

The Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia Quarterly Newsletter

Edited by Nina Dandurand



With the holidays behind us, now is the time to contemplate the past year and look with anticipation to the one we will be facing. I look forward to working on the newsletter once again and will try to make it an information medium for all to enjoy. At this time I want to thank David Steele so much for providing us with the newsletter this past while. I know how committed he was to this venture and we will miss his musings on the dahlia subject.

If anyone has a comment about the newsletter or who would like to have a say concerning anything that appears here, please, email me or call me and discuss what is on your mind. I love to hear from everyone. Also there is always room in the newsletter for comments on the growing of dahlias and we always take the time to answer questions you may have.

Mini Minutes

While you were absent: The October meeting of the Nova Scotia Dahlia Society met the last Friday of the month. Some of the topics discussed covered the storage space the society has in Sackville. It was decided to move this space closer to the Mic Mac Mall because it would be easier when the boxes were needed for the dahlia show. Fran and Barry MacKenzie went to the old storage locker to inventory and clean up all the boxes. Thanks for that you two. Barry gave an account of the contents and what was needed for future use.

Jack O'Neill asked about the criteria for exhibiting floating dahlias. Nina and Arthur answered his questions. It was suggested to be sure the flower was floating. This can be achieved by taking a small piece of foam, cutting a hole in it, placing the short stem through the foam so the bloom can still take in water, then placing both in the vessel. It is easier to float the dahlia if this is done. One can always paint the foam green to blend in better with the stem just make it small enough so the judge is not aware of it being there. Another idea for this display is to remember not to put too much foliage with the flower. The foliage should only be as an enhancement. After the meeting those attending had a chance to have refreshments and chat about gardening.

Our November meeting had a few hardy souls in attendance but we did get the job done. Barry MacKenzie indicated the final move of the storage contents has been accomplished. He told us it took Fran, Barry and, of course, Wiley, the dog, seven minutes to empty the locker and another seven to fill up the new one. There seemed to be a lot of work done quickly. This will be very helpful to the show chair in September when all this must be moved to the mall for the show.

John Proctor presented Barry and Fran MacKenzie with the 2007 ADS medal for the promotion of dahlias. We want to congratulate them on this well deserved award. This is an award to be given to a person or persons who work to make the public aware of the beauty of dahlias and to assist those who are interested in pursuing this interest as well as working within the society to educate new members in growing dahlias.

Membership cards for the Dahlia Society are now in effect. All paid members will be receiving their card with the next newsletter.

John Proctor brought forward the idea to give a donation to the ADS Website Challenge in the name of Ken Coudrey, one of our founding members. All were in agreement with this and the motion passed. Elections also took place with all positions being filled. The new executive for this year is as follows:

President – Heather Drope

Vice President – Nina Dandurand

Secretary – Jack O’Neill

Treasurer – Barry MacKenzie

Program committee – Nina Dandurand, Fran MacKenzie, and Carol Dexter

Publicity – Evie MacDonald

As another election is finished I would like to thank the past executive for all their work and dedication shown to the society. Many thanks to John Proctor for being our fearless leader for the past two years and I am sure if the new executive needs advice they can count on John to show us the way.

AT THE CROSSROADS by Nina Dandurand

The Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia seems to be at a crossroads in its evolution. Everyone who ever enters a flower show of any kind always examines the good, the bad and the ugly of each annual show. As a judge and an exhibitor I am looking at several things needing study or consideration. The mandate of this society or the mission statement, if you will, is to promote the growing of the dahlia in Nova Scotia. This was decided in 1985, with great enthusiasm and conviction by like-minded people, when the society was formed. It is time to ask ourselves if we are still fulfilling that mandate or do we need to, not reinvent the wheel, but get the wheel back on track.

A flower show by definition is “to show flowers”. We are showing the public what can be grown and we are giving the public a choice to join us in our joy of this flower or should they look forward to a mass display of horticultural specimens languishing on tables to entertain them once a year, at a specified location. Any horticultural show begins with a plan. This plan is a show schedule, giving all the requirements that must be met to put these blooms on display with proper standards one would consider if you were selling a home or any item of value. No one will buy into anything if the standards are not met. Setting up a show requires manpower. Volunteerism at its best is paramount here. A few cannot do the job of many for too long without eventually suffering burn out. There is a danger of losing expertise at this moment, with discouragement but all is not lost.

