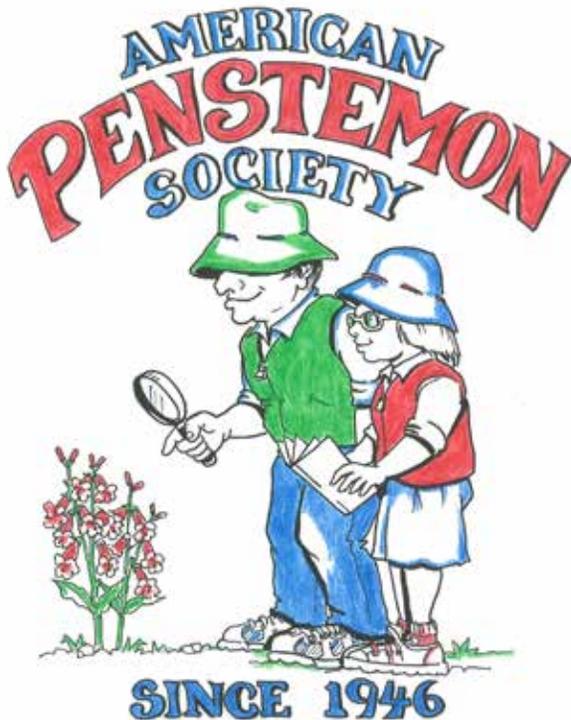


# THE PENSTEMANIAC

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NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY

Volume No. 7, Issue No. 1 <http://apsdev.org> January 2013



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## Welcome to APS Winter 2013

In the next half-dozen pages Stephen Love, Professor, Community Horticulture Specialist, University of Idaho, will take you on a virtual tour of next year's APS National Meeting in Idaho. Dr. Love provides education in urban horticulture, specializing in native plants in the landscape, water conservation in the landscape, turf grass management, and vegetable gardening. His research includes domestication of native plants for landscape use. He conducts a variety evaluations for vegetables and small fruits, maintains demonstration plots for illustrating turf management principles, landscape establishment and maintenance, and water conservation gardening. He is a graduate advising professor and graduate committee member.

Be sure to complete the registration form on page 10 if you plan to attend APS-INPS 2013 Meeting in Boise ID USA next Summer.

Best wishes for a worry-free Winter.

—Ginny (*Penstemaniac* Editor)

## Registration Information – American Penstemon Society Meeting 2013

Stephen Love, 2013 Meeting Arrangements Chair

### Welcome Back to Idaho

In 2007, the American Penstemon Society held a spectacular meeting based out of Stanley and Sun Valley, Idaho. It is time we invited you back for another visit to see a completely different part of our diverse and beautiful state. The 2013 meeting will be centered in Boise, giving us the opportunity to explore the botanical and geological wonders of the lower Snake River Plain, including the Owyhee Range, Mores Mountain, and Hell's Canyon, as well as Succor Creek and Leslie Gulch in eastern Oregon. We will be holding our meeting jointly with the Idaho Native Plant Society, giving us the opportunity to make new friends and take advantage of the cumulative knowledge of some of Idaho's most accomplished professional and amateur botanists.

### Meeting Dates

The meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 21 through Sunday, June 23. An optional post-meeting tour of the Hell's Canyon region will be conducted on Monday, June 24.

### The Region

Idaho is located along the spine of the northern Rocky Mountains. It is called the "Gem State" because it is one of only two places in the world where star garnets can be found. Idaho was the 43rd state accepted into the union and is the



*Mt. Borah (photo Stephen Love)*

14th largest state and seventh least populous. It is floristically and geographically diverse, with elevations ranging from 12,660 feet on Mount Borah in the central mountains to 700 feet at the outflow of the Snake River. Rainfall varies from 4 inches per year in areas of the southeastern deserts to over 70 inches in localized places in the northern panhandle. Plant communities range from sparsely vegetated cold deserts to alpine tundra, to heavily wooded rain forests.

Boise is the capital city of Idaho. It is located in the lower Snake River Plain at an elevation of 2,700 feet. The metropolitan area has a population of 615,000, third most populous in the Northwest. Historically, it originated as Fort Boise, a site established by US Army to thwart massacres of settlers and miners in the area. It became the Idaho Territorial Capitol in 1866, an honor previously held by the City of Lewiston in the northern part of the state.

## **Travel to Boise**

Boise can be easily reached via air or ground transport. You can fly into the Boise regional airport using one of several airlines, including Southwest, Delta, United, Alaska, US Airways, or Allegiant. You can drive to Boise from the east or west on Interstate 84, or from the south or north on US Hwy 95.

## **Lodging**

Please make your own reservations for lodging. Information concerning lodging options is detailed below.

The Owyhee Plaza Hotel will be the base facility for the 2013 APS/INPS meeting. All business meetings, banquets, and presentations associated with the meeting will be held at this location. The Owyhee Plaza has given APS and INPS members a very affordable reduced rate for rooms (\$80 per night for single or double occupancy). Rooms will be held at the group rate until May 31, so please make your reservations early. Call the Owyhee Plaza reservation desk at 1-208-343-4611. (If it is within your budget to stay with us at the Owyhee Plaza Hotel, we encourage you to do so to help us meet minimum room quotas for use of their convention facilities.) The Owyhee Plaza Hotel is located at the northwest edge of downtown Boise; address is 1109 Main Street.

### Alternate nearby motels:

Safari Inn-Downtown, 1070 W Grove Street, Boise, Idaho 1-208-344-6556

Cabana Inn, 1600 Main Street, Boise, Idaho 1-208-343-6000

Budget Inn 2600 West Fairview Inn, Boise, Idaho 1-208-344-8617

### Campgrounds (for those with a preference for roughing it):

Elaine Walker, INPS Board Member, has reserved the group camp site at the Gray Back Gulch US Forest Service Campground for those who want to stay and socialize with fellow plant aficionados. The INPS has agreed to cover the fees at this campground, thus allowing attendees to stay for free. This campground is located on Hwy 21 just south of Idaho City, about 36 miles from Boise. Visit on the web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/boise/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=5170&actid=33> to learn more about the Gray Back Gulch campground. Contact Elaine (email: [bat\\_hareem1@hotmail.com](mailto:bat_hareem1@hotmail.com), cell phone: 1-208-761-3957, or home phone 1-208-336-3983) if you need more information about Gray Back Gulch or other camping opportunities.

