



President's Message

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Many gardening societies seem to be in trouble, though not always financial ones, mainly because of declining membership, and I'm afraid NAHS is no exception. With the sole exception of NEHS, all chapters of NAHS are supposed to recruit only those who are already members of NAHS, so that chapter dues are paid after NAHS dues. In recent years it seems this practice has eroded, or at least not been enforced, so that several members of NAHS chapters are not actually members of NAHS.

NEHS has been in a peculiar position since its inception, since it was formed as a separate organization called the Northeast Heather Society about the same time as NAHS was being formed from a group of heather enthusiasts, then called the Pacific Northwest Heather Society. In order for NEHS to form an association with NAHS, it was necessary to formulate a unique arrangement in which NEHS itself became a chapter of NAHS without the need for individuals in NEHS to become members of NAHS first. NEHS members are strongly encouraged to become members of NAHS, but are not absolutely required to do so. Now that NAHS is having problems due to membership losses (as are we), it is naturally looking for new sources of talent and revenue, although the NAHS balance sheet is extremely healthy due to the very low costs of producing NAHS Heather News Quarterly by electronic means.

One such source would be to establish a system in which all chapter members have to be members of NAHS, a practice which has apparently lapsed in recent years in chapters on the West Coast.

In return NAHS proposes to publish an electronic newsletter which will contain all the chapter news so that the chapters will recoup the costs of producing its own newsletter. Whether that will happen is for each chapter to decide, but that decision should not prevent you from deciding to

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A Difference of Opinion By Mary Matwey

A deleted excerpt from Donald Mackay's "Moments to Relish" article reads "We had a little shower at the end of the Annual Conference, but it came just in time to dampen a smoldering discussion that was threatening to burst into a **conflagration** over chapter rights and privileges". As editor of your newsletter I felt "conflagration" was a little strong to describe the remarks, questions and concerns put to the NAHS representative concerning a new model for NEHS and NAHS relationship without an explanation. Per the NAHS representative, the implementation of this model would be accomplished by requiring NEHS members to be dues paying members in the NAHS. Example: the NEHS membership dues is currently \$15/year but the new model would see the total dues increased to \$25/year and that money would be distributed with \$15 going to the NAHS for membership dues and \$10 going to the NEHS for its membership dues. The decrease in NEHS dues from \$15 to \$10 would be justified because additionally each chapter's information, in this new model, would be published in the NAHS Heather News Quarterly (HNQ) thereby eliminating printing and mailing cost for the NEHS newsletter. Requesting electronic copies of the HNQ is encouraged but paper copy will be available for those members with no computers.

The Heather Enthusiasts of the Redwood Empire (HERE) chapter with approx. 30 some members has embraced this new model as the email (8-15-2014) from Don Jewett, the new president elect of the NAHS and member of the H.E.R.E. chapter states:

"Briefly, membership for NAHS comes primarily from membership in our member chapters. Under the current model that most chapters use a new member or current member pays dues to the chapter and also has the option to pay dues to NAHS and be a member of the umbrella organization (NAHS). This model is not working for NAHS.

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join NAHS and benefiting from its association with The Heather Society of Great Britain.

The NEHS Board, with your input, will decide whether to proceed with the NAHS offer of a common newsletter in exchange for direct dues paid to NAHS, with a portion of dues refunded to each chapter. However, the matter becomes moot if you decide to join NAHS directly. I hope you do.

The HERE chapter has taken the lead in reestablishing the requirement that NAHS membership is required for chapter membership - a practice in common with a vast majority of garden organizations - and I wish them every success in this endeavor. NEHS, however, has a historic exemption and the question is whether NEHS wishes to relinquish it for the benefit of a national newsletter that would include news of all chapter doings and thus free chapters of the costs of producing their own newsletters..

Think about it and let your Board members know your feelings.

Welcome New Member

Mrs. Joan White
Warner, NH

DON'T BE PRUNED! WE WOULD MISS YOU!

