

The *Boxwood* Bulletin

A Quarterly Devoted to Man's Oldest Garden Ornamental



Sigrid Harriman, ABS Director, and Joan Butler, ABS Secretary, "set up shop" under a pine tree at the west end of the northern bed of the ABS Memorial Garden to tag Buxus plants that are to be relocated. See article on page 30. (Photo: Decca Frackelton)

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Impressions from a First Visit to the United States

Regina Boehm and Wolfgang Kohnert

[The following is a translation of a report from Regina Boehm and Wolfgang Kohnert, German members of The American Boxwood Society, who travelled to the U.S. last May to attend the ABS Annual Meeting in Charlottesville, Virginia. Translated and edited by Sigrid G. Harriman]

Not unlike the first immigrants, we began our initial exploration of the United States on the East Coast. For three weeks we traversed states rich in history and old gardens:

Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. It became an intensive educational journey with numerous impressions about the land, its history and culture, its houses and gardens, and its people.

Our U.S. experience began with our shock on landing at Washington's Dulles International Airport to find the temperature at 95°F. It took a little while to recalculate its equivalent in Celsius, allowing us to compare the temperature at our departure (10°C=50°F).

Immediately we began to worry about our travel wardrobes. However, we learned during our three weeks that the high temperatures at the beginning of the trip were not typical for May. In fact, the weather changed frequently during our visit.

We drove in our rental car along generously designed highways at the required pace of 55 miles per hour. This seemed painfully slow when compared with German road conditions and much higher speed limits.

We arrived in Fredericksburg and found our reserved motel room to our liking. We proceeded immediately with the exploration of the interesting and historic downtown.

Fredericksburg is a charming town and its walking tour led us to several historically important sites. Of the many outstanding and historic houses we especially liked Kenmore House [the home of George Washington's

sister] and its pleasant gardens.

For our first meal we chose a typical steak house across the highway from the motel, and decided to walk. We soon encountered two problems: first, there were no cross-



Regina Boehm (center) and Wolfgang Kohnert with Decca Frackelton waiting for the bus to unload so the tour of the University of Virginia grounds can begin. (Photo: Sigrid Harriman)



One of the large plants of *B. sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley' in the Treacle garden on the ABS annual meeting tour. (Photo: Sigrid Harriman)

walks or other provisions for pedestrians to cross the street; and second, when we did attempt to dodge traffic and cross the six lane highway, we aroused curiosity and shaking of heads from passing drivers. A short drive in the comfortable car would apparently have been more appropriate.

Our next destination was Charlottesville, to attend the Annual Meeting of The American Boxwood Society. At the meeting we met many congenial boxwood enthusiasts, and most importantly we finally met Joan Butler, with whom we had been corresponding for some time. With much care and detailed descriptions of many varieties, she had shared her far-reaching knowledge of the

species *Buxus* to us. With her help we were able to put order into the inventory of our own *Buxus* collection.

We enjoyed the Annual Meeting very much and wish to congratulate the planners for a well organized, highly informative, and entertaining program. It was quite fascinating for us to meet so many charming people. The well-grounded presentations by the keynote speaker Elizabeth Braimbridge of Langley Boxwood Nursery in England and other speakers were notable. The excursions on the following day led us to many places, all of which impressed us greatly. We delighted in the engaging care of Decca Frackelton who, while driving us to the individual stations,

imparted a wealth of inside information about the various gardens on the tour and boxwood in general. We saw the study room of Edgar Allan Poe at the University of Virginia; admired the fantastic Woltz garden with a mature *Buxus sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy' allée, impressive 'Dee Runks', and billowy 'Suffruticosa' hedges; admired the *Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley' plants in the Treacle garden and its magnificent *Fagus sylvatica*; and marvelled at the especially beautiful *Buxus microphylla* 'Grace Hendrick Phillips' in Henry and Melinda Frierson's garden. Most impressive was the visit to Bundoran Farm where, from the beautiful house sweeping views of the Virginia

landscape frame a generously designed parklike surrounding with many mature stands of *Buxus sempervirens* and *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'. Mrs. Scott had prepared a delicious peppermint-flavored ice tea and home-baked lemon cookies, truly an unforgettable experience. Ideas for combining artistic sculpture and "gardenkultur" were demonstrated at the Estouteville estate. It did not matter the least that it rained too often during our tour; the adverse weather could not dampen the spirit of ABS attendees and made the general impression of all excursions more memorable.

We remained in Charlottesville after the meeting and visited the house and garden of the ingenious Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. Monticello is a living documentation of solutions for all sorts of problems. The configuration and organization of the rooms, the self-designed objects, as well as the architectural realization of the place prove the uncommon creativity of the third President. It is easy to conclude that Monticello was the place worthy of such a genius. From a boxwood lover's point of view, however, Jefferson's only shortcoming was that he disliked boxwood, hence none can be found. This part of our journey was completed with lunch at historic Michie Tavern.

