



# Manitoba Lily Connection

Manitoba Regional Lily Society Newsletter  
www.manitobalilies.ca

Volume 20, Issue 4

Affiliated with the North American Lily Society

December 2003

## President's Message

As the wind blows and howls outside, I'm sitting in front of my computer, eating macaroons, with my cat upon my lap, wondering what words to put to paper. I seem to remember, that spring was nice, summer was warm, dry, with many grasshopper and crickets and of course my lilies blooming. Fall was long and lovely. Time enough to get that last perennial at the local greenhouse or nursery. Even time enough to get it planted and mulch! But now winter is here, with Christmas and the holidays near, the plants all tucked away, sleeping, until spring. My thoughts are on spending Christmas with family and friends, especially with my new niece, who will be 5 months in a few days. My thoughts also turn to what I would like for Christmas. Plants of course! (lots of perennials) But, as snow outside shouts winter, a better substitute is a subscription to my favorite plant magazine(s) or a good plant book(s) or a gift certificate to a favorite mail order nursery or even a membership in a few plant societies. So, as none of my relatives belong to the lily society and won't be reading this, I have drop some strong hints! After the holy days, I look forward to getting and reading the nursery catalogues, to planning what I want to plant this spring, to dreaming about the garden! (until at least our MRLS Spring Seminar). I hope, pray and wish that you each have a Wonderful Time this Christmas with Family and Friends. Peace!

Ted Sobkowich

## Lily Questions?

If you have a question or thought on lilies just contact me, 'the editor' and I will publish it on a question and answer spot in the newsletters.

Let me know what else you would like to see published in your newsletter

E-mail: strohman@mb.sympatico.ca or Phone: 476-2536

Mail: Nigel Strohman, Box 846, Neepawa, MB R0J 1H0

## Question & Answer

**Q:** How can I tell what seeds I collected are viable?

**A:** Use the huff and blow technique. Just blow gently on the seeds as you transfer them from one bowl to another. The chaff will blow away while the good seeds (the heavier ones) will fall into the other bowl. Another way is to candle them. If you have a reading or magnifying glass, then place the seeds under it. The good seed has a light colored stripe to it.

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## Robert Simonet and the "Rescued Lilies"

FRED FELLNER  
Vermilion, Alberta

*The North American Lily Society Yearbook 1979*

ROBERT SIMONET was born near Paris, France, in 1903; he lived with his grandmother for eleven years and had already become interested in gardening at this early age. When he was sixteen, he accompanied his sister to Edmonton, Alberta, where she was to marry a Canadian soldier. Here in Canada his first work was helping local farmers in the summertime. Later he worked at the Misericordia Hospital as a steam engineer and also as a fireman; he also worked at market gardening in the summer. Eventually he had to choose between going further in steam engineering or going into market gardening on his own; and in 1930 he started his own market garden, growing fresh vegetables, as well as gladioli, cut-flowers, and bedding plants. His interest in flowers and vegetables expanded in many directions, and he grew with expertise and with an eye to improvement such diverse crops as early sweet corn, early tomatoes, parsnips, squash, red rhubarb, hardy runnerless strawberries, and many hardy fruits, shrubs, and trees.

During the Second World War, all trade was stopped with Japan; and at that time, the secret of breeding a completely true strain of double petunias was known only to the Japanese. George Ball Seed Company consequently was unable to acquire petunia seed which would produce only double forms. At this time, Robert Simonet went to the University of Alberta's library to study plant breeding and genetics. In only three years, he had produced a strain of petunias that produced 100% double forms, and he was the first person outside of Japan to accomplish this. He produced the double petunias in nine colours, and later he developed the large-flowered double forms.

His first interest in lilies was aroused by *Lilium philadelphicum*, the beautiful species native to Alberta.