Check the expiration date on the address page of this newsletter. Send your renewal to:

Treasurer Peter Matwey,
7 Heights Court B
Binghamton, NY 13905

The NEHS 2014 Parlor Show By Jane Murphy



One of the traditions of the annual NEHS conference is the Parlor Show.

Members bring flowering sprigs of their prize heath and heather for judging by NEHS conference attendees. Thanks to Pat Hoffman for volunteering to organize the show. Pat, along with Mary Matwey and Suzanne Barnes, took care of all the details of set-up and calculating results.

As always, it was difficult to determine the 'Best of the Best'. After much deliberation, the voters made their choices and the results are listed below.

Class	First Place	Second Place	Third Place
Single Flower Calluna	'Aberdeen' Donald Mackay	'J.H. Hamilton' Paul & Jane Murphy	'Aberdeen' Elaine Miller
Double Flower Calluna	'Dark Beauty' Paul & Jane Murphy	'Strawberry Delight' Donald Mackay	'Jimmy Dyce' Paul & Jane Murphy
Any Erica in Flower	'Mrs D.F. Maxwell' Mary Matwey	'Atrosanguinea' Paul & Jane Murphy	<i>Erica x watsonii</i> Mary Matwey
Calluna Bud Bloomer	Unknown Pat Hoffman	'Aphrodite' Donald Mackay	Triple Play Mary Matwey

The HERE chapter has changed our bylaws and structured our dues so that paid membership in our chapter also pays for membership in NAHS. The option to be in or out of the North American Heather Society has been eliminated. Though some may argue otherwise I firmly believe that this is to the benefit of everyone; NAHS, chapter and new or current member.”

Maybe this was just too charged of an issue to be introduced at the end of a very full NEHS, 3 day conference and your President, Donald Mackay, diplomatically tabled this discussion until the next board meeting of the NEHS. The next Board meeting of the NEHS will be in April, 2015, most likely at the heather trimming event at Fort Tryon Park in Manhattan, NY.

In the past, the general membership of the Northeast Heather Society has been very reluctant in responding to requests for their opinions on issues of governance within this society.

Please consider the enclosed list of pros and cons of the proposed model for the relationship of NEHS to NAHS. Your NEHS Board of Directors needs your opinion.

Detach the opinion form and mail to:

Mary Matwey	or	Donald Mackay
Editor, Heather Notes, NEHS		President, NEHS
7 Heights Ct.		135 Deerfield Lane
Binghamton, NY 13905		Pleasantville, NY 10570
Or: email your opinion to	mmatwey@stny.rr.com	or dammackay@gmail.com

Be sure to read the “President’s Message” that expounds on the historical aspects of this issue and encourages your participation in this poll.

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The Lasdon Heather Garden Expansion by Tolly Beck

Volunteers from the Northeast Heather Society returned to Lasdon in late June to expand the existing Heather Garden that they had installed in 2008. Once again their Garden Liaison, Bill Dowley, provided, at no charge to Lasdon, small pots of beautiful heathers ready to be planted. The Heather Garden is located adjacent to the goldfish (and bullfrog) pond near the Shop at Lasdon. The new area was cleared of weeds and usable plants were saved for replanting in other areas of the park. Once the weeds were removed, the natural rock placement became evident and recreated the appearance of a true rock garden. The soil in the garden expansion area had to be prepared with the addition of peat moss and compost, to create good drainage. When all the planting was finished, the newly expanded garden looked beautiful. The large bullfrogs who are residents of the pond gave their overwhelming approval by coming out onto the rocks to sun themselves in their new garden area.