Prompted by the newly issued plant catalog of Saunders Brothers, we decided to pay a visit next to Piney River in Virginia. Tom Saunders organized our visit during which we met Paul Saunders, the father, and visited their impressive plantation and its growing fields. We learned that Mr. Saunders is known far and wide as the "apple man", and that the peaches from his plantation have an outstanding reputation. We regretted that it was too long for us to wait for the first peach crop of the



Large Fagus sylvatica in the Treakle garden mentioned by Regina Boehm. (Photo Decca Frackelton)

season. Instead, we obtained some rare boxwood species such as 'Dee Runk', 'Green Beauty', and 'Justin Brouwers', all of which became an important addition to our own collection. We also secured some of his expert tips on how to treat cuttings with proper stimulants and soil preparation.

We had planned a trip on the Skyline Drive north towards Winchester for that afternoon. Forewarned by Joan Butler that intermittent rain might produce fog in the mountains, we had to leave the scenic road after a short while when visibility was reduced to less than ten feet. Reluctantly, we proceeded along a



Wolfgang Kohnert and Regina Boehm and others in one of the gardens at Estouteville on the garden tour at the ABS annual meeting, May 25, 1996. (Photo: Sigrid Harriman)

wide interstate highway in pouring rain toward Winchester. We met with Joan who guided us through the ABS Memorial Garden at the Virginia State Arboretum, Blandy Farm. We were most grateful to Joan Butler that she defied the pouring rain and guided us through the emerging Memorial Garden. We were deeply impressed with the mature boxwood varieties along the southern border of the garden. *Buxus sempervirens* 'Belleville', 'Inglis', 'Latifolia Maculata', 'Myrtifolia', 'Pendula', and 'Ste. Genevieve', as well as an incredible *Buxus microphylla* are some of the majestic varieties we saw there. Our empathy is with the ABS directors presently engaged in the

final disposition of all boxwood varieties in the Memorial Garden. Some of the rare and unique varieties had already been moved several times. In particular we noted the sad condition of two mature *Buxus* 'Harlandii' after their move to their final destination between several large arborvitaes.

After another intermediate station at the home of Sigrid Harriman, who gave us much information about the country and its inhabitants, we were ready to see Williamsburg. We had arranged an appointment with Dick Mahone, who kindly spent the entire day with us and gave us a very special tour through Colonial Williamsburg. His general knowledge of

Williamsburg was overwhelming. He knew special walks to all important houses, bypassing any obstacle in our path. It is very difficult for us to point to one particularly outstanding feature, though we should mention the almost perfect garden of the Governor's Palace as the highlight. We saw the largest *Buxus microphylla* 'Curly Locks' in America and a mighty *Buxus microphylla* 'John Baldwin' in the garden of William and Mary College; both are quite unforgettable. Before we left, Dick Mahone gave us two caps bearing the ABS emblem, which now occupy a place of honor in our house and will be worn only at special occasions.

After so much history and box-

wood we longed for peace and sunshine and drove south over the famous Chesapeake Bay bridge and tunnel toward Chincoteague. We wandered through the bird sanctuary observing many bird species and the famous wild ponies, and collected large sea shells at the beach. Each evening we enjoyed excellent seafood and recuperated rapidly. Day three found us on the road again to visit Charles and Lucille Fooks at their Woodland nursery. There we admired their well-cared-for nursery and talked shop about plants. They presented us with some rare boxwood cultivars *Buxus sempervirens* 'Cliffside' and *Buxus* /Route 50/ [Mr. Fooks' own variety.] Both are now thriving in our garden.

A totally new section of our journey began with our visit to Longwood Gardens and the Winterthur Museum and garden in Delaware. We visited Longwood Gardens twice in order to collect as many impressions as possible. The gardens offer a virtual fireworks of design configurations and ideas, with interestingly formal solutions and unusual waterworks. In contrast, Winterthur's property appeared less spectacular. We found the Italian kitchen gardens of the DuPont family fascinating and admired the interesting collection of rare trees.

The trip south to Washington, D.C. brought us toward the end of our journey. On the way, we decided to visit Annapolis, where we toured the town's historic center, the State House, and the Naval Academy, missing President Bill Clinton by a week. He had visited the Academy for the annual meeting of former cadets.

The final leg of our journey commenced by crossing the city limits into Washington D.C. Our meeting with Lynn Batdorf at the U.S. National Arboretum was set for the morning. Lynn led us patiently

through the understated yet well-displayed collection of *Buxus* varieties. He showed us the archive where his scientific research takes place, and gave us an overview of the Arboretum's famous Bonsai and herb collections. Enriched with new botanical insights, we ventured along New York Avenue toward our downtown hotel. The deplorable condition of houses lining the street surprised and shocked us. We began to ask ourselves whether we were driving in the right direction.

