parks Commission proudly cut the decorative ribbon, unveiling the new garden and then led the attendees along the meandering pathways of the garden. Mathis Natvik (one of the garden designers and an expert in prairie plants), Sue Clarke '79, and Lorne Fast '89 answered questions about the habitat variations mimicked in this space, as well as the plant choices.

There is a natural flow in the mingling of the softscape and the hardscape here, which creates a meditative feeling. One can't help but get lost in the tall grasses near the pond's



Above: The opening of the Legacy Prairie Garden at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens.

edge, or among the wildflowers. We invite you to visit and experience this garden as it develops over the coming years, leaving a legacy for those who follow.

Unique New Garden at Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens

The new Legacy Prairie Garden at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens was unveiled Saturday, where the many donors that made this feature possible were among the first to walk the new, winding pathways.

This unique garden is a combination of different ecosystems found in different parts of the Prairies. You'll find examples of Tallgrass, Alvar and Sand Barren Prairies as you explore this space, which is the largest garden of its kind in Canada.

One interesting feature you'll notice right away is the paved pathway. It is a fully accessible and permeable solution that makes the Legacy Prairie Garden available year-round. The material includes a gravel substrate with an epoxy granite material. Below, a drainage system takes water into a retention pond. During periods of heavy rainfall, this creates a water feature that is sure to attract all sorts of wildlife to this wonderful new section of the Botanical Gardens.

This project commemorates the 75th anniversary of the founding of both the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture and the Ontario Parks Association in 2011. A labour of love for all those who have worked and contributed to the garden's creation on the grounds of the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens, it is designed as a public and educational resource featuring the native habitat and meadows/prairie gardens most often found throughout Ontario.

The new Legacy Prairie Garden is located on the grounds of the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens, right next to the Butterfly Conservatory.

Reprinted with permission, originally published on the Niagara Parks Blog, September 15, 2014.

Legacy Prairie Garden Opening

Reflecting on the Legacy Prairie Garden

By Tom Clancy '61, Legacy Garden Steering Committee

The Legacy Garden Opening and transfer of the Legacy Prairie Garden to the Niagara Parks Commission went very well in mid-September. The last OPA Green Sward and Horticultural Herald had great photos of the event and garden. The opening reception and appreciation by the NPC Chair, Janice Thomson were impressive. A lot of design and construction support was given for this project by Ontario Park's members and particularly by the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture Alumni. If you are in the area, it is well worth the visit and will even get better in the next two years as "the grow in" continues to take place and plants get bigger and spread even more. The permeable pathways have worked out very well and the water is being picked up under the paths and flows into the pond. This turned out to be a very nice project with an important "sustainable horticulture" message for visitors and a suitable legacy for two organizations who celebrated 75 years in existence with very similar missions and tasks. They have, and are making a difference.

We still need about \$15,000 for the garden. The rebate from HST paid was to be in the \$13,000 range and Canada Revenue Agency changed the regulations for not-for-profit organizations so we may only get a portion of that amount. Having said that, several have stepped up and provided further donations, including John Lohuis, the NPC General Manager who just made his 3rd donation. If you have not donated please consider sending one in and if you have, maybe you can find a few more dollars for this very worthwhile project marking our 75th Anniversaries. Consider it a little payback for the education you received and all the careers that were started after the humble beginnings of the OPA and NPC School of Horticulture.

If you would like to donate to this incredible project, and please do, send a payment to Russ Boles '68 at the address below. Or contact Tom Clancy '61 at candtclancy@rogers.com, or phone 519-748-0377 for further information. Names can still be engraved on plaques

to be installed in the future as space was left for additional panels to be mounted. Be part of our legacy!

Just send a cheque to:

Russ Boles, NPC Alumni Foundation Treasurer at
7270 Sandy Court, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2G 7R3
Phone: 905-354-7250 Cell : 905-708-9677
Email: roundaboutthegarden@msn.com



Top: Panels naming the generous donors for the Legacy Prairie Garden. Above: Visitors enjoying the garden and official opening ceremonies.

Legacy Garden Opening



A celebration of the Legacy Prairie Garden Opening brought together the Alumni, Ontario Parks Association, Niagara Parks, friends, and the students and staff at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens. Top left: Tom and Sharon Laviolette. Top right: John Lohuis (General Manager, Niagara Parks), Rob Jacob '11, Jeff Winkelmolen '14, Jim Beeksma '70. Middle left: Janice Thomson (Chair, Niagara Parks). Middle right: Tom Laviolette '81, Zenia Buzanko '03. Bottom left: Cassandra Muileboom, Marg and Dan Castea, Dylan Muileboom '12. Bottom right: David Hunt '03, Kasia Zgurzynski '12.

Legacy Prairie Garden Opening



*Above: Alumni and friends enjoying the grand opening.
Below: An enticing display in the New Lecture Hall. Left: Sue Clarke '79, Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture Curator/Instructor discusses the development of the garden with Bryan Essery '61.*



Legacy Prairie Garden Opening



Annual General Meeting

Everyone is Invited...

Alumni Association Annual General Meeting

Saturday, February 7, 2015

Niagara Parks School of Horticulture
New Lecture Hall

The Alumni Association welcomes all graduates, members and students to the New Lecture Hall for our Annual General Meeting, to help guide our Association activities for 2015.

Master of Ceremonies – Jon Peter '04, Vice President, Alumni Association

8:30 am	Registration	Karen Michaud '84, Executive Secretary, Alumni Association
9:30 am	Opening Remarks	Zenia Buzanko '03, President, Alumni Association
9:45 am	Guest Speaker	Sean James '91, President, Fern Ridge Landscaping, Milton, ON
10:30 am	Annual General Meeting	Alumni Association
11:30 am	Annual General Meeting	Alumni Association Foundation
12:00 pm	Association Luncheon (Pre-registration required)	
1:15 pm	Presentation	SOH Third Year Class Study Tour
1:35 pm	Guest Speaker	George Scott, Managing Director, Niagara Beeway
2:15 pm	Demonstration	Cooking with Lavender, Melissa Achal, Owner, Niagara Essential Oils & Blends (neob lavender)
2:45 pm	Closing Remarks and Raffle	

The day is free with the exception of the meal. For those wishing to participate in the fundraising luncheon, the cost is \$20 and registration is required no later than February 4, 2015.