Robert received his first trumpet lilies from Fred Tarlton and a local garden seed company. His work with the Asiatic lilies started with seed he acquired from Percy Wright of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This was seed from 'Nubian,' and from it he eventually produced 'Black Butterfly' and

later 'Summer Night,' the darkest, near-black red which I have seen. It holds the deep colour until the petals dry up. He got lily seed from the *L. cernuum* breeding lines of Bert Porter of Parkside, Saskatchewan, which came by way of Percy Wright and which go back to the world-famous crosses made by Dr. Patterson linking *L. cernuum* and *L. davidii*. This seed then produced the lily 'Embarrassment,' which bears many pinkish, out-facing flowers and is fairly tall. It was originally sold in Canada as 'Pink Scottiae' before being registered as 'Embarrassment.' It received the name 'Embarrassment' because its color suggested to Mr. Simonet the blush that would colour a lady's face if she heard an off-colour joke.

My interest in growing flowers began in the late 1960's. I was planning on growing perennial flower plants for sale at this time. Because of low farm prices, we were getting only sixty-five cents for a bushel of barley; and I thought it would be easier to grow a plant or bulb for one dollar than to grow a bushel of grain for the same price. At that time I knew almost nothing about lilies. I bought a copy of the North American Lily Society's *Gets Grow Lilies*, and I joined the North American Lily Society. I also found the names of lily growers on the Canadian Prairies.

Among these lily growers were such men as Bert Porter, Percy Wright, Fred Tarlton, and Robert Simonet. I started to write to them, looking for information and help; and I have found these persons, as well as many others, to be helpful and generous with their time, information, seeds, and bulbs. I am very grateful for their generous help—but my greatest debt is to Robert Simonet.

I corresponded with Robert for two years, and with the others for even longer, before meeting them.

Because the haying season comes at the same time that the lilies flower, I found it hard to get to see these lily breeders and their works. In the fall of 1972, however, we finally were able to visit with Robert and his wife. He showed us around their twelve acres, much of which was planted in fruiting bushes and trees, perennials, flowers, strawberries, and both Asiatic and trumpet lilies.

Later that winter Fred Tarlton showed me slides of trumpet lilies growing in his garden. I just could not believe that such lilies could be grown on our Canadian Prairies, where temperatures may drop

*(Continued on page 3)*

as low as forty or fifty degrees Fahrenheit below zero.

On this first visit with Robert Simonet, he gave me a dozen Asiatic lily seedlings and a dozen trumpet lily seedlings. Out of these Asiatics, I named my first lily, 'Robert Simonet,' which is three to three and one-half feet tall and carries up to thirty-six purplish-pink, down-facing flowers. I also selected from this group a dark red, up-facing seedling, which I plan to name.

While visiting Robert again in the winter of 1972-1973, I learned that he planned to plow under part of his lily plot, because he had already removed from it all the seedlings which interested him.

In the spring of 1973, he gave me about two hundred bulbs from a cross involving a dark red and a Cernuum hybrid, as well as a washtub full of trumpet bulbs. I got a few breeding seedlings from this lot.

I was extremely excited and pleased with these, for they were a great improvement over the lilies I had!

While visiting with him again in the summer of 1973, I found that he had not yet plowed under all the lilies scheduled for destruction; but he was still planning to plow them under eventually. I asked him if I could mark those lilies which interested me, and I marked about seventy plants. He dug them for me that fall and brought them along on his first visit here.

I am not saying that there were not other lilies equally as good or better at that time, unknown to me-but these lilies were certainly better than any I had seen before! My great admiration for the Simonet lilies, too, is in no way a detraction from the work of other breeders.

It was after I saw the Simonet lilies that I became very interested in lily breeding; I am now using his lilies and their seedlings in my breeding work in many of my own crosses.

It saddens me to think of how many other good lilies may have been plowed under. Robert had no way of knowing just how great his work was at that time, for he neither visited other lily breeders nor bought any new named lilies.

I call these lilies the "Rescued Series," for indeed they were rescued from the plow. I have named eight of them at the present, and I will probably eventually name three more. Most of these lilies are now being grown and tested in Canada and

the United States, and a few are being tested in Holland as possible cut-flower and pot lilies. I think that these lilies are, and will be, stepping stones to many better lilies in the future.

Here are brief descriptions of the clones presently named:

'Elenore Edna'- July blooming, upright, thirty-two to thirty-six inches tall. Deep wine-red flowers with buds that turn brilliant red several days before opening. A smooth, cup-shaped bloom with wide petals that do not recurve. Similar to 'Wanda,' but with green stems and pedicels.