Finally, after several more blocks we found our hotel. We parked our car and were assisted by an extremely polite porter with our luggage—two soaking cartons of boxwood rarities. The plants found a new and rather luxurious temporary home in the marble bath tub on the 11th floor, and we soon received two new, dry cartons, compliments of the management.

Refreshed and curious, we took the sightseeing trolley through downtown. The day ended with a trip on the Metro to Union Station where we had an excellent dinner at America Restaurant. The next morning we walked from the hotel to and around The White House, visited the Smithsonian Institution, took a rest at the U.S. Botanic Garden, climbed the 96 steps to the U.S. Capitol, and back to the hotel for a well-earned rest.

The end of our journey was in Fredericksburg, where we began. Our last meal was American grilled food at the Harrimans. The next morning, loaded with eleven carefully wrapped boxwoods divided between two backpacks and carry-on sacks we started our return trip to Germany full-to-the-brim with new appreciation and impressions.

Everywhere we went, we experienced all Americans as friendly and helpful, as we were told they would be. Everything is larger and wider than we had imagined. Travel is most

comfortable in well air-conditioned cars. The American "gardenkultur" we experienced during our journey displays quite an independent character, yet European influences can be detected in many places. Contrary to German customs, boxwood is used more intensively and has been integrated into the garden design process. Additionally, we noted that boxwood is allowed to grow to its natural shape. As a matter of fact, we found that home owners prefer their boxwoods to attain their natural shape, while at this time Europeans are interested primarily in formally trained and topiary boxwoods.

Last but not least: the American cuisine is far better and more sophisticated than many Europeans pretend. We were much impressed.

NOTICES

Corrections

On page 9 of the July 1996 *Boxwood Bulletin* (Vol. 36, No. 1) the caption under the top left photo should read *B. sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy' (the cultivar name was omitted) and near the center of page 16, under Minutes, middle column, should read "limited funds" (rather than "limited lands").

Mark Your Calendar

ABS Annual Meeting at Blandy,
May 16 and 17, 1997.

Virginia's Garden Week, April 19-26, 1997, for splendid gardening and decorating ideas (see article, page 28).

In Memoriam

Mrs. Robert J. Culver
Family member with her husband
since 1984

“America’s Largest Open House” Set For April 1997

For Splendid Gardening Ideas, Plan to Attend Virginia’s Garden Week

Lovers of beautiful gardens, exceptional architecture and fine interiors will find much to enjoy during Historic Garden Week in Virginia April 19-26, 1997.

Garden Week visitors will be able to trace the evolution of American gardens, architecture and interior design from the 17th century to the present on a wide variety of tours across the state. More than 250 of the state’s finest properties will be open to the public from the Atlantic to the Alleghenies during the peak of Virginia’s springtime color.

Virginia is a national treasury of historic homes and gardens, as well as the setting for some of the 20th century’s most outstanding properties. Attractions include the oldest documented garden and brick house in English North America, the country’s longest historic frame house, America’s best-preserved Jacobean staircase, and many properties with fascinating Revolutionary War and Civil War connections. Innovative homes and gardens of the 1990s as well as beautifully restored houses from the Victorian era will also be featured during Garden Week’s 64th season in 1997.

In addition to events in city and suburban areas, tourists will have an opportunity to wander along Virginia’s scenic back roads to visit thoroughbred horse farms, riverfront cottages, and solar seacoast villas. Gracious hospitality and lovely flower arrangements designed by talented Garden Club members for each house on tour are the hallmarks of Garden Week events.

Landscapes range from large, formal parterres to delightful, owner-maintained urban “pocket gardens.” The house and garden tour in Lexing-

ton on Saturday, April 26, will showcase a creative “inter-generational” garden developed by local elementary school children and older volunteers. The “Roots and Shoots” project, now part of the local school curriculum, has been filmed for a Willard Scott television feature and is attracting other national attention as well. The Lexington tour will also include a reclaimed architectural gem, formerly an old boarding and fraternity house, and a gardening gem, formerly a city dump.

The Winchester-Frederick County tour Saturday, April 19, and Sunday, April 20, presents six interesting properties from the period of the 1760s through the 1840s. Three began as frontier log homes, and their original log walls have been incorporated in various 20th-century interior renovations. The “newest” home on tour is a handsome brick 1840s townhouse of Federal design.

Outstanding early colonial architecture will be featured on tours in Williamsburg on Tuesday, April 22, and in the Heathsville/Northern Neck area on Wednesday, April 23.

Among the impressive historic properties on the Northern Neck tour is Ditchley, decorated with eclectic furnishings from the Jessie Ball and Alfred I. DuPont family. A newly restored 18th century tavern on this tour is believed to be Virginia’s oldest frame building surviving east of Fredericksburg.

