

# *The* **Boxwood** *Bulletin*

*A Quarterly Devoted to Man's Oldest Garden Ornamental*



*At Langdon Farm, near Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, long rows of boxwood leading to the entrance of the house are part of an extensive boxwood garden laid out by a previous owner. See article on page 3. (Photo: D. Schumacher)*

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# The American Boxwood Society

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The American Boxwood Society is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1961 and devoted to the appreciation, scientific understanding and propagation of the genus *Buxus L.*

For information about boxwood and the Society, refer to [www.boxwoodsociety.org](http://www.boxwoodsociety.org).

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*Index to The Boxwood Bulletin 1961-1986* \$ 10

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Mr. Charles T. Fooks

31106 Johnson Rd.

Salisbury, MD 21804

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Technical articles, news, history, lore, notes, and photographs concerning boxwood specimens, gardens or plantings are solicited for possible publication in *The Boxwood Bulletin*. Material should be submitted to:

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# ABS 43rd Annual Meeting on Shore of Chesapeake Bay

Scot Butler

The 43rd annual meeting of the American Boxwood Society was held at Harbourtowne Golf Resort and Conference Center near St. Michaels on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Registrants were able to pick up their information packets beginning at 1 p.m. on Thursday, May 15. The ABS Governing Board convened at 3:00 p.m. to deliberate on their spring agenda. (See minutes on p. 18.)

The Thursday evening entertainment included a Wine and Cheese Reception followed by a slide lecture by Robin Munson of the Talbot County Historical Society. She described the background of the Chesapeake Bay area from prehistoric times up to the formation of the Bay, a brief incursion of its Eastern Shore by the Susquehannock Indians, and then settlement by white colonists. She traced the development of Talbot County through good times and bad, touching on the plight of Quakers and slaves at various times, divisions among the population during the Civil War, economic growth fostered by the advent of steamships and steam locomotives, and the impact of the fishing and canning industries as well as tourism on the way of life. Among prominent Talbot County names, she singled out the Lloyd family and slave-turned-abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

At 8 a.m. Friday morning ABS President Charles Fooks opened the meeting with a welcome to the assembled members and guests. He conducted a business meeting which featured reports from officers and committees as well as the election of officers for the coming year. (See minutes of the annual business meeting on p. 19.)

The Friday program called for field trips to three sites of interest: a private garden at Langdon Farm, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum at St. Michaels, and another private garden at The Reward in Kent County, Mary-



*Roses flourish on the end of the right wing of the manor house at Langdon Farm. (Photo: D. Frackelton)*



*In the rose garden, 'Iceberg' is the focal point, edged by Buxus 'Green Gem'. (Photo: D. Frackelton)*

peake Bay Maritime Museum at St. Michaels, and another private garden at The Reward in Kent County, Mary-

land. There is no way our group of some forty attendees could have anticipated the enjoyment in store as



*The waterfront vista from the portico of the manor house. The gusty wind on this side turned umbrellas inside out. (Photo: D. Frackelton)*



*Century-old English boxwood thrives on the wind-swept waterfront at Langdon Farm. (Photo: Clyde Weber)*

we set out by chartered bus in the pelting rain.

Entering a long, straight lane flanked by stately beech and pine trees we could glimpse the Langdon Farm brick manor house at the end of the drive. Alighting from the bus with umbrellas upraised we were met by the owner of the property who gave us some background information. The

central block of the house was built in the Flemish bond pattern of brickwork in 1804, replacing an earlier frame house dating from some time after the land grant of 1659. He attributed the hyphens and pavilion wings, of brickwork perfectly matched with the central block, to an owner in the 1920s, Mabel Gillespie of Pittsburgh, PA, who thus created a Georgian-style villa. He

also credited this owner with laying out the extensive boxwood gardens which he has restored and improved in recent years.

The farm consists of about 150 acres, mostly planted in grain crops, but with an estimated 10-12 acres in gardens. Mature boxwood plants are visible as far as the eye can reach and form the framework of various "green-room" gardens. Within these "green rooms" *Buxus* 'Green Gem' is used for edging the beds. The gardener estimated that there are some 2,000 of these plants and they have been in use for about 10 years. They are clipped back in March before new growth develops and are maintained at a height and width of approximately 10 inches each way. The hedges that form the "green rooms" are now mostly American or Common box (*Buxus sempervirens*). Between the house and the waterfront, however, stands a century-old English box (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa') of great size and beauty.

Within the "green rooms" are found several types of parterre gardens: a perennial garden (containing 86 varieties of perennials, including peonies, iris, columbine, salvia, etc.), a rose garden, a cutting garden, an herb garden (edged with marigolds), and a vegetable garden. In addition, there is an orchard, with apple, fig and peach trees, along the shoreline. The garden area boasts a number of ornamental and utilitarian structures: a rose arbor, several brick dependencies (coffee and cookies were served to us in front of an open fire in the potting and tool shed) and a cemetery. The house and gardens form a seamless complex that is oriented toward the waterfront and centered on an ellipse that is 48 feet long. The "green rooms" are connected by turf pathways.

Drenched but pleased with what we had seen, our group boarded the bus and headed toward the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum at St. Michaels.

(Boxwooders are a hardy lot; only a few opted to return to the Conference Center instead of visiting the Museum.) The Museum comprises a complex of structures that display and interpret various aspects of life on the Bay: boats and boat construction, transportation, harvesting food, and recreation. Among the approximately dozen displays is the Bay History Museum which features artifacts, documents and paintings that trace life on the Bay from Indian times to the present. Other displays include a Chesapeake oyster dredgeboat, the nation's largest collection of Bay watercraft, the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse and individual vessels of note. The museum emphasizes the variety and uniqueness of Chesapeake Bay craft such as its clippers, schooners, sloops and skipjacks. Anyone interested in the maritime history of the Bay area is sure to find this museum rewarding.

Following a scrumptious buffet luncheon at the conference center, we set out undaunted by continuing rain for a "rewarding" visit to The Reward. Located near Chestertown in Kent County, Maryland, the trip took us some distance from St. Michaels, but travel time on the bus was spent in earnest conversation. (It is clear from our field trips that most ABS members are friendly and enjoy conversation—listening as well as talking.) For those who had attended the 1985 ABS tour that included The Reward (at that time the Society sponsored 2- and 3-day tours separate from the annual meetings), a point of interest was in seeing again the spreading Japanese boxwood (*Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica*) that was then estimated to be about 93 feet in circumference, 30 feet in diameter, and 8 to 10 feet in height. Happily, it was still there, although it had a close call just before we arrived when an enormous red maple toppled over and narrowly missed crashing into it. In the last 18 years it appears to have



*Boxwood hedges and edgings around the pool overlook the water beyond. (Photo: D. Frackelton)*

flourished and grown even larger though no one was prepared to make an estimate of how much.

