

# ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 3

September 2002

## Calendar

Mark Your Calendars Now! The next issue comes in November. Also check for late breaking current events at the Alaska Rock Garden Website at:

<http://www.args.org/>

**September 21, 2002 2 PM Regular Meeting. Building a Water Feature in Your Garden by Ken Malay. There will also be a final report on the NARGS Annual General Meeting which ARGs sponsored this summer. It is also a good time to turn in your seeds for the seed exchange.**

### \$300 Stipend to Attend National NARGS Meetings

Each year NARGS offers each chapter an opportunity for one of its members to attend a national meeting by applying for a \$300 stipend. The recipient must be a NARGS national member and have never attended a national meeting before. (Attendance at a chapter-sponsored national meeting is exempted from the latter qualification.) Upcoming meetings are the Eastern and Western study weekends described above and the annual NARGS meeting in Denver.

For information and to apply, contact our chapter chair Florene Carney at (907) 376-5390.

From Our  
President,  
Florene  
Carney

Here we are facing fall and it seems like we were just frantically finishing preparations for the 2002 Annual Meeting. I hope you all had a wonderful summer. This is the time of year when we begin to put our gardens to bed and look forward to the lazier days of late fall. As you go through your routine please think about how you can assist ARGs in the coming year. Pot up a few of the seedlings around your favorite plants and put them in a protected place for next spring's plant sales; collect seeds for the exchange; think of running for an office. One of the most important positions is open now and you could be the perfect person to fill that slot. Due to her many obligations with the Horticulture Coalition, Annie Nevaldine will not be the Program Coordinator in the coming year. This is a very important position to the success of the club and could be a fun and rewarding job to take on. NARGS provides us with many options for speakers, slide

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shows, and assistance as well as drawing from the wealth of knowledge here at home. It is an opportunity to get personally acquainted with some of the best in our field. If you think this is something you might be able to do call Rhonda Williams, who is heading up the election committee.

A Hearty Thanks to all those who helped so selflessly with the 2002 Annual Meeting. It would take pages to list all of you and I know that Jaime will be addressing this as well, but wanted to add my personal Thanks and gratitude to all of you. From all the reports I have gotten from attendees, it was a huge success. They loved the speakers, the trails and guides, the sales rooms, the hotel, the handouts, the weather, and the food (except for maybe one lunch). What else is left? I think after all the excitement, we are all feeling a little "let down". That is normal and we should be back to normal in a few months.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the Meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Come and give us your ideas for programming for the next year and catch up on the latest from members' gardens.

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### Success 2002 by Verna Pratt

I want to express my extreme gratitude to all who made the NARGS Annual Meeting in June a success. (From our first fund-raiser at Les Brake's to the final day of shuttling people around to visit gardens.)

All aspects of the Meeting teamed together resulted in many happy attendees. I think that we all were disappointed with the lower than anticipated attendance. However, in some respects, it made for a much better Meeting. Newer members found it easier to mingle, and the ice-breaker buffet sure helped, also.

I, especially, want to thank all of the Tour Guides, many of whom worked hard for two years to be more proficient about native plant identification. Because of the low attendance had way more guides than we should have needed. However, I chose not to exclude any of them and I feel that we really benefited by so doing. We have received rave comments about Tour Guide ratio, and how great it was to get so much personal attention.

Those of you who loaned film and/or clothing, stayed back and helped struggling elderly or handicapped people, were especially thoughtful and I'm sure greatly appreciated. The small things really do count and I give you my heartfelt THANK YOU.

Verna E. Pratt  
Tour Guide Training / Speaker Arrangements  
"Tundra Magic 2002"

### Annual Meeting by Tom Stuart

Many thanks to all of you hard workers. It was a splendid meeting, well conceived and well run. We have seen a number of mediocre ones over the years, even when conducted by sponsors with experience, but this was first rank and your first time out. Congratulations.

In particular, the lectures were stronger than any annual meeting I've been to, in toto up to the standard of the best winter study meetings. Most of us from down below found many unfamiliar fine plants on the field trips or in gardens; certainly I did. The sales tables were strong, and I was stopped only by what I could carry.