Among the volunteers were Mary and Pete Matwey, Elaine Miller and the current President of the Northeast Heather Society, Donald Mackay, a true expert on heathers. The guide provides excellent information on soil preparation, planting, fertilizing, propagation, and the general maintenance of heathers. Many visitors to Lasdon are amazed that heathers not only do well, they can thrive. Thanks to the Northeast Heather Society, they are finding out that heathers are for sale at the Shop at Lasdon. Donald's guide is also available for purchase at the Shop for anyone who would like some help in getting heathers established in their own garden. Some of the small pots of heathers are for sale at the Shop for anyone who would like some help in getting heathers established in their own garden. Come by to see the newly expanded Heather Garden on your next visit to Lasdon. You'll be delighted with the colors and rich texture of this garden.



Donald is the lead author of a wonderful Regional Heather Growing Guide. The guide provides excellent information on soil preparation, planting, fertilizing, propagation, and the general maintenance of heathers. Many visitors to Lasdon are amazed that heathers not only do well, they can thrive. Thanks to the Northeast Heather Society, they are finding out that heathers are for sale at the Shop at Lasdon. Donald's guide is also available for purchase at the Shop for anyone who would like some help in getting heathers established in their own garden. Some of the small pots of heathers are for sale at the Shop for anyone who would like some help in getting heathers established in their own garden. Come by to see the newly expanded Heather Garden on your next visit to Lasdon. You'll be delighted with the colors and rich texture of this garden.

Heather Garden on your next visit to Lasdon. You'll be delighted with the colors and rich texture of this garden.

Thank you to the Northeast Heather Society for your devotion to educating people about the beauty of heathers.

Moments to Relish - NEHS Annual Meeting 2014

by Donald Mackay

First among these naturally is the Rhubarb Relish that made the Sunday Brunch at the Doyle's garden in Danielson, CT such a salivating occasion. Judy says its not a relish but a chutney, which is still an invigorating dish for a Vermonter whose first glimpse of renewed life in Spring is the large leaf of *Rheum rhaponticum*. Richard Canovan from England joined in the discussion, or attempted to, when Judy moved on to describing her Rhubarb Bars in an accent suitable for Bostonians. Richard must have thought she was referring to some Eastern dish made famous by Ali Baba and some of his forty thieves. Anyway, I gladly stole another one.

Moment number two came when Paul Murphy related some trying moments when a couple of different horticultural tastes came a plant sale to buy a shrub, in this case a witch-hazel, I believe. The couple left when the husband declared that should she buy this shrub it would have to be planted by her second husband.

Overnight there must have been some resolution as a man with his hat pulled down over his eyes came by the next morning to buy the disputed shrub. When challenged that he had visited the previous day, he gave a reluctant admission that he was the repentant first husband, presumably just trying to prevent a second one from taking over his conjugal duties.

At least the Murphy's got a sale out of it, but seemed less successful at selling heathers at a large Highland Games in Bethlehem, PA. The story started out in indignation at the thrifty habits of the Scots, or perhaps it was their obvious preference for drinking to heathers over planting them. Somewhere it veered into the mysteries of haggis, as if haggis were to blame for peculiar pecuniary habits. I think Paul was trying to bury haggis instead of eating it - had he ever tasted it? - but I assured him haggis could not grow no matter how carefully he planted it.

Aberdonians surely like their haggis, and rhubarb is one of the few fruits besides potatoes and turnips that prosper in that climate, so haggis had its revenge and I had my prized ribbons to relish and some prized rubabas too, thanks to Judy.

A memorable conference thanks to the Doyles - congrats to Ralph on his cooking skills - and to Priscilla Williams for her contacts, and to Ann Sinton for guiding us through the beautiful Grossman, Levin and Penney gardens. And of course to the Matweys - Mary for her parliamentary skills, and to Peter for wearing three hats with effortless ease and faultless bookkeeping.

It was very pleasant to have a small group from the West Coast in attendance with enough NAHS proxies to hold their Annual Conference, and to have Ella May Wulff remind us that it was time for the Northeast Heather Society to produce the candidates to compete for national offices like President and Treasurer.