'Lily Simonet'- Mid-July blooming, upright, three feet tall. Bright medium red with a few spots, wide petals with a creamy star formed by the nectary furrows. Eighteen or more buds well placed on an excellent flower head.

'Margorie Linda'-Early July blooming, out- to down-facing, three feet tall. Spotless red-orange flowers on a large, well-spaced inflorescence. Pedicels long and graceful; flowers lightly recurved.

'Robert Simonet'- Mid-July blooming, down-facing, three feet tall. Purplish- pink flowers, up to thirty-six well-spaced buds. An excellent increaser.

'Wanda'- Mid-July blooming, upright, three to three and one-half feet tall. Wine-red, flat flowers with broad petals and excellent substance; reddish stems and pedicels.

'Carol Jean'-Mid-June, upright, twenty inches tall. Nine to ten old rose flowers; a good cut-flower or pot plant.

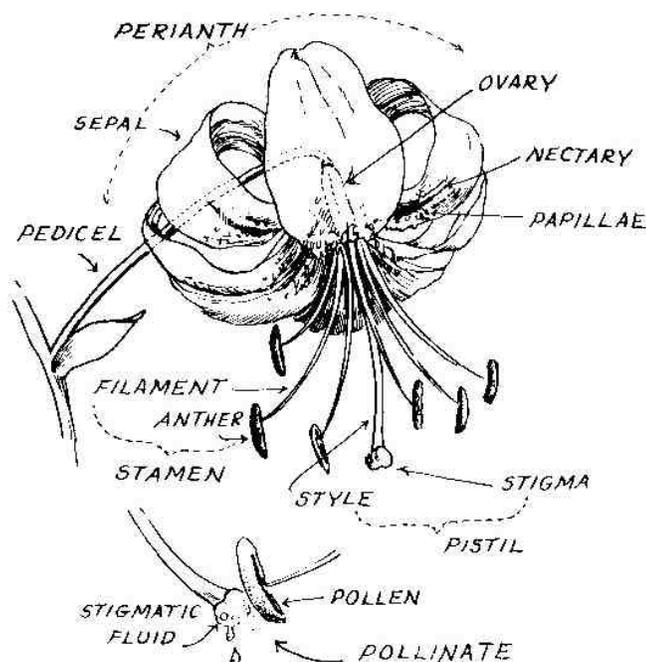
'Kimberly Ann'-Mid-season, outfacing. Dark red, carries secondary buds; up to forty flowers.

'Sally Jo Ann'-Mid-June, outfacing. Cardinal red with currant red reverse; colors show beautiful shadings.

## Novice Niche LILY STRUCTURE - FLOWERS

Source: NALS Judging Handbook, Let's Grow Lilies  
Artwork: Virginia Howie

Flowers are produced at the top of the stem. Sometimes they are borne singly but with most cultivars they appear in an inflorescence. The inflorescence takes on many forms depending upon the species or hybrid and the culture. One of the interesting attributes of lilies is the great diversity in the form of color variations in the flowers, not only among the species, but especially among the hybrids. Technically the flower consists of: the perianth, which is composed of an outer calyx of three sepals plus a corolla of three petals; six stamens; and a pistil. The sepals and petals which for all practical purposes are indistinguishable from each other are called tepals; thus the six tepals make up the perianth.



**PERIANTH . . .** The six segments (3 petals and 3 sepals) that compose the lily flower.

The six stamens are each composed of the filament and the anther where the pollen is produced. In the very center is the pistil which is composed of the style with the stigma at the top and the ovary at the base. The ovary develops into a many-seeded capsule.

**PISTIL . . .** The central female part of the flower, composed of Ovary, Style and Stigma.

**OVARY . . .** Thick part of the PISTIL where it joins the stem. It contains OVULES which, when fertilized, become the seed. A single ovary may contain as many as 2,000 ovules.

**STYLE . . .** The long slender part of the PISTIL . . . Bears the STIGMA on its tip, and joins the OVARY at the other end.

**STIGMA . . .** The "knob" on the end of the PISTIL which receives the POLLEN. A sticky substance called STIGMATIC FLUID bathes the stigma when it is "ready," holds the pollen and stimulates it to germinate.

