

EUGENE CHAPTER

October Newsletter 2010

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NEXT CHAPTER EVENT

NOVEMBER 18

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR COFFEE, COOKIES &
CONVERSATION AT CAMPBELL CENTER, 7 P.M.**

PROGRAM FOLLOWS:

**"THE DIRT ON DIRT" PRESENTED BY DOUG FURR
FOLLOWED BY PLANT AUCTION**

No October Meeting!



R. horaeum X

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The results of the membership interest and volunteer surveys that the Board asked you to complete in August were very interesting and will be helpful in planning chapter activities this year. Without a doubt, the regular chapter meetings are of great interest with the programs being important to all, but with the "time for social interaction" a close second. You have also graciously volunteered to help with these meetings - bringing goodies, helping to set up or take down the chairs, greeting guests and new members - and, for this, I say thank you. Even if you are not a designated greeter for a meeting, please notice who the new faces are and introduce yourself to make them feel welcome and want to return.

In regards to the Spring Flower Shows, there is a strong interest in retaining the two-day May Show in a large venue with a judged show like we have done in the past. This certainly is an excellent way to share with the community our interest in rhododendrons and the beauty of the flowers. However, it takes a lot of volunteer time to present a high quality show and only a few members have volunteered to help plan and organize the flower shows. In the coming months, the Board will be discussing the kind of flower show that we can have based on the number of people that we have to do the work. However, with the commitment that we have for helping to present the 2011 ARS National Convention and our fund-raising plant sale in May, we are likely to be short of the volunteer time needed to present a large flower show for the community. However, we will have a show of some kind for us to celebrate the bloom time of our favorite rhododendrons. Certainly, having the ARS National Convention so close to home and in the beautiful Heathman Lodge is an experience with rhododendrons to look forward to.

In September I much enjoyed Wilbur Bluhm's talk on the Kalmiopsis Wilderness and was interested in the marked distinction of plant growth between the serpentine soils and the non-serpentine soils. Though I have never hiked in or explored this area of the Siskiyou Mountains, I have enjoyed visiting with several of you who have explored this region. I find it interesting that the rich botanic diversity is due not only to the variation in soils but also to the effect of the Ice Age glaciers further north forcing many plants to move south.

After the September meeting, Paula and I enjoyed a drive along the coast of southwest Oregon and through the redwoods to visit friends and family in California. As we drove along Hwy 101 in southern Oregon, I started thinking about planning a trip where we could enjoy a bit of the Kalmiopsis as well as the native areas of *Rhododendron occidentale*. Just north of Eureka we stopped to visit Don Wallace's beautifully displayed Singing Tree Nursery and to chat with Don. While there, we were able to purchase a R. 'Virginia Stewart' to take to our friends as a remembrance of Virginia who was their nearby neighbor and friend - another way that plants can be a connector of people and memories.

Ted

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:	Ted Hewitt
VICE PRESIDENT:	Douglas Furr
TREASURER:	Rick Reed
SECRETARY:	Paula Hewitt
PAST PRESIDENT:	Helen Baxter
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BOARD MEMBERS	Term
Frances Burns	2008 - 2011
JoAnn Napier	2009 - 2012
Leonard Frojen	2009 - 2012
Gordon Wylie	2010 - 2013
Terry Henderson	2010 - 2013

STANDING COMMITTEES

Nominations	Harold Greer	686-1540
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EUGENE CHAPTER WEBSITE

<http://www.eugene.chapter-ars.org>

LAST MONTH DURING OUR SEPT. PROGRAM

the point was raised on where where *R. albiflorum* can be found. Bob Kintigh reports that Cox in his *Encyclopedia on Species Rhododendrons* says regarding the distribution "Western North America from British Columbia to Colorado, near tree line, often around stunted Conifers". And in his book *The Larger Rhododendron Species* the range is given as "Alberta to British Columbia and Oregon to Colorado, 1200-2200 m. (4000-7200 feet), in alpine woods and open places, often where conifers are stunted near the tree line.

Wilbur Bluhm quotes from *Flora of North America* that *R. albiflorum* grows in Montana, Idaho, British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, and Oregon. "Coniferous forests, alpine thickets, stream banks, seeps on rock outcrops, 800-3500 m. (2625-11,550 feet)" a wider elevation range than Cox reports. The lower elevation would be in Canada, at or the northern extension of its range, and the highest be the Colorado Rockies.