As for the rest, these gardens and

freestanding specimen plants overlooking Langford Creek were even more impressive than in 1985. There were enough unusual plants to test a



*Bee skeps used to protect the tender plants in bed edged with marigolds. Buxus 'Green Gem' borders the parterre. (Photo: D. Frackelton)*



*Lucy Fooks admires peonies at Langdon Farm. (Photo: Clyde Weber)*



*The path to the lookout is bordered by boxwood on one side and cold frames on the other. (Photo: Clyde Weber)*

botanist's taxonomical expertise, but our guide knew them all by name and habit of growth. One especially beautiful garden that attracted attention was planted in varying shades of blue using *Amsonia*, *Scilla*, *Anemone*, *Hosta* and *Clematis*. The boxwood plantings, mostly English, or true dwarf, looked healthy growing under the canopy of

tall shade trees or tucked in as landscape accents.

A number of buildings of architectural interest, including an orangery, dot the grounds and blend with the original 1740 brick house, which displays its English heritage, the front brick work laid in English bond (alternating headers and stretchers in

each course). The practice of glazing the headers when the brick were being fired was fairly common in England in the later middle ages and was carried over to this country by some of the early colonists. Not only did glazed headers enliven the traditional brickwork pattern but sometimes they were used to create special designs, such as chevrons in the gable ends of buildings or the initials of the owners of a house. Early colonial houses that were modest in size gained significance through the use of glazed headers in the brickwork. It was a pleasure to again gaze on this undisturbed example at The Reward of a style and art long since vanished.

Reluctantly our group left The Reward but with anticipation for the next event on our program, the auctioning of boxwood plants donated by members of the Society to raise funds for ABS scientific and research studies as well as to stimulate interest in and knowledge of boxwood among the attendees present. This year's auction was a great success with more than 60 plants changing hands, most in containers, but a few larger ones in ball and burlap. In addition to the auctioned plants, ABS President Charles Fooks generously donated from his nursery a gift plant of *Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley' to each of the 40-some registrants at the meeting. Mr. Paul Saunders offered for auction one of the plants evaluated in his boxwood trials and a newcomer to the auctions, *Buxus sempervirens* 'Jensen'. Also offered at auction was a beautiful red, white and blue afghan made by Betty Weber and a specially printed pocket guide on the care of boxwood by Lynn Batdorf. The unofficial total from the auction was about \$3,000. (For more details and final results, see p. 11.)

Following a brief respite to prepare for the evening banquet we were served a delicious and bountiful dinner of crab bisque, Maryland fried chicken, crab cakes, corn on the cob and apple pie a la mode. We remained seated for

our after-dinner speaker, Mr. Mike Hemming.

Mike is owner of the Eastern Shore Nursery of Maryland, Inc. He described how his grandfather, Ernest Hemming, happened to come to Maryland from England in the 1920s. Trained at Kew Gardens, but suffering from tuberculosis, Ernest decided that Talbot County was the best place to establish a nursery. He named it Canterbury Nurseries, Inc. He and a partner hit on the idea of growing boxwood in great quantities to fill a demand created by the placing of a quarantine on imports of boxwood. In one period they produced 250,000 boxwood plants, thus becoming one of the few nurseries to survive in 1930. In 1929 the name had been changed to Eastern Shore Nursery.

Ernest was succeeded as owner of the nursery by his son, Sam, who became well known for his advice on boxwood through a column in *American Nurseryman*. Having grown up with boxwood and helped in the nursery it was natural that Mike should succeed his father as owner of the nursery although he followed other careers in between. He pointed out that the nursery has switched in recent years from in-ground to container-grown plants, now all on one-quarter of an acre. His limited inventory of boxwood includes: English ('Suffruticosa'), *Buxus microphylla* 'Kingsville', *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Green Beauty', *Buxus sempervirens* 'Pyramidalis', *B. sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley', *Buxus harlandii*, and several forms of *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis*. Mike told some anecdotes about his experiences in the boxwood trade, including one about the ability of a colorblind foreman in the nursery who told the condition of a boxwood plant according to its temperature as determined by running his hand over it: cool—healthy; warm—sick; hot—dead.

Mike also gave the audience some cultural tips: keep the foliage loose by



*The original 1740 house, laid in English bond, with boxwood plants and a flourishing circle of *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'. (Photo: Clyde Weber)*



*At The Reward, in the foreground, part of the huge maple that just missed crushing the "grand-daddy" *Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica*, the top just showing from behind. (Photo: Clyde Weber)*

thinning at least every two years so the inside of the plant is light and airy; mulch but not too heavily; keep soil moist and well drained. The boxwood planted at the Easton Court House by his grandfather is now so large and dense it blocks the doorway unless cut back each year. This is done in the middle of March.

The Saturday morning program began with a slide lecture by ABS Director Clifford Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman spoke on "Boxwood Observed in New Jersey," primarily in his home area of Flemington, Quakertown and Stockton. His talk covered landscaping noted over several years, ranging from commercial property and

public areas to private residences and entrances to housing developments. He pointed out both good and bad examples of landscaping with boxwood and identified the types of boxwood used where possible. Examples of boxwood that were sheared and have never recovered (e. g., at the Paul Whiteman estate) made a telling lesson. Nor did the condition of boxwood at various nurseries escape Mr. Hoffman's comprehensive survey. His final slides captured the boxwood planted on the wooded property of the late Aubrey Zaffuto, who served briefly as an ABS director before her untimely death in 2000.

It was the consensus of Mr. Hoffman and the audience that the comeback of boxwood as a popular landscaping plant in New Jersey has probably been related to the increasing herds of herbivorous deer in the state and their aversion to boxwood.

Lynn Batdorf, Registrar for the ABS International Cultivar Registration Authority for *Buxus* and horticulturist for the U.S. National Arboretum's National Boxwood Collection, gave an informative slide lecture on his boxwood collecting trip to the republics of Azerbaijan and Georgia in 2002. He also placed on display several exquisite artifacts carved from boxwood that he had brought back from his trip.

Projecting a map of Azerbaijan and Georgia on the screen, Mr. Batdorf explained why they have areas that are so favorable to the growth of native stands of *Buxus*. Georgia, for example, is hemmed in by high mountain ranges that form a weather funnel which ensures plentiful rainfall. Also, the soil that washes down from the mountains is deep and rich. He stressed the fact that the plants he and his party observed and collected were growing wild in nature and were not cultivated varieties except possibly for those in botanical gardens. Left to grow undisturbed, many of the boxwood

plants have attained the height of tall trees. Viewing boxwood of such size and in such profusion was an eye-opening experience, he said. Nor could he say enough about the hospitality of his hosts and their able assistance despite their impoverished level of life.