It is a shame that more NARGS members did not partake, as you must feel also. However, the costs of travel and the reticence to travel turned out to be controlling.

[Tom Stuart is the Manager of the NARGS seed exchange, <http://www.nargs.org/seed/exchange.html>]

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### ARGS SEED EXCHANGE 2003

The ARGS Seed Exchange is fast approaching and as seed is being harvested now in our gardens, please consider becoming a donor in our exchange. Over the last few years our donors have consisted of ten people who have contributed to the exchange. Last year there were 15 donors and I would still like to see this increase considerably.

Due to the overwhelming response of donors last year, we were able to increase the number of seed packets to 15 for non-donors and 25 to those who donate at least 5 packets of seeds to this year's exchange. Donors will now receive five extra packets including the 15 they now receive as well as being the first to have their orders filled. If there are more donors, then more seed packets can be had.

So far there are some interesting and quite rare items being offered so please have your seed donations to Rhonda no later than the end of October if possible to be included in the next round of the Alaska Rock Garden Seed Exchange.

Please send clean, labeled seed to: Rhonda Williams, PO Box 872592, Wasilla, AK, 99687. (907) 373-0925; e-mail: [recluse@mtaonline.net](mailto:recluse@mtaonline.net)



## Alaska Diary, June 2002

by Alexej (Sasha) Borkovec

One of the main attractions of NARGS Annual Meetings are field trips and pre- or post-conference expeditions. Selected and guided usually by knowledgeable members of the local sponsoring chapter, they provide unique opportunities for exploring local flora of interest to rock gardeners, be they beginners or old hands, experienced mountain climbers or more or less decrepit flatlanders. This year's NARGS meeting on June 11-14 in Anchorage, Alaska, appropriately entitled TUNDRA MAGIC, was no exception, with five one-day field trips and two post-conference expeditions. In addition, there were several private, public, and commercial gardens open for visits.

What follows are my somewhat expanded, and possibly somewhat mixed-up notes from two field trips and one post-conference expedition in which I participated. Because I am neither a botanist nor a geologist but just an ordinary, straightforward rock gardener, I leave out the trees, bushes, geological formations and other paraphernalia that are usually included in learned field trip descriptions and mention only plants I saw and loved, my personal and highly selective "tundra magic."

### Bird Ridge (one-day field trip)

Climbing up from sea level to something like 600-m ridge on a steep and stony path was a pretty strenuous undertaking, relieved by magnificent vistas of a fjord (Turnagain Arm), sailing bald eagles, close enough for one to see their white heads. *Lupinus nootkatensis*, a striking blue and white lupine, just the right size for a larger rock garden, grew side by side with *Polemonium pulcherrimum*, in full bloom with violet-blue petals, white at the base and with yellow centers, some 15 cm high. A cute, little (10-13 cm) forget-me-not, *Myosotis alpestris asiatica*, appeared in small bunches not far from large tufts of *Viola adunca*. Here and there, straight from the rock fissures issued the fresh green leaves of a 7-10-cm fern, *Cryptogramma crispera*. I confess to turning back just upon reaching the edge of the ridge, where, presumably, more treasures were to be found.

### Arctic Valley (one-day field trip)

The high point of my Alaskan experience was reached by a ski lift that took us effortlessly to about 1,200-m altitude. Here we saw a mild slope of genuine alpine tundra, a grandiose rock garden with thousands of small plants growing in intertwining communities. You could just sit down at almost any place and look around your feet: a 25-cm-wide carpet of *Diapensia lapponica obovata* with 30 almost stemless, up-turned, white cups, some turning light pink after being fertilized (I was told); right next to it large, bright yellow, 3-cm wide cups of *Geum rossii* on 8-cm stems, and competing with

them in a dry scree somewhat smaller, but even more brilliant yellow cups of *Potentilla uniflora* over silver-green, velvety buns of three-parted leaves; then back again to the probably more acid bed of *Cassiope stelleriana* and *C. tetragona* with hundreds of nodding, white to pink bells, some open, but most still closed. The northern slopes of the tundra were covered with a wide array of mosses and lichens with only an occasional flowering plant. Altogether, the plant list for the Arctic Valley location contains over 130 names, all of them high on the wish list of most rock gardeners.

