

Fraser South Rhododendron Society

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You might say that Fraser South Rhododendron Society first saw the light of day as a gleam in the eye of Harold Johnson. For that matter you might say that quite a number of new chapters owe their existence to that same gleam.

At the time, Harold was Director of the American Rhododendron Society for District 1. Chapters in Victoria and Vancouver were thriving, but Harold saw a great need for expansion. There were many interested rhodo lovers both on Vancouver Island, and in the Fraser Valley, who found that attending meetings in the cities was difficult. In the early 1950's or so there had been an abortive attempt to begin a Chapter based in Abbotsford, but, actively opposed by Vancouver Chapter who felt they would lose valuable membership, the effort withered on the vine. Now, in 1988, with Harold's enthusiastic encouragement, it seemed to be just the right time and Chapters sprang up like mushrooms - on the Island and in the Fraser Valley.

On November 18, 1988 a meeting was held at the home of Les. and Bev Clay, with the hope of beginning a new Chapter of the ARS based in and around Langley - south of the Fraser River so as to avoid impinging on the new Fraser Valley Chapter centred in Maple Ridge, (hence our less- than- inspiring geographical name). Harold, Les, and Carol Fisher worked tirelessly to get this Chapter off the ground.

Early Members

Those present at the initial meeting included, as well as Harold Johnson and Les Clay, Carol Fisher, Lillian and Gerry Emerson, Pat and Dennis Dahl, Dave and Ella Crabb, Pat Glennie, Michael Jamieson Fred and Daphne Gornall, Jim Rishel, Mary Murphy, John Crosby, Mike Trembath. Several of these were already members of the Vancouver Chapter, but somehow, we were able to come up with twelve fully paid up members for our fledgling chapter. An executive was elected, and we were off and running.

President - Les Clay



Vice President - Gerry Emerson

Secretary - Carol Fisher

Treasurer - Lillian Emerson

Directors - Harold Johnson, Pat Glennie

One month later - Dec. 14th - the second meeting of Fraser South Rhododendron Society was held at the home of Dave and Ella Crabb, and our membership had increased to sixteen. Official acceptance of Fraser South was accorded by the American Rhododendron Society at the 1989 spring meeting of the Board of Directors. By this time our membership had increased to twenty four, with the addition of: Bruce Alexander, Cliff and Phil Anderson, Dr. Mike Bale, Chris Ballyn, John and Wendy Haveman, Bob and Alice Mann, Dr. Michael O'Brien, Diane Scott, Ron and Bev. Smith. We also had more associate members - Dr. Fred Banford, who is a life member of Vancouver Chapter, Mell and Joan Carroll, Fred Mansveld, and Don and Louise Martyn. It is gratifying to see just how many of these names are familiar !! and belong to members still active in the club.

Although losing some of our charter members Harold Johnson, Gerry Emerson, Ed Markowski, and Ella Crabb - spouses Melba, Lillian, Mary Murphy and Dave Crabb remained as active members of our society. Some of our early members moved away - Pat & Peter Glennie, Carol Fisher, Diane Scott (for a time), and we missed them, but the ranks have gradually increased over the years and we have a roster of enthusiastic and helpful members

One very early decision was to develop a library.

1989 - Year One:

Fraser South had a busy schedule ahead : we needed to

1. Find an affordable, and central location for our meetings
2. Increase our membership
3. Develop and register a suitable constitution
4. Develop a library
5. Develop a newsletter
6. MAKE ENOUGH MONEY to pay for 1, 4 &5

1. We were fortunate indeed. to be able to schedule meetings in the church hall of St. Andrew's Anglican Church - at Fraser Highway and Old Yale Road - and we continued to hold our meetings there until Sept. 2001

2. Membership did grow, with new members as well as associate members
3. A committee was established to work on the constitution. This rather thankless task was undertaken by Les Clay, Gerry Emerson and Harold Johnson.
4. Almost our very first Librarian, Pat Dahl, writes about its beginning:

" When the original group of people met to discuss the formation of the Fraser South Rhododendron Chapter the library was one of the topics. Ella Crabb offered to start the book collection and keep the records. Those present at the meeting offered old gardening books, and some members donated some of the essentials - Lillian and Gerry Emerson presented the Library with the Salley & Greer Rhododendron Hybrids , a constantly used reference.

Dave Crabb and Sandy Paul built a bookcase in which we could store our books wherever we could hold meetings.

The library existed for the benefit of our members - people wishing to add to their own library were able to order books along with those for the chapter library, and so received any available discounts. The executive allotted

money for library enhancement . and an increasing inventory was built up.

We acquired magazines, videos of some of our meetings and guest speakers recorded by Mike Bale, videos of rhododendrons and gardens around the world, tapes, and many more books. - so much so that the bookcase required to be doubled in size in a short time.

The library was very well used. Members were allowed to keep books out for the summer - taking them out from the last meeting in the spring to return at the Sept. meeting. "

5. Carol Fisher acted as Newsletter Editor as well as Secretary for most of our first year, but, since she was doing some university courses at the time, she found the demands too great, and the job was ably shouldered by Ella Crabb - with Dave to help with envelopes and mailing.

6. Fund raising - raffles - material donated by members, and plant sales at meetings, along with bargain tables. A small donation was expected for the coffee, tea provided , and we have found this sufficient to pay for these supplies. Cookies and cakes were donated by members, and we have done very well thank you.

By the end of this our first year, we had already established the pattern of a potluck supper or picnic for the June meeting, and Les and Bev Clay hosted the first of many great and famous Christmas parties .