Arriving in Baku on the Caspian Sea coast, Mr. Batdorf spent one week collecting *Buxus* specimens in Azerbaijan. His slides captured the geographical diversity of the country. In the arid regions all his meals were eaten outdoors. His travel took him to the mountainous border with Iran. In one forest he saw a single-trunk boxwood tree that was approximately 50 feet tall. He was amazed at the sight of water flowing slightly uphill on one mountain trail, but accepted the explanation of "the cohesion vs. adhesion" of water given by a local guide.

Two weeks spent in Georgia further increased Mr. Batdorf's respect not only for this country's boxwood, but for its culture. Unlike Azerbaijan which is primarily Muslim in religion, Georgia takes pride in being one of the earliest Christian countries of the

world. The country is dotted with many early Christian churches, some dating to the 11th and 12th centuries. Most of them are surrounded by boxwood plants. Similarly, graves are marked by plantings of boxwood. Because of boxwood's long life there is a belief among some Georgians that there is a nexus between eternal mortal life and boxwood. At the least, they find satisfaction in knowing that their human remains under a boxwood plant help to nourish it as the body decays. Boxwood is also cherished as a symbol of purity because, it is believed, evil spirits cannot penetrate its dense, hard wood. Mr. Batdorf speculated that because the word for boxwood is the same as the word for palm in Georgian, there is the belief that it was boxwood branches and not palm branches that were strewn in the road to greet Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Aside from the religious status of boxwood in Georgia its prevalence has also made it a national symbol, but the variations among individual plants can be great. Mr. Batdorf pointed to the blue color of some and the almost rectangular leaf of others.



*After a successful auction, Auctioneer John Boyd, Vice-President Henry Frierson, President Charles Fooks, and California member George Schumacher help load the "prizes." (Photo: Clyde Weber)*

A brief question and answer period was set aside in the program to allow attendees the opportunity to plumb the minds of the experts present. All questions were submitted in writing. One question concerned an upright boxwood, approximately 10 feet by 4 feet, on display at the Lewis Ginter Arboretum in Richmond, Virginia and identified there as *Buxus harlandii*. The questioner doubted that the identification was correct, and sought confirmation from others who might have seen it. There were no responses, but a flag was raised for future visitors.

A question about the use of dolomitic lime to raise the pH level for growing boxwood produced a consensus that a soil pH of 6-7 is best (Mr. Batdorf recommended 6.5-7.2) for obtaining the maximum benefit of nutrients in the soil, but it was pointed out that type of soil is also a factor.

Concerning the best type of container for growing boxwood, wooden containers were recommended because of temperature considerations. Mr. Batdorf noted that boxwood roots stop growing at 94°F and die at 98°F.

The question of rooting boxwood from soft, new (unhardened) growth was raised. Both Mr. John Boyd III and Mr. Charles Fooks had successfully done this but were unsure whether it was merely fortuitous. There were no other responses.

For dealing with *Phytophthora* (a root rot) good soil drainage was emphasized as the best form of prevention. Mr. Paul Saunders said that at the Saunter Brothers Nursery soil infected with the disease was fumigated.

The last question pertained to the shaping of English boxwood. Shearing is to be avoided because it tends to result in cut leaves. Though time-consuming, the pinching back of branches with hand pruners while the foliage is still soft was recommended as the best way of shaping these plants.

The program concluded with a

slide-lecture presentation by Mr. Paul Saunders on recent results of the boxwood trials that he has been conducting for several years to determine the best (most reliable and, at the same time, most aesthetically appealing) boxwood for use in landscaping. Mr. Saunders repeated the view expressed earlier in the meeting that, because of the increasing and uncontrolled deer population in many areas with concomitant damage to the plants they feed on, we may expect to see greater use of boxwood—which deer tend to ignore—in the landscape.

With 34 widely scattered cooperators (arboreta, botanical gardens, nurseries, colleges and private individuals) engaged in the trials, the results are showing a definite trend in the selection process. Saunders Brothers Nursery has distributed some 1,700 test plants to U.S. cooperators, 60 have been sent to the Republic of Georgia and about 10 cultivars have been sent to the Republic of China for evaluation. The largest number of evaluations received for any one given plant is 29 (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley').

Mr. Saunders' personal opinion of the best (and worst) boxwood cultivars has mostly been reinforced by the evaluations of his cooperators. He no longer recommends *B. sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy', partly because of its susceptibility to *Phytophthora*. His admiration for *B. sempervirens* 'Dee Runk' remains undiminished. *Buxus microphylla* 'John Baldwin', another cultivar in the ranks of upright plants, is highly rated by cooperators.

In the category of dwarf plants, four almost evenly-rated cultivars are: *B. microphylla* 'Grace Hendrick Phillips' and 'Green Pillow' and *B. microphylla* var. *japonica* 'Morris Midget' and 'Morris Dwarf'.

Among the class of dwarf-bush boxwood, Mr. Saunders does not advise English boxwood except when planted in just the right (protected)

location. This verdict was also expressed by some of the cooperators. Nor did *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Nana' fare better in the testing. However, *B. sinica* var. *insularis* 'Justin Brouwers' came through with flying colors and *B. sempervirens* 'Jensen' received a high rating. (Mr. Saunders admires the plant but warns of its "touchiness.")

Of the four "Canadian-Sheridan" cultivars being tested, 'Green Mountain' and 'Green Velvet' were most favored by cooperators. The ratings of boxwood in the medium-bush category were close: first was *B. sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley', then *B. microphylla* 'Jim's Tru Spreader', *B. microphylla* 'Green Beauty' and *B. sempervirens* 'Elegantissima.' As for the category of bush and large forms of boxwood, *B. sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen' (small leaf variety) was rated highest, followed by *B. sempervirens* 'Inglis' and 'Arborescens.'

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*Scot Butler is a long-time member of the ABS and former Editor of The Bowood Bulletin.*

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*The ABS Board extends its thanks for a worthwhile and enjoyable meeting to ABS President Charles Fooks and those who assisted him in fashioning the this year's program. The 44th annual meeting will be held next year in Williamsburg, Virginia.*

## Dues Notice

2003 dues are payable now. Those who have not paid before the October *Bulletin* is mailed will be deleted from the mailing list.

