

Hosta Horizons

Newsletter of the

Russ O'Harra Hosta Society

October 2017

President's Message

Happy Fall! We finally received some cooler weather and some rain! My hostas all seem to have taken a big sigh of relief with the rain and the cooler temperatures. My husband Keith and I are both thrilled to have a break from watering. Hopefully we can all enjoy these cooler temperatures as we work in our yards preparing for winter.

I am excited to announce that our speaker for the fall meeting will be a dear friend of mine, John Pearson. John is an ecologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. He is responsible for conducting inventories of the natural lands in Iowa and maintaining the list of threatened and endangered plant species in our state. He joined the DNR in 1985 and has now been in Iowa for 32 years. He and his wife, Peg, live near Indianola. He will be doing a presentation on "The Ledges Lichen Trail." I first met John years ago on Project Aware, an annual river clean up done by canoe or kayak, that each year concentrates on a different section of river in a different part of the state. We weren't formally introduced, in fact I couldn't even have described him to you. After a long day of paddling and working hard pulling trash out of the river, I joined a group around a campfire after it was already dark. I sat and listened to a discussion that was underway about lichen, something I didn't know anything about. I realized as they were talking, that I had seen many in my life, I just hadn't known what they were or anything about them. I was intrigued and learned a lot that night before I crawled in my tent, tired and ready for a good nights sleep. Though it didn't seem long before I woke to the worst storm I have ever experienced camping. There was water running right through my tent, a lot of water, like a small river! Thankfully I had an air mattress and I piled all my gear up on it with me while praying the trees above us didn't give up any of their branches. Later John and I met officially through kayaking, and I loved every adventure we went on, as I always learned something new every time I was with him. Whether it was about fossils, trees, native plants, invasive plants, kayaking or more. One day we were having a discussion about the worst storms we had ever camped in, and we realized that we were both describing the same storm at the same location. What a surprise to find out that we had been on Project Aware together. And then it didn't take long for me to realize that he was speaker I was so intently listening to that night. John is such a wealth of information, he knows so much about so many things, our state is truly blessed that he chose to come here. I am thrilled that he agreed to be our speaker for our fall meeting and I hope you all find lichen and the lichen trail as interesting as I do.

I am looking forward to our fall meeting. I love our get together's for many reasons, the speakers, the great company, and the food. The potluck is always delicious, as I found at the very first meeting I attended, Hosta lovers are also amazing cooks. I am also excited to share some ideas that I have for trying to entice some new members. And I know that there will be at least one great door prize at this meeting. So I hope you all can make it. See you October 8th!



Access the ROHS website at
www.rohs.org

The Russ O'Hara Hosta Society is an educational society open to all those interested in the genus Hosta. Its purpose is to promote the growing and enjoyment of hostas. Including their use in landscape design, the cultivation and development of new cultivars. The goals of the society shall be in keeping with those of the American Hosta Society.

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Next meeting:

October 8th, 2017

Location:

Iowa Arboretum.

Potluck will start at 12:30pm

2017 Summer Tour/Auction-"How, Why, When, What, Where, Who"

The Summer Tour/Auction event is the primary fund-raiser for the ROHS and features tours of selected gardens in a geographic area of the ROHS membership. Due to the vacant position of Vice President (this officer leads organization and management of the event), it appeared doubtful that we would have a 2017 tour. However, creative minds and a supportive membership at the spring meeting resulted in development of a very successful tour and auction held in the Pella area. ROHS members Bruce & Trudy Van Wyk had closed their "Holland Drive Gardens" and moved from their small acreage, selling their property two years ago. The new owners are very active professionals who had their first child in May 2017, and had very limited interest and experience in landscaping. The gorgeous extensive landscaping featuring Hosta (many were mature offspring from Trudy's hybridizing program-was ignored). When ROHS treasurer David Dettmann, and more importantly a neighbor friend of the new homeowners who are not gardeners, learned that they planned to drastically revise the landscaping by dozing the plantings and converting it to lawn the opportunity for a salvage rescue tour/auction was seen. The concept was to have attendees converge on the former Van Wyk gardens, auction off the plants and dig them on the spot for the winners. The logistics of creating the event for the first identified date of June 4 were significant, and resulted in a date change to July 9. It had been hoped that the later date would get lucky with the weather; it was dry, but very warm and humid. As it turned out, the date change also resulted in a surprise, as well it allowed time to make a significant change in the event. Despite very hot and humid weather, David, and Trudy & Bruce Van Wyk returned to their former home and harvested 40+ plants, assisted by Bruce's "Neptune Fork" (massive strong custom-made steel fork) and Trudy's recall of plant names. Nearly all of the harvested plants were mature clumps, many plants were noted to be Dorothy Benedict and other special seedlings, some were "No ID," and all were selected to be of collector interest. David later returned to the gardens and harvested another 40+ plants (he was now certified as an independent operator of Neptune's Fork), and the challenge then became preparing and maintaining the 80-90 plants for the ROHS auction. If you remember the 2017 summer: hot, humid, and DRY. One of the harvested plants was a large clump of "Ebb Tide" and was taken to the Midwest Regional Hosta Society tour/auction in Kansas City in June, and as a rarely available and huge plant, was the top money maker at \$210.