Two other campgrounds, listed below, are within convenient driving distance of the meeting events. If you wish to stay at one of these campgrounds, please make your own arrangements.

Boise Riverside RV Park (located in the city, privately owned), 6000 N Glenwood, Garden City, ID. Rates (may change): \$25 for a tent site, \$32 for an RV site). See: <http://boiseriversidervpark.com/> for more information.

Macks Creek Park Campground (located 25 miles northeast of Boise on the shores of Lucky Peak Reservoir, privately operated). Rates: \$10 for a tent or RV site. See website for more information: <http://www.visitidaho.org/lodging/public-lands-campground/macks-creek-park/>

## Meals

Meals associated with the Friday reception, the Saturday evening banquet, and the Sunday evening social are included in the registration fee. All other meals are on your own. Pack your own lunch and carry it with you on the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday field trips. Most field trips involve travel into very isolated areas and it is essential that you carry enough food and water for an all-day excursion.



*Penstemon davidsonii* among other native plants at the Idaho Botanic Garden, Boise, ID. (photo Stephen Love)

## Welcome Reception

On Friday afternoon, beginning at 4 pm, the Idaho Botanical Garden will host a welcome reception. The garden is located at 2355 Old Penitentiary Road near the northeast boundary of Boise. Food and beverages will be provided. At the gardens there will be an opportunity to have a guided tour of the Lewis and Clark native plant gardens and to see the penstemon trials.

## Banquet

The annual meeting banquet and business meeting will be held at the Owyhee Plaza on Saturday evening. A reception will start at 6 pm and the meal served at 7 pm. Following the meal, we will conduct short business meetings for both organizations and then be treated to a keynote speech by Dr. Don Mansfield. A description of Dr. Mansfield's credentials was taken from his professional web site:



*Don Mansfield, Keynote Speaker for 2013 Annual Meeting (College of Idaho)*

*Professor Mansfield has been on the faculty at The College of Idaho since 1989. He teaches organismal biology, environmental science, field botany, plant physiology, and a course about plants and people entitled Murder, Medicine and Magic. His scholarly interests include the distributions of plants in southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon and the biology of rare plants. He is currently writing a flora of the Owyhee region of southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon. Recently Dr. Mansfield received a National Science Foundation grant to provide funds for student internships to image and database all 42,000 specimens of the College's Herbarium—one of the premier plant "libraries" for southwestern Idaho and surroundings.*

## “Sunday Social”

For those who can stay and participate, there will be a social held at the Owyhee Plaza Hotel on Sunday evening. We will have a meal and view photographs of the meeting. Please take and share lots of photographs to make this a fun evening.

## Field Trips

You can select two of the three available options for field trips offered as part of the regular meeting agenda on Saturday and Sunday. You can also choose to attend the post-meeting, all-day tour of Hell’s Canyon on Monday.

All Saturday, Sunday, and Monday field trips will leave from a parking lot located a few blocks from the Owyhee Plaza Hotel, address 1511 W Bannock Street, Boise. We will carpool to minimize the number of vehicles on the tours. If you choose not to drive, you will be able to leave your vehicle in the parking lot until you return from the field trip (no overnight parking at this site).

### Mores Mountain/Bogus Basin

Tour Leader: Ann DeBolt, retired US Forest Service Botanist and Native Communities Specialist for the Idaho Botanical Garden.

Timetable: 8 am to 3 pm.

Vehicle Requirements: no restrictions.

Roundtrip Drive: approximately 40 miles.

This field trip involves a short drive north from Boise up Bogus Basin Road to Mores Mountain. Among the scheduled tours, this one includes the shortest

driving distance (less than 20 miles, one way) but requires some hiking to see the greatest diversity of plants. The proposed hike is only 1-1.5 miles, easy, and very scenic.

Mores Mountain is one of the higher peaks along the Boise Ridge, a range of relatively low mountains (highest peaks about 7,500 feet) extending from the foothill suburbs of Boise northward into the Boise National Forest. Located just south of Mores Mountain is Bogus Basin Ski Resort, favored winter destination of local boarders and skiers. After snowmelt, this area becomes a succession of verdant forests and meadows. A number of penstemon species can be seen on this tour, including *P. payettensis*, *P. deustus*, *P. attenuatus*, *P. humilis*, *P. fruticosus*, and *P.*



*Wildflowers on Mores Mountain along the Boise Ridge (photo: Ann DeBolt)*

wilcoxii. Many other unique and/or locally endemic species may also be seen, such as *Mimulus cusickii* and *Lewisia sacajaweana*.

### Reynolds Creek/Owyhee Front

Tour Leader: Beth Corbin, BLM Botanist.

Timetable: 7:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Vehicle Requirements: moderate clearance vehicles recommended.

Roundtrip Drive: 75 to 170 miles, depending on the route conditions will allow.



*Slope in bloom in the Reynold's Creek drainage of the Owyhee Mountains (photo Beth Corbin)*

This field trip involves a 36 mile drive west and then south of Boise on US Highway 55 to Marsing, followed by another 20 miles southeast on US Highway 78 to Reynolds Creek Road. Depending on weather and road conditions, the tour may stay mainly on the Owyhee Front or may continue into the Owyhee Mountains, stop at Silver City, a historic mining district, and possibly end up in Jordan Valley, Oregon.

The Owyhee Front, which includes the Reynolds Creek Drainage, is an ecologically unique region. Elevation ranges from 2,300 feet at the Snake River to 8,400 feet at the top of Hayden Peak. The lower elevations include dry, sparse shrublands. As elevation increases, ecological zones change to western juniper woodlands and finally into douglas fir forests. This area is home to a number of rare plant species, including *Astragalus mulfordiae*, *Cymopterus acaulis* var. *greeleyorum*, *Eriogonum shockleyi* var. *packardiae*, and *Stanleya confertiflora*. One very rare

penstemon is present on the Front, *Penstemon janishiae*, and we should be able to see this little beauty. A number of other penstemons are also common in the area, including a striking form of *P. speciosus*, plus *P. deustus*, *P. attenuatus*, and *P. fruticosus*.

### Succor Creek/Leslie Gulch

Tour Leaders: Jean Finley, retired BLM Botanist from Vail Oregon; and Stephen Love, University of Idaho Extension Specialist.