The Warrenton tour, deep in Virginia’s beautiful hunt country, features Spring Hill Farm, a thoroughbred breeding farm and home of Kentucky Derby winner Pleasant Colony; Great Oaks, site of a world-famous collection of calcite minerals; and Weston, a fine historic house

which also functions as a house museum. This tour will be Wednesday and Thursday, April 23 and 24.

A number of stately James River plantations will have special Garden Week openings. These historic homes and their carefully maintained gardens and grounds provide a rare glimpse into the daily lives of prominent Virginia families of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Two of Richmond’s three Garden Week tours will be held in the city’s Fan District, said to be the largest intact Victorian neighborhood in the United States. Tree-lined streets fan out from a downtown park in this distinctive area of more than 2,000 turn-of-the-century townhouses. Wednesday’s event (April 23) takes visitors along Monument Avenue, one of the most beautiful boulevards in the country, and Thursday’s program (April 24) will be held in the district’s charming West Avenue area. On Tuesday (April 22), Richmond’s Garden Day visitors will enjoy touring handsome 20th century homes and gardens in the city’s suburbs.

Annual Garden Week tours are sponsored by member clubs of The Garden Club of Virginia to benefit the restoration of Virginia’s historic gardens and grounds. Restorations have been completed on more than three dozen of the state’s most important historic properties.

A brochure outlining tour dates and localities is available now. A detailed guidebook about all properties open can be obtained in March by mailing a \$3 donation for postage to Historic Garden Week in Virginia, 12 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219, telephone (804) 644-7776.

An Endangered Craft?

Alun Rees

[Box is not only an edging plant for formal gardens, its wood is essential for engravers. However, as reliable supplies of boxwood become increasingly scarce a new source is urgently needed.]

Reprinted with permission from the U.K. publication Country Life, March 9, 1996.]

BOX means different things to different people. It is associated with the National Trust beauty spot Box Hill in Surrey, box edging, hedges and topiary, and the product—boxwood—is used for small turned and carved objects and in blockmaking for engraving.

Buxus sempervirens, the English or common box, grows in Europe, North Africa and western Asia, where it can be locally abundant. It is probably indigenous to Britain, although this is by no means certain. The box trees growing on Box Hill certainly look well established, and 10 or so place names in southern England suggest that it may have been more common long ago.

Described as a bush usually wider than its height, it can in time become a small tree 20-30 ft. tall with a girth of 3 ft. These days, such large specimens are unusual, and older reference books quote dimensions larger than those encountered today, and a maximum height of 50 ft. Logs are usually 3-4 ft. long and 4-8 in. in diameter. Box thrives on limestone, but can grow successfully on any soil.

Commercial harvesting early in this century was in Turkey, the Crimea, the Caucasus and Persia. In these areas, conditions warmer than in England, and a longer growing season allow trees to grow faster to the economically harvestable height

of about 20 ft. By the late 1930s, imports to Britain had almost ceased, justifying the concern expressed for several decades that reckless destruction of box trees in Asia Minor was making the timber scarce and expensive. There are records of large-scale felling on Box Hill—to the value of £3,000 in about 1712 and £10,000 in 1815—which indicates the price of boxwood and perhaps provides an estimate of the time needed for regeneration after a large-scale felling.

Boxwood has a fine, smooth texture, which gives it good turning and carving properties. It has been used for centuries for small objects such as chessmen, boxes, drawer knobs, tool handles, croquet mallet heads, rulers, cabinet-work inlays, and in the manufacture of musical instruments, such as flutes.



It is a modern paradox that as technical advances simplify chores, so enthusiasts take to working in the traditional way. This has happened with bookbinding, weaving, leatherwork, lacemaking and other crafts. Wood engraving is also enjoying an enthusiastic revival.

The speed, accuracy and ease of modern illustration, which can circulate to millions of newspaper readers clear photographs of events in remote parts of the globe, does not dismay the 100 or so wood engravers in this country. They take days or weeks to fashion a single block, continuing the tradition of the most famous of all wood engravers, Thomas Bewick, who virtually invented his medium.

Although he died in 1828, large numbers of Bewick's works survive, both the original blocks and the prints made from them. There is a collection at his birthplace, Cherryburn, 12 miles from Newcastle upon Tyne, now owned by the National Trust. Bewick is best known for his engravings of birds, animals and country scenes. They are all tiny and full of detail. Although frequently used to illustrate newspaper and magazine articles, they are, sadly, rarely attributed to the master.

The engraver's tools are traditional—each is a curved steel blade of a length to suit its user's hand, with a carefully ground face to do one specific job, set in a sloped boxwood handle. Each has a name: gravers, spitstickers and bullstickers to cut lines of adjustable width; tint tools for lines of even width. For space clearing, there are round and square scorpers and chisels. The cutting action is a controlled thrust of the palm guided by the thumb.