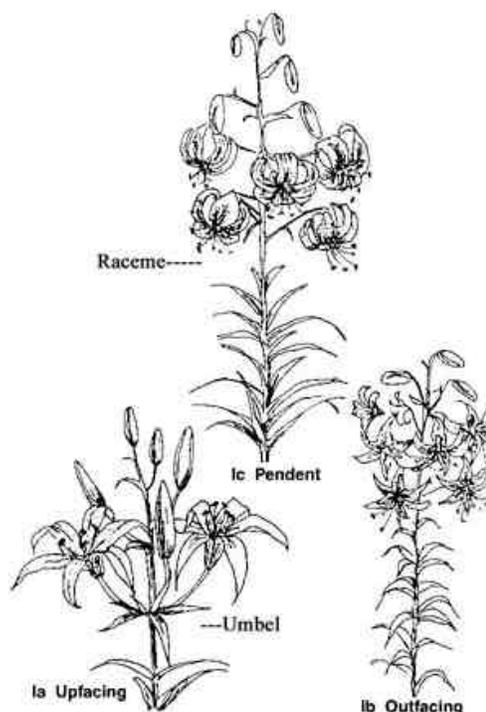
**FILAMENT . . .** Stalk of the STAMEN which supports the POLLEN-bearing ANTHOR at its tip.

**NECTARY (or NECTARY-FURROW) . . .** Nectar producing groove at base of a PERIANTH SEGMENT . . . often in a contrasting color to form a pronounced "star."

**PAPILLAE . . .** Tiny projections surrounding the NECTARIES in certain lilies, giving a "whiskered" look. (Examp. *L. speciosum* and *L. henryi*)

### Flower Forms and Placement

Because some of the hybrid group (Divisions) are so varied, it is desirable to subdivide them, especially for show purposes. Usually this is done on the shapes of the flowers, the way they are placed or carried in the inflorescence, or on the basis of other characteristics. These subdivisions are described in the horticultural classification and will be covered in the next newsletter.



### Types of Inflorescence

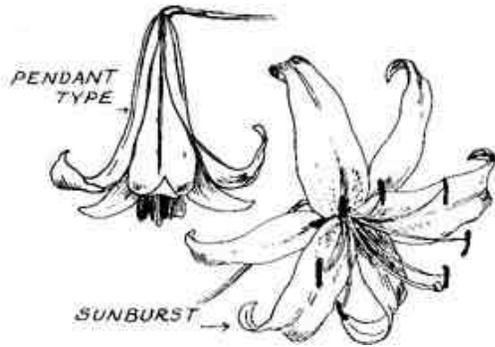
**INFLORESCENCE . . .** The part of the lily stalk that bears the flowers and buds. It may be in the form of a RACEME or UMBEL.

**RACEME . . .** Simple Inflorescence with flower stalks spaced fairly evenly one above the other to the top of the stem.

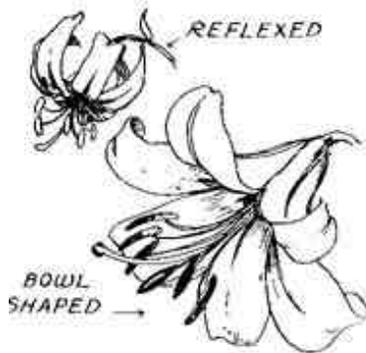
**UMBEL . . .** A cluster of flowers radiating from a common point at the top of a stem like the ribs of an umbrella, or out like the spokes of a wheel.

## Bulb Sale Report

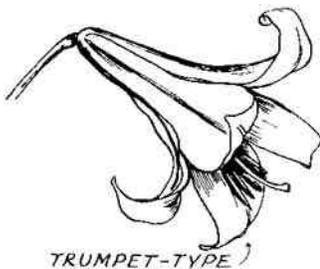
By Jennifer Bishop



**PENDANT-TYPE . . .** Lilies that hang down . . . Especially refers to Trumpet and Aurelian types.  
**SUNBURST-TYPE . . .** A lily of the Aurelian group which has a flat star-shaped flower.



**BOWL-SHAPED . . .** Lilies having flowers that are clearly bowl shaped and outward facing.  
**REFLEXED (Type of flower) . . .** Petals sharply recurved. . . bent back.