To register, please contact Zenia Buzanko '03 at president@alumninpcsoh.com.
Any contributions for our raffle would be welcome! Just let us know when you register.
For up-to-date details on this event, visit the Alumni website: <http://alumninpcsoh.com/events/>

Photo credits for this edition of the Horticulture Herald:

Dylan Muileboom, Page 1, 3, 4 (lower), 5, 6, 7, 13, 18 (lower), 19, 29

Zenia Buzanko, Page 2

Tom Clancy, Page 4 (upper), 9

Niagara Parks, School of Horticulture or Alumni Archives, Page 11, 12 (upper), 19 (upper)

www.legacy.com website, Page 11

Niagara Parks Commission, Page 14

Anne Van Nest, Page 12 (lower), 20 (upper), 26

Jon Peter, Page 15 (lower)

Melissa Spearing, Page 21-24

Charles Hunter, Page 18, 19 (lower)

Bailey Wilson, Page 18, 19 (lower)

Catching Up with Jack Unger

by Tom Clancy '61

Cecile and I spent a couple of hours in Delhi, Ontario with Jack Unger catching up on news during a July afternoon last year. He is struggling with several ailments but in good spirits and we reviewed past histories.

A classmate, Jack Unger had an outstanding and interesting career with Lady Bird Johnson, creating rest stops across Texas highways from east to west and top to bottom. Then he guided her impressive roadside wildflower program along the roads in Texas as she so loved Bluebonnets. Jack watched when Kennedy was shot and met five U.S. Presidents as well as attended dinners at the White House.

He is now back in Delhi, Ontario and battling some health issues. So after a long time of not seeing or being able to contact some of our friends and relatives, we sure met a lot this year. Sorry for dropping names that many will not know, but a good number of the Hort Herald readers will know them and maybe can contact them. Jack Unger would have graduated with the Class of 1961 but did not graduate (for complicated issues) and left at Christmas just prior to graduation. Even though he was not a grad he never lost his interest in the school and it's grads.

Jack is back in his home after a short stint in a retirement home. And he had sold all his antique furniture and items so is now collecting things again but is comfortable at home. He is still undergoing treatments for the cancer that has returned after many years but got a recent report that it is in remission. Give Jack a call as he would enjoy the chat. Life is short as we are only on this planet a short time. So do some things that make a difference in the lives of others.

After losing Don Schaaf, a 1961 School of Horticulture classmate, I was also finally able to get in touch with Dick Goodwin, another Niagara classmate of 1961 who we had not heard from in over 30 years. He is living in Maple Ridge, BC and doing pretty well.



Above: Jack Unger (left) and Tom Clancy (right) during a visit in July 2014 to Delhi, Ontario.

Wildflowers, Texas and Jack Unger

by Marion Rathwell

Born in the old Norfolk General Hospital, Jack grew up on a tobacco farm in the Delhi area. He attended the one room Unger's School, built by his grandfather and from there went to Delhi High School. Flowers were always his joy, and he applied, and was accepted at the Niagara Park School of Horticulture. This was a three all year-round course and only eight students were chosen each year. People came from all across the country to hire the graduates upon completion of the course. Jack was hired by a U.S. firm, a wholesale nursery in Birmingham, Alabama.

In 1963 the race riots broke out and he decided to head for California. When he reached Fort Worth, Texas he stopped for gas. It was raining heavily when he remembered he had an aunt and uncle in the city. He phoned them and found they lived only a couple of blocks from the gas station. While visiting them he decided to stay in Fort Worth for awhile, and obtained a job with the Fort Worth Botanical Garden. The secretary's husband worked for the government. At that time President Johnson was introducing the "Beautification Act" and she felt Jack was undervalued at the job he had so encouraged him to apply for the job in Texas. Sending in the application it was

Alumni News

nine months before he received a reply, a registered letter from the White House asking him to meet with President and Lady Bird Johnson. Arriving at the White House he met the President in the Oval Office. They shook hands, and the President realized Jack was a Mason. (He has been for over 50 years.) Asked to sit down they began to talk about everything but horticulture. After several cocktails and a very fine hand rolled Cuban cigar Jack was sent back to the hotel in the limo. He had yet to meet Lady Bird, even though this was her pet project. Asked if he could start the next week Jack said he had to give the city of Fort Worth a month's notice so they sent him back home on the Air Force One jet. A month later, Jack returned to the White House and met with Lady Bird and she talked with him about what was on the agenda. His office was in the state capitol, in Austin, Texas but he would be travelling all over the state. The first priority was the planting of wildflowers, bluebonnets, and daisies, on the slopes and medians of the highways. This was not only for beauty but also to stop erosion. The second priority was the installation of rest areas every 75 miles along the interstates, plus trees and shrubs were to be planted to stop the glare of oncoming traffic on the interchanges. Jack had to negotiate with the farmers for their land. The rest areas were designed to correspond with the area they were in, for example, oil derricks in oil country. Jack spent 32 years in Austin, making his home in Murchison, Texas. He visited the Little White House many times and met many Presidents over the years. On retirement, he first went to Clearwater, Florida but after some health issues he returned to Canada, building a home in Delhi.

