When J. C. Raulston arrived at the Department of Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University in the summer of 1975, few people would have imagined that he would become a major force behind a horticultural renaissance in the American plant nursery industry. During the next two decades, his effect on professional horticulturists and plant lovers extended from the Southeast throughout the United States and beyond. J. C. became widely recognized as a dynamo in promoting and introducing “new” plants. While establishing the North Carolina State University Arboretum (now the JC Raulston Arboretum), J. C. taught and mentored scores of students and made professional connections among plantmen, botanical gardens, arboreta, nursery owners, and landscapers.

(continued on page four)

The Horticultural Society of New York is located at 148 West 37th Street, 13th Floor, between 7th Avenue and Broadway, near the #1/2/3 subway, the B/D/F lines and N, Q and R lines at Herald Square. It is three blocks north of Macy’s and not far from Grand Central, Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.
~ MAY GARDEN TOUR ~  
SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2013, 10AM @ THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN  

By Special Invitation  

JODY PAYNE  

will host a private tour for chapter members of the new  

NATIVE PLANT GARDEN  

MCNARGS members will meet at the Moshulu Gate of New York Botanical Garden at 10am on Sunday, May 19th (rain or shine). NYBG Staff will meet us and walk to the Native Plant Garden which is adjacent to the Rock Garden. This is the debut for the Native Plant Garden, which will showcase the beauty and diversity of native plants in a contemporary garden setting. The project was designed by the landscape architects Oehme, van Sweden and Associates and was generously funded by the Leon Levy Foundation. Jody, Stefan, Yukie and many others have worked for at least three years to create and nourish this exciting new garden and now they would like to share it with us.

MCNARGS members (no guests please) need to register by May 16th in order to be admitted to the New York Botanical Garden. You may register by email to Brendan Kenney at NY10014@aol.com or by telephone to Zabel Meshejian at 212.242.2459.

There is no fee for registration; however if members are not able to keep their commitment, please notify us so that someone else may take your place.

**Public Transportation**  
By Metro-North Railroad  
Take the Metro-North Harlem local line to Botanical Garden Station. Walk across Southern Boulevard to the Garden's Moshulu Gate entrance. Just 20 minutes from Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan!

By Subway  
Take the B, D, or 4 train to Bedford Park Blvd Station. From the station exit:  
Take the Bx 26 bus east to the Garden's Moshulu Gate entrance.  
OR walk eight blocks down the hill on Bedford Park Blvd to the end (approximately 20 minutes). Turn left onto Southern Blvd and walk one block to Moshulu Gate entrance.
With the frenzy of a successful plant sale in our recent memory, I would like to thank everyone who participated to make this such fun. The publicity was excellent, the attendance was superb, the weather was wonderful and the plants were spectacular – I can’t think of any more superlatives… but it was just that kind of day! Particular thanks to Lola Horwitz and Mary Buchen for organizing us; this is not an easy task. The proceeds of the plant sale will go a long way in paying our operating expenses for the coming year, enabling us to continue to bring you excellent speakers and programs and to pay the rent.

The bloom season began in my tree pits with the *Scilla mischtschenkoana* which was recommended by Brent Heath last November. It began blooming in late March and lasted a very long time on very tough little plants. I will plant even more next fall. Now, after other *Narcissus* and assorted plants have bloomed, I am enjoying the flowers of *Narcissus ‘Sun Disc’* which I saw blooming in Massachusetts last May – very late and a “neat clumper” which I hope will persist forever under the trials and tribulations of a city tree pit.

The troughs on my roof are bursting with flowers, but I don’t recall that they ALL bloomed at the same time before. It seems that someone pushed the BLOOM button and they all responded. I’m worried now that they will be bloomed-out, so I’m glad that I found a few new plants at our plant sale that will flower a little later. Yes, the heirloom tomato season is upon us and I am eager for their fruits although they are barely out of the seedling stage. Mary has promised me a “Paul Robeson” and if you know this heirloom tomato – ONE Paul Robeson is quite enough because he is big and bountiful! Somehow I ended up with a red-bark *Salix* in my purchases from the plant sale – heaven knows what it will do on my rooftop this summer. Boy will Santa be surprised!