New members who have never experienced a dahlia show need to be told the road to be taken by the frequent exhibitor, as this process can be puzzling to them if not explained properly, not that they should do this but to know what is involved. Why on earth would anyone want to do this? Many members never see what happens to growers big or small who exhibit dahlias. These exhibitors just seem to show up at the shows and appear to be sane and all together. Many don’t know what has gone on for the past week but if these exhibitors do not do this, there would be no show. I, for one, get the show schedule and read it from cover to cover. I write on it. It is mine. One is better served if the rules of the game are known. Many in our group do not do arrangements, which is another way to

interest the public in growing dahlias. This section of the show is not well entered because, I believe, this takes a lot of time, thought, and plant material. The whole exercise can be viewed as a bit daunting for many. When undertaking arrangements, the title of the category must be understood as the judges will certainly know what is being asked of the exhibitor. As an example the title "Basket of Dreams" suggests a softer more dreamy pastel colour scheme rather than sharp contrasting colours which would depict a nightmare. These are small techniques that can be covered in programs to aid the exhibitor to understand what a judge may be looking at. Also our judges can be schooled in this even if they have not tried arrangements thus far.

When I first started growing dahlias I only grew a few and although we were not exhibiting we helped out at the shows. We started with a little bucket of nine blooms. Seven ribbons later our baptism was complete. I have very happy memories of Rod and Garth exhibiting for the very first time. What fun they had that day. Each time they "scored" you could visibly see their confidence level rise. I simply loved all their enthusiasm. We had such keenness that the three of us ventured off to Chester and entered that show in the worst thunderstorm known to man. We still laugh about that one. I can see Ken Coudrey, one of our founding members for those who don't know about Ken, holding a dahlia at arms length with a look of total dismay as he removed it from the Bedford show, enormous bug and all.

I exhibited early in my tenure of "resident know nothing" next to Ed Alley. Ed was always busy but he always made me feel welcome with his happy "Hello Nina". I think I thought that was license to rifle through his bag of items such as his pen, his cutters, and classification book and to chatter endlessly to him while he worked. His patient smile was pasted in place but he never suggested I move elsewhere. The Musquodoboit Show still has me laughing at the antics we all got up to but when it was all said and done, off to lunch we went to have enough laughs that would make us come back the following year. None of this was without work, to be sure. A person who wishes to contribute in a large way to any show has at least a week's work ahead of them. Planning what to take in the way of blooms, gathering bottles and containers to transport dahlias, writing out tags along with all the classification numbers can be an exercise in endurance. Getting arrival times straight. There are those who shall remain nameless who have stories on that subject. Just as you think you are finished with packing the blooms you circle the garden like a vulture on carrion looking for "just one more dahlia".

The dahlia, not the exhibitor is in competition here. The dahlia competes against dahlias of the same variety side by side. By education on exhibiting techniques the novice or first time grower can be schooled to be a better exhibitor therefore attaining what is now perceived to be the unattainable. It is my opinion having two shows within a show serves nothing for the society, the exhibitor and the viewing public. Perhaps a list of techniques could be catalogued to the exhibitors to guide them without lowering the standards on the Court of Honour. I am convinced it is harder to revive something than it is to better it and preserve it.

Is there room in the Dahlia Society for those who do not want to exhibit? You bet there is. If one does not want to exhibit that is just fine. Perhaps the idea of using dahlias in the landscape is what intrigues some or using dahlias in arrangements for the home or as gifts will keep members returning. There is so much to learn and so much to share. Being in contact and feeling comfortable enough to ask questions whether by phone, in person or by email is something everyone in the society must work on.

People do want to know how to plant dahlias and grow them well but they also want to learn how to make their properties beautiful with not just rows of plants but plantings designed to give colours in summer and fall as well as containers used in small places. It is an exciting time for the Nova Scotia Dahlia Society because each member of this club can realize so much more if you ask what you can do to improve the club and be on your way to forging new friendships and by being available to be a worker bee when the club undertakes a project. Every small bit anyone can commit to helps us achieve our goal and lets many, do the work a few would have undertaken.