Many engravers take pride in using as few tools as possible in a piece of work, emphasising their skill and increasing the harmonious texture of the finished job. The appeal is easily appreciated: an age-old method using traditional tools, requiring great skill and artistic ability, with a pleasing and satisfying end-product.

Inevitably, craftsmen encounter problems practising their craft. The main one is obtaining really good-quality blocks to engrave. Few woods have the uniform fine texture, hardness, freedom from gums and resins, resistance to splintering and absence of flaws, which are essential to the success of the eventual printing. Although other woods, both home-grown and imported, have been

used, the best by far, especially for fine work, is boxwood.

The sole supplier of blocks in Britain is T. N. Lawrence and Son, a family of engravers and blockmakers formerly in London, but now operating from Redruth, Cornwall. Their catalogues have not listed wood from Turkey since 1942, and now most blocks are of English-grown box. They supply some 2,000 blocks a year; the most popular size is 4 x 3 in., and 10 x 8 in. the largest standard. A 4 x 3 in. block costs about £20, reflecting the work and time required for its preparation. Logs are cut into 1-in. slices, which are seasoned for 3-4 years. As box is a small tree, larger blocks require the careful joining of several pieces. The engraving is done on the end grain of the wood, which is planed, scraped and glass-papered to a smooth, flat finish by the blockmaker.

In recent years there has been a shortage of English box. Landowners from Devon to Essex and as far north as Derby responded to enquiries for box trees some years ago, and the 1987 hurricane yielded the present reserve of material. But the long-term availability of good boxwood causes concern. English box has disadvantages. Small trunks produce smaller pieces for blockmaking, and slow growth means more side branches close together, resulting in "knotty" wood. A recent problem is soft, white flaws in the wood which are not visible on the block surface but crumble under the graver. The Society of Wood Engravers hopes to stimulate a search for an overseas source of good boxwood, or of interesting a British horticulturist in growing box specifically for block making.

Indeed, the future of wood engrav-

ing may depend on finding good boxwood, perhaps from Russia, now that trade relations have improved, or possibly from trees grown specially in Britain for this purpose. Such a venture would be a long-term gamble, but experience suggests that providing good growing conditions and regular pruning of side growth to develop a more tree-like form could be the answer to the engravers' prayer for fine boxwood.

Alternative foreign woods include the maracaibo (or West Indian), knysna (or kamassi), Florida and San Domingo boxwoods—none of which is related to the true (English) box, despite the similar properties of their woods. Home-grown apple, holly and pear have limitations for delicate work because they are not as finely textured as boxwood. And it is completely against the grain of the true engraver even to consider plastics.

A Memorial Garden Update

As the re-establishment of the ABS Memorial Garden continues, Joan Butler, Chairman of the committee, has been busy meeting with Blandy Director, Ed Conner and Landscape Architect, Nancy Takahashi. Mrs. Butler has become proficient in assisting as Mrs. Takahashi wields her transit to locate and stake sites for the companion plants and to restake the walks so that the metal edging can be installed to keep the grass within bounds.

While laying out the location of the companion plants from the master plan, care has been taken to avoid as much as possible relocating the largest boxwoods which might not survive another move.

ABS Memorial Garden Committee members Sigrid Harriman and Decca Frackelton, have helped Chairman Butler with the tagging of plants



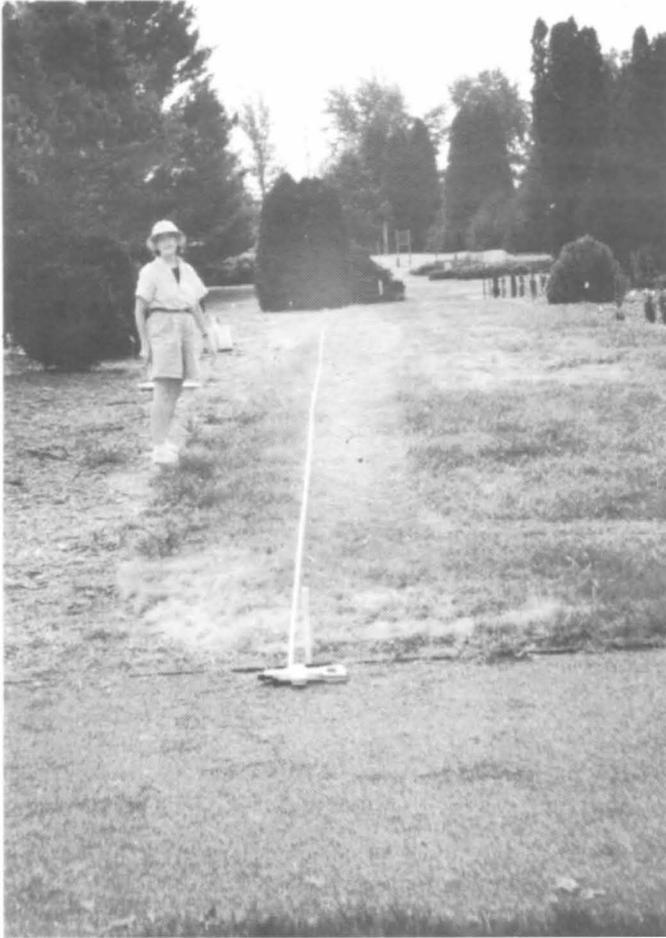
ENDANGERED! A proposed change of grade may result in the elimination of this picturesque grouping of pine and boxwood at the east end of the northern bed of the "new" ABS Memorial Garden.



