

1984 25th Anniversary 2009



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca

North Island Rhododendron Society

2008/2009 Executive

President Diana Scott 338-0208

Vice-President

Dave Crucq 941-1945

Past President:

Harry Wright 338-8345

Secretary

Pauline Thompson 339-3423

Treasurer

Don Law 339-2735

Director: Ways & Means

Dave Godfrey 335-0717

Director: Membership

Brian Staton 337-5228

Director: Publicity

Chris Aldred 331-0395

Director: Newsletter/Library

Noni Godfrey 335-0717

.....nonigod@shaw.ca

Social Committee:

Evelyn Wright 339-7493

Revenue Table Committee:

Louise Casson 334-2331

Sunshine Lady:

Pauline Bonney 339-7594

The club meets at 7:30 p.m.
the second Tuesday of each month
(except May through August)
United Church in Comox



PO Box 3183, Courtenay, BC, Canada V9N 5N4

Coming Events

2nd June 2009 - Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

This month's executive meeting will be held at the home of Dick and Pauline Bonney, 3293 Seabank Road, Courtenay.

13th June 2009 - Wrap Up Picnic Pot-Luck



Picnic Protocols

The season's finale beckons. This year's special 25th celebration and gathering will be held

at Roberts and Adela Smith's garden. The address is: 1717 Glen Urquhart Drive in Courtenay. Go along Back Road to 10th. Instead of turning right to Harry's, turn left, up the hill. The first right off 10th is Glen Urquhart Drive. All the way to the end of the road, through the nature park. (Bob says "lots of parking, but carpool whenever possible, and just ignore any signs that say... 'Do not enter.'")

Attendees to this year's gala can once again participate in the infamous "Bean Bag Toss Game". And premiering this year will be a new and fun "Word Game" hosted by Lois. New members will be welcomed, old friends embraced - warmly, in both cases. Do wear your name badges. Festive dress would be highly desirable...but any old thing will do.

Members are requested to bring one or more dishes...each suitable for serving several persons...of delicate appetizers, seductive savories, buttery breads, crunch salads, virtuous fruits, or decadent desserts.

The annual phenomenon of a perfect balance of dishes for all tastes will again be manifest. No need to bring any eating utensils or cutlery this year as the Smith's will be providing all that is necessary. Marleen and her kitchen cuties will be taking care of the tea and coffee, however your own harmless or otherwise punches may also be brought for consumption.

Antje & Peter Guertler will be making the 25th anniversary cake. Yum!!! Lois will be bringing all the club's historic photo albums, and they will be displayed inside on a table. Lastly, the picnic committee has requested that members please bring lawn chairs from home for the outside festivities.



Vol. 23 No 10

Jun 2009





...by Diana Scott

May has been a very busy month for our Chapter, and we are looking forward to a calmer June and a lovely 25th Celebration on June 13th at the Smith's garden!

We are very proud to congratulate **Harry Wright** on being awarded the American Rhododendron

Society **Silver Medal** at the national conference in Everett Washington in May. This is a great honour and very well deserved for the accomplishments and District-wide work that Harry has been involved with over these many years. Congratulations Harry! For more information on the award and process, please check out the article further on in the newsletter.

Our new Executive will be assuming their responsibilities as of July 1st. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Don Law for the many years that he has been NIRS Treasurer (at least 11 years!) and thank him for staying on to help with Facilities. He has been involved in all our major events and activities and I know that he will remain active in the club. Many thanks to Evelyn Wright who has managed our Social committee for 7 years as well as having headed up Publicity and Garden Tours at different times. Evelyn is a wonderful social hostess and accomplished baker who has donated many, many delicious goodies over the years. With a number of new commitments and a yen for travelling, Evelyn will continue to help out where needed. Thanks Don and Evelyn!

I'd like to welcome Nadine Boudreau to our Executive as she more 'formally' takes over the Ways & Means position. You will have seen Nadine assisting this past year and we are delighted to have her fully on board. Marleen Crucq is our new Social Chair and I know that she can count on the membership to give her lots of help in that area. Marleen was the Secretary for the NIRS for many years and we are very happy to welcome her back!