Pat Dahl had begun a photo album of pictures of people and picnics etc. to be added to over the years. (To my great chagrin - this appears to have evaporated)

The club was requesting suggestions for a "Club Logo"

Programmes for 1989

January - Harold Johnson - The American Rhododendron Society
February - Frank Dorsey - Dwarf Rhododendrons
March - Stan Sorenson - Azaleas and Hybridizing
April -
May -
June - potluck picnic dinner - Williams Park
September - Les Clay - Propagation and After Care
October - Lynn Watts - 'Travelogue' of trip to China (mainly N. W. Yunnan)
November - Alleyne Cook
December - Party at Clay's

1990

Slate of Officers for 1990:

President - Les Clay



Vice President - Gerry Emerson

Secretary - Sue Finley

Treasurer - Lillian Emerson

Directors: 3 yr term - Harold Johnson

2 yr term - Pat Glennie

1 yr term - Jim Rishel

At their January meeting the Executive moved to have the Librarian/Book Sales Chairperson, and the Editor of the Chapter Bulletin included in the Executive

Requests for members to supply designs for a Logo for Fraser South appeared to bring little enthusiasm. The design produced by Gerry Emmerson of a truss of *R. hippophaeoides*, became our Logo, and *R. hippophaeoides* our club flower.

Les Clay, Gerry Emerson and Harold Johnson hammered away at setting up our constitution.

Some members joined in the Langley Garden Club Spring Show. Our first very own truss show was held at Willowbrook Mall of this year, and stirred some interest we hoped, in the passers by.

In August, an information booth (to advertise our existance and it was to be hoped, lure new members) was manned during the Cloverdale Agricultural Fair.



Barbara Nelson at Willobrook

Then, still needing funds to operate, we agreed to go along with the Lily Society and place an exhibit at the Pacific National Exhibition. Several of our members worked very hard to set this up, and volumteers manned the booth during fair hours. This effort netted the club about \$600, but did entail some heavy work for people like Dave Crabb, Harold Johnston and Sandy Paul, and many others. Les Clay provided some plants for display, and these were transported by Chris Ballyn

This year, the Western Regional Conference was hosted by District 1 at Whistler, and quite a number of our members were present. The conference was widely attended, and highly successful.

1991

Executive:

President - Les Clay	Programmes - Les Clay & Harold Johnson
Vice Pres. - Mike Trembath	Membership - Chris Ballyn
Secretary - Sue Finley	Publicity - Diane Scott
Treasurer - Lillian Emerson (Bob Mann)	Library - Pat Dahl
Directors - 3yr. Chris Ballyn	Hospitality - Phyl Anderson
- 2yr. Harold Johnson	Newsletter - Ella Crabb
- 1 yr. Pat Glennie	

Chris Ballyn felt that our constitution required some tinkering and wished to see some ammendments made. He was asked to chair a committee including Les Clay, and Mike Trembath which met for several sessions, and managed to work out a constitution that:

a) would be acceptable to the provincial government so as to register us as a non profit society under the Societys Act and

b) would meet the requirements for us to become accepted as a Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

With much effort on Chris' part, he finally got all the t's crossed, and i's dotted, and sweet talked the sweet young thing (?) into accepting our constitution.

Harold Johnson arranged a one day bus trip to Vancouver Island, and we enjoyed seeing some of the lovely Victoria area gardens - the Abkhazi Garden, the Weesjes Towner Crest, the Herman Vaartnou garden and Bill Dale's garden. (See Charlotte Chase's report - next page.)

Early in May we produced our Truss display and **Sale** at Willowbrook (our first sale there), and then the next week, joined in a sale with the Surry Garden Club.

Harold had a friend who produced cedar planters, and tubs which we sold at our meetings, and sales, for a commission. The club improved the PNE display with a water wheel, built by Sandy Paul and it's 'wishing well'. Since people insistantly started to drop coins in the wishing well - we collected them and donated that amount to the Children's Hospital.

We had our first cutting exchange this year.

This year Gerry Emerson, a charter member and strong and steadfast supporter of Fraser South died, Sept. 30, we miss his interest greatly.



IN MEMORIAM
GERRY EMERSON

Gerry was one of the charter Members of Fraser South, contributing to the establishment of our library, designing our Logo, and acting as Vice President until illness forced his retirement. During his illness he continued to provide the Bulletin with articles, as well as writing a lengthy article on tissue culture for the Vancouver Chapter newsletter. Gerry is greatly missed by our chapter, and will long be remembered.

The following report of the Vancouver Island Tour, written by Charlotte Chase appeared in the FSRS Newsletter:



Here you have them - my first impressions of my first rhododendron tour. Well the initial impression leaves much to be desired; after all who in their right mind would want to wake up on a day of the week when all but a rhododendron nut would be safely tucked in between the covers. You guessed it, NO ONE! Not even me. Not even the birds, and we all know they are very early risers. However after much scrambling around, pushing of the panic button etc. we arrived at the ferry terminal with only seconds to spare and in very good company. Most of you were in doubt as to whether you would make it.

We arrived. No comment on the trip. It is just a hazy blur. We hopped on, made that struggle to board the bus, which was to take us to the first garden. The trip I believe was well planned and as I seem to recollect the driver had an interesting commentary as he chauffeured us to the first stop.

Our arrival was more or less uneventful. On our arrival our hosts gave us a map as well as a history of the garden. We all wandered down the lane; some with enthusiasm, some with anticipation, and me with just the desire to wake up. Then the most wonderful thing happened!!! I was instantly taken with the beauty of this wooded wonderland. Then I read the history and then I was truly impressed. There was not one sick rhodo that I could see. There weren't many rhodos which were under three feet tall. Every rhodo looked as if it might have been there from seed. They all appeared to be such a natural part of the landscape. I don't exactly know, in fact I don't know at all, a species from a hybrid but I found one or two which I recognized and some I would like to add to Larry's collection. (If it's Larry's collection then I am not likely to be accused of spending any unnecessary money.) Then after ages of wandering around in stunned disbelief, (time didn't seem nearly long enough), we ended up at the home of Nick and Evelyn Weesjes all nestled in a sunny spot. Would you believe it Home Made Cookies, Tea and Coffee for ALL of us. All too soon it was time to board the bus again and this time I was ready for it.

I didn't want to but we had to, we stopped for lunch.

The First Ten Years

Next stop after lunch is my personal favorite. The home of Herman Vaartnou. Why was it my favorite? Because it gives some hope to the Charlottes of the world, the ones who live on a 120 X 60 foot city lot. Now his is bigger than that but it really demonstrates the effective use of space. Not one square inch was wasted. He has all sorts of neat stuff (Rhododendrons) tucked here and there. Big ones, small ones, tall ones, short ones, old ones, new ones, and ones I think Larry should own. (Don't blame me for spending unnecessary money.) This house was the unwitting sponsor of an impromptu spending frenzy. Better known as a plant sale, for which we are all grateful. Larry was bad. He spent!