A curved walk shows the need for metal edging to delineate it. The southern bed, with Asiatic specimens, follows the curve at left side. The center bed is at the right.



*Sigrid Harriman stops to admire the *B. sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy' (now 7'9" H x 16" W) and 'Edgar Anderson' (now 7 1/2' H x 7' W), both to remain in place in the northern bed. *B. sempervirens* 'Rochester' (left) and *B. microphylla* 'Liberty' (right foreground) will be relocated.*



Sigrid Harriman, in updating her plat of the *Buxus* collection, measures the distance from the center point laid out by Nancy Takahashi to the gravel walk leading to the amphitheater (93').



Buxus sempervirens 'Newport Blue' to be relocated to the southwest corner of the northern bed. (Photos: Decca Frackelton)

which must be moved and setting stakes where they are to be relocated. Most of this work was done in the heat of summer.

Nancy Takahashi has designed three beds for the *Buxus* collection, locating a curving walk between the southern and center beds and a straight main walk between the center and northern beds. The main walk intersects the gravel walk which leads from the road to the new amphitheater.

Most of the Asiatic boxwoods have been planted in the southern bed, grouped together by species. The largest of the boxwoods in the 1976 original planting of the ABS Memo-

rial Garden in this area have been preserved as a backdrop, along with some mature *Arborvitae*, for the Asiatic groupings. White flowering trees of *Chionanthus virginica*, *Oxydendron arborea* and an *Amelanchier* species were used as companion plants in this southern bed.

The center bed has two allées, one of *B. sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy' and one of *B. sempervirens* 'Dee Runk', both to have grass paths. The west end of this bed will be planted with *B. sempervirens* cultivars of the Balkan boxwoods.

The center section will have cultivars associated with the Boxwood Society of the Midwest. The

companion plants here will have to be located before stakes can be set for some of the K-series.

A small east bed, just north of a clump of *Arborvitae* will be planted with a cluster of *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' and two *B. sempervirens* cultivars which bear a resemblance to 'Suffruticosa', namely, 'West Ridgeway' and 'Memorial'.

The northern bed awaits location of companion plants and two benches. Plants that will have to be moved from this bed have been tagged and stakes have been set where they are to be relocated.



*One of the hard-working volunteers at Blandy pauses to give directions as they tackle the weeds along the border of *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* leading to the Headquarters building.*

CORRESPONDENCE

Members Share...A Bit of Virginia in Tennessee

Along with a nice note of thanks to us for the Annual Meeting, Mrs. Daniel C. Hoffman of Memphis, Tennessee, sent some notes and photos of her boxwood. Her 89 boxwoods, mostly *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa', were brought to Tennessee from her home in Virginia, a few at a time.

She wrote that she has now added five *Buxus sempervirens* 'Elegantissima' to her collection, the gift plant and four more from Tom Saunders.

*The Hoffman home features *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' at the front corners and front door. A three-ring ivy topiary is located between two windows near white *Caladiums*.*





In the Hoffman garden a Virginia Metalcrafters sundial and base is surrounded by Curly Parsley. Other herbs are Lamb's Ear (right corner), Lemon Sage, Applemint, and Chives. Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa' in various sizes complete the bed. Along the fence, ferns and hostas are planted under the Magnolia which has been "limbed up."



Azaleas on the hill and Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa' border the garden of variegated Pachysandra, Caladiums, white Impatiens and Hostas. (Photos: Mrs. Hoffman)

Boxwood Display in Fredericksburg, Virginia

At the residence of Mrs. Sigrid Harriman, ABS Director, the foundation planting (below) consists of two "balls" of Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa' at the ends with a pot-pourri of small boxwoods in between. Two young plants of 'Graham Blandy' fit between the windows. Small plants of B. sempervirens 'Blauer Heinz', 'Vardar Valley' and 'Memorial', B. microphylla 'Green Pillow', B. sinica var. insularis 'Justin Brouwers' and seedlings from various places are scattered across the front. As plants outgrow their space, they will be relocated.