Dave Godfrey has done an outstanding job as Director of Ways and Means, and will now continue his fine work as Treasurer for the club. Dave Crucq will be taking over from Harry Wright as head of the Rhodo Garden committee although Harry will continue to be part of the group! Thanks to Dave G and Harry for their leadership in their former positions and welcome to Dave Godfrey and Dave Crucq in their new positions!

We look forward to working for the club over this next term.



Your 2009 - 2010 Executive and Committee chairs:

Executive Officers:

President: Diana Scott 
 Vice President: Dave Crucq
 Past President: Harry Wright
 Secretary: Pauline Thompson
 Treasurer: Dave Godfrey
 Membership: Brian Staton
 Publicity: Christine Aldred
 Ways and Means: Nadine Boudreau
 Library: Noni Godfrey



Committee Chairs:

Newsletter: Noni Godfrey
 Social: Marleen Crucq
 Revenue Table: Louise Casson
 Sunshine: Pauline Bonney
 Webmaster: Dave Godfrey 
 Rhodo Garden: Dave Crucq
 Historian: Lois Clyde
 Greeters: Harry Wright & Chris Aldred
 Facilities: Don Law
 Program: VACANT
 Educational: VACANT





Bernie standing guard?

Member's Notes

...by Dave Godfrey



"May is Rhododendron Month" which proved once again to be a resounding success, due in large part to our many dedicated members.

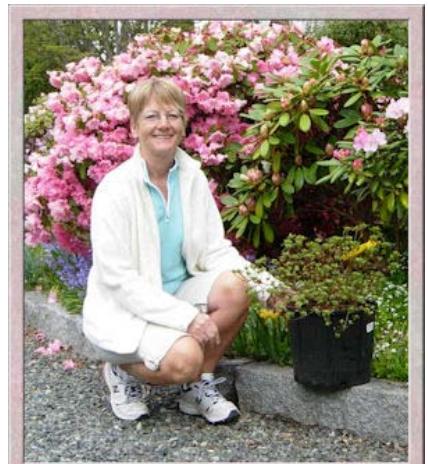
At our annual Sale and Show on Sunday, May 3rd, many hands certainly made light work of the busy day. I would like to say a BIG thank you to all members who helped make this important fund raising event a success once again. Of the \$1628 net profit, over 58% (\$951) came from our own NIRS companion plant table. Again, this deserves a big thank you to all those members who donated the large assortment of plants and garden related items.

For those interested, there were 117 tickets entered in the draw for R. 'Golden Genie'. President Diana drew the winner, *Bob David of Courtenay*. There were only 27 ballots cast in the 'People's Choice' award for the truss show this year. The rhodo "Jeda" was the clear winner with 6 votes, followed by "Conroy", "Dixie Lee Ray", and "Taurus" each with 2 votes. Thanks again to all those who brought in trusses, even at the last minute, and special thanks to Bernie Guyader for providing the new name plates for the trusses. The following weekend, the weather cooperated for our annual Mother's Day Garden Tour, on Sunday May 10th, for which we sold 130 tickets. Although this number is nearly half what was sold last year, we still cleared over \$1200 net profit. Again, a big thank you to our members who sat at the gates, and to the hosts of our gardens. A special thank you to Diana Scott for arranging the gardens and organizing the volunteers, and to Don Law for posting and collecting many of the direction signs.

Forty members attended the NIRS Annual General Meeting held at the Filberg Lodge and Heritage Park in Comox on May 12th. During the meeting, President Diana read the citation on the Silver Medal award which was presented to Harry Wright at the ARS convention in Everett, Washington on May 2nd. The Silver Medal is the second highest award presented by our international organization (see details elsewhere in this newsletter.) An appropriate and well-deserved award to honour our NIRS founding member, on this our chapter's silver anniversary.

During the elections held at the AGM, Pauline Thompson was re-elected

as Secretary and Noni Godfrey re-elected for another two-year term as Director. Also elected were myself (Dave Godfrey) as Treasurer and Nadine Boudreau as Director, Ways & Means. On the committees, Dave Crucq takes over from Harry



Congratulations to Mary Lynn Doubinin of Courtenay, the Garden Tour draw winner of *R. yakushimanum*.