Next stop was the most graceful landscape I personally have ever seen tucked into one and a half acres of land. This property was formerly owned by Princess Abkhazi, and is now the proud possession of Chris and Pam Ball. A miniature Butchard Garden in some respects. There is not one square inch of untended or uninteresting landscape. There is a sidewalk dated 1946 and I understand the garden was begun even earlier. The whole of this wonderland was topped by a charming little house which has an enormous and once again, gracefully curved patio on whose steps we were able to rest our, by that time, very weary feet. Such a pleasure to sit there and look down over rhodos in bloom, heather so tidy you might even consider being able to produce the same effect yourself, a pond which will soon be sporting water lily's and, I understand, ducks.

Back on that bus: The driver; (I know by now because I am awake.) is a very nice man who gave us a cheerful commentary on things of interest as we journeyed to ANOTHER PLANT SALE! Life is really too short for this. Really, that Larry spent more unnecessary money. He just about got out free but then, he noticed Chris with a "treasure" tucked under his arm and upon inquiring found there were two, count 'em, two, left WITHOUT OWNERS. He and his friend Bob sprinted across the street from the coffee shop and adopted those two poor little orphans. It was an act of kindness; what is a wife to do? I turned a blind eye.

Last but under no circumstances, least: the home of our host, Bill Dale. This garden has an awe-inspiring view not only out over the water but down over the experimental gardens. Now it is my considered opinion that they should just take a wander up the hill to Bill's garden and see how it's done! While we were relaxing our feet, and feasting our eyes, two of the cutest little Quail came calmly wandering along the path to view the beauties which Bill had provided for our enjoyment. Pure pleasure.

My personal thanks to Harold Johnson who planned this outing and to Bill Dale our gracious Victoria host. If it were not that Larry has nearly depleted the family bank account with HIS hobby I would be even more appreciative.
THANK'S GENTLEMEN.



Programmes for 1990

January – Dave Crabb – pictures from Gardens of Wales and Scotland

February - Don Martyn - Hybridizing

March – Les Clay – Kalmia – The Mountain Laurel

April – Clint Smith – Newer Hybrids and their Merits

May – Garth Wedemire- Gene Round’s Garden

June – Picnic at Willlliams Park

September – “Propagating from Cuttings, and Problems of any Kind” a hands-on work shop to involve all our members.

October – Del Knowlton – Lilies as Companion Plants

November –David Wilson – Nurseryman, Heather & Miniature Roses

December – Xmas Party at Clay’s

1992

Executive:

President - Les Clay
Vice President - Chris Klapwijk
Treasurer - Larry Chase
Secretary - Colleen Rodgers
Directors - 3yrs. - Don Martyn
 2 yrs - Chris Ballyn
 1 yr. - Harold Johnson

Programmes - Harold Johnson & Les Clay
Membership - Chris Ballyn
Hospitality - Phil Anderson & Pat Glennie
Test & or Display Garden - Chris Klapwijk
Shows, Plant Sales - Pat Glennie, Diane Scott
News Letter Editors - Ella & Dave Crabb
Library - Pat Dahl
Publicity - Diane Scott

This was also the first year of "Charlotte's Auction". Organized by Larry and Charlotte Chase, this event was in answer to the ARS appeal for funding help from its chapters. Advertized as Bring and Buy each member was to provide material for auction, and was expected to buy at least as much as they brought. With Charlotte as auctioneer an hilarious time was had by all.

1992 was a great year for garden visits: - FSRS members were invited to visit gardens of the Fraser Valley Rhododendron Society members. We visited the Dempster, French, Hemminger and Ladd Gardens - a rewarding tour.

The very next day FSRS members were included in an invitation to visit Dartshill - the lovely and very interesting garden of Francisca & Ed Darts.

The Bus trip last year was successful enough that it was decided to repeat it this year visiting, Towner Crest again as well as Dave Dougan's Malahat garden, the Smith alpine garden and Bill Dale's Sidney garden.

Early in May we spent a day visiting some of our members gardens - Crabbs, Dahls, Finley's Farm & Trembaths

1992 marked our first spring plant sale held at Clay's Nursery.

Chris Klapwijk was asked to persue the possibility of our creating a rhododendron test garden or display garden somewhere in our area, perhaps at William's Park.

A "hands-on" workshop at Clays in September with demonstrations of methods of propagation - cuttings, grafting, and seed sowing proved very useful.

1993

Officers, Directors and Committee Heads for 1993:

President - Don Martyn
 Past Pres. - Les Clay
 Vice Pres. - Norma Senn
 Secretary - Lillian Emerson
 Treasurer - Larry Chase
 Directors - Chris Ballyn
 - M.L. Trembath
 - Mike Bale



Programs - Harold Johnson
 Membership - Chris Ballyn
 Library - Pat Dahl
 Publicity - John Haveman
 Hospitality - Phil Anderson
 Bulletin - E & D Crabb
 - Wendy Sellars

Mike Bale brought to the attention of RSFS the plight of the McKee rhododendrons. One of the very early growers of rhododendrons in the area, Dr. McKee had amassed a large number of plants, grown from seed provided by his friends in the UK. The plantation property was due to be sold, and it was feared that the plants would simply be bulldozed out. There was a small hope that some of his large plants might be cut back, and bodily removed to a local golf course. FSRS decided to attempt to save representatives of the best of Dr. McKee's plants if possible. A group of RSFS members, including Dr. Bale, Don Martyn our president, Ella Crabb, Vern Finley and Mike Trembath visited the site. Four visits were made over the blooming period, and plants and flowers were examined, described, in some cases photographed. We tagged those we thought the best with the intention of returning to obtain cuttings of these plants for propagation and distribution. To our great disappointment and chagrin, when members went to take cuttings, it was found that tags had been moved or removed entirely, and we no longer had proven records and descriptions to put on cuttings. In any case, Mike Bale and Don Martyn and the Finleys did start some cuttings and many of these plants still remain in Mike's garden. A few cuttings were passed along to others, but on the whole, the club appeared to lose interest in the entire effort (if indeed any other than a few had had any interest in the first place.) Sadly - one would have to class this as something of a failure.