## ABS 43d Annual Meeting: A Summary

This year's meeting was held in the beautiful historic Eastern Shore community of St. Michaels, MD, at the Harbortowne Golf Resort and Conference Center. Charlie Fooks single-handedly made all the arrangements for forty members and guests attending from eight states. Mrs. Robert Frackelton provided registration packets in the lobby of the hotel on the afternoon of Thursday, May 15. The Governing Board of ABS met at 3 p.m. (see minutes, p. 18 ). A Wine and Cheese Reception in the upper lounge of the hotel started at 7 p.m., and included speaker Robin Munson, member of the Talbot County Historical Society. She provided slides and accounts of the local history and some folklore.

A rainy morning greeted Friday's activities, starting with the Annual Business Meeting held at the hotel's main conference room (see minutes, p. 19). During the meeting President Fooks asked for a vote on whether to continue the tours in spite of the rain. No one bowed out.

Following the meeting, we boarded the bus and headed for Langdon Farms. The large estate is maintained by two head grounds keepers and two assistants. Gustly winds and heavy rains accompanied our walking tour. We welcomed the hot coffee and snacks out of the weather at the far end of the gardens in a brick potting shed. The water table is low in that area and we were told they often use a wet vac to drain out the rose gardens! It was interesting to see boxwood thriving in such wet conditions.

After a thorough soaking, we traveled to the Chesapeake Maritime Museum. It was still cloudy, but little rain fell as we walked among the nine exhibition buildings. It was interesting seeing life through the eyes of oystermen, sailors, shipbuilders, lighthouse keepers and water fowl hunters.

We all enjoyed our soup and

sandwich lunch back at the Resort.

The afternoon tour took us to The Reward. Boxwood hedges and borders of unique cultivars surrounded the main house and outbuildings. Specimen trees and fragrant lilac commanded everyone's attention. As luck would have it, the storm blew over a huge maple in the rear yard just that morning, but barely another plant was injured in its fall.

As we were behind schedule, it was decided to hold the auction as soon as we returned to the hotel. Lively bidding and a lot of fun were enjoyed by all.

Our Banquet Dinner was "Eastern Shore" style, with oysters, crab cakes and corn on the cob. Mr. Mike Hemming of the Eastern Shore Nursery of Maryland was guest speaker. He joked about planting boxwood and considering their mature size when spacing/designing. He had the pleasure of "fixing" an old planting his grandfather did years ago that outgrew the walkway they lined, just like he told them it would! He told of one employee who was colorblind and included a dead plant in the landscaping to his embarrassment. Thereafter, he taught himself to feel the plants to determine their general health. Mr. Hemming told us the plants take on different temperatures in regard to their health conditions. Dead are hot, healthy are cool, and plants in decline are similar to the air temperature.

Saturday morning was still overcast as we started our final session. "Les" Hoffman had slides of boxwood plantings in and around his hometown of Flemington, NJ. He observed plantings that are not suited for their locations and others that will probably enjoy a long life.

Lynn Batdorf spoke of his trip to the Georgia republic, showing many slides, complete with background music. He displayed several items carved in boxwood which he obtained

during his trip.

Paul Saunders reviewed the 2002 Boxwood Trials with slides. He has many diverse locations studying the same cultivars. His booklets were available. Mr. Saunders thanked Mr. Fooks for all his time and talent working with boxwood and the ABS. He thanked Mrs. Frackelton for all the hours she invests in the *Bulletin* and other ABS activities. He recognized Mr. Batdorf's many contributions to the field of boxwood knowledge. He thanked Mrs. Butler for her advice and for sharing her knowledge.

Clyde Weber received seven questions from the forms distributed Friday morning. As they will make good topics for future articles for the *Bulletin*, only one will be repeated:

Q: In regard to shearing or thinning boxwood, how do you make the perfect plant? A: Go to plastic!! With that the meeting adjourned.

Laurie Jamerson  
Secretary

### Notice

Lynn Batdorf's book, *Boxwood: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, is nearing publication. It is a very thorough study of temperate zone species and cultivars of boxwood with history, photographs, and appendices.

Tax-deductible contributions to the ABS marked for the Boxwood Encyclopedia Fund will be most welcome. Net from sale of the *Boxwood Handbook* has been applied to the Fund, as well as previous donations, but such a comprehensive book will be costly to publish. (Mr. Batdorf does not receive compensation for his work.)

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## Annual Meeting Registrants

Lynn R. Batdorf Washington, DC	Maury Hanson, M.D. Madison, VA	Paul Saunders Tatum Saunders Piney River, VA
John W. Boyd, III Roanoke, VA	Clifford Hoffman Flemington, NJ	George Schumacher Dea Anna Schumacher Turlock, CA
Joan C. Butler Scot Butler Winchester, VA	Edna H. Hoffman Memphis, TN	Mac Stiff Anne Stiff Round Hill, VA
Alexandra Carell Walter S. Carell, Jr. Millington, NJ	Laurie Jamerson Madison Heights, VA	Katherine D. Ward Winchester, VA
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## Boxwood Auction

### Boxwood auction plants, listed by cultivar or species:

'Appalachian Pyramid', 'Belleville', 'Chicagoland Green' (syn. 'Glencoe') 'Compacta', 'Curly Locks', 'Dee Runk', 'Faulkner', 'Fiddlanbow', 'Franklin Gem', 'Grace Hendrick Phillips', 'Green Mountain', 'Green Pillow', 'Green Velvet', *B. harlandii*, 'Jensen', 'John Boyd', 'Justin Brouwers', 'Latifolia Maculata', 'Morris Dwarf', 'Nana' (Korean), 'Peaceful Valley', 'Rotundifolia', 'Route 50', 'Suffruticosa', 'Tide Hill', 'Vardar Valley', 'West Ridgeway' and some Blandy seedlings that show promise.

### Donors:

The donors who made this event possible were: John Boyd, Charles T. Fooks, Lee Hahn, Charles Hildebrandt, Cliff Hoffman, Bill Plumb, Paul Saunders and Clyde Weber.

Lynn Batdorf contributed two copies of his "Caring for BOX," published by Sage Press, and Betty Weber donated a lovely red, white and blue afghan.

## A Mid-Winter Stroll in the Boxwood Garden

### Boxwood in Southwestern Pennsylvania: Observations Part I

Clyde A. Weber

Friday, February 7, 2003, was a good morning for a walk in my boxwood garden. There was an overnight covering of dry snow, with the temperature again in the single digits. Snow has been an almost daily occurrence, and in 25 successive days only one day warmed above the thawing temperature. On that day we had high winds and 45 degrees but in a few hours the temperature again plummeted. Twice in this period we

experienced -5°F to -8°F.