Looking around for something to do he heard about volunteering at Norfolk General Hospital and joined the volunteer organization in 2008. Jack is a natural people person and he has helped in many areas of our organization. He enjoys being with older people and helps in the Nursing Home. Jack has received a Certificate of Appreciation, 500 Hour Service Pin and the Outstanding Service Pin. At home in Delhi he helps with the landscaping of his neighbourhood.

Reprinted from the Vitality Newsletter, Fall 2013, published by the Volunteer Association to Norfolk General Hospital and Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home.



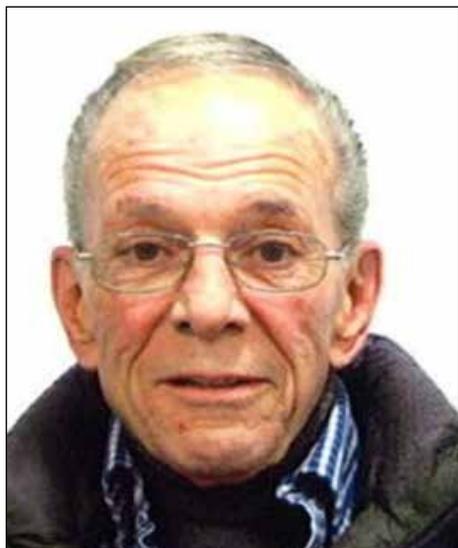
Above: Students, staff, an intern, and alumni catching up at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens booth at the recent Landscape Ontario Congress in Toronto earlier in January.

Answers from the last Plant ID Quiz (September 2014):

1. *Juglans ailantifolia* — Japanese walnut — Juglandaceae
2. *Phaenocoma prolifera* — cape strawflower — Asteraceae
3. *Quercus dentata* — daimyo oak — Fagaceae
4. *Eucalyptus stellulata* — black sally/sallee — Myrtaceae
5. *Phlomis russeliana* — sticky Jerusalem sage — Lamiaceae

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Passing of Don Schaaf '61

Reprinted from the Ithaca Journal from October 9th to 11th, 2014

Schaaf, Don Clifton

Willseyville: Don passed away peacefully on Oct. 4, 2014 in Ithaca, NY. He was born Feb. 2, 1937 in Gary, Indiana to the late Harry and Leona Schaaf. In 1940 the family moved to Hamilton, Ontario. After graduating from Niagara Parks School of Horticulture in Niagara Falls, ON. Don was employed as grounds superintendent at Juniata College in Huntington, PA, then as Superintendent at Cornell Plantations in Ithaca. At George Junior Republic in Freeville, he planned and managed all horticultural activities.

Don was active at the American Legion for many years, ending his horticultural career as a groundskeeper with the Park family. He was very involved with the AA program, where he made many good friends.

Don is survived and greatly missed by brother Gene (Marie) of Ajax, ON and nephews Robert & Paul, his children Derek (Tamara), Kristin, Tamsyn (Sverre) Selheim, Garth (Heather) and granddaughters Holly, Hannah and Brittney. He will be missed by stepdaughters, Jenny Ruhanen and

Above right: Remembering Don Schaaf. Above left: The Class of 1961. Back Row (left to right): Martin Moore, Art Drysdale, Tom Clancy, James Dennington, Richard Goodwin. Front Row (left to right): Don Schaaf, Byran Essery, David DeShane.

Jodi Rapone. Also, his faithful companion Venus.

At Don's request, cremation has taken place and internment will be in the Schaaf family plot in North Providence Ridge Cemetery, Manhattan, IL in June 2015.

A memorial celebration of Don's life will be held on Saturday, Oct. 11 from 1-4 at the American Legion, 1231 Danby Road. Donations in Don's memory can be made to Hospicare.org or SPCA.

Answers from the Plant ID Quiz in this Issue (last page):

1. *Carica papaya* – papaya – Caricaceae
2. *Calliandra tergemina* var. *emarginata* – red powderpuff plant – Fabaceae
3. *Acalypha hispida* – chenille plant – Euphorbiaceae
4. *Clematis* 'Comtesse de Bouchaud' – Comtesse de Bouchaud Clematis – Ranunculaceae
5. *Rhus typhina* 'Bailtiger' – Tiger Eyes staghorn sumac – Anacardiaceae
6. *Weigela florida* 'Verweig' – My Monet weigela – Caprifoliaceae

Graduate News

Passing of Norm McKenna '59

Reprinted from the Gilchrist Chapel, McIntyre & Wilkie Funeral Home website www.gilchristchapel.com

McKenna, Norman

1936-2014

Peacefully, at St. Joseph's Health Centre, Guelph on Monday, December 29, 2014.

Norman has joined his beloved wife Judith McKenna (11/2014).

Proud father of David (Julie) of Florida and Karen Thompson (Greg) of Kingston. Cherished grandfather of Kelsea, Kirby, Wade, Joshua and Taylor. Dear brother-in-law of Norma McKenna, Jane Ashby, and David Ashby (Dorval Stewart). Predeceased by his brother Jack and niece Janice.

Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will take place in the spring with Dad's family.

Arrangements entrusted to the Gilchrist Chapel – McIntyre & Wilkie Funeral Home, One Delhi Street, Guelph, (519-824-0031). We invite you to leave your memories and donations online. Memorial contributions to the Guelph Horticultural Society would be appreciated.

The garden is a love song, a duet between a human being and Mother Nature. ~ Jeff Cox



Above: Norm McKenna on graduation day from the School of Horticulture in 1959 with his family. Below: The Niagara Parks Commissioners with the class of 1959 on graduation day.



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Foundation News



**Alumni Association
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Greetings from the Foundation;

Have you ever wondered where the money comes from that is used to support the numerous bursaries, grants and scholarships that assist our students or that which funds the horticulture, environmental and educational projects of the Alumni Foundation? It doesn't come from the government or the Niagara Parks Commission – it comes from our organization. Through the generous support of the Alumni (and friends of the Alumni) we have been able to successfully issue, over the past two years, more than \$3,100 in scholarships, contribute \$4,700 toward various projects, such as the Legacy Prairie Garden, and give \$1,500 towards education in the form of a donation to the School of Horticulture Library. You all deserve a heartfelt Thank You for this!