Wright as 'CV Rhodo Garden' Director, and Marleen Crucq has agreed to chair our social committee replacing Evelyn Wright; while Don Law will continue to assist the executive as the new 'Facilities' chair. All those present congratulated the elected members, and thanked Don Law and Evelyn Wright for their many years of service on the executive.

Early the next morning (May 13th) a full bus of 48 members and guests, enjoyed a trip to visit several gardens in the Victoria area. Despite the damp weather, by all reports, it was a fun and enjoyable trip. (See Nadine's article in this issue.)



HARRY THE HYBRIDIZER



On Saturday morning, May 16th, ten enthusiastic members and guests attended a hybridizing workshop ("sex education" for plants.) by Harry Wright. His knowledge and experience with hybridizing is internationally renown, and those attending learned first-hand some of the details outlined in an article in our May newsletter. Refreshments and a tour of Haida Gold Gardens completed the seminar. Thanks to Gwen and Harry for hosting the group.

Be sure to check out the many photos of our May events, plus those of our 25th anniversary pot-luck picnic to be held on Saturday, June 13th, on the gallery page of our web site.... www.nirs.rhodos.ca I hope to have most of the photos posted to the site before the end of June. Have a safe summer and see you in September!



...by Diana Scott



American Rhododendron Society News

As a member of the North Island Rhododendron Society, you are part of a notable international organization called The American Rhododendron Society. The ARS is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to encourage interest in and to disseminate information about the genus Rhododendron. Members' experience ranges from novice to expert. Society activities include public education, flower shows, seed exchanges, scientific studies, and communication through publications and local and national meetings. ARS chapters are located throughout the United States and Canada and in Denmark, Holland, Scotland, Sweden and Sikkim.

NIRS is one of 9 Chapters in District 1 comprised of: Cowichan Valley, Fraser South (Langley), Fraser Valley (Maple Ridge), Mt Arrowsmith (our sister chapter in Qualicum Beach), Nanaimo, North Island, Peace Arch (South Surrey), Vancouver, and Victoria Chapters. We have a District Director, Ron Knight and an Alternate District Director, Ron McMaster, who represent our district at the regional and national levels.

As members of the ARS each of us receives a Journal 4 times a year. These magazines provide a variety of information on Rhododendrons from tips for beginners, reports on treks to rhododendron areas, articles on specific members of the genus, highlights of gardens, information on pests and diseases, society news, publications and much more. As a journal rather than a newsletter, it is also a vehicle for sharing new and scientific information. It has something for every level of rhodophile! The ARS Journal is only one of the many benefits of belonging to this respected organization.

Be sure to check out the ARS website <http://www.rhododendron.org/> for information on the Society, its Chapters, Plant Care and Data, Resources and Activities!





Harry Wins The Silver!



The American Rhododendron Society awards this prestigious medal to nominees on the basis of outstanding service over a period of time to either the Society or genus Rhododendron, or both. The primary consideration shall be for regional, as opposed to national or international, contributions. The honoree must be a member of the ARS.

A petition of nomination must be directed to the Honors Committee of the ARS for the deserving applicant. The petition sets forth and documents the nominee's accomplishments and contributions. Deliberations of the committee are confidential, with final approval by a majority of the Board or its Executive Committee, whichever applies. Decisions and medal presentations are announced at Regional or National Conferences.

We share with you the text of the petition of nomination for Harry Wright

We wish to nominate Harry R. Wright for the American Rhododendron Society Silver Medal Award. Harry has been an advocate for the genus rhododendron for over 25 years and through his accomplishments and contributions to our District, is an outstanding candidate for the ARS Silver Medal.