I concur, and if you or someone you know with secret ambitions for the highest office in the land will step forward, I will let you into my secret for winning Parlor Shows and high office. It's either rhubarb or haggis, but I won't tell you now. Better than helicopter rides anyway.

Finally, I should mention the dinner at the Riviera Portuguese Restaurant on Friday and at Gregg's Restaurant the next day. The two restaurants were obviously vying for the title of serving the largest portions in New England. One dessert was enough to feed the assembly later that night to hear the results of the Parlor Show announced by Pat Hoffman. Pat, Suzanne Barnes and Mary Matwey put considerable effort into organizing this contest. They must have spotted the colored thread I used to mark my entries, raising the distinct possibility I was voting for someone else's entry. How else could I have failed to get the Blue Ribbon for each class?

But wait for next year. It seems that sentiment is running in favor of a southern location for our next conference, but how far south is far from certain. If you have views on this topic be sure to make them known. And consider the possibilities of Southern cooking. Will it compare with Portuguese?

The Seekonk Garden

By Judy Doyle

On Friday afternoon of the conference we visited the home garden of a professional landscaper, Andrew Grossman. Andrew's place is hidden around the inner curved end of a longish driveway off a busy road; you walk through the tall hedges and gasp at the reveal of the house and upper gardens. If you were to dream up a picturesque old house set in and surrounded by beautiful cottage gardens, with an adorable dog romping on the manicured lawns, you would have the pleasure of seeing what we saw.

The gardens are planted closely with just about every favorite classic plant we gardeners love (with the sad exception of heather). Facing the front of the house is a path leading up a knoll, past landscaped fish ponds up to a folly from where one can soak in the bucolic scene below.

Or, from the center lawn, follow the footpath through an arbor and around to the terraced gardens behind the house. A garden version of a show stopper could be the large patio, planted with lush green carpet thyme between large pavers set in a diamond pattern. All around the edges are closely planted colorful perennials and annuals, leaving not a bare inch for a weed to get a foothold.



Step down from the patio and continue down and around on narrow paths taking hairpin turns between more and more gorgeous plantings. Beyond is the Runnins (that is the correct spelling) River, idyllic in the summer, lovely in the autumn and a site for winter ice skating. Andrew lets the gardens disappear in the winter and he enjoys the long view down to the river while enjoying the respite from garden chores we all appreciate. If you missed the conference tour, take heart. You can contact Andrew to book your own tour, or you can visit his website www.andrewgrossman.com to see gorgeous photos of his display gardens, see episodes of his cable tv show "In the Garden", and follow his blog "A year in My Garden".

A Visit to Sylvan Nursery By Donald Mackay

A major event for me during this year's NEHS Annual Conference was the visit to Sylvan Nursery, situated in beautiful southeast Massachusetts pretty close to the Rhode Island line, not the railroad line but the State one. In wending our way from Dartmouth, a pretty town full of Cape Cods and clapboard, we passed many woods, but the nursery is in open country suited for cows and market gardens.

Rather than engage the owners in heated disputes over siting a Sylvan Nursery in open country, it might be worth an aside to Scrabble afficianados that Sylvan, and related words, can be spelled either with an i or a y. The trouble seems to be the Romans who had both *silva* and *sylvus* meaning a wood. *Sylvus* sounds masculine but since most Latin names for trees (*Fagus*, *Quercus*, etc) have the masculine-us ending, but in fact are feminine (hence *Quercus alba*). I assume *sylvus* is also feminine and declined as such. I believe some Roman after a night of heavy drinking could not see the gender of the local tree god, got confused, and thus made it clear to us he could not see the forest for the trees.

The nursery manager received us very cordially and gave us free run of the place, so naturally we gravitated *en masse* to the heather section where we saw the propagation beds and greenhouses housing thousands of treasures.

Alas, this number is likely to go down as Sylvan said they were halving the varieties offered for future sale and may only offer 50 instead of the usual 150. *Calluna vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale' and 'Peter Sparkes' are off the list, but that was for a fungus problem shared exclusively by those two related cultivars.