Timetable: 7 am to 5 pm.

Vehicle Requirements: moderate clearance vehicles recommended, but not absolutely required.

Roundtrip Drive: approximately 160 miles.

This route has some rough roads that may not be suitable for sedans (although I have driven my Buick on all of these roads and never had a problem). This field trip involves a relatively long drive west and then southwest of Boise on US



*Penstemon miser* along SuccorCreek in eastern Oregon (photo Stephen Love)

Highway 95 across the Oregon border, then a loop back to the north on Succor Creek Road to Homedale, Idaho and ending up in back in Boise. Along Succor Creek Road there will be a side trip into Leslie Gulch. Much of the trip entails isolated country with no services or assistance.

The Succor Creek drainage is open, sagebrush country that includes areas of flat plains, rolling hills, and deep riparian canyons. Elevations range from 4,000 to 5,500 feet. Leslie Gulch is a spectacular feature of this region with vertical red cliffs that could just as easily have been transported directly from southern Utah. Although plants appear dry and brown in the late summer, this region can have a spectacular flower season in the spring (this is one of those places that is dependent on good winter moisture to bring on the flowers). On this trip, you will see a couple of penstemon species that you have likely never before seen. One is *Penstemon miser*, a species limited to tuffaceous soils of this narrowly defined region, and the other is *P. cusickii*. Other penstemons common to the area are *P. palmeri*, *P. deustus*, and *P. speciosus*. A number of other rare or locally endemic species are present in the area, including *Senecio ertterae*, *Mentzelia packardiae*, *Ivesia rhypara* var *rhypara*, *astragalus sterilis*, and *Trifolium owyheense*. On the animal side, it is common to see herds of desert bighorn sheep along the road in Leslie Gulch.

### **Monday Post-Meeting Tour**

#### Hell's Canyon

Tour Leader: Tony McCammon, University of Idaho Twin Falls County Educator and amateur ethno-botanist.

Timetable: 6 am to 6 pm.



*Hell's Canyon viewed from Kleinschmidt Grade (photo Stephen Love)*

Vehicle Requirements: moderate clearance vehicles recommended, but not required (I've had my Buick on these roads, too).

Roundtrip Drive: approximately 270 miles.

This is a long field trip that will take a full day. However, it will be more than worthwhile if you have never had opportunity to see the unique geography and ecology of the deepest canyon in North America. The route of the field trip will go from Boise, northwest on Interstate 84 to the Oregon border, north on US Highway 95 to Cambridge, then northwest on Hwy 71 into the south end of Hell's Canyon. After driving more than 20 miles into the canyon the route climbs 4,500 feet up Kleinschmidt Grade and wends its way back to US Highway 95 at Council, then retraces the course back to Boise. A portion of this route is gravel and dirt, but most vehicles should be able to complete the drive without problem.

Although you cannot drive into the most rugged and spectacular portions of Hell's Canyon, the tour will provide an opportunity to sample this remarkable realm. The elevation of the Snake River at the bottom of the canyon is about 1,000 feet and has

unique ecological zones associated with the relatively warm, dry climate. Here we will find *P. triphyllus*, *P. glandulosus*, and many other unique species. On the grade out of the canyon, we hope to find *P. elegantulus* and other species adapted to dry slopes and moist clefts. At the top of the canyon rim, we will cross into ecosystems dominated by heavy fir/spruce forests alternating with rocky meadows creating the possibility of seeing *P. gairdneri*, *P. payettensis*, *P. deustus*, *P. rydbergii*, *P. fruticosus*, and *P. wilcoxii*. We may have opportunity to see a few rare species outside the genus *penstemon*, including *Mirabilis macfarlanei* and *Phlox colubrina*.

### Field Trip Preparation

Most of the field trips take us into places with limited access to food, water, or other essential equipment. If you are driving, be sure to start each field trip with a full tank of gas. Make sure you have a good spare tire. All field trip participants, please bring the following:

**Sack lunch**

**Water (at least ½ gallon per person)**

**Jacket**

**Wide-brimmed hat**

**Insect repellent**

**Good hiking shoes**

**And remember your camera!**

## Annual Meeting Schedule

### Friday

1:00 pm – Board Meeting, APS (Owyhee Plaza Hotel)

1:00 pm – Board Meeting, INPS (Owyhee Plaza Hotel)

4:00 pm – Welcome reception at the Idaho Botanical Garden (food service begins at 6 pm)

### Saturday

All field trips depart from the parking lot located at 1511 W Bannock Street, Boise.

7:00 am – Depart on the tour to Succor Creek/Leslie Gulch

7:30 am – Depart on the tour to Reynolds Creek/Owyhee Mountains

8:00 am – Depart on the tour to Mores Mountain/Bogus Basin

6:00 pm – Reception (Owyhee Plaza Hotel)

7:00 pm – Banquet, annual business meetings (APS, INPS), keynote speaker

### Sunday

All field trips depart from the parking lot located at 1511 W Bannock Street, Boise.

7:00 am – Depart on the tour to Succor Creek/Leslie Gulch

7:30 am – Depart on the tour to Reynolds Creek/Owyhee Mountains

8:00 am – Depart on the tour to Mores Mountain/Bogus Basin

7:00 pm – Social and slide show

### Monday

The field trip departs from the parking lot located at 1511 W Bannock Street, Boise.

6:00 am – Depart for the post-meeting tour to Hell's Canyon. Scheduled return time 6 pm

### **Registration**

To register for the meeting, fill out and return the printed registration form included with this article. You can pay registration fees using one of two methods; include a check with the mailed registration form, or send the registration form separately then log onto the APS website ([www.apsdev.org](http://www.apsdev.org)), click on the Annual Meetings tab, and follow the instructions to pay using a credit/debit card.

Note: You must be a member of the American Penstemon Society or the Idaho Native Plant Society to attend the joint annual meeting. If you not a member of one of the societies and wish to attend, please fill out and submit the registration, then go online to your society of choice and complete a membership application. Web site addresses: APS: [www.apsdev.org](http://www.apsdev.org); INPS: [www.idahonativeplants.org](http://www.idahonativeplants.org).

