



Newsletter



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 28:5 June 2017

President's Message

At this point in the year, it is time to reflect on, and enjoy, the activities of the past year (and deadhead the rhododendrons, by the way). Thank you to the solid, hardworking Plant Fair Planning Committee and the many wonderfully enthusiastic volunteers who ensured that the 2017 Garden Fair was the most successful to date. While the hordes of eager plant hunters crowded the aisles with a fervor generally reserved for Boxing Day Sales, the club volunteers rose to the occasion. This was truly a club effort and could not have been done without you.

A special mention is also due to the kind people who opened their gardens this year for the garden tours: Al and Liz Murray, Don and Louise Loewen, and Mona Kaiser and Dr. Tom Rimmer. And, Richard Jacques shared his and Marie's garden however difficult that may still

CVRS Annual Summer Picnic
Saturday, June 17; 11:30 am
In the Garden of Maria and Siggie Kemmler

(More details on page 9)

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CVRS Garden Fair

Photo by Sharon Tillie



have been. Please recognize that your generousities, particularly this spring when so many gardens were set back by cold and rainy weather and guest turnout was no doubt disappointing, are greatly appreciated. It is of great value and inspiration to visit your gardens and speak with you, their creators.

We are looking for two new Members-at-Large this year. Many thanks go to outgoing directors, Sigg Kemmler and Peter Lewis, for their significant contributions and service in past years. If you would like to become more involved and are not sure how to do so, this is a rewarding first step requiring minimal time commitment. The duties of this position are not onerous, so please consider it. To read more about it go to <http://cowichanrhodos.ca/about-us/>. The Constitution and bylaws describe the various positions. Let us continue to grow as a passionate group of special individuals who share the fascination of gardens and plants, the pursuit of life-long learning, the continuous sharing of knowledge, and the camaraderie that this club offers.

Last but not least, let's celebrate a successful year for the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society at Sigg and Maria's on June 17th !

See you in the Kemmler's garden!

Barrie Agar, President

Official Elections

for the 2017- 2018

CVRS Executive Committee

**Will take place at the June CVRS Meeting
at the Summer Picnic, kindly hosted by
Maria and Sigg Kemmler**



VOLUNTEER FOR A POSITION OF FUN!!

Have a great time next year by becoming FULLY involved in the more enjoyable aspects of club membership!

The CVRS offers growing opportunities and a medium for propagating your great ideas!

**Be the growth and changes you
would love to see!!
Share your willingness, interests,
skills and talents.**

Letter *from the Editor*



The 'Merry Month of May' is a crucial for gardeners. What a fresh thought, Editor---"thou breath of [Spring's] being"! Okay---Percy B. Shelley again---and definitely too much poetry. Who has time to ponder poetry in spring? I did, and I found that May is not the month for a gardener to be bedridden with a leg infection.

Eventually, I eased off the couch, limped through the garden, returned to the deck, and propped my red and swollen leg onto the patio table near my husband. "So, has your garden missed you, Hon?" His too direct question elicited an immediate allergic response in my eyes, and my already wrinkled lips distorted further. "It's a disaster!" The site of my main spring project of creating order and health to my strawberry fields, where deep green plants and large white blossoms separated by fresh sawdust pathways should have been, was a deluge of knee-deep waves of yellow buttercups in blossom. The thistles in the asparagus bed and the raspberry rows were tall enough to prick my heart, and sudden death of shrubs and trees would require chainsaw pruning. George suggested I was tired and that it was probably time for my meds. True.



See the irises before the buttercup groundcover

The most effective was a dose of the news. Almost immediately, I began to hear distant and haunting voices---voices of perspective and insight from dramatists and poets. From a Wildling, "You know nothing, [Verna Buhler], and from D.H. Lawrence " . . . [you] have something to expiate, / A pettiness." It was appropriate to berate myself, as I really have no idea what a disaster looks or feels like. The only justifiable emotions I should own are gratitude and wonder. To live here on the West Coast of Canada, surrounded by diverse, verdant growth is awe-inspiring. I have no right to moan or complain, as I am truly fortunate!

So, let's all celebrate on June 17th, by picnicking in an immaculate garden setting amidst tall sheltering trees, fully decked out in our finest Canadian red, and surrounded by special friends. Life's not just good; **Life's Great!**

Verna Buhler

A Look Back: Cowichan Valley Garden Fair 2017

By Carrie Nelson, Photos by Sharon Tillie

Once again our Society hosted a very successful Garden Fair at the Cowichan Exhibition Grounds. The timing was perfect for getting gardeners out after a cold and rainy start to our spring.



The pre-planning and organization began in the Fall 2016 with a small and enthusiastic group of volunteers bringing new ideas and contacts to the process. They took on the duties of soliciting new and repeat vendors, and key Gold Sponsors, as well as donations for the popular draw gifts. They ensured we had a wide selection of plants, marketed the Fair via paper, Internet, TV, magazines, and with other clubs. They grew plants to give away, determined the hall layout, organized the volunteers, and problem-solved all the last minute details.