The B. sempervirens seedling at right fits nicely into a 2' x 3' space with Hostas and Liriope at the base. The seedling was found growing beside a tree boxwood in a family cemetery in Spotsylvania County. It now flourishes at the Harriman residence. (Photos: D. Frackelton)



Minutes of Fall Board Meeting

The fall meeting of the ABS Governing Board was held on Thursday, September 19, 1996 at 2 p.m. in Staunton, Virginia. The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Southall; also in attendance were Vice President Tom Saunders, Executive Treasurer Mrs. Katherine Ward, Secretary Mrs. Joan Butler, Registrar Lynn Batdorf and Board Members John Boyd III, Mrs. Robert Frackelton, Dr. Henry Frierson, Mrs. Sigrid Harriman and Clyde Weber.

President Southall expressed great thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Frierson for the wonderful Annual Meeting and Gardens Tour in May which they had planned for participants.

The minutes of the Spring Board Meeting were approved as published in *The Boxwood Bulletin Vol. 36, No.1, pp.16-17.*

The Treasurer reported balances of \$30,599.35 in the checking account and \$14,244.20 in a certificate of deposit. Discussion followed on the subject of reserve funds. It was agreed that reserves should be put to work to enhance the mission and purposes of the Society as opportunities arise for projects which will be evaluated by the Board. Several immediate and several future opportunities were considered. It was decided to contribute \$2,000 toward the permanent sign identifying the *Buxus* Collection at the U.S. National Arboretum. Also approved was an allotment of \$1,000 to cover travel expense for the Registrar to represent ABS at the first annual meeting of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society, to be held in London on September 28, 1996. The ABS will purchase a membership in the Virginia Nurserymen's Association.

A discussion of Special Funds then followed. They have been maintained as accounting figures representing escrowed amounts to be allotted for specific purposes when needed. Amounts in two of these Funds, Research (\$1,026) and Index (\$628) have been reported as negatives. It was decided to apply reserves to close out these two deficits, so that these two Funds will now have balances of 0. Future sales of the *Indexes* will increase that Fund. Sales of the *Buyer's Guide* will be credited to the Research Fund. The *Boxwood Handbook* Fund will be closed and its net balance will be included in the *Buxus Manual* Fund. In the future this Fund will be credited with net proceeds from the sale of the *Boxwood Handbook*.

It was agreed that a strong effort would be made to complete the re-establishment of the ABS Memorial Boxwood Garden by December 1996, including transplanting as well as the purchase and planting of companion trees and shrubs and the installation of metal edging to delineate all boxwood beds, matching the edging used at Blandy for the compacted gravel walkways.

Future opportunities to be included in budgets for succeeding years include expenses for the Registrar to attend the International Symposium on the Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants to be held in Edinburgh in 1998; the publication of a second edition of the *Boxwood Handbook* when needed and support for additional research on *Buxus* species in Cuba.

A proposed Budget for the current year (1996-97) was presented by Joan Butler, and was revised to show an estimated income of \$18,500 and

expenditures of \$18,500. It was unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

Boxwood Bulletin and Membership Mrs. Frackelton displayed a just-received copy of the next five-year *Index*, which will be sent to all members. Others will purchase it at \$3. December 1 will be the deadline for copy for the January *Bulletin* and Board Members are urged to generate or write articles for that issue.

Nominating Dr. Southall announced with regret the resignation of Mrs. Tyra Sexton from the Governing Board. Since her term of office would end in May 1997, it was agreed not to seek a replacement until the next Annual Meeting.

Old Business Plans for the 1997 Annual Meeting at Blandy Farm on Friday and Saturday May 16 and 17, 1997 were discussed. The inclusion of a panel of experts for information and questions was very successful and should be repeated. It was proposed that the 1998 Meeting be held in Southern Maryland or the Annapolis area. Mr. Batdorf and Mrs. Ward will plan it.

If the Society wished to set up a home page on the Internet, Dr. Frierson has a contact who could establish it. Further work is needed to determine information to be included.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Butler,
Secretary

Two New ABS Directors



ABS Director John W. Boyd III

My first memory of boxwood is of running through the bushes in my grandfather's garden in his back yard and being reprimanded for breaking parts from them. Later my grandmother rooted those broken parts and moved them to the garden as they grew.

At about age seven I had a chance to help move boxwood from Belvue Plantation box garden to our new house. A seven-year-old really could not help much but it was a learning time. At twelve I got my introduction to the need and the business of thinning boxwood.

After high school and college I went to work in the electronics industry and have spent 25 years with

what is now Bell Atlantic Telephone Co., which has nothing to do with boxwood but is the reason for moving to Roanoke, Virginia, where I live with my wife Leigh and my daughter Sarah.

About ten years ago while at church one evening one of our friends was explaining to someone that she couldn't find anyone to thin her boxwood. Later I volunteered to do so for her. In talking with her and her husband later it was suggested that maybe I should help others by starting a business in the care of boxwood. I did so and call it Boxwood Care. Maintenance and care of boxwoods are our primary aim. Insect control, restorations, and general care

of boxwood are our objectives.

Bell Atlantic has the lion's share of my time just now, but I am looking forward to retirement so I can devote full time to the business.