# REGISTRATION FORM

## 2013 APS/INPS ANNUAL MEETING

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanying person name(s) (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Special Food or Health Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fees	# People	\$ Total
Full registration—\$130 (Friday Reception, Saturday Banquet, Sunday Social)	_____	_____
Partial registration—\$100 (Friday Reception, Saturday Banquet)	_____	_____
Check here if payment to be made online via PayPal _____	Total Fees	_____

Field Trip Preferences (Please check two)

Mores Mountain/Bogus Basin \_\_\_\_\_

Reynolds Creek/Owyhee Mountains \_\_\_\_\_

Succor Creek/Leslie Gulch \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you plan to participate in the Monday field trip to Hell's Canyon \_\_\_\_\_

Note: You must be a member of the American Penstemon Society or the Idaho Native Plant Society to attend the joint annual meeting. If you are not a member of one of these societies and wish to attend, please fill out and submit this meeting registration, form, then go online to your society of choice and complete a membership application. Society web sites: APS: [www.apsdev.org](http://www.apsdev.org); INPS: [www.idahonativeplants.org](http://www.idahonativeplants.org).



Total \$ Remitted \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

**American Penstemon Society**

Mail payment and registration to:

Caroline Morris  
1347 W Parkhill Dr  
Boise, ID 83702-1350

Payment by PayPal: Fill out and mail this registration form without payment to Caroline Morris. Go online to the APS website ([www.apsdev.org](http://www.apsdev.org)), click on the annual meetings tab and follow payment instructions.

### **From the President**

There are many reasons why I'm so excited about getting more involved in the APS.

One is that I so thoroughly enjoy traveling to the wilds where penstemons grow. Another is that I like visiting with the members, learning about what, besides botany, excites them. There are so many talented, knowledgeable, multi-faceted people in our group there is always something to learn from them or be amazed by them.

I am looking forward to working with the new board and know that we will be considering projects and field trips that will be rewarding to our members. In that regard, if anyone has an idea for a project, a grant opportunity, locations for upcoming meetings, please send them to me or one of the other board members.

The only thing that intimidates me at this point is that I now have to learn the botanic names for the penstemons. Anyone who knows me also knows that I occasionally (ok, a lot of the time) make up names for plants.

Hope to see you at the 2013 APS Meeting in Boise. Steve Love promises that it will be a good year for botanizing. Besides, if there is a dearth of penstemons, Boise is the epicenter of Basque restaurants, and we'll just have to make do.

Randy

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### **NEW MEMBERS**

**Mid-September 2012 Through Mid-January 2013**

**Newsletter Vol. 7 Number 1, January 2013**

#### **Life Members**

Mary Mastin of Grand Junction, Colorado, has joined APS as a Life Member. Mary is the new Chair of our nominating committee. Mike Kintgen also has joined as a life member. Thank you, Mary and Mike for your support of APS.

#### **New members**

Please welcome the following new members who have joined since mid-September. We are glad to have you!

Giardino Botanico 'Caplez' Dott., Massimo Cantoni, Milano, Italy

Pamela Brunsfeld, Moscow, ID

Conor Carey, Canby, OR

Michael Garverich, Butte, Montana

Laurence Hawkins, Parkdale, OR

Kirsi Kosonen, Haapakallio, Finland

John Powell, Euclid, Ohio

Jarid Simons, Medford, OR

Janean Thompson, Canyon, TX

Ellen Watrous, Corvallis, Oregon

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John Rembetski of Ft Collins, CO is inviting fellow APS members in the Ft. Collins area to contact him. Will they form the first local chapter? His email is: [jfr110701@gmail.com](mailto:jfr110701@gmail.com).

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## A Note From The Membership Chairmen

Once again we are reviewing our membership rules and timing of dues payment for your information. In summary, those of you who have paid for more than one year of dues will be members in good standing until December 31 of the final year paid. Others who pay only a single year at a time should renew before the end of that year.

According to our APS Bylaws, dues are due on or before January 1 of each year and are past due on May 1. Our practice is to drop all our 2011 members who have not renewed as soon as this Newsletter is out. We hope that those of you who haven't paid for 2013 will do so promptly in order to remain on our roster, enjoy our wonderful annual APS Bulletin, receive an invitation to join our Annual Meeting and receive notice of our Newsletter and the Seed Exchange. Please see the membership renewal form in this issue of the Newsletter.

## Membership Renewal

The American Penstemon Society involves almost 400 penstemon aficionados world-wide, many of whom will enjoy meeting other APS members and traveling to Boise, Idaho for our annual meeting in June, 2013. Dues include our newsletter (with a notice sent to our members electronically and posted on our website), annual bulletin and the annual seed exchange. Dues run on a calendar basis, renewed at the first of each year.

US and Canadian dues \$15 US; Elsewhere \$20 US. Dues for students are \$5. Life Membership is \$150. In addition, members may pay two years in advance and receive the third year free. Please do not send cash.

You may pay either by check or by PayPal on our website at [www.apsdev.org](http://www.apsdev.org). Make checks payable to American Penstemon Society. Mail to:

Dale Lindgren/Phoebe McFarlane, Membership Secretaries  
9202 Maloney Drive,  
North Platte, NE 69101

Dale Lindgren and/or Phoebe McFarlane can be reached at [aps.membership@yahoo.com](mailto:aps.membership@yahoo.com). Please update any current info with new phone numbers or e-mail addresses. Thanks for your enthusiastic support of the Society.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

We do not sell, share or distribute member data in any manner.

Remember, if you plan to attend the exciting meetings in Wyoming, your membership needs to be up to date. Also, if you have changed your e-mail address lately, please send this information to the Membership Chairmen at [aps.membership@yahoo.com](mailto:aps.membership@yahoo.com). Thank you.

APS USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_ BY \_\_\_\_\_

## ELECTION RESULTS

### THE 2013 APS BOARD

Val Myrick, Past President

Fifty-three APS member households have voted. The ballot, as prepared by Nominating Committee Co-Chairs, Dallas and Sharon Boge, Libby Wheeler, and myself, has been approved.

The following have been elected for two-year terms:

Randy Tatroe, President  
Noel and Patricia Holmgren, Co-Vice Presidents  
Mary Cunningham, Treasurer  
Lupita Wesseler and Andi Wolfe, Board Members  
Mary Mastin, Chair, Nominating Committee.

Thanks to all for agreeing to make this new or continuing commitment to APS.