EDITOR'S BYTE

FRANCES BURNS

One gets used to seeing humming birds, grosbeaks, and band tailed pigeons at the feeders, then one day as the equinox nears, flock by flock they disappear – all but the gold finches, who are the last to nest and the last to leave. The brilliant yellow of the males is fading to match the drab olive of the females and won't come back until mating season next summer. Even the wild geese are no longer flying up the river daily to feed at the golf course. A bee colony has swarmed into the wood duck box for the winter, and the blue jays, squirrels raid the hazelnuts as they fall. A family of marauding bears have done costly damage to a neighbor's orchard, climbing and breaking down the trees, downing huge amounts of nuts before they leave to hibernate for the winter. The young raccoon family under the barn have left their mother and gone their separate ways and she's more than ready for a long winter's nap.

There's been no frost yet, but a few leaves flutter down daily in the breeze and the hostas are beginning to melt away as the shadows lengthen. As the northern hemisphere prepares for winter, I am preparing for a month-long sojourn in Australia, a second 2010 spring and the 50th anniversary convention of the Australian Rhododendron Society. Leaving Halloween madness and the fall garden work is neither curse nor blessing, but with a mild winter I can catch up before spring returns here. With Thanksgiving and Christmas well on the way, we can be sure spring will follow the grim beleaguerments of February weather. Our rhodies are loaded with buds this fall. Due to summer problems with the underground watering system, they received about half the usual watering. Point taken – see discussion page 5.

If you've wondered about the Three Rivers Casino's accommodations, four of us dined at their 24-hour buffet with Siuslaw Chapter members before their meeting last week. The food and food service were really great. In addition we received \$10 in cards to try out the casino. Dan Bones guided us to the nickel and dime slots – great for neophytes like yours truly. In ten minutes I won three times – more than enough to pay for my dinner before we rushed off to learn about raising rhodies according to Mike Bones.

In the early afternoon we visited Wapiti Woods, the amazing rhododendron garden high above Mercer Lake in Florence belonging to Don and Jeanie Shields. Don, a native Oregonian, retired from his medical practice in Palo Alto in 1997, after purchasing the property in 1994, having a road constructed into the site where Don and Jeannie's lovely home was constructed in 1997. They brought some plants with them and have added many many more. I particularly enjoy the splendid display of Calluna heaths and Erica heathers. They also built a large pond with a fountain, landscaped around it, and count on it for fire protection in their very off the beaten path location. Thank you Don and Jeannie for sharing your very much hands-on gardening adventure. Yes, it was a fun trip.

According to Harold Greer, the committee for the 2011 National Convention in Vancouver, Washington is in the final stages of procuring speakers and workshop presenters. It promises to be an exciting convention with great accommodations at the Heathman Lodge. Next May 11-15.

“Opie, you haven't finished your milk. We can't put it back in the cow, you know.”
Aunt Bea

I discovered at the website All Fiber Arts (www.allfiberarts.com) that during WWII a milk by-product was spun and used to make hats to socks. Soldiers, sailors and salesmen all benefited from this cloth.

The website explains, “Milk casein fibre is made by separating the oils and fats from the protein. The curd is rinsed, dried and dissolved to form a 'dope' that is pushed through spinnerets into an acid bath that forms the fibre. The fibre goes through further salt and formaldehyde processing to soften and improve the quality.”

The history of milk casein fiber is fascinating. The first patent for this technology was issued in 1935 by the Italian government. The United States then issued a patent in 1937 for ARALAC fiber (American Research Associates = ARA plus milk LAC = ARALAC fiber). According to SWICOFIL Textiles, mail order catalogs such as Montgomery Wards and Sears Roebuck offered many products made from ARALAC fiber, but a common complaint was that the articles smelled like sour milk when wet!