The American Boxwood Society is very close to me as it promotes the use and care of these fine shrubs. I've been a member for several years and hope to be able to serve you as a board member to the best of my ability for some time.



Photo: Alan Mills

ABS Director Clyde Weber

Clyde Weber was born Dec. 17, 1931 near the town of Baden, Pennsylvania, just a short distance down the Ohio River, and north of Pittsburgh. He acquired a love of growing things at an early age on an uncle's truck farm where berries, fruit, garden produce, along with some cattle, hogs, and poultry were grown. There was no shortage of chores or work, and it was there that Clyde learned the value of family teamwork to get a job completed. The depression was rough, but there was never a scarcity of food on the farm. It was during these early years that a lifelong love affair with the soil, plants, trees, and the living green world that supports us, was begun.

As a young teenager Clyde earned his Boy Scout hiking merit badge, and he became a convert to backpacking in the forested mountains of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. That was at a time when trails were few and backpacking wasn't in vogue as it is now. This marks more than 50 years as a backpacker and camper for Clyde.

"I always had a love of science,

and this led to a career in chemistry," says Clyde. His laboratory experiences have led from research in petroleum hydrocarbons, plant and animal glycerides, and protective coatings or paint chemistry. Clyde formerly worked for The Valspar Corporation, but since retiring he works for the Watson Standard company. In the coming year he will again retire to the full-time operation of his Oak Hill Nursery, near Bentleyville, Pennsylvania, with time for trekking the mountain trails and increasing time for reading and writing. At the present time Clyde has the opportunity to disseminate some of his plant and outdoor knowledge through his semi-monthly column in *The Ledger*, a local newspaper published in Bentleyville.

Clyde's avocation of growing ornamental evergreens, primarily for the home landscaper, began in 1959. During the last 15 years or so, since deer damage became more extensive each year, increasing emphasis has been placed on the growing of several hardy Asiatic forms. "All plants are field grown, and our heavy and

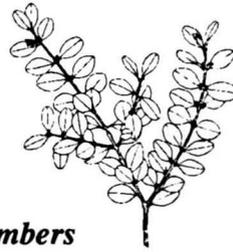
sometimes too wet soil has been a problem and a learning experience," says Clyde. "*Buxus* is one of the few genera that has never suffered deer damage in our nursery."

Clyde and Janet, have been married for 33 years. Their decision to become man and wife was made one evening after they had lined out 500 Japanese Red Maple. They work together in their 25-acre Oak Hill Nursery, which at present has 12 acres of field stock. They have raised two children, Lisa 27 and Michael 26. "The nursery and large gardens was a good place to raise them," says Clyde. "I didn't want them to be deprived of hard work in the field as many young people are today." Clyde and Janet have one 20-month-old granddaughter, Hunter. Already she strolls among the plants and flowers with delight.

Clyde and Janet have both been ABS members for several years, and they thoroughly enjoy the people and events. "The members of ABS offer a treasure house of plant knowledge," says Clyde, "and together we have a lot of fun."

The Seasonal Gardener

Practical tips for boxwood enthusiasts from Society members



Bonsai

A *bon* is a tray or shallow container, *sai* means grow. Bonsai means something that is growing in a shallow container, and is the art of growing a living tree in a small pot.

There are three training methods in which the plant is dwarfed.

The Chinese method, known as Penjing, was developed first. Later the Japanese method of bonsai began. Finally, North Americans have developed a third style. Each is unique in its own way. Since it is an art form, the styles are constantly evolving.

While nearly any plant will make a suitable bonsai with proper training, azalea, beech, ginkgo, maple, oak, and pine are favored for use as bonsai. *B. microphylla* 'Compacta' and *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Morris Dwarf' are also used in the art of bonsai.

Unfortunately this is not the proper place to give any details on the fascinating procedures to grow these wonderful miniature replicas of trees. However, there is an exceptional number of books available on the subject.

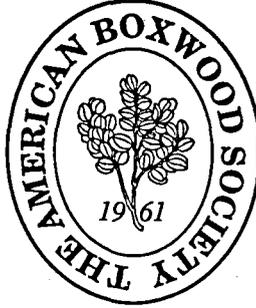
Quite often public libraries and some garden centers will have introductory books on bonsai. There are also numerous local bonsai clubs, which can be found by writing to a national group. The national groups can provide a wealth of informa-

tion: The American Bonsai Society, Box 358, Keene, New Hampshire 03431; Bonsai Clubs International, c/o Virginia Ellermann, 2636 W. Mission Road #277, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.



Beginning bonsai enthusiasts often choose B. microphylla 'Compacta' because of its miniature tree-like characteristics and its ability to adapt easily to the demanding cultural conditions placed upon bonsai plants.

From the Boxwood Handbook: A Practical Guide, available for \$15 from the ABS. See ordering information inside front cover.



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