We were glad to see our friends the Turchio sisters from Howard Beach at the plant sale. We hadn’t heard from them since Hurricane Sandy and they told tales of watching their gardens floating down the street – we are glad they survived and are replanting with the same enthusiasm and tenacity as before. Welcome to our new members Maureen and Mira from the Westside Community Garden on West 88th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues where they are renovating their very nice and large rock garden. Stop by and check it out!

We look forward to our visit to the New York Botanical Garden’s new Native Plant Garden. This has been a long and well-planned task for Jody Payne and her staff. Abbie Zabar and I visited the Rock Garden last week to see the bulbs popping up and the reconstruction of the major waterfall, now almost complete. There is nothing more exciting than the emerging garden in spring. I have a new most-favorite *Narcissus rupicola var. rupicola* – what an elegant little bulb with fine glaucous foliage. Where will I plant it? Perfect in a trough!

In case you are wondering … our June meeting will be a Saturday July 13th field trip to Nutley, NJ to visit the summer gardens of Silas Mountsier and Graeme Hardie. These are quite well-known gardens from the Garden Conservancy Open Days and Zabel will have more information at a slightly later date.

Meanwhile, please join us on May 19th for our visit to NYBG and then welcome Bobby Ward to our meeting on Monday the 20th at the NY Horticultural Society.
J. C. observed, that in any given region of the United States, only forty shrubs and trees made up about 90 percent of the landscape plantings. There was a good reason: the plants were familiar to the public, easy to propagate by nurserymen, profitable, and they stood the test of time.

He was determined to make horticultural changes. Beyond the classroom, he taught short courses, mostly at night, to nurserymen around North Carolina, recommending plants with commercial possibilities, and at the end of the lectures often dispensed free “goodies” of rooted plants to attendees, cajoling them to propagate and test them. Nurserymen were permitted to come to the arboretum and make propagation cuttings from woody plants—a system generally unheard of at other arboreta and botanical gardens at the time. Photinias, forsythias, and flowering dogwoods began being supplanted by other fine ornamentals from temperate regions around the world as thousands of softwood and hardwood cuttings found their way to nurseries and garden centers and ultimately our landscapes.

J. C. tested plants from other arboreta and gardens from some 55 countries, estimating that he tried and maintained records for over 9,000 plants. He also promoted plants from his own collecting trips. At the arboretum, J. C. established collections of several genera of plants. Outstanding collections were the redbud, magnolia, nandina, witch hazel, crape myrtle, Japanese flowering apricot (*Prunus mume*), and conifers. They became choice locations where gardeners and nurserymen could observe and compare individual characteristics.

In his time, J. C. was widely credited with introducing and promoting more plants into contemporary horticulture than anyone else during the latter part of the twentieth century. Or rather, he introduced more *people to plants*. When J. C. died in an automobile accident in 1996, there were numerous tributes paid him from around the world. *The New York Times*’s Anne Raver said that he was “a generous-spirited giant among horticulturists.” He was described by Panayoti Kelaidis of the Denver Botanic Gardens as the “sanest and sweetest voice of contemporary horticulture in the United States.”

**BOBBY WARD**, author of a biography of J. C., titled *Chlorophyll in His Veins*, will discuss J. C.’s life, his professional career, his impact on horticulture, and some of the plants he introduced to our gardens when he speaks to our chapter on Monday, May 20th.

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**~ REMEMBERING OUR FOUNDER ~**

Lawrence Thomas, December 17, 1926 – May 7, 2013

**Editor’s Note:** Shortly before going to press, many friends of Larry were saddened to hear of his passing. In a future issue, chapter members and friends of Larry, who are legion, will commemorate his life and accomplishments in greater detail. The following is a short description of his garden and influences written in support of his successful nomination for the NARGS Millstream Award for a notable private garden. All of us have stories of how Larry motivated us to grow alpines or get more involved in NARGS, one of his many activities. Please share your stories for future inclusion in our newsletter.