The Fair is also successful because of the great turnout of club volunteers and their families for the big day. These folks put up signs and banners, laid out the refreshments, organized the truss show, donated plants to the CVRS table, helped vendors set up and clean up; they helped customers with questions, controlled traffic and circulated the carts, they took the money and balanced the books! Enough cannot be said how great it is to have enthusiastic and selfless members jump in and do their parts. **So thank you all!**

As we all know, there is always room for improvement. We have some ideas as to how to curtail the tsunami to the exit and to encourage patrons to stay longer and enjoy the show. If you would

like to offer your suggestions on any aspect of the Fair that you think needs “tweaking”, please do so by emailing the CVRS President (barrie.agar@shaw.ca).

Proceeds from the 2017 Fair exceeded all previous years. The treasurer will have details at the AGM. Of the proceeds, \$500 will be used for the beautification of a public place in the Cowichan Valley.

Thanks again everyone!



Garden Fair Delights!

SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM, AND
ALWAYS LEARNING MORE



ENJOYING OUR OWN HAND
CRAFTED SPIRIT: CVRS TRUSS

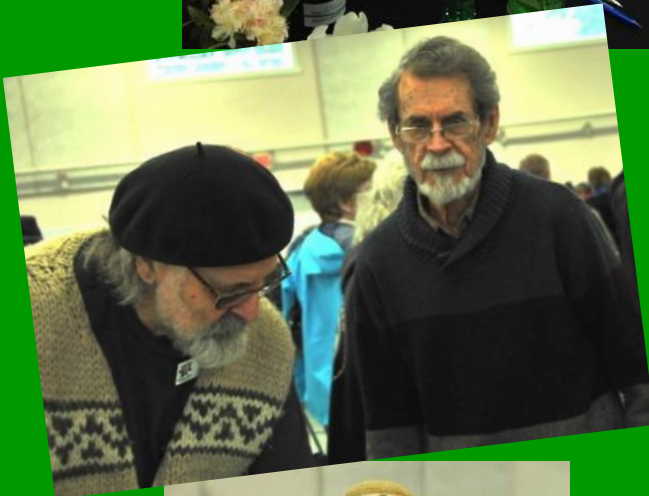


HUSTLING, HAPPY VENDORS



OFFERING SPECIAL SKILLS - TEAMWORK

Checkout, Judging, Pricing, Promoting membership, Raffles,
Setup, Transporting



RUNNING INTO GOOD FRIENDS



LEADERSHIP





SUMMER PICNIC

Saturday, June 17, 2017; 11:30am

Hosted by Maria and Siggie Kemmler

3730 Gibbons Road, Duncan, BC



Theme: "Canadian Enthusiasm"

WEAR RED – Shirts, Hats, Pants, Dresses, Shoes

Potluck Meal:

Provided: Main meat or fish will be provided
Punch, some spirits

Bring: Your favourite picnic dishes to share --- Savoury, Sweet, Salads, or Bread
Personal Drinks

Seating and Eating:

Bring: Lawn Chairs
Personal Plates and Cutlery



SIGGIE AND MARIA'S GARDEN:



... about this intriguing fellow in our club? An element of creativity and magic tends to exude from him. Do you ever feel like a bit of a *Muggle* around him?





Parting with Bare Point

Joe and Irene Hudak were encouraged to take their time and look around a little more. Why would anyone want to buy property that was simply rock and swamp? What could be done with that kind of land?

“Poor city folk; don’t really know what they’re getting themselves into.” Whether Joe and Irene had a clear vision of it’s ultimate potential and value, or not, they had already fallen in love with this unique rocky outlook at Bare Point just outside Chemainus. They moved forward with their purchase, and slowly built a spectacular home and property.

It wasn’t the first time they had accepted the challenge of building a home on a difficult site. In Saltair, they built on a steep pie-shaped lot, extending their house right above the ocean water. The stories they sometimes share with friends during a coffee break in the middle of their busy days are fascinating. “For us, it has always been more the process,” Irene explains, “not necessarily the product.” Whatever Joe and Irene do, they do whole-heartedly, in a courageous and bold manner.



They have accomplished, and contributed so very much to their community over the years. For over thirty years, Joe owned a pharmacy in Chemainus. So very typical of the Joe that we, in the rhododendron club, have all come to know and love, when the calls came in to assist the community with animal care, his compassion and willingness to offer help where needed, led him to serve as the community veterinarian as well. At some point, Joe developed an interest in rhododendrons, and this led him to build a green house to grow rhododendrons and begin a small nursery business. “What began as a hobby,” he admits with a chuckle, “turned into an obsession.”