Their propagation system was very interesting. Long benches evenly covered with several inches of 'triple washed' sand. The significance of 'triple washed' is unknown as to affecting either impurities or particle size. It is bought under that name. The key fact is that it compacts nicely. No additives like peat or Perlite, just pure sand. Professor Richard Munson, the first NEHS President, taught biology at Smith College and told those at one of our first meetings in Northampton, MA that he taught propagation of heathers using an aquarium with a few inches of moist sand in the bottom, covered with a glass plate, and placed on top of a refrigerator over winter to receive the warmth from the cooling coils. Of all the propagation media I've tried the best was always pure sand, even play sand which is often ground-up coral (which is, heaven forbid, limestone).



However, many of my propagation methods do better at propagating mildew than heathers, and I think sand works because it can be sterile and has little organic content for the fungus to work on. Coarse sand works well because it allows air into the rooting zone, but it should not be too coarse. The right size is that which sticks to the roots when you check on the cuttings' progress. If it falls off that seems to create later losses in potting on, perhaps through damage to the fragile root geometry. Either way my potting-on losses almost match my rooting successes and commercial nurseries have nothing to fear. I gave up the aquarium for the tightly sealed plastic boxes used for baked goods, mainly because it was hard for me to get rooted cuttings out of it without knocking off the sand. More delicate hands should not have that problem.

Sylvan uses oil at 55° F for bottom heating of the benches, and an overhead misting system with a wide range of operating conditions. They insert cuttings late in the year (even December) and cover them over winter with a spun fiber blanket, though the greenhouses never get that cold. By contrast, George MacKinnon at Waquoit Nurseries happily left his cuttings to freeze over winter. He said freezing was not a problem. They do use a little slow-release fertilizer at Sylvan in their potting mix, and can get plants growing in 2" pots by mid-summer.

I noted these plants in 2" pots had extended stems with many flowers, and the foliage was definitely on the light green side. The bud-bloomers were doing well, and even the old cultivars *Calluna vulgaris* 'David Eason' and 'Underwoodii' (they were called late bloomers, not bud-bloomers in those days) were fully budded with lots of color. Are these nursery-improved versions? When I grew 'David Eason' and 'Underwoodii' in olden days they were really late bloomers, so late they had few buds and little color. The Sylvan versions are vast improvements.

I was glad to see *C. vulgaris* 'E.F. Brown' on offer. It is by far (I think) the best heather for Sept.-Oct. viewing when most others (excepting the doubles and bud-bloomers) are past their best. Again, the Sylvan offering seemed way ahead of those in my garden, and again the foliage was paler than I remembered.

Such considerations of the consequence of commercial practice were lost upon us as we happily walked the aisles and pounced on old favorites or newly intended treasures. I'd have pounced more but Sylvan keeps faith with its commercial clients (they are completely wholesale) and charges visitors (even the NEHS) the full retail price if they do not have a wholesale account.

Now I regret my lack of propagation and potting on skills. As Marlon Brando said, "I could have been a contender."