Eleven stories above Second Avenue, high above the ambulances and garbage trucks, lays a hidden mountain retreat, filled with a wide assortment of seed and cutting-grown alpine and rock garden plants, choice shrubs, an assortment of *Clematis* species and cultivars, and a few select trees. The plants are grown and displayed in wooden planter boxes, homemade hypertufa troughs, and an array of high-fired unglazed pots of the owner’s creation. A shaded sitting area with a bubbling fountain has welcomed countless travelers to this oasis, and most left refreshed, sated by a variety of sensory impressions often carrying away a few choice plants, grown from seed in Styrofoam cups.
The garden belongs to and was created by Larry Thomas, who also formed the Manhattan chapter of NARGS over twenty-five years ago in order to bring like-minded local gardeners together to pursue their mutual interests. Larry has since hosted numerous speakers to local chapter meetings and alpine gardeners traveling to and through New York City. In addition to human guests, Larry has nurtured and sheltered a stellar variety of challenging and unusual alpine plants, particularly members of the Campanulaceae and Ranunculaceae. Most were grown from seed and hundreds have been offered for sale at chapter plant sales, the proceeds funding countless speakers and activities. Seed harvested from Larry’s plants has been freely shared with a number of society seed exchanges, and likely a large percentage of members of this organization can boast of plants traceable to Larry Thomas.

Larry has frequently shared technical cultural horticultural methods and information as a speaker at local and national meetings, and his terrace is familiar to many from his slide presentations and photographs published in the Rock Garden Quarterly. Larry’s garden has been an inspiration to NARGS members from several states and this award will recognize his contribution to rock gardening and rock gardeners around the world. Recently reorganized after a disruptive period of roof repair, the containerized garden will continue to evolve and inspire for years to come.

STEVE WHITESELL

~ THE ROCKHOUSE FERNS OF SCHOOL HOUSE FALLS ~

Field trips are the highlight of NARGS annual meetings for many of us. The organizers of the recently concluded meeting in Asheville gave participants two choices from among five possible areas in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

One of the field trips was through Panthertown Valley to see the “Yosemite of the East”. On the valley floor we saw School House Falls and our knowledgeable guide, Dr. Kathy Mathews, described the phenomenon of rockhouse ferns.
School House Falls has a recessed area behind the falls that Francisco Correa and Michael Riley visited. Fern gametophytes and immature sporophytes from the tropical filmy fern genera *Trichomanes* and *Hymenophyllum* live on the moist stone walls and recesses behind the falls. Despite the low light, the constant moisture and moderated temperatures provide a protected environment for the fern gametophytes. [A bit of background: Remember the alternating fern life cycle of sporophyte/gametophyte that Tom Stuart took us through last month? The sporophytic phase constitutes the familiar fern form. This stage produces spores that germinate and develop into thalloid gametophytes producing male and female gametes. Following fusion, the embryo develops into a sporophyte.] As there is frequently insufficient light for the development of mature spore-producing sporophytes, the rockhouse ferns survive only as gametophytes — but they can reproduce asexually. They do so by budding off small groups of cells, *gemmae*, from the edges of the thallus. These ferns are believed to be relicts of a tropical flora that existed in the area prior to the ice age. Donald Farrar who has written about rockhouse ferns, likens them to living fossils that tell us about prehistoric inhabitants of an area.

Among the notable plants we saw elsewhere in the valley were several Trilliums, including *T. undulatum*, a curious parasitic plant called bear corn (*Conopholis americana*), and *Goodyera pubescens* with its striking leaves.

At the top of the ridge we emerged onto the granitic balds colonized with their own unique flora: reindeer lichen (*Cladonia portentosa*), club moss (*Lycopodium clavatum*), *Selaginella tortipila*, and the Kalmia relative, *Leiophyllum buxifolium*, forming neat flowering borders.
Where we looked across the valley of the upper Tuckaseegee River we could see mountains with uplifted strata and more granitic balds providing a resemblance to the more famous valley in the West.

Our hosts, the Piedmont and Southern Appalachian Chapters, provided outstanding guides and well-planned itineraries with extensive plant lists. Each evening featured a well-chosen speaker covering the geology, ecotypes and plants of the Southern Appalachians. The only thing they could not control was the weather.