This year a sister chapter in the ARS was formed, based on White Rock, and registered as Peace Arch Rhododendron Society.

The final (we hoped) "tweakin " of our constitution was accomplished by the carrying of a couple of amendments, finetuning our "executive"

It was decided that our Newsletter or Bulletin should be graced by a name, and suggestions were sought from the membership. In May, the meeting voted on the suggestions, and the Newsletter was named "The Yak"

In April a car pool tour of some Whidbey Island gardens (including Meerkerk)

The first ARS Bronze Medal presented by FSRS was presented to Dave and Ella Crabb. Their solid support, enthusiasm, help in all manner of projects not to mention their lovely garden will be sorely missed as they move to Vancouver Island.

Dave and Ella Crabb

“This Bronze Medal is awarded for their efforts as charter members of the Fraser South Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Ella has served, assisted by Dave, as editor of the newsletter, Dave built cabinets for the library, They graciously open their garden, donate plants, and assist at plant sales. For their leadership and encouragement to the Chapter, we award this medal.”

In April a car pool tour of some Whidbey Island gardens (including Meerkerk)

Right - some of our happy members at Meerkerk



Some of our members elected to help with landscaping at St. Andrew's Church, where we held our meetings. Plants were donated, and a landscaped bed of rhododendrons was begun

Right - Pat Dahl and Ella Crabb survey the site for the proposed rhodo bed at St. Andrew's



A second workshop was held at Clay's to demonstrate propagation methods - Here is a report written for the Yak by the (incomparable) Charlotte Chase

Report on Cuttings Workshop

by Charlotte Chase

After giving the matter considerable thought, Larry made a tough decision. This is it. Charlotte will write the report on the Cuttings Workshop. Yep, that's the ticket...*delegate*.

So here it is, a secondhand report. It seems that only about 10 people were in attendance. That was all to the good because it enabled Les to identify my little seedlings which I planted at the cuttings class last year. It turns out that the 23 survivors are the species *R. macrophyllum*. Strong and healthy one and all. There will be a sale one of these years. Such a deal you could get.

Not everyone there was a member of our chapter but they all learned something new or of interest. Les divulged a few of his secrets and Larry has already put some of the information to use. When the class adjourned all the students were graciously escorted to the main building by Chelsea. After removing shoes and promising not to touch, they were treated to a tour of the lab where Clay's Nursery does tissue culture propagation.

Anyone who has not been on a lab tour should make a point to go if the opportunity should present itself again. Larry and I were first introduced to rhododendrons by Mr. Clay Sr. right there at that nursery, some 10 years ago. I am sure you will agree that no introduction would be complete without a sale. Now Mr. Clay Sr. was no slouch, we left there with 7 bales of peat, 5 bags of mushroom manure and last but not least 5 quite mature rhodos. He also saw to it that we were armed with a Greer's Guide to Rhododendrons and pages of notes.

Well off we went home to plough up our yard. We had to rent a roto-tiller to do the job. We worked from dawn to dusk for 2 days and finally succeeded in planting our treasures in their fine new bed and after having a load of mulch delivered we tucked them in for the winter. The date was November 2 and it snowed the next morning.

More than rhododendrons are propagated at that nursery. Rhodoholics get started there too.

Don't miss the next cuttings class. You never know what could happen there.

Sadly - this year we lost Harold Johnson - not only a charter member but really the founding member of our chapter, and many more in District 1 The following two articles appeared in the "Yak" October, 1993.



Harold Johnson

Today we say good-bye to Harold Johnson. You will each remember him through your own encounters. I liked to listen to him chat enthusiastically about his past-The Bakery-working in the forest-and then the meat brokerage industry.

He loved to travel and made so many lasting friendships through the Rotary Club and Rhododendron Society.

Harold became a member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society in 1970. He said he attended meetings for three years before anyone asked him 'why he was there'. He has been showing us ever since 'How to make people comfortable'. Francisca Darts still remembers him greeting members and guests at the door as they arrived at meetings. Harold has been a participating member. He has served as Director, President of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, Regional Director to the National Board and Director of the Fraser Valley Chapter, as well as Fraser South. He attended all the National Conferences and many Western Regional Conferences and all meetings at the local level when he was in town. We should label him '*Man In Motion*'. He toured the Pacific Northwest looking for new and old gardens to add to the bus tours that he organized and hosted.

I would have enjoyed listening in on his meeting with MacMillan Bloedel explaining to them how they could improve their public image if they were to protect the rhododendrons on their property at Rhododendron Lake and allow access to the public. Harold and Clive Justice were instrumental in getting the company to declare the area a reserve and, at considerable expense to the company, improve the 9.5 mile road and clear the area involved for better viewing.

Harold received the Bronze Medal at club level and the Silver Medal at National level for his interest, dedication, and hard work in assisting the formation of the new chapters in District I.

We are so fortunate to have had this long, close association with Harold sharing our common interest in our gardens and with our 'rhodos'. He loved the rhododendrons.

He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

Vern Finley

Returning from Harold's funeral and the meeting at Fraser South on October 20th, I had the following thoughts running through my mind, and would like to see it on record just how much Harold contributed to our Chapter, and how fortunate we were to have had him as our active member from the inception of the Chapter.