That being said, the Alumni and Foundation are at a crossroads right now and the Foundation Board is working in concert with the Alumni Board to address some significant issues. You will hear more about this from Alumni President, Zenia Buzanko '03. At the beginning of December, 2014, only 79 Alumni have fully paid up their membership compared to 180 a year ago at this time, and charitable donations to the Foundation are down

90%. We realize that there is much need in the world today and that funds are limited, but let us all remember where we got our start and where we are today in our careers. The Alumni needs your help. Your giving can be in the form of a donation, planned life giving, or supporting the Alumni/Foundation programs and events.

On February 7, 2015 the Alumni and Foundation Boards are hosting a day of lectures, information sharing, camaraderie and our AGMs at the School and this is one event you should not miss.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who donated time, money, services and ideas toward the opening of the Legacy Prairie Garden. A big thank you goes to the staff and students at the School who have embraced this project as a new asset to the Botanical Gardens and also as a teaching tool for our students and patrons. With your continued support of the Foundation we can continue to develop programs like the Legacy Prairie Garden, make donations to education and to continue to support our students through scholarships, bursaries and grants.

May this New Year bring success to all your endeavors and I hope we will see you on February 7th, 2015 at the School of Horticulture for a great day.

If you have any comments, concerns or ideas please contact me at harbinger.27@hotmail.com.

All the Best;

J.J Todd '84

Foundation President



**Alumni Association
of The Niagara Parks
Commission School
of Horticulture
Foundation**

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Your donation to the Foundation helps serve the purpose of horticultural education! Make your donation in memory of someone special or fondly remembered, or as challenge to your classmates and fellow Alumni.

- Legacy Prairie Garden Fund
- Knut Mattais Broman Fund
- William J. Snowden Award Fund
- Beatrice Catherine Martin Scholarship Fund
- Roland Duffy Dwarf Conifer Teaching Garden Fund
- Seymour Howard Schott Memorial Seminar Fund
- Edward J. Hill NPD '48 Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Gateman Malloy Scholarship Fund
- Educational Fund
- Florales Library Fund
- W. Garfield Weston Fund

Niagara Parks News



Introducing Mark Dykstra

Dear Alumni,

It is my pleasure to be working for The Niagara Parks Commission as Senior Director, Parks, Planning and Properties. I am now into the second year in this position and two key items resonate with me so far; the beauty of the Parks and the great team of staff and students that work with the Commission. The Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens, School of Horticulture and Butterfly Conservatory exemplify both of these qualities. I have enjoyed walking through the gardens and the conservatory. It is a beautiful site. While doing so, I have had an opportunity to interact with staff, students and visitors. It has been great getting to know the staff and network with the students.

As an introduction, I am a Landscape Architect having graduated from the University of Guelph. In addition, I have a Masters Certificate in Municipal Leadership from York's, Schulich School of Business. To support my career I have pursued an ISA Arborist designation, Pesticide License, DZ truck license, Playground Inspector Certification and supplementary horticultural courses at both Humber and Sheridan colleges.

My love for gardening started at a young age when I worked with my father who maintained several properties in our hometown. From there I developed a landscape construction and maintenance business that supported my university education. Upon graduating from the University of Guelph, I worked as a landscape architect for five years

with land use planning and engineering consultants in both the Greater Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo area. During this time, I was able to teach landscape design and construction at Niagara College. Moving to the municipal sector I have worked for the City of Brampton and most recently for the City of Waterloo as Director of Transportation, Environment and Parks. At these municipalities I gained experience in public place making – design, construction and maintenance, public works operations, environmental land use, budgeting, health & safety and governance.

Now with the Niagara Parks Commission I am looking forward to the opportunities at hand. The Commission's new strategic plan is focusing on:

- Finances;
- Human Resources;
- Product and Services;
- Facilities and Technology;
- Research and Development;
- Image; and
- Partnership.

The evidence of the current direction, focus and leadership are great to see from my perspective and I believe very exciting for the organization. The importance of nature and the garden experience are being demonstrated in our business planning initiatives. For example, the Parks 2014 Discovery Guide illustrated this focus. If you have not seen a hard copy when visiting the Park this past season please do review the digital version on our website: www.niagaraparks.com.

As Alumni, you are a key part of our strategic direction, specifically in Image and Partnership. You tell the story of the Parks, Gardens and School ... you are part of the Image. Thank You! As well, your partnership is appreciated. The new Legacy Garden is one example of that partnership and it is a great addition to the Botanical Gardens.

Having attended various events and ceremonies at the School over the past year I have been impressed with the demonstrated level of knowledge, and professionalism

Niagara Parks News

of the staff and students. The program links to sustainability and innovation, which demonstrates relevance for the future of the horticulture industry.

Thanks for allowing me to introduce myself. I look forward to meeting you in the future and working with your Board to advance Niagara Parks at the Botanical Gardens, School of Horticulture and Butterfly Conservatory.

Regards,

Mark Dykstra, Landscape Architect

Senior Director, Parks, Planning and Properties

Tel: 905.356-2241 ext. 242 | Mobile: 905.651-0537

Email: mdykstra@niagaraparks.com



Above: A view across the pond in the Riparian section of the Legacy Prairie Garden.

Reminder!

**Alumni Association of the
Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture**

It's 2015 Membership Renewal Time

**Please Support your Alumni by
Renewing your Annual Dues today!**

Graduate	\$75
Fellowship	\$85
Associate	\$100

(Special discounts for those renewing for two years or for married Graduates)

Let us know your Blue Book membership directory preference. Available in a Digital CD version, included with your membership or printed version (for a small fee).

