

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS)
WINTER NEWSLETTER, JANUARY 2023



CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS **meeting details below**

You can always check our website for information: <http://glnargs.com/>

****SATURDAY, Jan. 21: Annual Winter Potluck**

PLACE: Matthaei Botanical Gardens Auditorium

Yes, we're back to being able to have our traditional Winter Potluck!
Please do come. It's a great way to make the winter shorter!

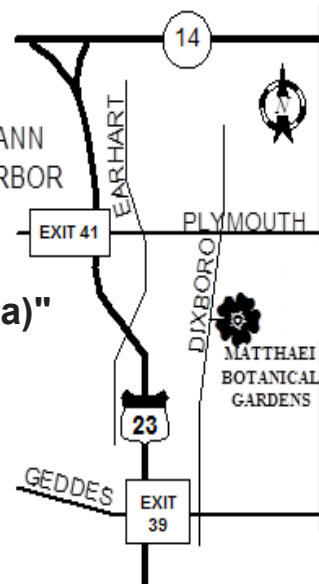
12:00 Noon: Potluck Lunch (see notes by Julie Caroff-next page)

1:00: Brief membership business meeting

1:30: Program:

Sean Zera – "Iris (and More) of Primorye (Russia)"

Sean is our Vice-president and in 2019, on behalf of the American Iris Society, had the opportunity to accompany a group of Russian and Mongolian botanists on a trip to collect wild iris species in Primorye, the southeasternmost region of Russia. He will share photos of the locations visited and of numerous plants, many of which will be familiar as garden plants or as East Asian counterparts of our native species.



****SATURDAY, April 8: Spring Meeting at Matthaei**

We have the good fortune this spring to have, through the NARGS Speakers Tour Ian and Carole Bainbridge from Great Britain. They are great plants people and we'll have an exciting program. Mark the day on your Calendar!

****SATURDAY, May 13: Spring meeting, Plant Sale, & Garden tour**

This meeting will be special. We'll be visiting Benedict's Nursery, in northern Indiana. If you have been there, you will know it is a major destination for display gardens and great plants. So be prepared to be amazed – and get some super plants above and beyond our spring sale! To make things more convenient, as it is a long drive, we're looking to charter a bus. So you simply can't miss it.

All the details for both spring meetings will be in our spring newsletter!

NARGS 2023 Annual Meeting – 2023 Nova Scotia NARGS Conference and AGM: Rocks, Plants, Habitats. June 8, 2023 - June 11, 2023 TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA. Check the Quarterly or the NARGS website:

(<https://www.nargs.org/2023-nova-scotia-nargs-conference-and-agm-rocks-plants-habitats>) for details.

Letter from the President

Julie Caroff

It's January - the month that nursery catalogs with tempting plants appear in our in boxes and mail boxes, reminding us that spring isn't all that far away. Giving way to temptation, I've already submitted one order for plants to arrive in May. January is also the month of our Winter Potluck. After several years of abeyance due to the pandemic, we are meeting in person on Saturday, January 21 at noon in the Matthaei Botanical Garden auditorium. In addition to the happiness of meeting and lunching on tasty dishes in person, we will hear a very interesting presentation by Sean Zera, our Chapter vice-chair, on iris and other species he saw during a trip several years ago to Siberia. Please do bring a dish to pass - appetizers, dips, salads, sides, mains and desserts, all delicious, have been enjoyed at earlier potlucks. The chapter will provide plates, napkins, utensils and bottled water.

In February, our Chapter will handle the SeedEx Surplus Round, with Lisa Oxford coordinating our efforts. We meet for a few hours in the evening and on a Saturday during later February through mid-March in Tony Reznicek's garage to fill the surplus seed orders. We talk plants, pull seed packets and fill orders. Best of all, there are extra packets for the packers. Look for more info from Lisa.

There's more! Drs. Carole and Ian Bainbridge will be giving a series of talks to our chapter in late March or early April as part of the NARGS Regional Speakers Tour, organized by Bonnie Ion. The Bainbridges have travelled to six continents in pursuit of al-pines, as well as having grown these and other horticultural treasures in their garden in Scotland. Keep a look out for more details on the Bainbridges' talk.

Back to the catalogs and plans for spring,

Notes from the treasurer

Happy 2023 fellow gardeners!

Please let me know if you have any phone number changes (or deletions) or address changes. If you would prefer "snail mail", we would be happy to make that change as well.

Plant sales or membership renewals can be made through Zelle via my phone number, 734 717-3279.