### NARGS Alaska Expedition (a four-day tour)

We just about filled the 26-passenger bus that was to take us on a zigzag tour through the Chugach Mountains, a mighty chain of hills, glaciers and peaks, some of them over 5,000 m high, that form the northeastern backdrop of Anchorage. The first day, on our way to Sheep Mountain, we visited one commercial and three private rock gardens, the last belonging to Verna and Frank Pratt, our guides on the tour. Verna, with Frank's substantial help, was the soul of the expedition and for us a walking encyclopedia of Alaskan plants. The next day, we botanized the upper third (700 m and up) of the Sheep Mountain, a colorful formation with extensive screes covered with choice plants and at least eight species of willows (*Salix* spp.), some of them only 3 cm high in full bloom. To me, the highlight of the steep climb was a large patch of *Pyrola asarifolia* growing in a scree fissure, in full sun, with rich spikes of large, nodding, pink flowers protruding from rosettes of dark green, shiny leaves. The entire plant was about 20 cm high and simply beautiful. The soil of Sheep Mountain screes must be acidic because ericaceous plants, most of which we have seen before, predominated.

The third day, we headed back toward Anchorage and along the Turnagain Arm to a ski resort Alyeska with a brief visit to the Portage Glacier. The last day, a ski lift in Alyeska allowed us to ascend some 400 m into the surrounding mountains, but except for a few plants of *Phyllodoce glandulosa* and a *Cassiope* sp. we saw just large and forbidding snow fields.

As often as I marveled over the beauty of Alaskan mountain flowers and the majesty of her mountains, I was astonished by another Alaskan specialty: dandelions. Have you ever seen a single dandelion rosette 50 cm tall with 40 (forty) enormous flowers? A common sight in Alaska - and I counted them.

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Alexej (Sasha) Borkovec lives and gardens in Silver Spring, Maryland, USDA Zone 7b. He is a member of the Potomac Valley Chapter of NARGS and has contributed articles to his chapter newsletter, the Rock Garden Quarterly, and to *Alpine-L*, the Electronic Rock Garden Society.



# NARGS Annual General Meeting 2002 Thank You

The success of the 2002 NARGS Annual General Meeting resulted from the efforts of many individuals in a variety (and often, a multiplicity) of capacities.

The planning committee consisted of Jaime Rodriguez (Chair), Florene Carney, Harry Deuber, Jr., Kate Gordon, Debbie Hinchey, Sally Karabelnikoff, Frank Pratt, Verna Pratt, and Rhonda Williams.

Jack Frost acted as master of ceremonies to introduce our talented speakers: Marilyn Barker, Ed Buyarski, David Murray, Annie Nevaldine, Carolyn Parker, Anne Pasch, Jaime Rodriguez, and Bartmar Sveinbjornsson.

Verna Pratt spent two years training the more than 40 tour guides who contributed so much to the enjoyment and enlightenment of the attendees. This tour corps was a combination of members of the Alaska Rock Garden Society and sister gardening organizations of the Alaska Native Plants Society, Master Gardeners, and local garden clubs. Our appreciation go out to:

- |                     |                   |                       |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Cass Ariey          | Marilyn Barker    | Liz Bashaw            |
| Martie Black        | Joan Brewer       | Glenn Brown           |
| Mary Jo Burns       | Donna Cherrier    | Sandra Christopherson |
| Jean Christy        | Cecily Fritz      | Leonard Grau          |
| Debbie Hinchey      | Unison Hubbard    | Irene Jemison         |
| Mimi Jemison        | Ken Johnson       | Joyce Johnson         |
| Jean Kane           | Norval Kane       | Sally Karabelnikoff   |
| Connie Kison        | Susan Klein       | Dana Klinkart         |
| Karla Kolash        | Maureen Loopstra  | Alice Lynch           |
| Nicki Nielson       | Robert Nielson    | Maureen Pintner       |
| Peggy Pletcher      | Verna Pratt       | Maxine Rader          |
| Brigitte Ressel     | Julie Riley       | Jaime Rodriguez       |
| Carol Ross          | Anjanette Steer   | Kathy Swick           |
| Janie Taylor        | Charles Utermohle | Elaine Wardell        |
| Cora Wardlaw Bayley |                   | Diane Wendling        |
| Barbara Winkley     | Luise Woeflein    | Cathy Wright          |

A thank you to all of local organization who generously contributed to the door prizes. And not least, those unnamed individuals who stepped forward when needed and contributed to the ultimate success of the meeting.