Don't forget to update your Blue Book information. The form is online at the Alumni website.

To renew your Alumni membership contact Karen Michaud, Executive Secretary at npcsha@gmail.com or executivesec@alumninpcsoh.com.

Membership Renewal Deadline: March 1st

New

Alumni Association Travel Mug!

Show the world your proud affiliation while enjoying your morning coffee. For the graduate on the go or those that want to enjoy their drinks longer, our stainless steel travel mug is 20 cm tall, bears the Alumni Association logo, and is insulated to keep beverages hot or cold.

Help support your Alumni Association by ordering yours today. Email Karen Michaud at executivesec@alumninpcsoh.com. Makes a great gift too. \$10 each.



Board News

From the Desk of the Secretary

By Karen Michaud '84

Here we are at the end of our fiscal year. Memberships are due on March 1st, 2015. At this time, we have only 79 paid graduate members.

Financially we are not in great shape. There are expenses that have to be paid, and we cannot do this without your help. Renewal forms are available on our website, call or email me and payment can be made by credit card over the phone. **Please take the time to send in the contact information form too, even if you are not paying your dues at this time, so we can make the appropriate changes in the Blue Book.**

Some people tell me that the Alumni Association is not relevant, and why should they care. How do we become relevant in 2015 and create interest among our Alumni?? Maybe we need to make our voice heard and stand behind a relevant cause, and become more than a social club.

I heard about a restaurant in the U.S. that has decided to pay all their employees \$15.00 per hour; everyone from those washing the floors to counter staff to the burger flippers will get paid the same wage. They took a chance and paid more per hour than other restaurants. Their profits are up, the employees are happy and friendly and the place is spotless. Now they have a waiting list for staff.

We, as trained horticulturists, should be considered professionals, yet if you compare our wages to those of plumbers or electricians, also professionals, is there a wage discrepancy? I noticed two ads in the recent Landscape Ontario magazine. Both companies are looking for experienced workers, willing to pay \$11.00 per hour. This is minimum wage, why not go and work at McDonald's? Why should we have to lower ourselves to work at the same level as an unskilled labourer? Let's talk about this.

Anyone with an email address on record is receiving the Horticultural Herald. We do this to keep as many graduates as possible up-to-date with the Alumni Association. If you are a paid member and have an email address, you will receive 2 copies of the Horticultural Herald, one copy mailed to you and one emailed, **unless you specify that you only**

want an emailed copy. Help us save some money and enjoy your beautiful colour edition, emailed to a computer near you. Please email me with your request to receive only an emailed copy.

As you know, we keep a list of employment opportunities; please let me know if you see anything out there so we can post it on our website or pass it on to any of our interested, paid up graduates.

If you have had a change in your life; a new job, a move, a new baby, or perhaps you know of a fellow graduate who is celebrating an exciting honour, please contact me and I will direct the information to the appropriate board member. As well, don't forget our friends who are ill.

Karen Michaud '84 Executive Secretary
8 Hahn Avenue, Cambridge ON, N3C 2X9
Phone: 519-249-0381 Email: npcsha@gmail.com or
executivesec@alumninpcsoh.com.

Horticultural Herald

By Anne Van Nest '83

It's a New Year but the Herald is not done with 2014 yet as we highlight the Legacy Prairie Garden opening which was happening just as the last issue was published. In this issue we have included lots of images of that proud day for those that were not able to attend. Looking forward, this issue also has an invitation to attend the Alumni Association AGM. It's a full day of educational speakers, a demonstration, a little Alumni and Foundation official business, and a presentation from the third year students about their study tour to California last year. Spend the entire day learning and networking at the School on February 7th all for the cost of lunch!

Thanks are extended to everyone who contributed articles, images, or checked names for this issue. All your contributions are most gratefully received.

Melissa and I are always in need of content, stories, travel reports and photos of happenings in your professional and personal lives. If you have a story to tell, sit down at the computer while the snow covers the garden and please send it along. Submissions can be emailed to hortherald@alumninpcsoh.com.

The next deadline is: **March 15, 2015 for April printing.**

Board News

Board Members Needed for the 2015-2016 Term

The Alumni Association is looking for potential new Board members for the year 2015-16, starting in March 2015. Might this be you or someone you know?

As Board work is challenging and rewarding, new members receive support and are not expected to understand all the various aspects of governance immediately. An orientation package, an orientation session, and a mentoring period greatly help new Board members learn the ropes.

We have six returning Board members for the next term but a full Board complement is 12. We need a quorum of at least six members to pass motions, run meetings, etc. There are six meetings per year and members are required to spend some time travelling to meetings and attending events.

For questions, to learn more about serving on the Board, or to express interest in nominating yourself for a position, please contact Zenia Buzanko '03, President via email at president@alumninpcsoh.com.

From the President

[continued from page 2]

We are looking forward to working with our new Editor. Welcome back to Anne Marie Van Nest '83! Huge thanks to the tech-wizardess Melissa Spearing '13 for bringing the Herald a little farther into the 21st century. There is still a long way to go, but we'll get there.

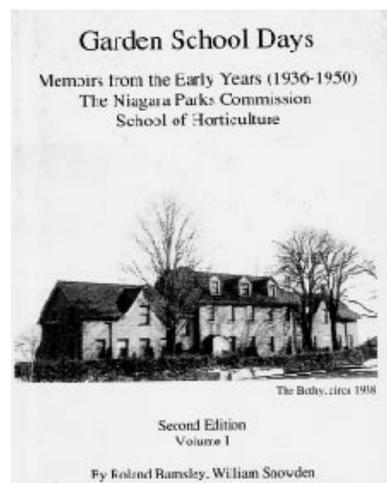
Our own New Year's party, otherwise known as the AGM (Annual General Meeting), is coming up soon. See details in this issue, and watch for updates.