Irene, with creative energy to an extreme, became an entrepreneur in the world of art. She owned, not one, but three Great West Art stores in Chemainus, each specializing in unique styles of art. This began when the mill in Chemainus closed and people were desperate for employment. Irene and

Joe recognized a community need, spotted a vacant storefront and within two weeks opened a shop where people could sell their handicrafts. Years later, people continued to stop by to express their gratitude for the opportunity that the shop had offered them at such a crucial period in their lives. As the new character of Chemainus took shape, Great West Art added a print and framing shop, and then a gallery for the original works of local artists.

Animals too, learned to appreciate and trust Joe and Irene. It is so true, that “you can tell a lot about the character of people by how they treat their critters.” (Russ Morris) Wildlife inhabited Bare Point before people developed the properties, and clearly continued to feel safe in the Hudak yard. The events on the first of June one year were particularly memorable. Irene was weeding and despite her gentle shooing, a doe was lingering near enough to nudge her. It was Irene who moved, however, because under the rhododendron where she was working rested a newly born fawn. Then they noticed, just outside their living room window on their lawn, lay another doe, struggling in fawn-birth. Only a short while later, another doe with two tottering fawns

emerged from the shrubbery.

Animals chose to live cooperatively on the point as well. Irene described how a mother bear, with two cubs in tow, simply batted two annoying dogs from her path and continued on her way. Feral cats have learned to announce their dinner hour to the Hudaks.

But it was Taurus and Tanya who demonstrated absolute confidence in the quality of this special couple. Once the two pups had spent a little time with Joe and Irene, and were returned to their original home on Thetis Island, no other home would suffice. Although a body of water between Thetis Island and Joe and Irene’s home on the water’s edge in Saltair separated them, Taurus and Tanya planned and accomplished more than anyone could have expected of a pair of sibling pups to achieve. Joe and Irene were returning home one day from having visited Thetis Island. When the ferry neared the Chemainus terminal, Taurus and Tanya crept out of their hiding place on board the ferry and presented themselves to Joe and Irene. The pups made their point and so lived the rest of their lives with Joe and Irene.



Despite very hard work and demanding schedules Joe and Irene never regretted their choices. Not until recently, in any case, when they faced a difficult decision. They describe the past two years as a roller coaster of conflicting emotions: detaching from their cherished Bare Point home, or staying and abandoning their travel dreams. They really enjoy travelling and there were so many more photos and entries required to complete their sets of past and future travel journals. On a previous ninety-day trip around the world, they had watched young elephants at play, dunking each other under water, and adult elephants sliding down banks into water holes. They had tried leaving their home in the care of others while away, but it often left them disappointed for various reasons, and marred the memories of relaxed and contented travel.



Joe prepares his patio for the sale, and chats with his tenant, who has a self-appointed mission of deadheading their vast collection of rhododendrons.



Joe with the winning truss! Yes, he won, but does anyone have a picture of Joe without that warm, engaging smile?

So now, they have made the choice to move on—to leave the home that they lovingly created and enjoyed for thirty years. How are they doing that? By once again, committing whole-heartedly to the process.

There are many rhododendron friends who feel as Taurus and Tanya did. What is this moving away all about? How many roads lead to the Hudak's? We will find their new home in Nanaimo once they settle. GPS is handy. No doubt, the question will be, however, will Joe and Irene be home? Perhaps the newsletter will note the date of their next home travel slide show. Just a few photos of rhododendrons from anywhere in the world, and anticipation of their warm greetings would fill all available seats!

2016-17 Executive

President: Barrie Agar
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Vice President: Judeen Hendricksen

Past President: Carrie Nelson

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y1880@yahoo.ca 250-746-6419

Membership Chair: Trudy Muir

Directors at Large:
Siggi Kemmler, Alan Campbell, Peter Lewis, Ron Martin

Convenors

Sunshine: Mary Gale

Tea: Judeen Hendricksen

Raffle: Hilda Gerrits

Club Liaison: Alan Campbell

Library: Joyce Rodger

Membership Recruitment: Peter Lewis

Program Co-ordinator: Peter Lewis, Sandra Stevenson

History: Ian Efford

Garden/Bus Tours: Peter Lewis

CV Garden Fair: The Team

Facility Liaison: Roy Elvins

Christmas Party: The Team

Bus Tours: Vacant

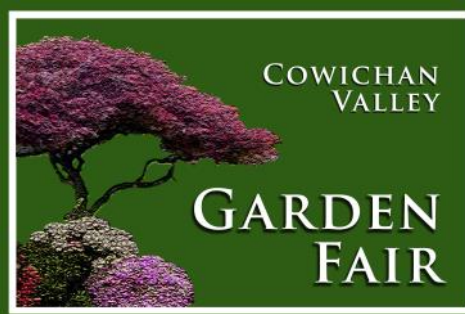
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Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

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April 2018

<http://cowichanvalleygardenfair.com>



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