## ARGS Newsletter Dates

	<u>Submission date</u>	<u>Mailing Date</u>
Feb/Mar issue	January 15	February 1
Apr/May issue	March 15	April 1
Summer issue	May 15	June 1
Sept/Oct issue	August 15	September 1
Nov/Jan issue	October 15	November 1



## Positions of Responsibility

**President:** Florene Carney, HC 31 Box 5212, Wasilla, AK, 99654. (907) 376-5390; e-mail: snowfire@ak.net

**Vice-President:** Carmel Tysver, 2030 Patriot Cir., Anchorage, AK, 99515. (907) 522-3490; email: garden@corecom.net

**Secretary :** Kate Gordon, 7500 Beacon Hill Drive, Anchorage, AK, 99516. (907) 346-1603; email: kgordon@gci.net

**Treasurer:** Mary Moline, 9601 Copper Dr., Anchorage, AK, 99507 (907) 333-4419; email: moline@alaska.net

**Membership:** Thais Thomas, P.O. Box 93003, Anchorage, AK 99509. (907) 243-1666; e-mail: Thomas\_Thais@mssmail.asd.k12.ak.us

### Program Chair: Open

**Newsletter Editor:** Charles Utermohle, 5021 Southampton Dr., Anchorage, AK, 99503, (907) 561-1662 email: thule@alaska.net

**Seed Exchange:** Rhonda Williams, PO Box 872592, Wasilla, AK, 99687. (907) 373-0925; e-mail: recluse@mtaonline.net

**Archives:** Marcia Hamilton, P.O. Box 870344, Wasilla, AK, 99687. (907) 746-3296; e-mail: mlh@matnet.com

## Join NARGS

Join the North American Rock Garden Society. Benefits include a subscription to the *Rock Garden Quarterly*, seed exchange, garden book purchases at a discount, study weekends, and annual meetings, as well as other benefits. Membership in the Alaska Rock Garden Society is separate from NARGS, the national organization. Membership is \$25/year.

Send payment to Jacques Mommens, Exec. Secretary of NARGS, PO Box 67, Millwood, NY 10546.

Welcome New and Returning Members!

Janet Parr  
Kathy Stewart  
Kathryn Zins

WWW.ARG.S.ORG

Webmasters: Kate Gordon and Frank Pratt.  
Contact them at webmaster@args.org

## Join Us!

We have about six meetings per year, plus Plant sales, Field Trips and a Seed Exchange. Our meetings are generally on the third Saturday of the month, Fall, Winter, and Spring, and rotate between the Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage. To Join, and receive this newsletter, send your name, address, Phone number, e-mail address and a check payable to ARG.S to :

Individual Membership \$15.00 US

Family Membership \$20.00 US

Canada Membership: \$20.00 US

Overseas Membership \$25.00 US

Membership is for the calendar year and includes all issues of the newsletter for that year. Back issues are available at \$1 each. The ARG.S Newsletter is published 5 times per year. We invite your contributions. Please contact Charles Utermohle, editor, 5021 Southampton Dr., Anchorage, AK, 99503, (907) 561-1662 email: thule@alaska.net

**Alaska Rock Garden Society  
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Anchorage, AK 99524-4136**



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**ARGS Newsletter**    **Volume 6, Issue 3**    **September 2002**

**ARGS Membership:** - New   - Renewal: - W/O Changes or - W/Changes  
**Dues:** \$15 US - Individual, \$20 US - Family/Canada, \$25 US - Foreign

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

ARGS may share its membership list with like-minded, non-profit organizations. If you DO NOT want to receive these notifications, please check the box -

**Send form and payment to:  
Alaska Rock Garden Society  
P.O. Box 244136  
Anchorage, Alaska 99524-4136**

Membership is for the calendar year. If the year after your address is not 2002 or later, your membership has expired!