Board members who have agreed to serve another term or whose terms have not ended:

Phoebe McFarlane and Dale Lindgren, Membership Co-Chairs  
Hugh MacMillan, Website Administrator  
Gerald Klingaman, Board Member  
Louise Parsons, Seed Exchange  
Ed Godleski, Auditor  
Dorothy Tuthill, Special Projects  
Libby Wheeler, Robins Coordinator  
Stephen Love, Bulletin Editor and Librarian and Custodian of Slides Collection  
Ginny Maffitt, Newsletter Editor  
Val Myrick, Past President

**Dale wears several additional hats:** Registrar of Cultivars and Hybrids and Historian. Thank you for agreeing to continue in service to APS, bringing your much appreciated experience, expertise, and enthusiasm to your jobs. The American Penstemon Society is in good hands. This year will be a great one!

Dallas and Sharon Boge, Eric Gouda, and Bob McFarlane have finished their terms on the Board. They have taken a wonderful organization and made it even better. I hope they will continue to have close ties with the board. Thank you.

My two-year term as president has sped by. Our talented Board, Annual Meeting Chairs, and our many other volunteers have made my job a pleasure. I'm very happy, however, to be able to hand the job over to Randy, a man of many skills, and his capable Board.



*Val Myrick, APS President 2010-2012, 'on top of the world' at Summit Overlook, near Laramie Pass. Val, thank you from all of us for all your hard work! (Maffitt photo)*

# AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY

## APPLICATIONS SOUGHT FOR SPECIAL PROJECT GRANTS

The purpose of the APS Special Projects Program is to stimulate activities that promote knowledge and appreciation of Penstemons. The Society is particularly interested in funding projects that:

- 1) Promote conservation of Penstemon species in the wild, especially rare or sensitive ones, through understanding of factors that affect their survival, and
- 2) Promote appreciation for the diversity and beauty of Penstemons in wild and domestic landscapes, through horticultural research, dissemination of information of interest to gardeners, or the construction or enhancement of educational display gardens.



**More information about the American Penstemon Society can be found at [www.apsdev.org/](http://www.apsdev.org/).**

All applicants must be current members of APS, and may join APS for the purpose of submitting a proposal. Maximum award amount is \$1000; in the past three years, awards have ranged from \$200 to \$1000. Awards are not intended to pay wages or travel to meetings. The number of successful awards in any year will be determined by the number of high-quality proposals, value of the awards, and the annual budget. Awardees are required to submit a final project report, due one year after the award is made, and provide either an article for the newsletter or an oral presentation at an annual meeting.



### Proposal Format

Proposals should not exceed five pages, and must follow this format:

1. Project name
2. Name and contact information of submitter(s)
3. Requested funding amount
4. Objective of the project
5. Background and rationale
6. Proposed methods and timeline
7. Itemized budget
8. Description of submitters' qualifications.

Submit proposals to Dorothy Tuthill via email ([dtuthill@uwyo.edu](mailto:dtuthill@uwyo.edu)) or mail (Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center, Dept. 4304, University of Wyoming, 1000 E. University Ave., Laramie, WY 82071) no later than March 31, 2013. Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged by email, and successful awardees will be notified no later than April 30, with disbursements made in early May.

## A Year of International Robin Letters

The International Round Robin is a long-standing pen-pal group, open to any APS member wishing to take part. Address emails to: Libby Wheeler, at [glwheel@prodigy.net](mailto:glwheel@prodigy.net). Historically there were several other robins which have now disbanded. Their cumulative purpose was to share penstemon gardening conversations since we don't have monthly meetings. Current members are **Thea Unzner**, Schoneiche, Germany, **Kari Wang**, Hosle, Norway, **Ingemar Bjork**, Huddinge, Sweden **Jill Pitman**, Portland, U.K., **Mike Evans**, Fort Laramie, WY, **Libby Wheeler**, Fayetteville, AR and recently,reluctantly withdrawn 92 year old **Gunne-Bert Wedell**, Bromma, Sweden. The letters are edited for brevity with attention to all comments regarding **penstemons**.

### Ingemar Bjork, Huddinge, Sweden, June 7, 2011

Dear friends,

When writing this Robin letter, I already have visited Uto on six occasions, so I am in a better position to tell what has happened there since my last letter of March, 2010.

The primary limestone ridge

My newest planting area is in a 2-4" wide fracture (crevice) on top of a limestone ridge. I have planted the following penstemons in the crack:

Late 2007: I placed two beautiful white-flowered unnamed penstemons that I bought at a plant meeting, later identified as *P. fruticosus* var. *scouleri* and *forma albus*. Until now, they produced only a few flowers. Yesterday, the plants demonstrated their capability by showing fifteen flower stems (5" tall) with glistening white flowers. They also demonstrated an impressive lateral growth (now 10 x 16" wide). It seems to me, that 3 1/2 years after planting, the roots finally have found their way into fissures deep in the ground.

Early 2008: I planted *P. davidsonii* var. *menziesii*. This plant demonstrates an impressive lateral growth (now 12 x 16" wide) This year, 2 1/2 years after planting, it will produce the first flowers. Since *P. newberryi* (probably var. *berryi*) was planted, it has annually produced a few flowers. This year, it has shown eight flowering stems (1-2" tall).

Early 2009: I planted three *P. rupicolus*. This is my first attempt to grow this species at Uto. All the plants are still very small (2" wide), but look promising.

Conclusions: The primary limestone ridge has so far proven to be the best place for me to grow the beautiful penstemons from section *Dasanthera*. I have realized that in my non-garden, they will need three to five years to produce a spectacular flower show. One good thing with the ridge is that there still remain a few not yet exploited fissures (total length 5-6 meters, or 16-19'). One of the candidates for my next planting is *P. barrettiae*. On another place I have grown one plant of that species for at least 10 years without seeing any flowers.

Desert areas: The most important area is my 20" thick grit bed based on Norman Denos sand bed idea. The site is in full sun (now 14 hours per day). The site imitates a desert area with two impressive *Yucca glauca*, *Asclepias tuberosa*, *Zauscheria garrettii* and a lot of prickly pears. In July, 2010, the yuccas surprised me by flowering for the first time, but didn't last very long. I have earlier tried several penstemon species in the grit bed as well as other hot, but non- irrigated areas, but found them all unsuitable. I realize that I have to rely upon cooler and therefore shad-

ier positions. To add interest here, I have added *Asclepias tuberosa* (milkweed) and *pulsatillas*, plus *Erigeron compositus* (white, 15 cm tall) collected in Idaho many years ago. One native Uto species is *Lynchnis viscaria* that I find quite spectacular in a desert setting.