{**BEN BURR** is the Recording Secretary of the North American Rock Garden Society and fortunately for us, a member of MCNARGS.}

“Yosemite of the East”

~ **WHY DON’T YOU ~**

~ Mulch planting beds early in the season with shredded leaves or bark, gravel, grass clippings, or whatever best suits the plants? Waiting until later in the season may increase the amount of weeding you’ll face.

~ Spend all the time you need to remove all dead wood from trees and shrubs? They’ll reward you with better growth and a better appearance. Remove crossed and awkward branches while you’re in there.

~ Supplement the empty spots in your troughs and rock garden with small-scale unusual annuals and short-lived or monocarpic perennials like *Centaurium scilloides*, *Layia platyglossa*, *Campanula saxifraga*, *C. pulla*, and *Linaria marocana*? They’ll also provide some color after the early Spring rush. Seeds are available through various plant society seed exchanges.

**STEVE WHITESSELL**

{Erratum: The version of Brian Bixley’s *Lilactree Farm Garden Notes* in the March/April 2013 contained minor formatting errors that have been corrected in the online version of the newsletter on the chapter website link at [www.mcnargs.org](http://www.mcnargs.org)}
For one blowout week in May all of London celebrates a world-famous flower show. Daily coverage appears on the front page of newspapers. Reviews and interviews are prime-time entertainment. Awards carry as much weight as the Oscars and garden designers become overnight celebrities.

From May 21 to 25, The RHS Chelsea Flower Show will be celebrating its 100th year on the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Since 1862 the show has displayed the best of horticulture, mostly in three major categories: exhibitors of plants, show gardens, and a diversity of tools.

At one time it was a show seen by nurseries, head gardeners, and those who employed head gardeners. Go now and everyone from allotment holders to windowsill horticulturists are a part of the hordes. The royals still attend at their own designated time and so do the ‘sell off’ seekers after the final bell rings. Over the years the passion has never changed, it’s just a different cast of characters, plus a windfall of new temptations. Exhibits with sleek cutting-edge robots have replaced hand push reel-type lawnmowers.

Yet, even if Chelsea might be the ‘world’s greatest flower show,’ there are moments and sightings, endearing as the flower shows in local villages.

The first time I attended Chelsea it was long before I knew anything about rock gardening. Yet, there under the great marquee, a tall man in tweeds was standing by his award-winning plant. Minute green specks of leaves formed a solid mat on top of a shallow terra cotta pot. The elderly man told me he’d been tending that plant since his university days. I’m embarrassed to say it crossed my mind, “And that’s all you’ve got to show for it?” Yet the prized plant and the proud grower got me thinking. As Chelsea is meant to do. Fast-forward thirty years and I’m staring at miniscule rosettes of a very similar-looking *Saxifraga paniculata* v. *minutifolia* ’Red Backed Spider’ in a comparable early 20th century Sankey pot, that I now know to call an “alpine pan.”

It has been said that the two most common features of the show during its earlier years were the crowds and the rock gardens. Only one thing hasn’t changed. Excerpted here is what Brent Elliott, RHS Historian, wrote in the May 2013 Chelsea Centenary issue of RHS THE GARDEN:

“During the first half of the 20th century, rock gardens dominated the show; everything else was labeled a ‘formal garden’ in the catalogue, no matter how informal they might appear. Rock gardens were the most numerous and


prestigious show gardens at the Flower Show. In fact, the area where they were concentrated, along the Embankment side of the Royal Hospital grounds, is still called the Rock Garden Bank, even without the rock gardens.

Rock gardens were a legacy from the 19th century, when two opposing traditions of rock garden design competed against each other: the school of the ‘noble cliff,’ who wanted to create scale models of alpine scenery, and the school of the alpine plant who wanted to create environmental conditions under which alpine plants normally grew – not cliffs or crags, but moraines and screes. In the early 20th century the voices of two great gardening writers, William Robinson and Reginald Farrer (who cordially despised each other but agreed on this point) joined in promoting rock gardens as probably the most important part of a garden. In a typical Chelsea show prior to 1940, there would be from eight to a dozen rock gardens, created by the great alpine nurseries of Clarence Elliott, Backhouse of York, Ingwersen, Pulham & Son and Gavin Jones. Fashions came and went in types of stone (mountain, granite or slate), scale (cliffs, boulders or level plains with rocky encrustations), the incorporation of water features and, of course, the plants.