**TRUMPET-TYPE . . .** Trumpets or Aurelians which have a trumpet shape.

It is important that one learns the correct name for the various parts of the lily plant and flower. Only by the use of the correct terminology can one describe or discuss intelligently the characteristics of lilies.

Fall Bulb Sales were held this year in Winnipeg, Brandon and Dauphin. There was a great selections of bulbs. Sales were down approx. one-third from last year in all three locations, however we still managed to realize a combined profit of between \$12,000 and \$13,000. This money will go a long way to making NALS 2005 a great success as well as all the other good work that MRLS does in furthering our mandate of promoting Lilium in Manitoba.

We had a few more species than usual this year thanks goes out to Nigel Strohmman at the Lily Nook for making them available. Martagons were of course a hot ticket item again this year. We were very fortunate to be able to have some of Terry Willoughby's fine martagon crosses for sale and I for one look forward to seeing mine bloom. We also were able to trade some martagon bulbs with The English Garden again this year which helped increase the number of martagon bulbs available for sale. In return for being able to have those bulbs for sale MRLS provided the beginnings of an Ed Robinson Martagon Collection for the English Garden and we were able to acquire 6 of the named martagons that Dr. Frank Skinner developed and registered. I look forward to seeing them blooming in The English Garden.

Mail order was offered this year, the first time in a long time. There were enough people who took advantage of this opportunity to make it worthwhile for the Committee to do it again next year. The 10% discount offered to members or new members was a very nice benefit of membership. This will also be extended to mail order next year.

Many thanks to all the individuals who volunteered their time to work on the sale, from bagging to packing up at the end of the sale(s). Without the volunteers these sales would not happen.

A Great Sale once again!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
Thanks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## My Encounters with Jean Ericksen

by Barrie Strohman

On September the 25th Jean Ericksen peacefully passed away in her sleep. On her desk lay four finished letters which would be posted later by her son Marius. Already in the outgoing mail was a letter to a man who had never meet Jean but who was a recipient of the Jean Ericksen Award at the local regional lily show. There was a letter for my son Nigel suggesting an article for a future newsletter and a letter that I will tell you about later.

Jean was a prolific letter writer. Over the years she corresponded with folks throughout the world, Lords and Ladies, lily explorers, both amateur and professional lily hybridizers lily people and nurserymen and thus became affectionately dubbed "the lily lady of Saskatchewan." It was close to twenty years ago that I felt it was time to meet this intriguing lady and view the results of what she was accomplishing. After a two hour drive we were most graciously welcomed, enjoyed her western style hospitality and were not let leave to go home without being treated to a home cooked meal prepared on her wood stove. This was after we had visited a while, toured her lily garden which contained many species, asiatics, martagons, Caucasian, trumpets and seedling batches of all kinds. Of course Jean said "bring that shovel" and what ensued was the digging up of several specimens that she thought that we should have plus the dishes of some started seedlings. What was intended to be an hours visit ended up to being a most enjoyable 6-7 hour stay. As we were leaving a carton of fresh country eggs was thrust into our hands as a parting gift. This first meeting turned into a close friendship and resulted in sojourns to Jeans an a basis of two or three times a year. Of course we would take some new lily cultivars in pots or as bulbs but Jean would always best us with some "treasures" she had and a carton or 2 of eggs as a parting gift. What was to be an hours visit always ended in us driving home in the dark and always with a warm feeling in our hearts towards this loving sharing person. Whether it was Joyce and I, Nigel and I or others visiting with her, Jean would always make sure we have a cup of tea before we would leave but then she would bustle around and a meal would appear as well. Over the years we got to know and appreciate a little about this diminutive bundle of energy, her accomplishments, her deeds and her contacts with those of the lily world. Most certainly a book of her life could be written but I am sure it would be expanded to several volumes.

Jean was the recipient of many prestigious awards in the horticultural and especially in the lily world On every occasion she felt that she was not deserving of such but that others were more so. Such was her humbleness. On one occasion I had the distinct privilege and pleasure to present her with one of these awards. It was the New Zealand Lily Society's medal of honor given in recognition of her sharing of seeds and information and her work in promoting the genus liliun. Jean graciously accepted it as she said in a small measure for myself but in a greater degree to all those wonderful lily people who have shared so many things with me. This I think describes Jean to a tee.