The first book in the library was a gift from Harold and Melba. He was our first three-year Director, and willingly took on the position. Harold hardly ever missed an Executive meeting or a regular meeting. Harold arranged the out-of-town bus trips-and as he knew practically *EVERYONE*, he could call upon the Weesjes, the Vartnous and all the others and they would gladly accommodate him, or Bill Dale would do it for him. He was our Program Chairman throughout his four years-again because of his wide association with the ARS when he called upon speakers from south of the border, they were ready to be with us - mostly hosted by Harold and Melba, they not only bed and breakfasted our speakers, they also toured them around locally the following day-and this they did gladly and thoroughly enjoyed doing it

Harold was the one who at a time when \$600.00 was a rather inviting sum for us, introduced the Chapter to the possibility of going along with the Lily Society in a display at the PNE four years ago. This was because of his association with the Lily Society and he and Del Knowlton had come up with the possibility. He practically single-handedly arranged that first exhibit with help at the set up from Les, Butch, Dave and Sandy. Melba and Harold attended the PNE more that first year and sat with the brochures at the table than all the rest of us put together! Once again Harold was enthusiastic about the improvements for the following years, and he loved adding his precious plants to the exhibit.

At the Willowbrook plant sales you could depend on Harold and Melba to arrive with their trusses all well marked for display.

Harold carried out all this in spite of the fact that there were times when his arthritis was giving him much pain-but did we ever hear him complain?

We shall remember Harold for his stories-about his Willow Water, his "fast" manure and many many more. How fortunate and thankful we should all feel for having known a man such as Harold.

Is it not possible for our Chapter to perpetuate his memory in some way?

Ella Crabb

Programmes for 1993

January – John Kerridge - Primulas and Companion Plants Elections

February – year two – Charlotte’s Auction

March – Clint Smith – Slides showing a Progression of Species Bloom from Dec. to
Canada Day

April – Members Round Table – How To: do cuttings, identify species, know rhodo
problems, and Companion Plants

May – Dave Crabb – Truss Selection

June – picnic at Williams Park

September – Gwen Bell – Halfsan Lem and his Hybrids

October – Bill Herbst – The Tower Court Rhododendron Species Collection at
Valley Garden, Windsor Great Park.

November – Garth Wedemire – “Rhododendrons I Have Known and Grown”

December – Xmas Dinner Clays

1994



Executive:

President - Norma Senn
Past Pres. - Don Martyn

Vice Pres. - Mike Trembath
Secretary - Lillian Emerson
Treasurer - Larry Chase

Directors - John Anderson
Mike Bale
Arnim Roeske

Membership - Arnim Roeske

Programmes - Les Clay & Dave
Sellars

Library - Pat Dahl

Newsletter - Wendy & David Sellars

Publicity - John Haveman & Hedy
Dyck

Hospitality - Phil Anderson

Ways & Mean - Diane Scott

Fraser South Rhododendron Society having heard a very interesting presentation by Peter Wharton decided that we would like to subscribe to his seed collecting expedition to China.

Another successful (and delightfully hilarious) Charlotte's Auction was held.

We continued to enjoy various garden tours : the Asian Gardens, Hammond's Acres of Rhododendrons and the Bloedel Reserve.

This year a new format was used - each Thurs. evening from late April to late May, 7:00 pm to dusk, one of our members gardens was opened for drop in visitors.

It was hoped that a tour to visit the Skagit Valley in June - to see the native *R. macrophyllum* in its natural habitat - would be possible.

Fraser South decided to hold a truss show for our own edification and amusement, and so the First Annual Beer Bottle Truss Show took place. Classes were few, simple and some were a bit "off the cuff" but it was deemed a success.

A Harold Johnson Memorial Fund was established, but no definite decision taken as to how it should be used.

It was this year that Mike Bale began trying to urge us into activity re developing 'commercial' Garden Tours - as a fund raising as well as awareness raising effort.

Members of Fraser South added plants to the rhodo garden at St. Andrews Church, as well as doing maintainance work there.

In Nov. our charter member and great friend, Ella J. Crabb died. Although the Crabbs had moved to Vancouver Island, all of Fraser South missed them, and felt Ella's loss very keenly.



A Gallant Lady

Ella J. Crabb, nee Paul, wife of David, formerly of West Vancouver, Langley and lately Qualicum Beach passed away November 24, 1994. Ella died as she had lived -bravely- her concern more for those near and dear to her than for herself.

Fraser South Rhododendron Society has lost a charter member; Vancouver Rhododendron Society has lost a long-time member; and Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society has lost a newer 'tho' active member. We are all very aware of our loss. Ella was one of those most valuable people without whom organizations fail to prosper. She was ready to help whoever, whenever, and wherever help was needed. She and Dave edited the F.S.R.S. newsletter for several years, keeping us up-to-date with club happenings along with information from other chapters and articles of interest gleaned from newsletters and garden journals. They had recently taken on this job for the M.A.R.S. chapter. Ella and Dave were awarded a Bronze Medal by F.S.R.S. for their generosity in sharing their garden, their knowledge, their plants and for their yeoman job as newsletter editors.

Ella's enthusiasm for her plants was infectious, although it occasionally led to a frustrated howl from Dave—"Ella. ..where have you put...?" and the reply would come- "Well it didn't look happy there, so I moved it." The Crabb garden in Langley was a mecca for all rhodoholics and we were all welcomed, rain or shine, toured and coffee'd or tea'd, and toured again. There was an incredibly large collection of rhodies in that garden, each known and cherished.

Ella took delight in her animal friends, the dogs Rhodie and Sam, the cat Buffy, the birds and the wild birds they encouraged and fed—even the squirrel who stole from the feeders and sent Rhodie into paroxysms of barking. There always seemed to be a chuckle behind her voice, as though she was amused by the vagaries of us all.

I can hardly bear to think that I will never again pick up the phone and hear the very definite voice say, "Mike, how are ye? Mike what do you know about..."

As the ballad says, "Sad am I without thee".

Mike Trembath

Board of Directors

President: - Norma Senn
 Past President - Don Martyn
 Vice President - David Sellars
 Treasurer - John Warner
 Secretary - Janet Warner
 Directors - John Anderson
 Mike Bale
 Arnim Roeske

Membership Chair - Arnim Roeske
 Programs - Les Clay & David Sellars
 Library - Pat Dahl
 Newsletter - Wendy & David Sellars
 Publicity - Hedy Dyck
 Hospitality - Phil Anderson
 Ways and Means - Diane Scott

1995 saw the decision taken to use the “Harold Johnson Memorial Fund” to purchase a bench, and a suitably inscribed plaque, to be placed in Williams’ Park and surrounded by a rhododendron garden. The plants and garden maintenance to be provided by FSRS members.