******It is that time of year again. To ensure you continue to receive the newsletter and dahlia information along with the various events you may wish to attend, please consider sending your membership fees to Barry Mackenzie. The form is situated at the end of the newsletter. Please fill it in and mail it along with your cheque.**

Planned Programs

January – The Evolution of a Garden Presented by Arthur Haskins

February – Sea Boost presentation

March – To be announced

April – Tuber Auction

May – New varieties grown and how they performed in Nova Scotia gardens

2007 National Show in Chicago

Submitted by Arthur Haskins

September 6th saw me wind my way to the Halifax Airport to board a flight to Chicago for the 2007 ADS National Show and Conference. The Dahlia Society this year did not sponsor any members to attend the National Show so I attended on my own as the sole attendee from eastern Canada. Having only fifty minutes in Montreal to change planes and do the customs thing was a bit tight, but made it with a few minutes to spare. The highlight of the flight from Montreal to Chicago apart from the stale pretzels was that I sat almost directly across from Harrison Ford, it was assuring to know if anything went wrong we had Indiana Jones on board to save the day.

It was teaming down rain when I landed at O'Hare Airport and found my ground transportation to the Pheasant Run Resort just south of the city center. What a great place, long arms of rooms extended out along the greens of the eighteen hole golf course, plus a high rise building with 16 floors, with me on the 15 floor with a great view. This resort, the largest in the Midwest, had a number of shops and eateries, lounges, a pro shop for the golfers, a comedy club and three pools. Half of a large banquet room was used for the show area and the other half for show set up.

Thursday night was a chance to get reacquainted with all the dahlia folks that had come to the show. The Central States Dahlia Society was our host and they kicked things off with a wonderful hot and cold buffet reception. Although it was ten o'clock my time I still managed to put away a plate full of great food. Early Friday morning everyone boarded the busses for a tour of the world famous Morton Arboretum, which has over a hundred thousand different trees and shrubs and the Ball Seed Company Trial Gardens, with 8 acres of gardens and over 3000 varieties of annuals and perennials on trial. It was a full day in beautiful sunny weather. Upon returning to the resort it was off to the staging area where exhibitors were busy entering their blooms. Organizers were concerned that the number and quality of dahlia blooms would be down due to the severe weather that had hit the area two weeks prior to the show, but that was soon forgotten as many beautiful blooms appeared in the staging area. The show room filled up quickly and I had a chance to get some great photos before any crowds gathered around. Saturday morning bright and early saw me taking more pictures of some of the early morning entrants. A quick breakfast and all was set to start the judging at 9am sharp. I was on a judging team that judged the Court of Honor table; these were the section award winners that were to compete for even higher awards. After all was completed the Court of Honor was overflowing with top quality blooms showing their special tricolor award ribbons. After the judges lunch it was off to lectures on Dahlia Virus and Dahlia Genetics. Saturday was topped off in the evening with a reception and awards banquet. Special awards were given to Mac and Norma Boyer and also Harry Risetto for their years of service to the ADS and the promotion of the dahlia.

Sunday was a series of short meetings and discussion of the stellar form of dahlia, the classification meeting, and the annual meeting of the ADS. After lunch it was back on the busses and visits to two local dahlia gardens. Everyone got to view the two new color sports out of Spartacus, one a pure white, the other a variegated red/pink color, both the same size and form as Spartacus. Monday morning I bid everyone goodbye and headed to the airport for the trip back home.

Memorial

The passing of our oldest member, Ken Coudrey, at the age of 96, saddens the Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia. Ken was one of a small group of gardeners who kept the popularity of the Dahlia alive here in Nova Scotia for many years. Ken was a familiar fixture at Flower Shows and Exhibitions across the province and often elevated his dahlia entries to “Best in Show” status. Ken made every effort to share his knowledge and gave many a tuber to an aspiring grower. Ken was one of our founding members and became our best goodwill ambassador with his always friendly approach to new members at meetings “Hi, I’m Ken Coudrey, call me Ken”. Ken had many highlights in his dahlia career but none match the thrill he received in 1997 at the National Show in Halifax when he had the honor of showing his dahlia garden to delegates on the Friday Bus Tour. Ken was unable to garden the last several years and grow his beloved dahlias, but Ken came to visit the National Show in Halifax in 2006. Ken was a true gentleman and a key building block in the making of our society. He will be greatly missed. Submitted by Arthur Haskins

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA: New Member / Renewal Form
DSNS dues are \$5.00 single and \$7.00 for family in Canadian funds, per year.