A short stroll into the garden to observe the three plants of *Buxus sempervirens* 'Elegantissima'. The leaves are variegated with a creamy-yellow margin and an irregular green center. After shaking off the snow, I saw that there were no signs of winter stress. These good results are contrary to my experience with the same type of boxwood from other sources, which usually succumbed

within a few years, even when planted in protected areas. My present 'Elegantissima' test plants were planted in 1997, and are now a distinctive pyramidal shape to 3 feet tall. If these plants grow according to the descriptive literature, they should grow to 7-12 feet tall while assuming a broad pyramidal shape. I remind myself that these good results are based on a short 6-year trial period with relatively milder winter condi-

tions than previous years, but for now I am happy to have three already beautiful specimens of 'Elegantissima' with a great deal more potential beauty to come to my garden.

Next in my stroll were 10 young *Buxus sinica* variety *insularis* 'Tide Hill'.

These plants experience the western exposure as the above discussed boxwood, but also there is an equal number in a more sheltered area of the garden. All of the 'Tide Hill' regardless of exposure exhibit complete tip freeze-back as they did last year. These plants were not treated in any way that would have induced late summer growth susceptible to such winter damage. This freeze-back may be due to the fact that the plants are still young, and the susceptibility to such winter damage may decrease as the plants become more established in their location. If not, winter freeze-back in Zone 6 or colder regions will decrease the

apparent annual growth.

Lynn R. Batdorf, in the *Boxwood Handbook*, reports 'Tide Hill' to be hardy to Zone 4, with a mature size of 18 inches high and 4 feet across.

"Younger plants have low spreading habit with a relatively flat top. Older plants have a loose open top."

Although my experience with 'Tide Hill' is limited to only a few years, I can say that it is a beautiful summer plant in this region.

My preferred alternative to 'Tide Hill' is *Buxus microphylla* 'Kingsville', or the type that I am growing by that name. This type is apparently one of the types which was grown by Henry Hohman at Kingsville Nurseries, Kingsville, MD. in the 1940s. Mr. Hohman grew them under the Kingsville name followed by a numerical designation. The numerical designation, at least of my type, has long ago been lost. My 20-year-old plants are 16 inches tall and 36 inches across. In this time I have not experienced any significant tip freeze-back, even on

young plants, although I do observe some russetting on plants grown in severely exposed or wet locations. This 'Kingsville' type is one of my favorites, but I must admit that I am acquiring a lot of favorites as the number of types in my collection increase.

I wandered from my backyard plantings, across the ice-covered gully to a collection of *Buxus* 'Green Velvet' and *Buxus* 'Green Mountain'. In the *Boxwood Handbook*, 'Green Mountain' is described as a cold-hardy boxwood introduced by Sheridan Nursery in Georgetown, Ontario, Canada. Of the four putative hybrids introduced by Sheridan Nurseries, I rate 'Green Mountain' the best. 'Green Velvet' was also introduced by Sheridan Nursery about the same time and is reported to have the same parentage as 'Green Mountain'.

My young 'Green Velvet' plants on this cold winter day are a dark, almost black, green as are the nearby *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Justin Brouwers'. The 'Green Mountain' are an intense green but not black-green as the 'Green Velvet' and 'Justin Brouwers'. One observation that seems to be consistent is that 'Green Mountain' and 'Green Velvet' are more susceptible to winter discoloration in their first and second year after planting. Once established severe discoloration is essentially nonexistent. My 6-year-old 'Green Mountain' plants are 3 feet in height and most are pyramidal. Near the park bench are 8 pyramidal 'Green Mountain' lining the sides. If I live long enough, I will allow them to grow up and then train them as a living green canopy over the seat.

Strong endorsements can be given for 'Green Mountain' and 'Green Velvet'. Both types are likely to assume a mound-to-upright shape, but a greater percentage of the 'Green Mountain' is likely to assume an



*B. sempervirens* 'Elegantissima' showing no damage, Feb. 2003. (Photos: Clyde Weber)



*B. sempervirens* 'Elegantissima' wintered in fine condition and was still excellent May 2003.

upright pyramidal shape, especially when given a little selective trimming. The 'Justin Brouwers' also deserves a very strong endorsement when a smaller, compact, dark green mound is wanted. It will grow to 24-30 inches tall and 36-42 inches wide in 25 years. My experience in growing this type is limited but the short term results look very promising.

My short stroll turned into a several-hour walk among the members of my extended boxwood family. I passed by and took notes on many more types than I was able to include in this article, but that leaves more to discuss another day. I will mention briefly several more plants of interest, among them the *Buxus sempervirens* seedlings that were rescued from beneath an old boxwood at a house demolition site by Mr. Andy Tarnik. Of the 15 seedlings he gave me for my collection in 1997, 1 have selected one or two that are showing very good winter stress resistance.



*B. sempervirens* 'Elegantissima' mid-winter foliage.



*B. sempervirens* 'Graham Blandy' and *B. sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill' in February 2003.



Three established 'Graham Blandy' plants were fine in May 2003, but smaller plants had severe freeze-back.

Also, there is an extremely dwarf 'Wintergreen' sport given to me to add to my collection. I brushed the snow from the area where I expected the plant to be and found it no larger than the size of a tennis ball, though it must be 5 years of age. The unique characteristic of this plant, aside from its little leaves and dwarf form is its winter color. And there, against the

white snow, are the chocolate red leaves of the dwarf plant. I accept this as an omen of the good things to come in the boxwood garden.

I enjoyed my winter walk in the garden. I hope you enjoyed tagging along.

---

*Clyde Weber is a Vice-President of the ABS.*



*The first three plants on the far side of the stepping stones are 'Kingsville' which, as established plants, remain in excellent shape. The next five are 'Winter-green' and the plant in the right foreground is 'Rt. 50'.*



*Six plants of 'Kingsville' are in fine shape, May 2003.*



*B. sempervirens 'Andy Tarnik' is a seedling that shows great promise, March 2002.*



*Buxus 'Green Mountain', planted around the picnic bench, in excellent condition, February 2003.*