July 9th ROHS Summer Tour/Auction Review

Tour featured tours of four gardens. Garden #1 was Connie Dingeman's "Rustic Garden" in Pella. The Rustic Garden had many Hosta and companion plants around her city home lot, with extensive use of rustic garden items from her farm background, rocks collected by her husband, birdhouses, and some small water features. A short distance away, Bruce & Trudy Van Wyk's "Townie Garden" showed how they moved from nearly 4 acres of shaded hill sides to a flat, sterile, small, tree-less, sunny city lot. Truck loads of plants and trees were artfully arranged at their new Pella home, and highlighted their favorite hybridized Hosta amidst shrubs, daylilies, succulents, and other perennials. Visitors were treated to mimosas and Trudy's baked treats for the Sunday morning "Patio Time" at the Townie Garden. The tour then left the Pella city limits and journeyed to "Dutchman's Landing-East" for gardens #3-4. Garden #3 was Ron Humeston's "Marlys's Memories Garden" which he has lovingly and tediously maintained for his past partner (and former ROHS president) Marlys Anderson. Ron's dedication was apparent with impeccable lush mature Hosta clumps and various companion plants with art pieces in the many garden plots enjoyed while traversing the pathways on "her" side of the landscaping and on "his" side which featured a stream, waterfall, and small pond. ROHS tourists also had a chance to visit garden #4, David & Betsy Dettmann's "Good Intentions & Type-B Garden" located just 3 doors away from the Humeston garden. Thanks to the Garden tour hosts and hostesses, and their assistants for their preparation work and hospitality!

All tourists survived Garden #4 and returned to Garden #3 for the potluck and auction. Knoxville's "Rib Shack" provided a catered BBQ lunch, and post-auction treats of Pella Dutch bakery items were enjoyed. Special thanks to Ron for siting the lunch/auction, and Robin & Carl Vos for hostess/hosting service!

Prior to the formal auction, the surprise for the event was revealed: "guest" visitors from North Carolina were in attendance! Former ROHS members and very active hybridizers (many of us likely have various plants from them, including our prior convention and anniversary plants) Greg Johnson, his mom, and his partner Lance Ferguson were unexpected attendees. As Greg & Lance were in Marshalltown the prior days visiting Greg's mother, and happened to discover that ROHS had the tour/auction event nearby (relatively) in Pella, they made their surprise appearance, and further supported ROHS by taking a few plants back to NC. We also were delighted to see Bob & Jackie Pool, long-time ROHS members, who hadn't been able to attend ROHS events in recent years.

Auctioneer Bruce Van Wyk had able assistance from Ellen & Frank Glasgow, Lance, David & Betsy Dettmann, Deke & Marilyn Gliem (with Trudy & Greg in identifying some of the "No ID" plants) in auctioning off more than 2 trailers of plants and other donated materials. Some of the plants were in 20 gallon pots and required wheel barrow transport. A total of \$4,780 was raised thru the auction of the 105 items donated by members and the "rescued/salvaged" Hosta from the former Holland Drive Gardens. Thanks to the great generous winning bidders: Ken Outzen (\$460), Traci Seltz (\$430), Craig Taylor (\$415), Connie Dingeman (\$350), Cindy Schnoebelen (\$345), Dean Koob (\$320), Trudy Van Wyk (\$275), Mary Van Berkum (\$265), Robin Vos (\$265), Darrell Jensen (\$260), Ellen & Frank Glasgow (\$210), Pat Beck (new member who joined at the event, \$205), Jeff & Marie White (\$155), Lisa Swanson (\$135), David Dettmann (\$135), Deke & Marilyn Gliem (\$130), Donna Miller (\$120), Anne Lynam (\$90), Deanna & Tom Jones (\$80), Lance Ferguson (\$70), Greg Johnson (\$60), and Jeannie Belzer (\$5). Thanks to our wonderful donors-in addition to the harvesting work of Bruce & Trudy and David (and the very generous neighbors Eric & Kerri Dolash who allowed us access to the gardens and plants)-Traci Seltz, Paula Brain, Lisa Swanson, Dean Koob & Ken Outzen, Donna Miller, Ellen & Frank Glasgow, Deke & Marilyn Gliem, and Jeff & Marie White. The top items were "Fickle Blue Jeans seedling" (\$150), "Lemon Meringue" (\$150), "Dorothy Benedict seedling" (\$130), "Shady Affair" (large clump, ROHS Midwest convention plant, \$130), "No ID" (\$115), "Dorothy Benedict seedling" (\$110), "Maya OS" (\$100), "Tattoo" (Greg Johnson plant, \$100), "Potters Hand" (\$100), "Nightlife" (\$95), "Spartacus" (\$90), Paula Brain's "Garden Spinner" art object (\$80).

Profound THANKS to all of the people who attended, supported, participated, assisted, and enjoyed the ROHS 2017 Summer Tour and Auction. It was an unexpected success and much fun!