*Plaque on Harold’s Bench
 in Williams Park*



The decision was also taken to consider that the rhododendron plantings at St. Andrew’s Church, largely the result of donations from Fraser South members (many plants from the Crabb garden) be enlarged and designated as the “Ella Crabb Memorial Garden”, with the chapter assuming the maintainance of this garden.



*Melba seated on Harold’s Bench at
 Williams Park*



*Members of Harold’s Family
 try the Memorial Bench for size*

Garden Tours undertaken this year included a day trip to Victoria Gardens, and a visit to some of the North Shore gardens. Again this year, arrangements were made for member gardens to be open, one per week for visits from members

Great Garden Tours

We have had some wonderful garden tours this year. Fred and Anne Banford's garden looked as if someone had turned on coloured lights as the woodland setting was lit up by numerous large rhododendron species and hybrids. Mike Trembath's garden was enjoyed by a large crowd who "oohed" and "aahed" at the monstrous Loderis and beautiful 'Queen of Hearts'. At Evelyn and Allan Morton's, we enjoyed a wonderfully mature garden and appreciated meeting Evelyn and Allan.

The trip to the North Shore gardens provided us with another dimension to rhododendron gardening - the vertical. Trees, rocks, waterfalls and steep slopes were the defining characteristics. Margaret Charlton's garden was a feast of rare and unusual plants. Glen Patterson's was a beautifully landscaped rock / alpine / rhododendron garden overlooking the sea. In Lion's Bay, Joe Ronsley's and Richard Mossakowski's mountainside gardens had to be seen to be believed. A beautiful sunny day was enjoyed by all.

The Gardens of Victoria tour was a full day. It started off with a relaxing two hours at the amazing garden of the Weesjes - one member got lost among the species! Extra stops at Elk Lake Garden Centre and Norman Todd's Firwood Nursery loaded us down with purchases. Dave Dougan's garden (featured in the Summer 1993 edition of the ARS Journal) was stunning and Alf and Shirley Smith's rock garden is said to be the finest rock / alpine garden in North America - a beautiful setting on the side of Mt. Douglas with native Garry Oaks, native rocks, rare alpiners and lovely rhododendrons.

Rhododendron Planting in Williams Park

On Friday, October 20th and Saturday, October 21st, eleven stalwart Fraser South members dug and planted a rhododendron bed in the glade where the Harold Johnson Memorial Bench is located. A total of 16 plants were moved - 15 from Melba Johnson's and one plant donated by the Finleys. The rhodos included 'Lem's Cameo', 'Hotei', 'Belle Heller', 'Robin Hood', 'Taurus', 'Halfdan Lem', *R. bureauvii* and *R. pseudochrysanthum*. Vern Finley directed the colour and height arrangement and everybody had a good time drinking coffee, chatting and digging.

The weather was wonderful and such a good job was done, the Langley Parks Department has invited us to take over the whole park! Participants included Norma Senn, Melba Johnson, John Anderson, Diane Scott, John Warner, Arnim Roeske, Mike Bale, Vern and Doc Finley, and Pat and Dennis Dahl.

Seeds were available from the Peter Wharton Expedition to China, and several of our members undertook growing these on. We hoped to see the result of some of these in following years.

We continue to enjoy outstanding Christmas Parties. Here is a depiction of the Party held in 1995.

About fifty merrymakers made it to our annual Christmas Party at the Church Hall. It was a pot luck event and what luck we had with the pots as dish after dish of amazing culinary perfection were spread on the tables. We had an immense number of door prizes which were distributed by "RhodoLot" a new game of chance which had its world premiere at the event. Everyone was given a rhododendron name when they arrived which they had to wear all evening. At the appointed time, each rhodo had to find another of the same colour. Easy enough for Bob's Blue but a little more challenging for Sir Charles Lemon! Rhodo names were then drawn from a hat and the first couple with both names drawn won a prize. Trivial Pursuit watch out!

We also had the traditional Les Clay "Name that Rhodo" contest and in keeping with tradition it was too hard despite efforts by Les to make it easier this year. Most of us can just about tell the difference between Polar Bear and Mrs. Furnivall but one red rhododendron looks very much like another! The winners were Joan Bengough and Chris Klapwijk.

Many thanks to all who brought dishes (especially the sherry trifle) and the members who organized the decorations and setting up the hall. Particular thanks to Melba Johnson and Diane Scott who organized the event.

1996

FSRS Executive for 1996



President - Bobby Ogdon

Past President - Norma Seaman

Vice President - David Sellars

Treasurer - John Warner

Secretary - Janet Warner

Directors - John Anderson

Trevor Badminton

Arnim Roeske

Programs - David Sellars & Les Clay

Refreshments - Melba Johnson

Membership - Arnim Roeske

Librarian - Julie Garland

Newsletter - Wendy & David Sellars

Ways & Means - Diane Scott

Publicity - Hedy Dyck

Hospitality - Phil Anderson

In March, another work bee was organized to spread mulch over the rhododendron garden created and planted by our members around the Harold Johnson Memorial bench in Williams Park.

A plant sale was held at the Clay's nursery on March 31st.

Tour arrangements for this year included: a visit to Kay and Harry Huffman's Garden in Burnaby, to the developing garden of Mike Bale - Lu zhu - east of Agassiz, and a visit to the Thomas Hobbs Garden in Vancouver.

Huffman Garden A Romantic English Garden

Hidden behind evergreen hedges on a quiet street in Burnaby, is the secluded, magical garden of Kay and Harry Huffman.

Winding paths lead through beds containing rare trees, such as a 25-year old Ginkgo *biloba*, underplanted with flowering shrubs interspersed with perennials and tiny rock garden plants. Their garden style has evolved over the past 50 years and closely resembles what Graham Stuart Thomas calls 'gardening in four layers' which he believes to be the most satisfying garden design. Trees provide retreats for shade-loving shrubs and cast their dappling of shade across the lawn and groups of larger shrubs on corners give shape to the views and create surprises.