The Dartmouth Garden

By Suzanne Barnes

The five acre property of Dr. and Mrs. Levin in Dartmouth, MA is a showcase of wonderful, soothing green areas punctuated by garden areas that demonstrate their plant passions. The upper end of the property is anchored by a house designed by an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright and is reminiscent of 'Falling Waters'. Their privacy is enhanced by a large planting of junipers, but the visitor soon notices a hemerocallis area, then a rose garden bordered by a stone wall covered with Clematis 'Noguchi' and many spikes of verbena bonariensis, a succulent collection displayed in wonderful containers, an annual garden between the house and greenhouse with a front planting of Rudbeckia 'Henry Iler', a wonderful pole-like maple, and a well-fenced vegetable garden. This upper area of the long property is separated by a driveway and a large rectangular grassy area framed by two opposite facing gardens. One is a tropical garden with banana trees and brightly colored flowers. Non-zone hardy plants are removed in the fall, overwintered in their greenhouse and returned to their place in the spring. The other garden contains spring blooming bulbs and native plants. These two gardens lead the visitor into the newest area of their gardening plan: a hillside arboretum. Wide, gravel filled paths weave in and out of plantings protected by a high canopy of trees. The path ends in the "Stumpery" and Japanese Maple garden. The Stumpery is a novel natural sculpture garden where large tree stumps with their roots were upended, power washed and then left to weather and astonish. The owners work with Nan Sinton of Sinton & Michener Associates. She calls this garden a "contemporary stroll garden" which invites the visitor to explore different garden vignettes. It is a sensory delight.



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Penney Property

By Jane Murphy



As we walked up the driveway of the Penney property, we first saw a vernal pool nestled amongst tall trees and shrubs. The pool was surrounded by groupings of Joe Pye Weed, Black-Eyed Susans, Queen Anne's Lace, and Cardinal Flowers in bloom. The riot of bright colors enticed us to venture down for a closer look.

Once reached the top of the slope, the views of the Westport River took our breath away. The owners had situated their house to take advantage of the river view. The subtle gardens of inkberry hollies, Oakleaf Hydrangea and other shrubs provided the perfect backdrop for the spectacular views.

As we continued our tour we noted whimsy everywhere - colorful chairs and gates, fish 'swimming' through a garden bed, and a lovely *Clematis heracleifolia* 'Mrs. Robert Dryden' surrounding a window. We were delighted to find a hidden conversation area, complete with stone chairs. At the end of the tour we seated ourselves on the granite terrace, reluctant to leave those amazing river views.



HEATHER NOTES, all rights reserved, is published quarterly by the Northeast Heather Society (NEHS), a tax-exempt organization and a chapter of the North American Heather Society (NAHS).

The purpose of the Northeast Heather Society is to foster interest in growing heathers (*Calluna, Erica, Daboecia, Cassiope, Phyllocladus* and *Andromeda*) in northeastern North America, by serving as a conduit of educational information for both the experienced and the novice gardener.

MEMBERSHIP in the Northeast Heather Society is open to anyone who pays dues to this chapter. Membership benefits include: a subscription to this quarterly newsletter, participation in chapter meetings and elections, borrowing privileges for slide/power point presentations, and, most valuable of all, contact with fellow heather gardeners who mostly live in or near your growing zone, all willing to share helpful advice and their experiences. A family membership permits more than one family member to vote and participate in all NEHS activities for an additional \$5 per year fee above the annual dues. The family membership includes all household members residing at the same address and each member has one vote. Each household will receive only one copy of Heather Notes.

Dues for an Individual: \$15 a year; \$28 for a two year membership; \$40 for a three year membership

Dues for a Family \$20 a year; \$33 for a two year membership; \$45 for a three year membership

Remit payment to: Peter Matwey, Treasurer, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

For digital presentations, contact Bill Dowley, Keene, NH. Tel. (603) 355-8801; wdowley@ne.rr.com

WEB INFORMATION: North American Heather Society website: www.northamericanheathersoc.org

NORTHEAST HEATHER SOCIETY website: www.northeastheathersociety.org

ADVERTISING: Quarter page ad: \$35 per issue; \$25 per issue if advertising in two or more consecutive issues.

Contact: Pat Hoffman (856) 467-4711; njgardener15@hotmail.com

BE A CONTRIBUTOR TO HEATHER NOTES:

Do you have a suggestion, a question, a story, an anecdote, a poem, or a photo to share? Contact the Content editor:

Mary Matwey, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905 (607) 723 1418 mmatwey@stny.rr.com

All material may be edited for clarity and length.

DEADLINES FOR EACH ISSUE:

March 20–June 20–September 20–December 20