Salute: After visiting Uto a few days ago, I would like to salute all the American phloxes that bring such brilliant colors to my non-garden. I would also include the opuntias (prickly pear) that will in about four weeks give their spectacular show.

I wish you all a good gardening summer, Ingemar

### **Gunne-Bert Wedell, Bromma, Sweden, Spring, 2012**

Dear Robin Friends,

I'm very sad to find that I'm no longer a good robin member. At age 92, I find that I'm now a 'robin brake' and so I'll finish my membership and you for all this time and hope the Robin will turn around in a faster way without me. I will keep in second-hand contact with you via Ingemar as long as I can.

Last summer gave a nice garden and I'm now looking forward for the days to come. The first galanthus, ranunculus and anemones are starting up and soon a new spring will be here to give us fun. It seems to be an early spring this year, let's hope that King Bore does not return too strong.

My best wishes to you all in the Robin for days to come. Please forgive this big delay of the Robin.

Gunne-Bert

### **PORTLAND PONDERINGS, JILL PITTMAN MEWS COTTAGE: started March 16, 2012**

Hello Robins, I received the envelope from Gunne-Bert Wedell last week. Robins are definitely something to look forward to when the weather is anti-gardening.

During the growing season, I collect seed from several things, not only penstemon. When we give a talk on the garden to local Dorset garden groups, I trot up and down the rows offering the members a dip in the bag and the seed (packets) they pull out is theirs to grow. They can keep the plants or bring them to their own plant sales later. It just creates a bit of fun and interest particularly if they have no idea what exactly they selected. At the end of the evening we do a free raffle. I bring a 6 bottle wine carrier with six soft drink bottles. They have been cut in half, and then reassembled with a penstemon growing inside in a 'Jiffy 7' (compacted compost discs). I distribute pamphlets giving the dates that Mews Cottage is open to support our various charities. Whoever finds the ones numbered 1-6 on the back wins a bottle. This creates a bit more fun and ends the meeting with much chat, questions and sometimes answers!!

The cut bottles have another use; I use them for propagating penstemon seed as well as cuttings. I've sprinkled *P. serrulatus* seed on the mix I use for potting (4 scoops vermiculite to 1 scoop compost moistened with diluted liquid seaweed plant food). To my surprise, the seedlings are up to about 1/2", but I obviously sprinkled far too many. I will have to cut up the bottle to get them out, hopefully in small clumps. (In an earlier letter, she explains that she also roots cuttings in the bottles. The tops are replaced by cutting 2" vertical slits to slide over the lower bottle half.) When roots are seen, she transplants them.

Like all other members, I look forward to the seed list every year. I sometimes refer to the books

Peter's cousin found us in America, which specialize in species penstemons. They are all 'must-haves', but the garden cannot seem to make elastic sides. There is a limit to how many plants I can actually find a space for.

Should any Robin member fancy some seed from Mews Cottage and know that their Customs and Excise will allow it to be imported, do let me know. There is quite a selection of *Dierama* (Angel's Fishing Rod). *Freesia* 'Laxa Star of David' is a plant appearing to be a tiny *gladioli* in scarlet with a black center 1" across, acquired from the Plant Heritage Plant Exchange. The *agapanthus* are another favorite; there were 107 varieties here at one time. They all live together with the penstemon and show each other off.

Jill Pittman

### **Kari Wang, Hosle, Norway, May, 2012**

(Ed.note: Kari last came to an annual meeting in Utah, 2002. She became known as the sharp-eyed one who could spot a lone penstemon in a really drought-stricken year).

Dear Robin Friends,

We all comment about the winter and so do I. The winter was very cold, started early and lasted long. Particularly difficult was the very wet autumn, before the frost. Many plants didn't get enough time to prepare for winter. Now we start to see the results. (she lost an 'Amanagawa' cherry, and 2 junipers).

So what about penstemons? Many have taken a beating. The *P. rupicola* in the big pot is very battered, but recovering. The one in the lower garden on top of the wall is doing fine. *P. barrettiae*, NNS 07-382, planted out last spring, is doing well. *P. serrulatus* and *hirsutus* have no problems. *P. globosus* (Wallowa Mts., Oregon) is ready with buds, doing it's best to smother plants around. *P. humilis* ssp. *brevifolius* looked dead when the snow had melted, but is coming back. *P. eatonii* v. *eatonii* from NNS2009, is doing OK in the seedpot. *P. attenuatus* v. *pseudoprocerus* NNS-08-291 and *P. pachyphyllus* v. *pachyphyllus* NNS06-428 are both doing OK.

*P. fruticosus* v. *scouleri* f. *albus* is overwintering in a polystyrene box and looks very good, but still has no buds. *P. fruticosus*, in the garden, is ready with large buds. *P. pinifolius* (in a garden bed) looked very unhappy but is coming back. *P. caryi* and *debilis* in a sand frame survived and are coming back. (Ed. note): this is excellent information for growers in far northern climates).

My experiment with *P. oliganthus* together with the hybrids in the cellar did not go well. Maybe they didn't have enough water.

I will do as Ingemar suggests and keep a diary of what is going on in the garden, so when the Robin returns, I'll have new information. Happy gardening and a good summer to you all.

Kindest regards, Kari

### **Thea Unzner, Schoneiche, Germany, September 1, 2012**

Dear Robin Friends,

Now at the end of summer, 2012, I'll write about my penstemons. It is raining again; the sky is gray and I can see the fall flowers blooming in my garden. Our summer was cold and rainy. I didn't need to water the plants and took away my hose with sprinkler in June and July. At last,

August brought us some warm, hot and sunny days.

I told you in my last letter that I lost some penstemons in the winter of 2010/11, but the winter 2011/12 was much colder and again, I lost many plants. The coldest days were in March and early April and killed many roses, now coming back from new basal shoots. In my American garden, I lost all sphaeralceas, sidalceas, callirhoe, hymenoxis and grindelia. Although we have had such a cold and wet summer, all my penstemons which lived, were blooming-wonderful! They were *Penstemon ovatus*, *procerus*, *hirsutus*, *attenuatus*, *serrulatus*, *smallii*, *whippleanus*, *barbatus* and all the *barbatus* hybrids in different colors.