One last thing — start thinking about 2016. We are hoping to celebrate the SOH 80th anniversary with a conference, so keep that in mind. We'll need a committee and lots of support. Hope to hear from you in the New Year!

Until next time, Zenia Buzanko '03.

No two gardens are the same. No two days are the same in one garden. ~ Hugh Johnson

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Executive Secretary Karen Michaud :
npcsha@gmail.com

From the School



Above: Dan Johnston (centre) cutting his retirement cake in the Residence dining room. Left to right: Sue Clarke '79, Ennio D'Aiuto, Jessica Bond, Jason Leavens, Dan, Suzette McDonnell '94, David Olmstead '10, Vinnie Armstrong, Carolyn Paterson, Darrell Bley, Lorne Fast '89, Kevin Battista, Charles Hunter '95, Ruth Stoner, Zenia Buzanko '03.

Celebrating 39 years, 6 months and 15 days!

By Anne Van Nest '83

Dan Johnston, an Alumni Association Honorary member, retired on November 21st, 2014 after 9,933 work days at Niagara Parks. Dan "The Man", the ever jovial, always obliging big guy in the Residence has seen 41 School of Horticulture classes from 1979 to the current first years in the class of 2017 — that's over 350 students and graduates.

Best wishes are extended to Dan in his retirement as he spends more time with his family and takes on more clients during the gardening season.

Notes of congratulations and to reminisce about your good times with Dan in the Residence can be sent to:



Dan Johnston at 42 Hurricane Road, Fonthill ON L0S 1E3 905-892-9935 or by email Johnston.williams@sympatico.ca

Dan Johnston, at retirement, was the 2nd longest serving employee at Niagara Parks having worked from May 7th, 1975 to November 21st, 2014. Congratulations Dan!

Thats ... 39 years, 6 months and 15 days.

1,247,961,600 seconds

346,656 hours

14,444 days

2,063 weeks and 3 days.

From the School



Above: A flash from the past! Dan Johnston (center) with Staff and Students in the Rose Garden in 1989. Front Row (crouching): Tim Anderson, David Walters, Jeff Whyte, Plac Iammarino. Seated Row: Marja vanden Berg, Kelly Visser, Debbie Lowe, Andrea Stempski, Leslie Burns, Michelle Secord, Mary O'Rourke, Colleen McComb, Nancy Christie, Freda Noorloos. Third Row: Mel Dell, Maribeth Fitts, Richard Gilmour, Russ Spence, Mark McDonell, Dan Johnston, Marvin Fast, Sean James, Bryan Zerbs, Ken Warren, Cosette Staats, Yvonne McColl, Mary Ann Shanahan. Fourth Row: Betty Lynn Smith, Shirley Stoner, David Schroeder, Kevin Watson, Fred Collins, Pierre Parent, Adam Foulon, Greg Pilliteri, Martin Winkel, Rowland Cave-Browne-Cave, Joe Fabiani, Paolo D'April, Linda Moore. Back Row: Joe Carusello, Paul Hoekstra, Michael Schmahl, Mike Hoekstra, Andrew Mamych.



Above: Dedicating an American elm, *Ulmus americana* 'Jefferson' in the OSA, north of the Herb Garden (along the path to the Cafe) at the School of Horticulture in honour of Dan Johnston's retirement after 39 years on November 21, 2014. Right: The commemorative sign identifying Dan's dedication tree which is a clone of a tree on the Washington D.C. mall in front of the Jefferson monument that is apparently resistant to Dutch Elm disease.

From the School

New Hires at the School

By Charles Hunter '95

Jessica Bond and Jason Leavens have joined the Botanical Gardens and School of Horticulture team as Instructor/Curators. Jessica began on Tuesday, August 5th and is responsible for the Vegetable and Rose Garden areas as well as teaching academic courses. Jason began on Monday, August 18th and is managing the Integrated Pest Management side of the Botanical Gardens and teaching academic courses.

Jessica began her career with the Niagara Parks in 2011 as a seasonal gardener. She has been a consistent and positive performer and has shown a dedication and passion for horticulture. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees. She also holds additional classifications in teaching through Special Education 1, 2 & Specialist, ESL 1 and Deaf Education Certification 1. In addition to her teaching credentials, Jessica holds a Horticulture Diploma and Floral Design Level 1 & 2 Certificates.

Jason holds a Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Horticulture Science & Business and Associate Diploma in Agriculture/Horticulture. Jason has been teaching green industry programs as well as academic courses since 2000. Jason has a great combination of experience, formal education and hands-on industry knowledge.

Jessica and Jason are eager and pleased to meet all School of Horticulture graduates — so be sure to introduce yourself if you chance to see them at the School.



*Top: The cutleaf sumac, *Rhus typhina* 'Dissecta', plant accession number 000149, at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens Fire Pond garden, part of the now completed Arboretum plant inventory. Bottom: Instructor/Curator Jessica Bond with Kasia Zgurzynski '12 in the Legacy Prairie Garden.*

Plant Records Milestone is Reached!

By Dennis Eveleigh

A significant event happened in plant documentation at the Botanical Gardens last year. The plant inventory of the entire Arboretum has been completed, the last section was the large Rosaceae collection. Soon all the plants in the Arboretum will be on the botanical garden's AutoCAD map, as well as be in the BG-BASE database, and will all have labels. The Rosaceae family area is the last major area to be entered in the Plant Documentation System and Darrel Bley, Curator of Woody Plants has been patiently waiting for years for this area to be included in the record system so students and staff can better utilize these plants.



Seed Conservation Techniques



Above: The public entrance of the Millennium Seed Bank, at Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, UK. Right: Melissa Spearing '13 in the foreground participates in a lab exercise at MSB excising avocado embryos for seed moisture measurements.

I Dreamed of Seeds ... and Kew

By Melissa Spearing '13.