Name _____
Address _____ APT ____
City/Town _____
Province/State _____
Country _____
Postal Code/Zip Code _____
Phone and or E-Mail _____
Single: (\$5.00) _____ Family: (\$7.00) _____

Make check payable to the: DAHLIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA
Mail to: Barry Mackenzie
634 Myers Point Road
Head of Jeddore, NS B0J 1P0
Canada

Are You Missing Out

By Arthur Haskins

I'm sure many of you are taking a greater interest in growing dahlias than when you first started out. We plant a few tubers just to test the waters and before long we have the rototiller out and expanding our flower beds to grow more dahlias. There seems to be so much to learn, and not everyone can attend the meetings in Halifax and hear first hand all the information being offered. Learning to grow and show dahlias is an ongoing process with new and innovative ways of planting, growing and storing dahlias being developed all the time. A number of members of the Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia are gaining additional knowledge about dahlias by joining the American Dahlia Society (ADS) each year. Their membership provides them with four (4) Bulletins a year which contains up to date information on the dahlia from not only the United States and Canada but worldwide. Along with the December Bulletin you also get the ADS Classification Book which contains thousands of dahlia names, records of their show wins for the year, their size, form and color and year of introduction, a wonderful resource.

You can join the ADS through the Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia who provide a Yearly Membership \$25.00, this is separate from your Nova Scotia Society dues, and is sent off as a group every year. Although the names and monies are sent in at year end, anyone can join at anytime throughout the year. If you are interested in joining the ADS please fill in the following application and send it to Heather Drope, 6219 Pepperell St., Halifax, N.S., B3H2P1

ADS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Fee: \$25.00

Make cheque payable to Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia

Notes From the Outgoing President (and ADS Rep)

Show Reports

The Supplement to the December 2007 Bulletin (society reports), included with December 2007 Bulletin of the ADS, has an error introduced in the DSNS September 7 & 8 show report which was not in the report submitted. It should indicate that Rod Prowse was the show chairman.

Comparing the September 7&8 show report in the DSNS newsletter and with the report in the Supplement, you will notice that the latter lists fewer entries and exhibitors. See the Bulletin of the ADS, September 2007, p. 5, for the detailed specification of the space allotted for each society show report. Our September 2007 show format required significant consideration to reduce the size of the report to fit that space. My strategy was to retain as many different exhibitor names as possible and to omit entries that I considered to least significance. I do not expect all to agree with the decisions made. For those who disagree, be aware that no suggestions were received in response to my request for input to this process in the DSNS July 2007 newsletter "ADS Report for September 7 & 8, 2007 show". The full show report appears in the September DSNS newsletter.

It is part of the ADS Rep's role to prepare the show reports, consisting of the show reports that have appeared in the DSNS newsletter and the ADS bulletin, and the Blues and Higher Awards report that many members are probably unaware of. The Blues and Higher Awards report records the number of blue awards won by each blue ribbon winning dahlia in both DSNS shows, and the number of higher awards won by each dahlia that won higher award in both shows. The Blues and Higher Awards reports submitted by all ADS-affiliated societies are used to compile the Classification and Handbook of Dahlias. For the first time ever, in 2007 the Blues and Higher Awards report could be completed electronically (MS Excel spreadsheet) and submitted electronically by email. (The next great leap forward will be to get the ADS editor to accept submissions by email!) The final number of blue and higher awards accumulated by each cultivar dahlia in 2007 determines whether it is included or deleted from the 2008 handbook. See p. 2 of the 2008 Classification and Handbook of Dahlias for the criteria for cultivar inclusion or elimination.

Judges Sheets – Preparing the above reports requires at least 6-8 hours of work after the show. They are completed from the judges sheets. Future show chairs and judges, please make sure the results of your careful judging are as carefully and completely recorded. Also please ensure what is recorded is legible and uniquely identifies both the cultivar and exhibitor.

2008 ADS Memberships Through The DSNS, Executive Summary

- Renewals: 16, down 6 from 2007
- New ADS members: 3

Anyone who opted not to take advantage of paying their ADS membership through the DSNS, as put forth in the September DSNS newsletter, has the option of paying ADS dues directly to the ADS. Any recent Bulletin of the ADS, p. 2, indicates the dues for ADS members at large.

And finally...

Thanks to all who have helped the society in many ways through the shows, tuber sales and the host of other things that a volunteer society needs doing, and to those who have stepped up to all the current positions of responsibility.

All the best,
John Proctor