Of particular interest in early May will be the collection of Milton Wildfong's hybrid rhododendrons and a number of tree peonies in flower.

The Huffman's garden has won the Burnaby Garden contest several times and our visit will provide us with lots of ideas for our own gardens.

Lu zhu - A Dewdrop above the Fraser River

Imagine the ultimate rhododendron garden. It would be nestled in a sheltered bowl high on a rocky mountain ridge above the raging waters of a mighty river. Thousands of rhododendrons would be planted among towering native trees and perched on rocky ledges high on mossy crags. Ponds and streams would reflect the foliage and flowers, and winding paths would lead down narrow ravines and over wooden bridges. A stepped walkway would take you to the edge of a rock gully with torrents of water below sheer rock walls. The view from the garden would convey the eye from the wild river below over a verdant valley towards snow covered mountains.

Such a garden existed in the imagination of Mike Bale and since 1993 he has been creating it on a 25 acre mountain ridge near Agassiz. The garden is called Lu zhu which is Chinese for “dewdrop”. A dewdrop is a symbol of purity, sincerity, honesty and beauty in China. We are fortunate to have been invited by Mike to visit his garden this Spring and to join him in celebrating the beauty of his creation.

Thomas Hobbs Garden

This very interesting garden, featured on a PBS documentary on Gardens of the Pacific North West, was visited May 26th

The annual “Beer Bottle Truss Show” was again held along with Members Sale Night (when members may bring and sell their plants without a percentage going to the club), and considered a success.



This year the Annual Conference of the American Rhododendron Society was hosted by the Scottish Chapter in Oban Scotland, and provided people with an excuse, if one was needed, for an interesting foray into the gardens of the U.K. Some members of our Chapter went - to the UK although not to the convention !! Lillian Emerson regaled us with some slides from this trip.

At left - pond and fountain - Younger Botanical

Garden

The Chapter continued the tradition of a picnic for the June meeting, at Williams Park. It was as usual, much enjoyed by all.

1997

FSRS Executive for 1997

	Chairpersons:
President - Dr. B. J. Ogdon	Hospitality - Phil Anderson
Past President - Norma Senn	Librarian - Janet Warner - pro tem
Vice Pres. Michael Neyedli	Membership - Vicki Neyedli
Secretary - Janet Warner	Newsletter - Mike Trembath
Treasurer - John Warner	Programmes - Les Clay & Dave Sellars
Directors - 3 yrs - Don Selman	Publicity - Hedy Dyck
2 yrs - Trevor Badminton	Refreshments - Melba Johnson & Lillian Emerson
1 yr. - John Anderson	Ways & Means - Diane Scott

This year our determination to find some method of honouring deserving chapter members led us to develop special Fraser South Rhododendron Society Awards. As well as acknowledging current members for their contributions to the chapter we wanted to honour three past members each of whom played an important part in the development of FSRS. Memorial Awards have been named in their honour.

FSRS Memorial Awards

Ella J. Crabb - a charter member of FSRS and former editor of our newsletter Ella gave generously of her enthusiasm, her time, her labour and her plants. She could be depended upon whenever help was needed, be it planting or searching the literature for tid-bits of knowledge of interest.

Gerry C. Emerson - a charter member of FSRS. It was Gerry's generous donation of funds that made it possible for a fledgling club to survive its first critical months. It was important to him that the club begin its existence properly. Gerry was very interested in propagation and had begun working with meristem culture.

Harold Johnson - FSRS probably owes its very beginning to Harold. He was eager to increase the number of chapters in District 1 and was instrumental in starting many new chapters. A 'hands-on' grower and propagator himself, Harold's enthusiasm made him the quintessential ambassador for the genus rhododendron.

April was set aside to be our "Awards Night" and our newly created Memorial Awards were presented.

A.R.S Bronze Medals were presented to **David and Wendy Sellars**, and to **Diane Scott**.

“Wendy and David Sellars

In appreciation of the many hours you have committed to the production of an excellent newsletter, and interesting and educational programmes, and for sharing with us the beauty of your garden we award you the Society’s Bronze Medal”

“Diane Scott

In appreciation of the cheerful enthusiasm with which you arranged so many club activities - plant sales, shows, and social events, and for the valuable records you have maintained, we award you the Society’s Bronze Medal”

Our first Memorial Awards were presented to:

Ella J. Crabb Memorial Award - to - **Pat Dahl**

Gerry C. Emerson Memorial Award - to - **Arnim Roeske**

Harold Johnson Memorial Award -to - **Les Clay**

The A.R.S. National Convention of 1997 was held in Vancouver, hosted by the Vancouver Chapter with assistance from the other chapters in the Lower Mainland. This, as always, was a massive undertaking, and many members and associate members were heavily involved in making it a very successful conference.

At the convention, associate members of FSRS **Dot and Ken Gibson** were awarded the **ARS Silver Medal**. This well deserved award was enthusiastically endorsed by those present. Also - our own **Les Clay** received a **Life time Achievement Award** to a standing ovation from the audience.

The June picnic - held again at Williams Park was as usual a time of good food and good fellowship. This year we sported an especially attractive ‘raffle’ - filled with many exciting items....all in a effort to help our shrunken bank account.

In September we again held a ‘hands-on’ propagation clinic at Clay’s Nursery. Methods of taking and sticking cuttings, and various types of grafts were demonstrated: side, cleft and saddle grafts. We spoke of aids such as nurse grafts, as well as grafting on rooted stock. Those who attended found it a very pleasant and educational day.

The Annual Christmas Dinner was supposed to be held at St Andrew’s Hall, but somehow we managed to find Bev and Les Clay hosting the party again - seemed like coming home !

1998



FSRS Executive for 1998

Chairpersons

- President - Les Clay
- Past President Bobby Ogdon
- Vice President - Don Selman
- Treasurer - John Warner
- Secretary - Janet Warner
- Directors - 3yrs Colleen Forster
- 2yrs. Michael Neydli
- 1yr. Trev Badminton

- Coffee & - Melba Johnson, Lillian Emerson
- Hostess - Phil Anderson
- Library - Pat Dahl & Janet Warner
- Membership - Vicki Neyedli
- Newsletter - Mike Trembath
- Programs - Trevor Badminton
- Publicity - Hedy Dyck
- Ways & Means - Diane Scott

The highlights of our year continue to be:

Care of our two Memorial Gardens

Plant Sales - spring at Clay's Nursery, and the Willowbrook Mall Truss Display and Sale.