Harry has been interested in rhododendrons since moving to the Pacific Northwest in the 1970's. As landscaper after his release from the RCAF, Harry fell in love with the genus Rhododendron. His enthusiasm for this genus resulted in the decision to buy and developed a 1.5 acre lot in Courtenay in 1979 with his wife Gwen. This was to become their "Haida Gold Gardens" which is known throughout Vancouver Island as a showpiece of rhododendrons and companion plants. Haida Gold Gardens is host to many garden tours and charity events throughout the year, including 'tours and tea' for the elderly and an annual 'open garden' at Christmas where proceeds go to a local food bank.

As an avid gardener, Harry was a founding member of the Comox Valley Horticultural Society in 1978. His increasing interest in Rhododendrons resulted in the formation of the North Island Rhododendron Society in October of 1984. Harry has been active in NIRS since its inception, taking a role on the Executive for 18 of the 23 years and elected as President for 13 of those years. He actively supported and encouraged the members from the Qualicum area to form their own Chapter as the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society in 1989 and continues to act as liaison between the clubs. He has been a cornerstone of NIRS and for his contributions was awarded the Bronze Medal in 1995.

As Director for District 1 from 2004 to 2006 Harry worked to promote the goals of the ARS and support the Chapters within the District. He encouraged Chapters to work more closely together through continuing to share speakers, facilitating cross-Chapter visits and garden tours, and sharing ideas. Believing that the social aspect of club membership was one of its drawing cards, Harry frequently arranged local tours for visiting speakers, and typically hosted them at his home.

Harry is an advocate for the growing of rhododendrons and has actively promoted its popularity with the public. For many years he had envisioned a public park featuring rhododendrons, showcasing the wide variety of flower and leaf forms available. To that end, he initiated and was instrumental in the development of the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden which was a joint project between the City of Courtenay and the North Island Rhododendron Society. The Garden was first approved in 1993 and opened in 1997. To highlight hybridizers from Vancouver Island he initiated and collected plants for a new section of the garden which is known as the 'Born on Vancouver Island' bed which opened in May 2007. This public garden is adjacent to a park walkway and is visited by hundreds of people each day.

In 2003 Rhododendron 'Courtenay Lady' developed by Harry was chosen as The City of Courtenay's Official Plant. In his efforts to focus public attention on Rhododendrons, Harry was instrumental in having May proclaimed as 'Rhododendron Month in the City of Courtenay' in 2007 and 2008.

Harry is always available to share his enthusiasm and knowledge about growing Rhododendrons. Harry has written articles for our Chapter and District newsletters, written brief articles for the ARS Journal, is often interviewed by the local newspapers, and is a frequent guest speaker to clubs and organizations across the District. Harry is very personable, and is able to share his knowledge in a way that is satisfying to both the novice and the experienced grower.

Plants with structure and scent have always appealed to Harry, and in the late 1980's he began to do some hybridizing. He has developed a number of Rhodos including the Courtenay Five crosses (Courtenay King, Courtenay Queen, Courtenay Princess, Courtenay Lady, and Courtenay Duke) registered in 2001 and propagated at Brigg's Nursery in Olympia Washington. These can be seen at the gardens of Government House in Victoria BC, the Born on Vancouver Island bed in the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden in the City of Courtenay, and in many private gardens across the province.

In addition to hybridizing the Royal 'Courtenay' series,



Harry has also developed 'Iona Cee', a sister seedling to 'Courtenay Queen' & 'Courtenay Princess', very similar to rhododendron Haida Gold with a later blooming period. Named for BC's Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo, it was registered in 2006 by Bill Dale.

Harry is enthusiastic about the plant possibilities through hybridization and has held workshops for those interested in developing new Rhodos in this way. Always willing to share his techniques, he has also held workshops on propagation by cuttings and through grafting. Harry has been involved in discussions and plans for a propagation greenhouse to be established at Milner Gardens and Woodland in Qualicum Beach BC at some time in the future and has been interested in seeing a rhododendron species garden located there.