Happy Gardening! (or at least looking forward to in the spring.)

Colleen Mitchell
GLC-NARGS treasurer,
3995 Monks Road,
Pinckney, MI 48169

Volunteer for the seed exchange!

Holly Pilon

This is our last year for the seed exchange. The main difference this year will be that we asked if we could shorten the duration of the surplus round. Last year it ran until the March 20th, a Saturday. That meant we had to come back on the following Tuesday to finish up. This year the last orders must be in by Friday March 17th. This will let us finish up on Saturday, and it's always easier to get workers on a weekend. Both Joyce Fingerhut and Laura Serowicz okayed the change as most orders come in the first few days. We will be at Tony's garage again, so we'll put out a call for space heaters! We had a few very cold days last year and chilled fingers don't work well. Usually the work sessions are three hours long. If we do evenings, we'll likely keep those to two hours. All helpers are welcome as it speeds things along. This time around, Lisa Oxford will be our new

SeedEx coordinator, and she'll be scheduling the days. Sean Zera is handling the mailing; he might need some help so you could ask him about that. Colleen and Bonnie are handling money, Lisa Quiggle will do the work forms.

The Azary Rock Garden rebuild

Tony Reznicek

As you all know, from the messages about workdays, our chapter has been rebuilding the Azary Rock Garden at Matthaei. Marie Azary was a long time chapter member who lived on Pontiac trail, not far from me, and had a lovely rock garden, with a focus on using tufa, and a love of showy plants like Pulsatillas and gentians. She donated her rocks and plants as the nucleus of the Azary Rock garden. It underwent a rebuild and expansion some years ago, but, before COVID hit, once again was in need of a "refresher." This time the director at the time, Bob Grese, wanted to make it more of a striking feature, and so a plan was sketched out that involved a dell that people could walk into and a lot more tufa, plus more relief, and an eye to shady and sunny aspects to allow for variable microclimates.

Our chapter volunteered to spearhead the rebuilding and pay for the materials (at this point, the cost of the tufa). With the decision to use more tufa, we decided to use a richer soil mix to hold more water so that planting could be primarily on the tufa itself. So we began to hold weekly workdays – and were promptly interrupted by COVID! But we started up again after things stabilized and the gardens opened, and had workdays this summer and fall, organized by Holly Pilon, with Don LaFond taking the lead in rock layout. Our last workday, on Dec. 7th, came very close to wrapping it all up. Here are a few pictures of where it now stands.



People hard at work Dec. 7 – this is a view of the finished area



Just about finishing the north side



These flat areas without tufa will be a stone 'patio' for displaying troughs

The next steps, besides finishing things, will be planting, which we will begin in the finished areas next spring (after a weeding to make sure

no nasty perennial weeds entrench themselves among the tufa).

We'll fill people in more at the Winter Potluck meeting.

Clarence Owens

In 2022, we lost one of our staunch long-time members, Clarence Owens, who passed away Oct. 5, 2022 at the age of 96.

We had our last meeting at Clarence's wonderful garden in the fall of 2008 and I still remember all the lovely woodland plants, the carefully chosen shrubs and dwarf conifers, and, of course, all the Hostas (Clarence's primary passion). Here are a couple pictures as a remembrance – the second one with Fred Case, another one of our great stalwarts for a long time. My apologies to the photographer who sent me the pictures, but I failed to record the name, so beg forgiveness for using them without checking. Thank you, however.



Clarence, expounding on his beautiful garden



Clarence Owens (front) and Fred Case – Clarence and Fred shared the same life calling of being High School Biology teachers – we need more like them!

Helleborus niger in bloom 5:04 PM, Jan. 9 by my back door! Tony Reznicek



Please send address changes to:

**Colleen Mitchell,
3995 Monks Road,
Pinckney, MI 48169, USA**

Do include your up-to-date email address.

Thank You.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Great Lakes Chapter:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Send \$20.00 per year (check payable to Chapter) to:
Colleen Mitchell
Treasurer, Great Lakes Chapter, NARGS
3995 Monks Road
Pinckney, MI 48169, USA

OR pay in person at the next GLC meeting

We strongly encourage people to join both the Great Lakes Chapter, and the National Organization.

National Organization:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Send \$40.00 dues (check payable to NARGS) to:
Bobby Ward
Executive Secretary
North American Rock Garden Society
P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619

OR pay through the NARGS website:
<https://www.nargs.org/join>

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FIRST CLASS