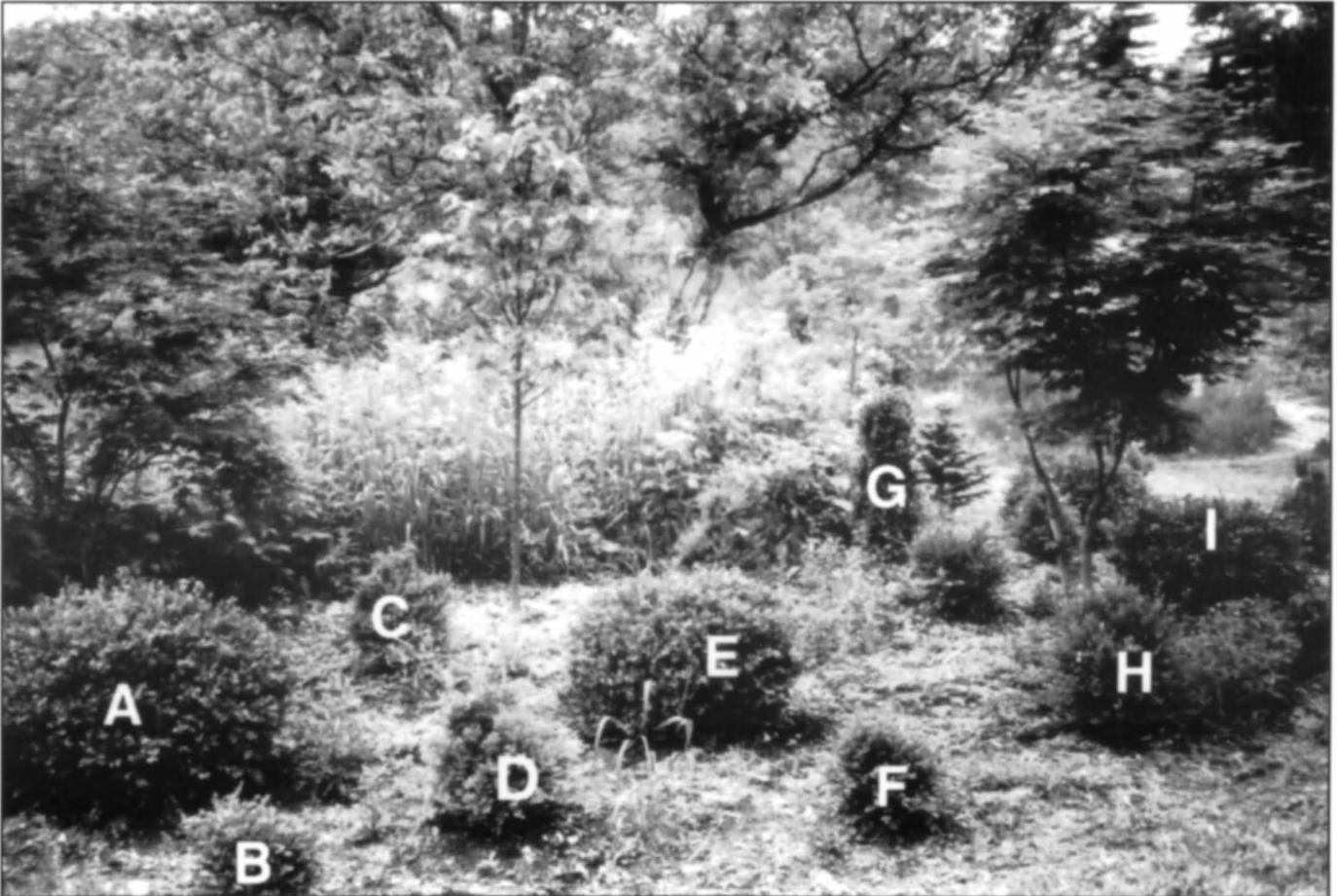
*Four of the "Andy" series in February 2003. 'Andy Tarnik' is the second plant from the left.*



*Miscellaneous boxwood in Test Area III as seen February, 2003.*



*Boxwood Field #134 as seen in February 2003.*



*Boxwood assortment came through the winter in good condition, but plenty of weeds developed thanks to spring rains.*

- |                  |                  |                    |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| A 'Winter Gem'   | D 'Glencoe'      | G 'Dee Runk'       |
| B 'Green Velvet' | E 'Winter Gem'   | H 'Green Mountain' |
| C 'Tall Boy'     | F 'Green Velvet' | I 'Winter Gem'     |

# A Spring Update on the Boxwood Garden

## Observations Part II

Clyde A. Weber

This past winter has been a real learning experience in the boxwood garden, and the following is a May 2003 update of all of the plants covered in our February stroll. At that time the weather conditions had been severe, but the adverse effects were not visibly evident. Following the February stroll we had lots of wind and an 18-inch snowfall over several inches of old snow. The total snowfall by the end of February was more than 50 inches. After that we had more snow, rain, wind and maximum temperatures in the upper 70s only a few days. May has been cool and rainy with more than 6 inches scattered on 22 days of the month. I don't believe that we had a day yet that reached 80 degrees but several boxwood made an early flush of growth, and some plants show frost damage of the tender new growth. How did our plants fare overall?

The three plants of *Buxus sempervirens* 'Elegantissima' weathered the conditions very well. They are real beauties showing no signs of winter stress even though they are in a relatively unprotected area of the garden.

The tip freeze-back evident on the *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Tide Hill' is not much worse now than it was in February. This appearance in spring however, is not very complimentary to the garden, but they will flush back with fresh light green foliage and again be beautiful. All of the plants are young and I have no experience with established or mature 'Tide Hill' plants. This is not so with my previously recommended substitute for 'Tide Hill'. I have young, established, and mature plants of *Buxus microphylla* 'Kingsville'. The young 'Kingsville' fared the winter in a worse condition than 'Tide Hill', but established and mature 'Kingsville' plants did not exhibit any winter stress failure whatsoever. Indications are that young plants of this type require some protection, i.e. mulch to minimize root freeze, and wind screen or branches for wind protection. Once on location for several years 'Kingsville' performs faultlessly (Zone 6) provided poorly drained soil is avoided.

Both *Buxus* 'Green Mountain' and *Buxus* 'Green Velvet' came through the winter with flying colors, regard-

less of the age of the plant. The plants showed no winter freeze-back or discoloration. Even last year's liners in the open field showed only very minimal damage. I should also mention that 'Chicagoland Green' (patent name for 'Glencoe'), performed equally well. These three cultivars flushed early in May and some plants showed frost damage.

The few *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Justin Brouwers', a foot to 15 inches in diameter, exhibited very good winter stress resistance, showing only a few winter-damaged branches among the green-black foliage. Many young liners, however, were lost, so I have another reminder to protect liners and wait until they are larger before lining out. 'Justin Brouwers' remains a very strong endorsement in my book, and as Paul Saunders says 'Justin Brouwers' and 'Morris Dwarf' make fine replacements for English Boxwood.