Harry believes strongly that enthusiasm for growing Rhodos will come from growing plants that do well in each region. In addition, it may be important at some point in time to know where certain Rhodo varieties are located in District 1. In 1993 Harry started recording the varieties of Rhododendrons and known crosses that grow successfully in this district and at last count he had nominations from over 113 gardeners and an inventory of over 4000 plants. The list is available in the form of a self published booklet "Rhododendron Varieties in BC" and it includes the name of the rhododendron, whose garden the plant is in, and where the garden is situated

Community and fellowship are important to Harry and he is always noticeable in a group. He encourages members to participate in related activities outside of the club meetings, and to attend Conferences whenever possible. At Chapter, cross-Chapter, District, or public events, Harry and wife Gwen can be seen circulating and chatting, introducing newer members to others, connecting those with similar interests, smiling and laughing, and generally making participants feel welcome.

Harry has spent many, many years as an ambassador for the genus rhododendron across our District, and has been an avid supporter of membership in the American Rhododendron Society. We therefore nominate Harry R. Wright for the ARS Silver Medal.

At the Annual ARS Convention held in Everett Washington (29th April - 3rd May, 2009), the American Rhododendron Society President, Fred Whitney, presented the Silver Medal Award to Harry R. Wright.

THE CITATION READS:

For over two decades, you have been an ambassador for the genus rhododendron and an avid promoter of membership and participation in the American Rhododendron Society. As founding member of the North Island Rhododendron Society, you have worked tirelessly as President and Director throughout the Chapter's

history. You have been instrumental in the development of both your own "Haida Gold Gardens" with your wife Gwen, and the public "Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden", providing enjoyment to countless citizens and visitors. As a speaker, teacher, writer, propagator and hybridizer, you have ensured that rhododendrons maintain a high profile. As Director of District 1, your support of individual Chapters and encouragement of interactive sharing has emphasized both education and fellowship. You are an inspiration to all members of the American Rhododendron Society.

★For outstanding service the ARS is proud to award the Silver Medal to Harry R. Wright.

Congratulations Harry!



Harry and Gwen holding the citation

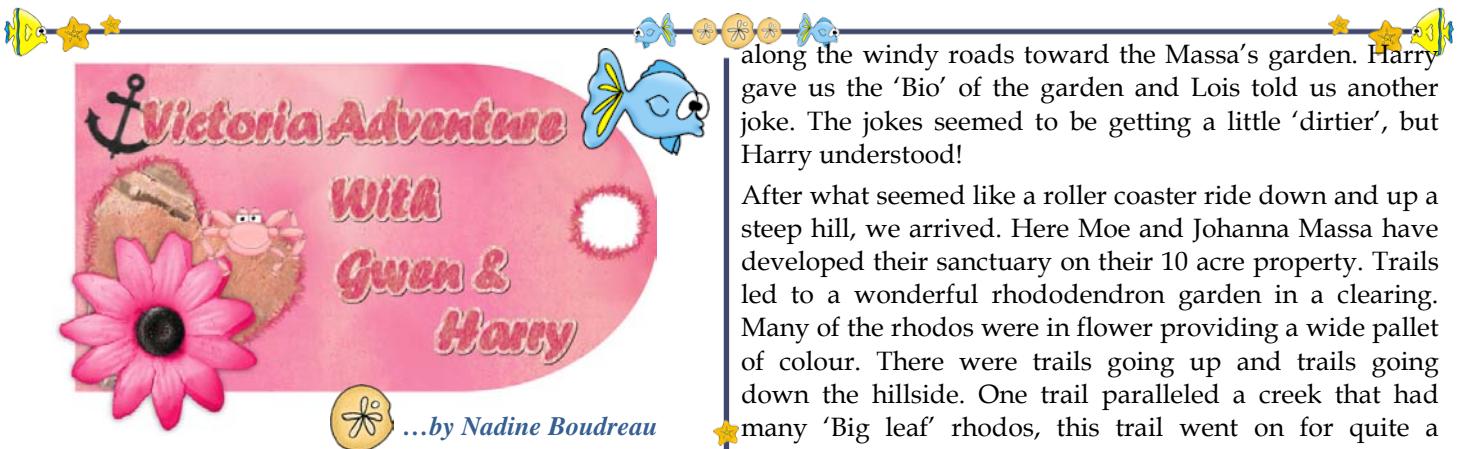


ARS President, Fred Whitney congratulates Harry Wright on receiving the Silver Medal Award



Photos by Susan Lightburn





Excitement was in the air early Wednesday morning on Chaster Road, as all the rhodo addicts knew Harry and Gwen had a great day planned for us. And as usual we were not to be disappointed!!