Ever get the feeling you were meant to be somewhere, at that exact moment? I knew that moment when I coincidentally sat on a bench near the Palm House at Kew Gardens that was dedicated to an NPC graduate, Leonard Riley NPD '39. Much of the reason I wanted to attend the Niagara Parks program was because of my interest in seeds, which naturally precedes most plant propagation. I had a desire to grow everything and conserving seeds seemed an efficient means of doing so. My classmate Andrea Weddum '13 and I dreamt aloud in our first year about attending Kew together; she would work at the main Kew site, and I could be at Wakehurst, home to the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB). Although an internship didn't pan out, my dreams of working in a seed bank did come true.

In September 2014, I participated in a three-week Seed Conservation Techniques training course at the MSB, sponsored by the Forest Gene Conservation Association and Ground Covers Unlimited. The course offered a complete view into the workings of an international seed bank, from strategic frameworks such as the Convention on Biological



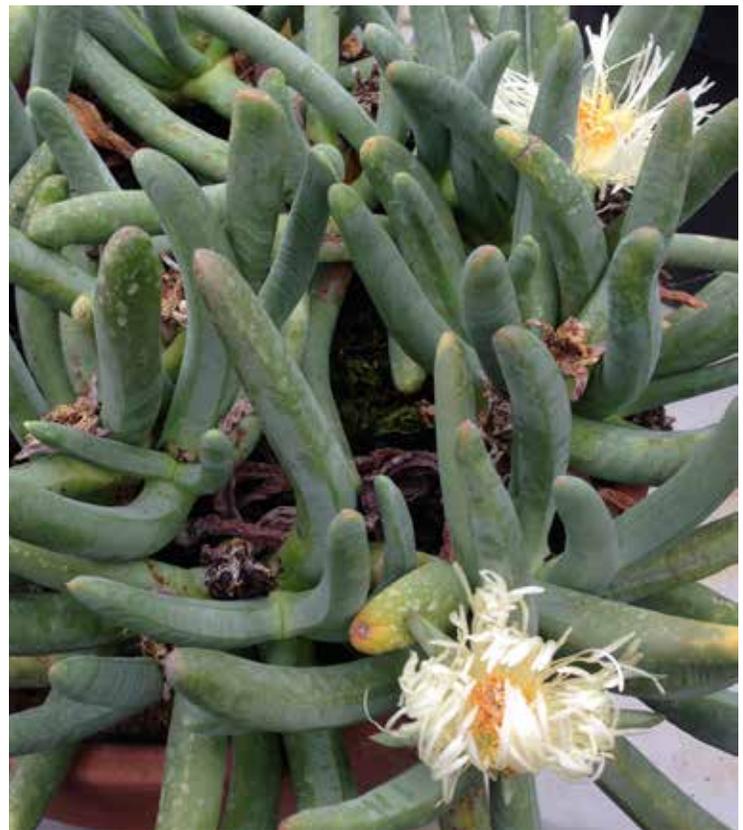
Diversity (CBD) and CITES, prioritizing collections, to processing and long-term utilization projects. Specific lectures I enjoyed most highlighted the scientific principles behind seed viability equations, seed air-moisture relations, genetic diversity sampling methods, seed bank design and cryopreservation of non-orthodox seeds. Dr. Wolfgang Stuppy's presentation on seed morphology and evolution was as detailed as his SEM photographs, yet a fun group activity dissecting various grocery store fruits brought his research to life. Other hands-on activities such as ISTA-standardized germination testing methods, TZ staining and accelerated

Seed Conservation Techniques

aging experiments cemented the practice beyond theory. Doing it is always better than reading about it. The course content is summarized in *Seed Conservation: Turning Science into Practice* (Smith et. al 2003); the first major review of non-domesticated seed conservation science since 1972, and now one of my most dog-eared books!

Much like the living arrangements at the School of Horticulture (SOH), accommodations were provided at MSB, on the same floor as the largest wild seed bank in the world! It was amazing to learn in an environment with all the best equipment and research resources available in one place. Any student who participated in the Seed Exchange program at the SOH understands the love of sieves and reference books. Keith Manger and John Adams, both experienced in testing all manner of field and lab technology, rationalized and instilled the need for a digital x-ray, indicating silica gel, eRH% hygrometers, trifoliate aluminum packets and Muntzer sorbition dryers to do the best seed conservation work and research possible. Everything from a £50 portable field kit to a £30,000 drying room was based on the same scientific principle: dry seed is safe seed. An unassuming glasshouse on site housed some of the rarest plants in the world, reintroductions grown from seed maintained at the MSB. I witnessed propagation of one success story of a rare South African succulent *Cylindrophyllum hallii*, as told on Kew's website (<http://www.kew.org/discover/news/plant-story-last-wild-population-cylindrophyllum-hallii-saved-extinction>). The MSB is often responsible for first documenting storage behaviour and germination testing of such rare species.

Other participants in the course came from South Africa, Malawi, Ghana, British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Australia, Azerbaijan, Israel, South Korea and Thailand. The global perspective and experiences from other countries was as informative as meeting the MSB researchers themselves. There were representatives from gene banks, herbaria, universities, forestry research institutes and botanical gardens, many with PhDs and high scientific credentials. It was a telling moment, however, when Dr. Tim Pearce, a seasoned field collector leading MSBP projects all over Africa, asked how many in the room had harvested seeds in the wild before. I was proud and shocked to be one of three, out of 15! It was reassuring to know you don't need to have a doctorate to collect seeds, and that good research depends on well-trained collectors obtaining high quality seeds.