When I'm looking at all my photos and slides from our meetings in American, where the penstemons are growing is always in stony or rocky grounds. I can see and admire my own growing so nicely in my sandy soil. The frost killed *P. pinifolius* which was damaged from the winter before. Also *P. laetus*, *strictus* and *arkansanus* didn't come back again and *P. fruticosus* and *cardwellii* were frozen down to the base. From there, they are coming back now with tiny shoots. I lost all the plants from the Southwest; *P. kunthii* and Mexican hybrids. So, now in the last months, I have no penstemon flowers in my beds, which always gave me such nice red and violet colors in the fall.

I had *P. digitalis* with green leaves and 'Husker's Red' with red leaves. Because my garden is now full of new *digitalis* seedlings, I have many plants with different leaf colors in green, red and green/red leaves!

I had a great surprise in summer, when I found one plant of *P. comarrhenus* and one plant of *P. augustifolius* blooming in the beds. I think the *comarrhenus* with one stem of blue flowers is really an eye-catcher! This spring I again tried growing new penstemon and hope the next winter won't bring us such cold frost without any snow. I planted some seedlings of *P. grandiflorus*, *deustus*, *humilis*, *venustus* into the garden and planted all the other small seedlings into pots and bowls and left them in my green house.

From all the American plants I tried in the last years, the erigerons (fleabane daisies) are feeling most at home. *E. peregrinus* filled all places, even on the driest points. *E. subtrinervis* bloomed later; *E. algidus* and *foliosus* bloomed all summer. I also tried to grow erigonums. I now have some species, but NO flowers this year! Maybe the cold, rainy summer was the reason for no flowering?? Even *Eriogonum umbellatum*, which I had for a long time, didn't bloom this year.

Now there are many asters, heleniums, rudbeckias, cleomes and *cimicifuga* and the last stems of *liatris* blooming in my garden.

It is a pity that we now have to do without Gunne-Bert, but I understand him. We met at a NARGS/APS meeting; I think it was in Oregon in 1988, a long time ago. It'll become harder to work in the garden and write about what you've tried to grow. I'm so glad to see the photos Ingemar sent; all these photos made with the computer are such big, new technical progress. We old people have to learn it. I hope I'll get many letters in the next days and I enjoy reading about all your experiences with the penstemons and other flowers and your travels.

Best wishes to all,

Thea Unzner

## Libby Wheeler, Fayetteville AR, July 21, 2012

Dear Robin Friends,

Finally the last APS Robin letters have made their rounds and you should have received them from Thea (or will shortly). Reading these letters is much fun for me, and I am always impressed by what I learn from all of you.

I am writing my letter for the next Robin early (I think we set a September 1st deadline to have a letter describing summer penstemon activity to Thea and an e-mail copy to Ginny Maffitt for the APS Newsletter). I'm writing in July because we are having a very dry, hot summer, and nothing is thriving in my garden. We did not get the usual spring rains here in Arkansas, and we are part of the drought that encompasses the mid-western US. It is serious, and I water early each day only to keep plants barely alive. It is interesting to see how much more robust the native plants are to drought, and my gardening interests are turning more to them. I see penstemons growing in the arid western states, but those that are not native to Arkansas have a hard time here. I've lost most of the hybrids I planted last year that were part of the plant nursery trade.

But I did have my usual penstemons. *P. tenuis* grew everywhere, in the lawn as well as in the garden, with its small, delicate flowers. I also had *P. digitalis* and *P. arkansanus*, white flowers and healthy plants. And the cultivar, Husker Red, thrives in our rocky, clay Arkansas soil. But my success with other penstemons was marginal. I did get a cutting of *P. murrayanus*, a native of southern Arkansas and a favorite of mine, which I nurtured for several months in water and then in light soil, but it finally died. The plant sent out new growth from the base but not roots. I'm very interested in trying Jill's soda bottle method of propagation. *P. cobaea* is a native that should grow well here, but I've had little success. *P. pinifolius* (not native) did well, I think because we had a mild winter. And I still have one plant that survives from the study Dale Lindgren did in 2003 –*Penstemon* x 'Prairie Splendor' - that faithfully blooms. But this has not been a good season for any plants in my garden.

I know you will be reading accounts of the APS meeting in Laramie, WY, in the newsletter and Bulletin. But I want to convey that the meeting was well organized and lots of fun. Wyoming had an early spring as did much of the US, so some of the penstemons we hoped to see had already bloomed, but we saw most of those promised and had good hikes and fellowship. I must admit that this is the first meeting I've attended (and I've attended yearly since 1999), that I decided to appreciate the plants and flowers without the obligation to try to exactly identify them. I loved the vistas the Medicine Mountains offered and enjoyed the company and expertise of the Wyoming Natural Plant Society members as well as APS friends. It was a satisfying, long weekend.

And now to your letters. Jill - I admire all the volunteer work you, your under-gardener, and your garden do for non-profit groups. Sharing my garden and plants I grow is the most satisfying part of gardening for me. Your pergola looks wonderful, and by now you must have your waterfall operating. I was interested in your description of roach rock and the fossils therein. And I enjoyed seeing a picture of you and Peter with Princess Anne. Nice smiles. And reading your letter makes me smile.

Ingemar – I liked reading about your limestone ridge plantings over the years. There is a wonderful stand of *P. cobaea* on a limestone outcrop about two hours from my house. I wonder if *P. cobaea* would grow for you? I'm glad you also are more willing to accept native species in your Uto garden. I like to experiment with exotics but get depressed when non-natives die in our

recent harsh, dry summers. You mentioned to Thea that you lack clay in your garden. Too much clay (and rock) is why I have to garden mostly in raised beds.

Thea – Thanks for collecting the new round of penstemon letters. Hope this new system works. I'm glad to hear you are finally having summer weather and that you and your garden are doing okay. You sure have a green thumb in your sandy soil. As you describe your plants, I can picture your garden in Schoneihe, where Ellen Wilde and I enjoyed lovely tea times with you.

As you probably know, Gunne-Bert has is unable to continue in the Robin. We'll miss him.