In the preceding mid-winter stroll article I mentioned a nice dark-green *Buxus sempervirens* 'Andy Tarnik' boxwood that I selected after five years' observation of 15 seedlings from an old plant which was growing

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS\*

#### RESISTANCE TO THE WINTER CONDITIONS OF 2002-2003 (Zone 6; Minimum Temp. -8 °F; Exposed; Lots of West Wind)

	YOUNG	ESTABLISHED	MATURE
<i>B. sempervirens</i> 'Elegantissima'	9, No Failure		No mature plants
<i>B. sinica</i> var. <i>insularis</i> 'Tide Hill'	7, Tip Freeze		No established or mature plants
<i>B. microphylla</i> 'Kingsville'	4, Freeze-back	10, No Fail.	10, No Fail.
<i>Buxus</i> 'Green Mountain'	8	10	10
<i>Buxus</i> 'Green Velvet'	8	10	10
<i>Buxus</i> 'Chicagoland Green'	8	10	10
<i>B. sinica</i> var. <i>insularis</i> 'Justin Brouwers'	2	9	No mature plants

\* Rating scale 0 to 10 with 10 being no failure

in this area. It still looks great as it did when I last observed it on February 7. Six of the 15 plants were dead or nearly so and they were culled from the test group. Of the remaining 9 plants there will be one or two winners, the 'Andy Tarnik' boxwood being one of them.

And the 'Red Dwarf' boxwood, a sport of *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis*

'Wintergreen' has changed from its chocolate-red winter color to its fresh mint green summer color. The leaves, being very small, are in scale with the plant, which is the size of a tennis ball at six years of age. The discoverer of this unique little sport has now begun to propagate it with about 50 plants now in his possession.

Another ABS annual meeting has come and gone, and my new auction plants have been planted out in the test garden. The more than 250 test plants, representing 25 types, should provide a lot more material for these articles.

## Research Proposals Funded by the ABS: An Update

Henry F. Frierson, Jr., M.D.

In 2000, the ABS funded, in part, research by Dr. Robert Wright and colleagues at Virginia Tech to study cultural criteria for the production of boxwood in containers. The goal was to determine optimal conditions to quicken growth so that nurserymen could provide plants for the market more rapidly. According to Dr. Wright, it was determined that the level of nutrients needed for boxwood growth in containers was similar to that for other horticultural plants such as holly and juniper. The investigators also found that additional flushes of shoots for some cultivars such as *B. sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley', which normally have only one annual flush of growth, could not be promoted by increasing the application of fertilizer. The application of the growth regulator Promalin and gibberellic acid did result in some success in additional flushes for some cultivars. As the application of Promalin to *B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa' led to promising results, this experiment will be repeated during the summer of 2003.

Dr. Wright and colleagues will continue to study the irrigation requirements for different boxwood cultivars growing in containers. Early results suggest that some cultivars that flush only once a year require less water than some other woody

plants grown in the nursery.

At the Annual Meeting, the ABS Board voted to provide \$2400 to fund a proposal for *Buxus* exploration by Dr. Marina Mosulishvili, who is a senior researcher in the Institute of Botany, Georgia Academy of Sciences in Tbilisi, Georgia. The research plan is a detailed inventory and mapping study of the existing populations of *Buxus* in nature in Georgia, and the collection of herbarial specimens to be placed in the herbarium in Tbilisi and to be shared with other interested institutions worldwide. Dr. Mosulishvili will be assisted by Dr. Maia Akhalkatsi, leading researcher of the Plant Reproduction Laboratory of the Institute of Botany in Tbilisi; Dr. Zurab Manveidze, head of the Department of Plant Introduction of the Batumi Botanical Garden, Batumi, Georgia; and Sandro Okropiridze, who is a student at the Lyceum at the Georgian State Agrarian University in Tbilisi.

The current knowledge regarding the distribution of boxwoods in Georgia derives chiefly from studies performed many decades ago. It is important to update this knowledge according to modern standards of mapping plant populations, as boxwood is an important component of the Georgian flora and a very

valuable source of new germplasm for horticulture. To ensure a thorough mapping of *Buxus* distribution, a 50 km by 10 km grid and global positioning system (GPS) will be used. There will be expeditions to nine provinces of Georgia that include Kakheti, Kartli, Imereti, Racha, Lechkumi, Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo, Guria, and Ajara. Abkhazia, a politically-disputed territory known to have natural stands of boxwood, will not be visited unless there is a change in the political climate. During the

### Notice

Dr. Henry Frierson noted that Dr. Tomasz Anisko of Longwood Gardens is making a study of soils where boxwood are growing successfully. He is requesting help from growers. He would like 1½ cups of soil samples and the names of boxwood growing there. Additional detailed information as to boxwood age, site location, etc. would be helpful. Send samples to Dr. Tomasz Anisko, Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348.

field trips, slated for 2003, data such as locality, map coordinates, altitude, and type of habitat will be recorded. Photographs of the most different and important varieties will be taken to

enhance the herbarial documentation. In addition, the degree of threat to boxwood populations and the source of the negative factors will be assessed in view of measures and

priorities of species protection and nature conservation. If possible, proposals to promote the protection of plants in endangered areas will be developed.

## NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

### Minutes of ABS Annual Board Meeting, May 15, 2003

The Annual Meeting of the Governing Board of The American Boxwood Society was held on Thursday, May 15, 2003 at the Harbourtowne Golf Resort and Conference Center, St. Michaels, MD. In attendance were: Charles T. Fooks, President; Clyde Weber, First Vice President; Henry F. Frierson, Jr., M.D., Second Vice President; Laurie Jamerson, Secretary; Katherine D. Ward, Executive Treasurer; Lynn R. Batdorf, Registrar, and the following Directors: John W. Boyd III, Walter S. Carell, Jr., Decca G. Frackelton, W. Edward Goode, Jr., Maury Hanson, M.D., Clifford L. Hoffman, Gary Richardson, M.D., McHenry L. Stiff III; and Chairman of the ABS Memorial Garden, Joan Butler.

President Fooks called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. A motion was made, seconded and approved that the minutes of the Governing Board winter meeting on January 23, 2003, at Blandy Farm, Boyce, Virginia be accepted as printed in the April 2003 *Bulletin*.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mrs. Ward distributed 2001-02 and 2002-03 ABS Treasurer's Reports and ABS Special Fund Reports for review. She explained expenses and receipts for the Annual Meeting usually fall in two fiscal years. Checking balance as of May 13, 2003 is \$17,673 and CDs are \$13,469 and \$11,130. Receipts were \$29,296 and expenses were \$17,437. The Board discussed the need for detailed treasurer's reports to help in preparing the budget and to determine if there would be a surplus for extra

projects. Mrs. Frackelton suggested outlay of sums over a certain amount, not in the regular budget, be approved by the Executive Committee before being submitted to the Treasurer.

**Registrar/Publication Report:** Lynn Batdorf distributed to Board members copies of a new booklet, "Caring for BOX," that he had prepared for the Sage Press series. He said that going from the written version of *Boxwood: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* to the "printer's version" is very time consuming. The Board discussed options that would still allow ABS/author control over the final version. Funding alternatives were discussed. Upon request, Mr. Batdorf listed the stages for completion beyond his many years of work on the book. A motion was made that Mr. Batdorf get prices for various stages of publication.