In 1920, rock-garden specialist Bertram HB Symons-Jeune showed his new hybrid, Saxifraga x ‘Tumbling Waters.’ (AZ: It was voted best plant of the show that year. Now it is up for “Plant of the Century” and definitely has my vote when this Rapunzel-like beauty is in flower.) There have also been alternative ways of displaying alpines, beginning with Clarence Elliott exhibiting pig troughs planted with alpines in the 1920’s, but since 1945, the popularity of rock gardens has gradually declined, and by the mid-1960’s, there was not a single rock garden on display. And there has never been a return to the glory days of the rock garden.”

{A LITTLE SIDE SHOW IN HOMAGE TO THE BIG SHOW GOING ON AT CHELSEA: THERE WERE ORNATE 18th C. ROCOCO-STYLE CONSOLE TABLES ON EVERY FLOOR, RIGHT NEAR THE LIFT IN THE HOTEL WHERE WE WERE STAYING, BUT I ALWAYS TOOK THE STAIRS. I LOVED SEEING THE MASSES OF SIMPLE GLASS VESSELS, EACH ONE HOLDING AN INDIVIDUAL PEONY STEM. BY THE END OF THE WEEK EVERY BUD WAS FULL-OPENED.}

{ABBIE ZABAR is our current Program/Speaker Chair. For her, the next best thing to being at a great plant exhibition like Chelsea is taking walkabouts in her own garden, especially since we haven’t had a cool, slowly evolving Spring like this one in ages.}

{Editor’s Note: Abbie Zabar regularly recycles her past issues of RHS The GARDEN at our Annual MCNARGS Plant Sales. For those of you who missed out this year, here’s another chance. Every back issue of RHS THE GARDEN from 1989 to the present is available free to the first reader who offers to pick them up. Please get in touch with Steve Whitesell, Newsletter Editor, whose contact info is available on the back page of THE URBAN ROCK GARDENER.}
~ NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY ~

Join today. NARGS is for gardening enthusiasts interested in alpine, saxatile, and low-growing perennials and woody plants. Annual dues in the U.S. and Canada are $30, payable in U.S. funds. VISA/Mastercard accepted.

Benefits of membership include: Rock Garden Quarterly with articles on alpines and North American wildflowers, illustrated in color photographs and pen and ink drawings; annual seed exchange with thousands of plant species; study weekends and annual meetings in either U.S. or Canada; and book service to members.

Join on-line at www.nargs.org
Or write: Bobby J. Ward, Executive Secretary NARGS
P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604, USA

The NARGS Quarterly is now online and members have free access. The path is www.nxtbook.com/allen/roga/70-2

~ MANHATTAN CHAPTER NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY ~

2013 Membership Form

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(When renewing, you may give a Gift Membership to a new member.)

Members’ dues status is indicated on this months’ mailing label. Membership renewal is usually due in January, so taking the time to renew now would be a big help to our Membership Secretary.

If you owe chapter dues, please take time to pay them now.
Send your check with this form to:

Gelene Scarborough,
Membership Secretary
103 West 105th Street #5B
New York NY 10025
THE MANHATTAN CHAPTER of NARGS, founded in 1987, is a group of gardening enthusiasts who are dedicated to the propagation and promotion of an eclectic range of plants, with emphasis on alpine and rock gardening selections. Our Chapter Programs, designed for a sophisticated mix of professionals and amateurs, cover a broad spectrum of special interests such as rock and alpine, woodland, bog, raised bed, planted walls as well as trough and container gardening.

The yearly membership fee of $20 entitles members to five informative copies of THE URBAN ROCK GARDENER, to attend all meetings and field trips, as well as tours of unique and private gardens; plus participation in our much-anticipated Annual Plant Sale. If you are not already a member we invite you to be a guest at one of our upcoming meetings.

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~ WE’LL SEE YOU AT THE MAY FIELD TRIP AND MEETING ~
{Submission Deadline for the September/October Newsletter: September 3, 2013}