As we departed, Harry informed us that we would be picking up 3 more passengers en route. As we looked around the bus for empty seats, we wondered if Harry had sold a ticket for the 'private' room in the back of the bus! But he had calculated correctly and we had room for the three and the bus was full. We were all comfortable and settled in for our cruise down to Victoria. Harry kept us entertained with some short stories, and also gave us the whistle rule: 2 short whistle blasts meant we had 10 minutes left at the garden, 1 short whistle meant we had 5 minutes, after that you were on your own to get back home!!

When we turned off the Highway at Shawnigan Lake, the anticipation of our first garden visit of the day grew. There was a light rain falling, but it did not dampen the mood. Driving along the lake and native woodland provided a beautiful route. It was through this windy section that Harry asked Lois to come to the front of the bus to tell one of her jokes; we all had a good laugh and Harry understood the joke!!

The garden of Alan and Sandy Campbell was beautiful. From the road, you looked up tiered rockery to the home. Natural rock outcropping was the bases for the tiers, most of us walked up the driveway to the home; it was here that you walked through a long arbor with a stream running beside it to enter the garden. Within this tiered garden there was a large collection of Rhodos, woodland flowers, mosses, ferns and maples. Al and Sandy had worked very hard to restore and compliment this area as it had been overgrown with ivy. The back yard of the home would not disappoint, there were beds filled with lilacs, peonies, perennials and interesting trees such as a Catalpa. They had lovely sitting areas, a fire pit and a pond. Sandy had graciously proved coffee, tea and goodies. Very nice! We were all back to the bus on time and Harry didn't even have to blow his whistle!

Back on the bus and down the Malahat, we turned off toward Sooke. Bill, the bus driver did a great job driving

along the windy roads toward the Massa's garden. Harry gave us the 'Bio' of the garden and Lois told us another joke. The jokes seemed to be getting a little 'dirtier', but Harry understood!

After what seemed like a roller coaster ride down and up a steep hill, we arrived. Here Moe and Johanna Massa have developed their sanctuary on their 10 acre property. Trails led to a wonderful rhododendron garden in a clearing. Many of the rhodos were in flower providing a wide pallet of colour. There were trails going up and trails going down the hillside. One trail paralleled a creek that had many 'Big leaf' rhodos, this trail went on for quite a distance with bridges adding to the enjoyment of the garden. Moe and Johanna had personalized their garden with figurines and even a small chapel. The Massa's extended their generosity by not only opening their garden to us, but also giving each of us a small rhodo that they had propagated. Giving them our thanks and good byes at the bus door, and petting the family dog, we heard our first whistle warning from Harry. We think he just had to blow that thing! Our bus driver, Bill Cove, had turned the bus around, thank goodness, before we had boarded, as I think Bernice would have fainted from fear if we had to back down the big hill.

Off we went; the bus was abuzz with chatter. We had seen two great gardens and we were on to others. Another garden 'bio', and a joke from Lois, (I think Harry got it.) More windy roads and then we were there. The Blackmore's garden was awesome. A pathway led us through Rhodos, water features and Arbutus trees. The path brought us to a large deck that ran the whole length of the home. Though it was cloudy, you could see the Sooke hills beyond. There were various sitting areas, the farthest one having a pond at its side. The garden had been damaged in the 2007 winter storm; Roy and Lois were still busy redoing many areas. They were also very gracious, serving tea and coffee in the gazebo. The whistle blasts echoed through the trees, and we were off once more.