Garden Tours to The Glades and to Dartshill - It is so gratifying to see The Glades in the hands of those who appreciate the garden. Elfriede and Jim DeWolf are doing marvels to restore and enhance this lovely location. A visit to Dartshill is always an exciting experience. Not content with enjoying the well grown and happily blooming rhodos, one can't but be amazed at the wealth of interesting and unusual plant material grown in this garden.

June Picnic. This year the picnic was held at the Rhodo Ranch, the beautifully manicured site of the home and nursery of Doreen and Trevor Badminton. Each of us enjoyed the new local, and are very grateful to the Badmintons for their gracious hospitality

Christmas Dinner and Party this year at Clay's. We always have a super party here Whether it is the beautifully cooked turkey roasted by Bev and carved by Les, or whether just the comfortable and happy welcome we are always given by these most hospitable hosts, FSRS has come to believe that Christmas Parties at the Clays should be a yearly event.

In between the above activities we had some very interesting visiting speakers: Susan Murray told us of her experiences Visiting Gardens in France - touring by bicycle. Clint Smith was his usual delightfully entertaining self with a description of Gardens of

the UK and Ireland.

The Himalayan Garden of the VanDusen Botanical Garden was described and shown to us by the garden's curator Gerry Gibbens.

We received a lesson in the art of Bonzai by that guru thereof - Roger Low.

Paulus Vrijmoed of Linnea Nursery discussed Native Plants, as Companions for Rhododendrons with a wealth of pictures and plant material.

We had an evening of information regarding Yak Hybrids - from our resident expert in the field - Trev Badminton.

As I write this, several years down the road, it seems to me that we could do it all again with considerable pleasure!

This year,FSRS awarded the ARS Bronze Medal to **Pat Dahl**

Pat Dahl

In recognition of your outstanding commitment and support to so many of the Chapter's activities since its very inception; and in particular appreciation for your role as librarian, Fraser South Rhododendron Society if pleased to present the ARS Bronze Medal

Ella J. Crabb Memorial Award - **Lillian Emerson**

Gerry Emerson Memorial Award - **John Anderson**

Harold Johnson Memorial Award - **Melba Johnson**

Summary

Our first ten years:

Well - we won some and we lost some. Our membership has waxed and waned, but we have always managed to have a core of dedicated and enthusiastic members who have kept the flame alive - and may we always have same !

Fraser South has implemented some excellent ideas -

1. Our memorial gardens
2. Our memorial awards,
3. Our garden tours - sharing with other lower Fraser Valley Chapters, and tours of our members' gardens. This faltered for a year or so, but recently we have been trying to maintain a yearly tour between 'sister' chapters - each chapter to host all the others in their own member gardens.
4. The idea of developing a test garden for the area.
5. The hope of saving and propagating some of Dr. McKee's plants.
6. The use of fun auctions for fund raising. In abeyance for a time after the departure of Charlotte and Larry Chase, but now successfully revived as part of our picnic entertainment.

Some of our very good ideas have fallen on hard times and had to be abandoned or altered:

1. Test Garden - in spite of Chris Klapwijk's search and efforts, we were unable to come up with a suitable site. It was at first thought that an area of Williams Park might be suitable, but it became apparent that maintenance might be a problem, and that security definitely was a problem.
2. Our Memorial Gardens - Ella's Garden - at the St. Andrew's Church site, is in good condition, and continues to be overseen by club members. Unfortunately Harold's garden - at the site of the memorial bench in Williams Park - lost some of its plants to theft. Some have been replaced and secured in situ with wire and rebar, but efforts to enlarge this have been abandoned.
3. The McKee Rhododendrons. This was intended to be one of Fraser South's main projects. The Abbotsford property where Dr. McKee had grown on his rhodos was being sold, and it appeared as tho' the forest which had developed from his plantings was going to be clearcut. There was some hope that one of the new golf courses in the area might make themselves responsible for moving some of the plants onto their grounds, and so saving them. At the suggestion of Mike Bale, a group of FSRs members undertook to try and survey the rhodos, with the hope of identifying, and propagating some of these plants - all of which had stood through heavy weather with no special treatment, and so were known to be hardy. We visited the site several times during the blooming season, finding many plants of interest, describing them carefully, and tagging them, with a view to getting cuttings from these plants at the proper time. Among the plants of interest :
 - i. many we could only classify as '*oreodoxa* types', some of which were particularly attractive
 - ii. several from the triflora series - probably many *yunnanese* - one at least of which, tho' small flowered, put up a large rounded 'head' of flowers.
 - iii. A plant showing heavy fawn coloured indumentum - actually seen in bloom, and presumed to be a form of *fictolacteum*.

iv. Another indumented plant - under leaf surface a white indumentum, inflorescence tubulo-campanulate and rosy pink. The foliage somewhat scorched by the sun in an exposed location.

v. Many that looked to be ponticum hybrids, some of attractive pastel hues.

To our great dismay and disappointment when it came time to take cuttings it was found that our tags had been moved or in some cases removed entirely. With no way of cross checking numbers to plants we felt at a great loss. Nevertheless some cuttings were taken - and plants grown on by Mike Bale, Don Martyn and Vern Finley, but we have been disheartened, and interest has been lost.

Many of these plants have bloomed in Mike's garden, but have not been reassessed, as they should be. Recently a triflorum grown by the Finleys had bloomed - a surprising mauve colour. Our best suggestion was a *yunnanense* - tho' it fails to 'key out' exactly.

To my great interest and delight - Rob Bishop has been growing one of the 'white' indumented plants #7 (see iv above) (we thought none of these had been successfully rooted.) Rob says it is alongside his group of *R. argyrophyllum*, and looks right at home there ! It has not yet bloomed. (2002)

It is to be hoped that we can still do something about the McKee plants.