Best wishes to all,

Libby Wheeler

### **Mike Evans, Fort Laramie, Wyoming, August 28, 2012**

Dear Robin Friends,



*North Platte river valley.*

Today I write to you from Fort Laramie, Wyoming. This is a small town in eastern Wyoming, about 25 miles from the Nebraska state line. The North Platte River valley is irrigated farm land with corn, beans, sugar beets and alfalfa the major crops. A short distance away from the irrigated lands are grassland prairies with some rocky outcrops. These outcrops have Ponderosa Pines and Juniper trees. The streams and river are lined with cottonwood and ash. There are willows and wild plums along the streams also.

I work at Fort Laramie National Historic Site. A trading post was established in 1834 for the fur trade. Then the US Army made it a military fort until 1890. The Oregon Trail went through here as did the Pony Express. So, there is some interesting history concerning the settlement



of the American West in the 19th century. Not very old compared with European history, however. I get to work on the old buildings and take care of the grounds. We still are involved in the operation of the ranch.



Since we moved here in April, there has been less than one inch (2.54cm) of rain! It is terribly dry with little or no new grass growth this year at all. Many ranchers had to sell off their cattle due to lack of forage. In the river valley the crops can be irrigated with water stored in reservoirs higher up in the watershed. If the drought in the area persists, those reservoirs will not get refilled. Since moved here, I have yet to see a Penstemon growing in the wild. Next spring, if there is some snow and rainfall, I expect to see *P. grandiflorus*, *albidus*, *angustifolius*, *glaber* and perhaps *gracillius*. The grasslands are made up of buffalo grass and gramma grass, two very drought resistant species. The native grasses are remarkable in their ability to withstand drought. Buffalograss and the gramma grasses have the ability to “go dor-

mant” until adequate moisture is available, then they can quickly green up and produce seeds. The forbs are there too, but are very few and far between this year. I look forward to getting out next spring after what is hopefully a wet yet mild winter. We look forward to exploring western Nebraska, South Dakota and the Black Hills, all of which are only a half day’s drive from here.

Joyce and I have a house with a large yard. We put in a garden and have enjoyed growing vegetables. This has been quite a welcome change from where we have lived in the past. Near Saratoga the growing season is only 60 days in a good year and in Utah there was little water and many hungry varmints. Here we have a 120 days with no frost. We are planning a flower garden devoted to native plants and hope to have that started next summer.

There is a very large crab-apple tree in the yard which was beautifully covered with blossoms last April. There is an apple tree, mulberry, chokecherry and grapes in the yard as well as many hollyhocks. We have large Juniper trees too, so there is shade which helps on hot afternoons. In town there are Linden and Caltapa trees which I hope to also plant in our own yard. This year we did plant a plum tree and a late blooming apricot.

Ingemar, there were no *P caespitosus* seeds on our land by Saratoga, Wyoming again this year. Maybe next year, some will be produced. Thank you all for the letters from last year. This year things should be spread around a little faster. I hope you all had a nice summer and are prepared for the cooler days to come.

Best wishes and take care.

Mike Evans  
PO Box 493  
Fort Laramie, Wyoming 82212  
iroxranch@yahoo.com

PS: A month ago, my email account was broken into and some hacker sent you all a note saying I was in London without funds and broken hearted or something. That was all a hoax and I sure hope nobody responded to that criminal. I do wish I could have been there and seen some of the Olympic Games. But alas, I was here in Wyoming working

Editor’s note: An early January update from Mike on the drought relays that in the eastern Wyoming plains there is little snow. In North Park and Steamboat Springs, CO the snow pack is at 80%. This is good news as that is the headwaters for the North Platte and Laramie rivers.



*Yucca and Prickly Pear cactus*

## *Our Officers*

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## Seed Exchange is Humming Along

**T**ime to Plant Seeds. “If winter comes, can spring be far away?” However there is still time to brighten those dark days by planting some penstemon seeds. Most species benefit from at least a few weeks of cold conditioning. Remember to save your pots if penstemon seeds don’t germinate readily. Many species either delay or stagger germination by a season or even more.

There is Still a Nice Selection. Some donors reported a long, cold spring, with less pollination and seed set. Even with some choices gone, there is still a nice, broad selection of seeds. However, it is always a good idea to list a few alternates. The seed exchange is open for requests until March 31. Please remember to include your postal address with your requests.

Alas, we are not set-up to take overseas or domestic payments via Paypal for seeds. I am learning that it is getting to be more difficult for overseas members to obtain the small amount of US currency to pay for the additional requests with surface mail. We will need to re-think the way this traditionally has been done. US currency is much less available overseas than in times past. One possible option is to add additional Paypal “buttons” for seed payment. I note that some of the garden club seed exchanges are doing this, but include a surcharge to use Paypal. With any option, we need to keep accounting both simple and straightforward. Additionally some overseas members have suggested an enhanced membership payment that would allow them to make 20 choices instead of ten. A few domestic members have also indicated that they would prefer to pay for seeds via Paypal. What do you think? All ideas are always very welcome.

Keep APS “in the Loop”. As always, please be sure to keep APS (SeedEx and Membership!) updated with e-mail and postal address changes. In general, it is a good idea to keep a file or folder that includes everyone to be noticed in the event of any address change. Although our membership secretaries are excellent at keeping me updated, please make sure that my e-mail <parsonATpeak.org> (“AT” is to be replaced with an ampersand) is included in your list of permitted e-mail recipients if you use one. Clients such as Google mail have become especially aggressive about spam and could filter out items (such as the seed lists e-mail) that contained attachments, links, and is sent in bulk. Filtered mail is not “bounced”, so I would never realize that you had not received seed lists.

Diserata or Special Needs? If you don’t see something on the list that you are seeking, please send me your desires and we will publicize them in future issues of “The Penstemaniac”. If you are planning or participating in an event such as a talk and will be promoting penstemons and APS, you may separately request extra packets, labeled for promotional or beneficial purposes. Write to me with your needs and tell me a bit about your project or the nature of your “audience”. As resources permit, I will make-up and provide individual packets from excess seed.

Ongoing gratitude to the donors. They are the essence of the exchange! If you have not donated seeds, please consider doing so in the future. Donors realize the old saying, “Ya gotta play to win”. Although the Exchange “closes” at the end of March, I can accept donations, to be included in next year’s list, at any time. --Louise Parsons