*Top: The digital x-ray machine in the seed cleaning lab is a quick and non-destructive test to sample percentages of filled and damaged embryos before expending time and effort on long-term storage. Below: In 2001, 219 plants in a single population of *Cylindrophyllum hallii* were discovered and seed saved at the MSB. By 2002, only 6 plants remained. Propagating the 2001 seeds, the MSB successfully saved this species from extinction.*

Seed Conservation Techniques



Top: Panoramic view of the UK Native Seed Hub, another successful initiative in reducing collection pressure on rare native chalkland species by supplementing commercial trade availability. I see this as a useful means of native seed production viewed at some Ontario nurseries. Left: José Sustache, from the George R. Proctor Herbarium in Puerto Rico, demonstrates proper protocol for field herbarium vouchers that must accompany every seed collection to the MSB for identification and GIS mapping.

collect seeds of five rare species one afternoon, a five-minute walk from the dormitories. It highlighted the value of our tree seed orchards and gene banks in Ontario and Canada that bring together isolated breeding populations, helping secure a future for genetically diverse native seed production.

The course also presented case studies on how to value seed bank expertise, an important justification in the economic costs of seed banking. International projects such as the Useful Plants Project and Crop Wild Relatives program highlighted the need to target species used for food, medicine and future genetic breeding resources, often with the help and for the financial benefit of local communities. In the course of six years, these projects gained more botanical data on some species than had been accumulated in the past 100 years. Restoration projects such as the UK National Tree Seed Project aims to have samples from each of the 24 seed zones for 150 orthodox native woody species. I saw parallels in our efforts with the Ontario tree seed zones, the Forest Gene Conservation Association's Seed Collection Area Network and valuable living gene banks such as those at the University of Guelph Arboretum. I also observed a rather unique field gene bank dubbed the UK Native Seed Hub for producing seed of source-identified chalk grassland species that were unavailable in the UK's commercial trade. I helped

The weekdays were filled with intense lectures, studying in the MSB library and touring the beautiful Wakehurst grounds. And much like our study tours, I did not waste a moment of sunlight to see gardens on the weekends. I attended the RHS Wisley Flower Show on September 7th, and absolutely fell in love with that place. Impressive nursery displays from all over the UK, an astonishing European fruit collection, active trial gardens and well designed modern garden themes; I couldn't take pictures fast enough! In particular I sought out a Champion Leyland Cypress (as of 2012 taxonomy: *xHesperotropis leylandii*; accepted latin name always in conflict!). My father, Ted Spearing '81, said he recalled this tree from their NPC study tour trip in 1980; but I was so mesmerized by all the large conifers, I never pinpointed the same one. Several large trees had also been taken down recently, and many of these giants were already survivors of the Great Storm of 1987 that wreaked havoc both at Wisley and the Wakehurst site.

Seed Conservation Techniques



Although we had an inside tour of Kew on the 16th, I did a solo trip on the 13th, planning to walk the entire 326 acres over the course of both visits. There is far too much to say about Kew but my overall impressions were of living a sense of history around every turn, that the original arboreta specimens were well labeled, and treasuring the original Victorian glasshouses. Though the Temperate House was closed for renovations, the view from the top of the Palm House and the inside tour of the Herbarium and Library made up for it. Seeing Kew's "School of Horticulture" – the student dorms, the individual vegetable plots, the library – gave me a shared sense of pride in our training, as did visiting the sprawling Alpine Garden where Andrea Weddum interned. The sheer scale of the vistas and collection spaces was staggering, especially to my thoughts of maintenance! Although I will commit horticultural blasphemy by saying I liked the style of the RHS Wisley display gardens better, Kew still stands alone in its international reach. I have been to the horticultural mecca, and I rejoice in how the NPC helped Mr. Riley and I achieve this, so many years apart.



Top right: An award-winning botanical imitation of miniature desserts at the RHS Wisley Flower Show. Above: Melissa standing in the Alpine Garden at Kew Gardens, where roommate Andrea Weddum '13 completed her internship. It still looks immaculate! Below: The morning of my weekend visit to Kew, the second bench inside Victoria Gate beckoned me to sit after a long walk from the train station. I glanced at the inscription and was so happy to see this plaque, watching over the Palm House.



24 Donate to the Alumni Foundation and leave your legacy

Legacy Prairie Garden Donors

Legacy: Above \$10,000

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Test Your Plant ID



Find the answers on page 11. Submit your own puzzling botany photos to Jon Peter at: aanpcsoh@alumninpcsoh.com

Job Postings

Job Postings

Listings are provided by the Alumni Association for Alumni and Associate members. Job postings from non-Alumni or Associates may be listed under subjectivity and reciprocal agreement. For more details visit the Alumni website: <http://alumninpcsoh.com/employment/employer/>

Position: Assistant Superintendent with The Oaks of St. George Golf Club, in St. George, Ontario

For more details, go to job posting [https://www.dropbox.com/s/fpkfvzirg13z3e2/The Oaks of StGeorge Assistant Superintendent.pdf](https://www.dropbox.com/s/fpkfvzirg13z3e2/The%20Oaks%20of%20StGeorge%20Assistant%20Superintendent.pdf)

Closes: January 31, 2015

Position: Experienced Tree Climber with Arborvalley Urban Forestry Co. Inc., in Newmarket, Ontario

For more details, go to the job posting <http://alumninpcsoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Experienced-Tree-Climber.pdf>.

Position: Plant Health Care Coordinator with Arborvalley Urban Forestry Co. Inc., in Newmarket, Ontario

For more details, go to the job posting <http://alumninpcsoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Plant-Health-Care-Coordinator.pdf>.

Position: Certified Horticulturist with Landscapes by Lucin, in Greater Toronto Area, Ontario

For more details, go to job posting <http://alumninpcsoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Horticulturalist-position-2015.pdf>.

Position: Assistant Manager of Horticulture, City Zoos with the Wildlife Conservation Society in New York, NY

For more details, go to the job posting <http://jobview.monster.com/Assistant-Manager-of-Horticulture-City-Zoos-Job-New-York-NY-US-143816577.aspx?mescoid=4500767001001>



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