It was several years after this in 2000 that Claire Patten and Stuart Bennet from New Zealand came through on their quest to meet this charming lady and to see if they could also see the native *L. philadelphicum*. Dr. Reg Gallop brought them out and we proceeded with a bucket of chicken toward Jeans along Highway 8. Here we were able to photograph the lily in the ditches and meadows and arrived at Jeans to enjoy the chicken, a cup of tea and a slice of home made saskatoon pie. Jean was overwhelmed that they would come all that way to see her. The folks were overwhelmed by her hospitality and I was overwhelmed by being part of the occasion. All in all an overwhelming day! This was but one of the many experiences in Jeans life. Her activities can be summed up in her words. "My adventures with lilies have been as a whole been a rewarding labor of love crowded into a work schedule that could have easily kept three people on the run. As a child less than three years old, I experienced the newly opened prairie lands and recall the pastures of virgin grasses. Each July the prairies were red with the native lily and each year I was scolded for having pollen all over my nose and pinafore spread there as I smelled the unique perfume of its flowers." When she concludes with "I have grown and given and enjoyed and originated lilies due really to generous and wonderful people who have been my friends through the years. I have tried to pass on their fellowship by sharing in seeds and information." I really think this is the epitome of Jean and I count it as a special blessing to have been her friend.

Oh yes that final letter, well it was to me and it will be a reminder that she will always be with us in our shared experiences.

Jean leaves a legacy of 38 asiatic hybrids, 8 Aurelian and 17 martagons that are registered with the RHS plus countless other seedlings in gardens around the world. As a testimony to her, several lily societies have awards in their show schedules that bear her name.

## Jean Ericksen

1908 ~ 2003

Jean Cynthia Craig was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1908, weighing only two pounds at birth. Jean was a delicate baby and throughout her childhood. As a baby Jean lived at Wauchope with her grandparents and later with her aunt Elizabeth Pittman while her parents were off to conquer the west. Her parents divorced in 1910, and her mother then married Fred Kestler. They had two girls and two boys in Silverton BC. Jean's mom died of the world flu in 1919 and dad Kestler died at Castlegar, BC at 97 years of age.

Jean took her schooling at the Wauchope Convent and stayed with her aunt Mrs. Kay Holstein and thus grew up somewhat like a topsy, being useful in several levels of farm and housework. She was never bored or without work.

Jean married John Ericksen of Wauchope in 1933, and from this union two sons were born – Egon in October 1935, Marius in October 1950. They moved to their present farm in 1943, the former David Lutz homestead. During the time they farmed, they had a well known dairy herd of registered Holsteins. John died in 1988 and Jean remained on the farm until two years ago, at which time she moved into the Moose Mountain Lodge at Carlyle until her death. Jean enjoyed gardening and will also be remembered for her love of lilies.

## Daniel (Dan) Thomas Dale

1920 ~ 2003

Mr. Dale passed away October 31, 2003, at the age of 83 years. Dan was born June 20, 1920 in Stony Plain, AB, where he lived until his death. He is survived by one sister, Betzie Harvey; of Salmon Arm, BC; numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins in Norway. Predeceased by his father, Thomas, mother, Ingeborg; sister, Sarah; brother Sidney Edwin; sister, Sara Wocasek. A Memorial Service was held on November 12, 2003 at 1:00 PM at Westlawn Memorial Gardens Chapel, 16310 Stony Plain Road, Edmonton, AB.

Many ARLS members knew Dan as a good friend and avid lily grower and many knew of him and grow his lilies. He was already missed at seminars and shows in recent years when he could no longer get around comfortably and will be missed more now. However each year we will remember his vast contributions as we enjoy some of his lilies in our gardens. Three years ago, ARLS granted Dan an honorary life time membership. Many also knew Dan as an exhibitor, member and award sponsor of the Stony Plain Horticultural Society. Those who have taken a Stony Plain mural tour will discover a mural of Dan surrounded by lilies on a building just south of the Multi-Cultural Society.