**ABS Bulletin:** Decca Frackelton has received several articles and can always use more. She reminded the Board that June 1 is the deadline for the July issue and September 1 for the October issue; earlier is fine.

**Research/Web Site Committee:** Dr. Frierson said Dr. Wright has written on Promalin effects on boxwood and he will request an article for the *Bulletin*.

Jeff Miller reported to Dr. Frierson on the heavy use of the website with the most active days being Monday, Wednesday and Tuesday in that order. Busiest hour of the day is 7 p.m. Forty-nine countries have visited the site. Major inquiries are about pruning,

transplanting and "wood" use. Mr. Hoffman reminded us that this was a good source for articles.

Dr. Frierson distributed a seven-page Plant Exploration Proposal on behalf of Dr. Marina Mosulishvili for funding an inventory mapping and germplasm collecting project in Georgia. The data would be shared with the ABS for distribution in the USA. Mr. Batdorf emphasized the importance of mapping. Dr. Frierson made a motion to fund \$2400 for the project, Mrs. Jamerson seconded and the Board voted to approve.

**Nominating Committee:** Clifford Hoffman, Chairman reported that the present ABS Officers will be presented for reelection, that the slate for expiring Directors terms will be Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton, Mr. Clifford L. Hoffman and Dr. Gary Richardson, (terms run to 2006) and that Mrs. Alan Willemsen has agreed to fill the Director's vacancy to 2005. Officers will serve a one-year term. The position of Director is for a three-year term and is staggered in groups of three.

**ABS Memorial Garden:** Joan Butler reported all plants look good except the eastern site where there is a soggy area. During the winter, deer defoliated the *Thuja* trees up to five or six feet. No one can remember this much damage in past years.

**U.S. National Arboretum Stakeholders:** Dr. Gary Richardson attended the March 26 meeting where outside input for future arboretum plans were discussed. Ideas to put information on

the web site are to include over 900,000 plants. Lynn Batdorf was mentioned for his overseas trip to Georgia and for his work on the boxwood encyclopedia. Reference was made to an article in the April 2003 issue of *Country Living* listing the U.S. National Arboretum as one of the top ten gardens to visit. The others were Arnold Arboretum, Missouri Botanical Garden, Desert Botanic Garden, Strybing Arboretum, Marie Selby

Botanic Garden, Chicago Botanic Garden, Denver Botanic Garden, Atlanta Botanic Garden, and New York Botanic Garden. Several of these are ABS members.

**ABS Annual Meeting - 2004:** Mr. Goode reported preliminary work has begun on the Williamsburg, Virginia meeting. It was suggested that there be more than one person to help setting up food/hotels/sites and tours. Mrs. Frackelton needs to have the itinerary

and plans early for the *Bulletin*, as well as costs and deadlines for the Registration Form. Mr. Fooks said buses should be arranged early and Mrs. Ward suggested the possibility of school buses.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dr. Hanson and seconded by Mr. Boyd. The meeting concluded at 5:25 p.m.

Laurie Jamerson  
Secretary

## Minutes of ABS Annual Business Meeting, May 16, 2003

The Annual Business Meeting was called to order at 8:20 am. in the conference room at Harbortowne Resort by President Charles Fooks who welcomed all attendees. He thanked Mrs. Robert Frackelton for the articles in the *Bulletin* about the tours and itinerary for the Annual Meeting. He asked for a vote on whether to continue the tours in spite of the heavy rainfall. All were in favor of continuing. The minutes of the 42nd Annual Meeting were approved as published in *The Boxwood Bulletin*, Vol. 42, No. 1, p.22. A Question and Answer form was distributed for the Saturday morning meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mrs. Ward reported a checking account balance of \$17,673 as of May 13, 2003. CDs are \$13,469 and \$11,130. The Society has not been billed for current meeting costs. Mrs. Ward noted the Board's wish to have the boxwood encyclopedia published by year's end. Contributions to the fund are welcome.

**Nominating Committee:** Mr. Clifford Hoffman, Chairman, presented the slate of officers and directors proposed by the Nominating Committee. A motion was made by Joan Butler for the Secretary to cast a unanimous vote for the slate as presented.

*Officers (one-year term):*

President, Mr. Charles T. Fooks; 1st

Vice President, Mr. Clyde Weber; 2nd Vice President, Dr. Henry F. Frierson, Jr.; Secretary, Laurie Jamerson.

*Directors (three-year term):*

Mrs. Robert L. Frackelton, Mr. Clifford Hoffman, and Dr. Gary Richardson

*Director Vacancy (term expires 2005):*

Mrs. Alan Willemsen

**ABS Memorial Garden:** Joan Butler reported that all plants look good except the eastern site where there is a soggy area. During the winter, deer defoliated the *Tsuga* trees in the Garden to a height of five or six feet. This has not happened before in past memory.

**Registrar/Encyclopedia Report:** Lynn Batdorf gave an overview of the boxwood encyclopedia and noted 18 years have gone into it so far. It is hoped that publication can be completed by year's end. Donations to assist in the printing can be made to the ABS Treasurer, earmarked Boxwood Encyclopedia Fund.

**ABS Annual Meeting - 2004:** Williamsburg, Virginia has been selected for the 2004 Annual Meeting, Director W. Edward Goode, Jr. will be in charge.

Details to be published in the *Bulletin* as they become finalized.

**Gift Plant and Auction:** The gift

plant this year is 'Vardar Valley', donated by Charles Fooks. John Boyd will conduct the Auction and Katherine Ward has prepared index cards, pre-numbered with your name, so you can keep track of your bids and plants and present the card with payment.

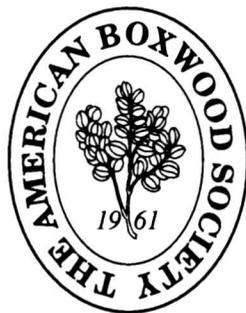
**Other Business:** As dues are payable May 1 each year, Katherine Ward suggested a space be provided on the Registration Form so they can be paid with registration.

**Locations for Annual Meetings 2005 and beyond:** Several locations were suggested. Walter Carell noted that a large percentage of attendees were from Virginia and there were a lot of boxwood to be seen in the state. Henry Frierson asked for a show of hands of those willing to travel outside Virginia. With California, New Jersey, Tennessee, Georgia and western Pennsylvania represented, travel does not seem to be an issue.

Tentatively 2005 will be in the central Virginia area. Paul Saunders offered a tour of boxwood production at his nursery in Piney River. Edna Hoffman is willing to assist with a meeting in her home city of Memphis, TN.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Laurie Jamerson  
Secretary



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is published yearly.*