Garden bio, funny joke from Lois (Harry understood it), and we were at Ann and Tom Widdowson's home, our next garden in West Saanich. A heritage garden and home, has bluebells flowering everywhere. Perennials filled the borders in the front of the house, with a large veggie garden on one side, and as you walked to the back of the property, past a huge variegated Liriodendron, you could hear water rushing down the Colquitz Creek. Here there was a pathway with a cement bridge crossing the creek; this area was carpeted with bluebells - truly enchanting. The path ended at another lovely garden area with Rhodos. Much of the garden was fenced, so I asked if it was for keeping deer out. Tom explained that it was not for deer, it was for keeping their cats from going out near the busy road. Lucky cats!

On to the bus, no whistle this time, and off we went to the final garden. Another garden bio, another funny (and a



little dirtier) joke from Lois had us all laughing. It was rumored down the aisle of the bus that Harry "didn't get the joke".

We arrived at Ken and Madeleine Webb's garden, and again we were not disappointed. Right from the edge of the driveway, you could see large, lovely rhododendrons all the way to the house. The front yard was raised from the driveway. The rhodos edged a lush, green lawn area. It was a delight to walk around these healthy specimens, many in full bloom. Walking in the front yard, Lois and I remembered that Harry had said that rhodos would be available to purchase. We thought we had better get back before they were all gone.

As we walked towards the back, we could see a crowd around the garage... "Oh no, too late for plants" we thought. But as we got closer, we could see the crowd was for another passion... wine and appetizers had been set out for us; the Webbs had really extended their hospitality. They answered many questions and showed us their propagation greenhouse. There were quite a few rhodos available. They also had a unique water feature, a natural creek flowing through the back, and they had laid logs that had been carved for the water to flow over. Ah, time to get back on the bus, can't even remember if the whistle was blown!!

On the way home, we drew our raffle prizes. First draw was for a beautiful 'Courtenay Queen', with the winner being, Bob Smith. Our second draw was for 2 tickets to the horticultural garden tour, generously donated by Isabel. Those tickets were won by Ruth Rose. Lois told us her final joke of the day, the bus roared with laughter, and Harry asked us if we got it!

As we drove along, the talking seemed to quiet down, tired maybe; or if the others were like me, just reflecting on the day, the lovely gardens, each so different yet warm and inviting. But really on how much fun the trips are, all because of the company. Thanks for a wonderful tour Harry and Gwen!



N.I.R.S. Jun 2009

Ucluelet Celebrates George Fraser Day

...by Dave Godfrey

The ninth annual George Fraser Day & Heritage Fair was held on Saturday, May 23rd, and by all reports was another sunny and successful day. Wanda McAvoy tells me that, although the numbers attending were less than previous years, the committee was pleased with the results.

During the welcoming ceremonies in the morning, a new interpretive sign was unveiled by Wanda and Mayor Eric Russcher at the George Fraser Memorial Park on the waterfront, across from the municipal offices. The sign outlines George Fraser's original property, as well as indicates a self-guided tour of the many rhodo gardens in the area.

The afternoon Heritage Fair at the UAC Hall had several historic displays, as well as the traditional music of the Coombs Old Time Fiddlers. In addition, a silent auction, plant sale and door prizes helped keep those in attendance entertained for the afternoon.

Wanda advises that special arrangements and early advertising will be in order for next May's 10th annual event. The new Community Centre should be completed and open by then, and the District has already named one room as the "George Fraser Room." It is anticipated that the Heritage Fair will be at the new centre next year.

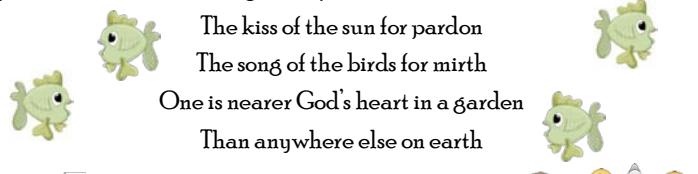


From the desk of...



EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the last issue of The North Island Rhododendron Society's Newsletter, The Rhodoteller, until September. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a pleasant and fruitful summer! A little rest from the computer is in order, however there is still time to enjoy and work in the garden, and of course the odd golf game. So I will leave you with this last verse or garden proverb:



The kiss of the sun for pardon

The song of the birds for mirth

One is nearer God's heart in a garden

Than anywhere else on earth