Editors Note: Dan was a Speaker at one of our early Spring seminars here in Manitoba. Of course his main topic was martagons. To know Dan was to know his dedication to collecting and growing of martagons.

### THE TIME HAS COME FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!

(Membership expiry date can be found on the Address label after surname) i.e. Dec 03

#### M.R.L.S. Membership Renewal Form - Deadline

\$7.50 Year — Single Membership

\$10.00 Year — Family/Society Membership

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE# \_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO: MARLENE PULS  
99 MACALESTER BAY, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2X6  
Make Cheques Payable to MRLS

## Coming Events & Notices:

### Seedy Saturday

MRLS will be there offering seeds along with growing advise and lily talk.

**Date:** Feb. 7, 2003, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Place:** Assiniboine Park Conservatory  
2355 Corydon Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB.

### Manitoba Regional Lily Society 2004 Spring Seminar

**Date:** Saturday, March 20th, 2004

**Place:** Brandon , MB  
Details to follow in the next  
newsletter!

### N.A.L.S. 58th Lily Show

#### 'Northern Horizons'

Hosted by Manitoba Regional Lily Society  
July 2005 Winnipeg, MB

**We need YOU!!** If you are interested in volunteering and helping out contact John Rempel at 204-895-2212

E-mail: jrempel@mb.sympatico.ca

We welcome you to host a NALS Garden Tour in 2005. If you feel you would like to open up your gardens for our visitors to view, please contact Barbara Jean Jackson (B.J.) at 204-725-4696

E-mail: jacksonb@mb.sympatico.ca

### NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL

If you wish to receive your future newsletters by e-mail, sign up by e-mailing the Newsletter editor, nigel@lilynook.mb.ca  
Your newsletter will be sent to you in Adobe .PDF format.

### MRLS By-Laws

Please find enclosed amended By-Laws for the Manitoba Regional Lily Society. Please review these for discussion and the passing of such at the 2004 MRLS Spring Seminar.

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2004

#### OFFICERS:

**PRESIDENT:** Ted Sobkowich  
Box 166, Hazelridge, MB R0E 0Y0  
755-2827 Home, E-mail: ts32@mb.sympatico.ca

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Jennifer Bishop  
23 Chopin Boulevard, Winnipeg, MB R2G 2C9  
661-5036 Home, E-mail: jb@awnet.com

**PAST PRESIDENT:** Susan LeBlanc  
33 Morin, St. Francis Xavier, MB R4L 1A8  
864-2254 Home, E-mail: jaslebl@mts.net

**SECRETARY:** Sandy Venton  
203 Vernon Road, Winnipeg, MB R3J 2W1  
888-2837 Home, E-mail: sandyventon@shaw.ca

**TREASURER:** Marlene Puls  
99 Macalester Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2X6  
269-3499 Home

**NEWSLETTER:** Nigel Strohmman  
Box 846, Neepawa, MB R0J 1H0  
476-2536 Home 476-3225 Bus.  
E-mail: nigel@lilynook.mb.ca

#### DIRECTORS:

Barbara-Jean Jackson - 2421 McDonald Ave, Brandon, MB R7B 0A6

Ed Czarnecki - 881 Laxdal Road, Winnipeg, MB R3R 1V7

Joan Svenson - 194 Clarke Drive, Brandon, MB R7B 0V4

Nigel Strohmman - Box 846 Neepawa, MB R0J 1H0

John Rempel - 590 Municipal Road, Winnipeg R3R 1J2

Len Giesbrecht - 876 St. Gabriel Ave, Winnipeg MB R3V 1G2

#### Honorary Directors:

Barrie Strohmman - Box 846, Neepawa, MB R0J 1H0

Dr. Wilbert Ronald - Box 402, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3B7

Lynn Collicutt

#### Historian:

Gwen Jamieson - 21 Bowhill Lane, Winnipeg, MB R3R 0J4

#### Library:

Barrie Strohmman - Box 846, Neepawa, MB R0J 1H0

#### Research Committee:

Dr. Wilbert Ronald - Box 402, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3B7

Sandy Venton - 203 Vernon Road, Winnipeg, MB R3J 2W1

Ed Czarnecki - 881 Laxdal Road, Winnipeg, MB R3R 1V7

Lynn Collicutt

Louis Lenz