All Fiber Arts has lots of information on fibers, and one little piece of information particularly intrigued me: Rhododendron leaves and a metallic compound (mordant) are used to make an organic dye for dyeing wool. Different chemical concoctions produce different dye colors. For example, tin and rhododendron leaves produce orange yarn. If you use vinegar instead of the tin, you get beige yarn. Three compounds used in rhododendron leaf dye baths caught my eye, and they are probably well known to many ARS members: Blue vitriol (common copper sulfate) sometimes produces **green** yarn, iron produces **green** yarn, and alum (potassium aluminum sulfate) produces **yellow** yarn.

Our good friend Diana, who lives in Seattle, is a great knitter and is coming to visit. During her visit we will attempt to dye some wool using blue vitriol, iron and alum using the guidelines found on the All Fiber Arts website: Soak the wool in each metallic mordant for two hours and allow to dry. Gather four ounces of rhododendron leaves for each bath, chop them into little pieces, add water and soak overnight. The next day heat the rhododendron bath to 200° F, simmer two hours, add the pre-mordant wool and watch the bath simmer until you like the color and shut it off to cool. When cool rinse the dyed wool and allow it to dry.

If all works well, I will plead shamelessly until I get an agreement from Diana to knit us a door prize! [Ed.note: Pleading shamelessly did not work.]

Questions? Comments? E-mail me, Douglas Furr, at garden.projects@hotmail.com

Tips from the old tool shed: If you are going to experiment make sure you follow all safety practices, including having obtained permission from **others** first! Remember aluminum and tin pots interfere with the dye as they act as a mordant too! And **DO NOT** run with knitting needles!

THE TOP 10 PRACTICAL TIPS

Information from an article in the Sept. 2010 issue of *The Digger* by Dr. Jennifer Parke (associate professor, senior research) is a plant pathologist in the Dept. of Crop and Soil Science, and Dept. of Botany and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University, Corvallis. She specializes in *Phytophthora* diseases of nursery plants and the biology & management of soil-borne fungal pathogens. She can be reached at jennifer.parke@oregonstate.edu.

1. Be careful what you buy. The best defense is to not bring in any outside plant material. If you do, know your source. Make sure your supplying nursery uses excellent sanitation practices. Keep purchased plants in a separate area and do not treat with fungicides effective against *Phytophthora*. Observe them for several weeks... Should disease develop, you have not exposed your [other plants.]

2. Don't use dirty pots. Re-using pots is a good idea for reducing costs, but make sure you aren't also recycling pathogens and weeds. Break the cycle by sanitizing pots before re-use. Several methods are available, including sanitizing with a hot water dip or soaking in a disinfectant, but most methods require washing to first remove old potting media and organic debris.

3. Keep propagation areas as clean as possible. Your propagation area should be the cleanest part of your nursery. Get rid of any weeds, sick plants, leafy debris or dying plants that could harbor pathogens. Use a source of clean water, such as well water, municipal water, or treated water. Disinfect your propagation beds between crops.

4. Ensure good drainage. Remember the disease triangle? A susceptible host, a virulent pathogen, and a conducive environment are all required for disease to occur. *Phytophthora* is likely to be present in your soil, so if you are growing susceptible plants, your best option for managing disease is manipulating the

(Continued page 6)

O. HOWARD HINSDALE GARDEN UPDATE Gordon Wylie

Mid September, seated at the keyboard and gazing out the window for inspiration—to (yuk!) overcast skies and the dreary drip of rain showers—my thoughts are not of what to write, but rather annoyance as it appears this year’s green tomato summer will not, at least so far, be followed by the treat of a pleasant, enjoyable and sunny Indian Summer. So instead, peer at the screen and focus on the positive in recent progress and future prospects at the Hinsdale Garden.

The most dramatic recent change first encountered at Hinsdale, particularly for those who have been there in the past, will be the entry road spanning the slough into the main garden. In the past this has been spoken of as the “new bridge”, though as constructed it is really much more than a bridge. Large culverts were placed to maintain the water flow, followed with a rock and gravel overlay, then final paving to the level of the highway and existing driveway leading into the garden and toward the house. The end result makes the property a much more obvious and visible destination point, and will at the same time greatly enhance access for personnel and equipment to aid continued work in the garden. Less visible is remediation required by the new access carried out on



the route of the slough around the east bank portion of the garden. Among other things, these substantial investments further affirm the Bureau of Land Management’s long-term commitment to reclaiming and maintaining a garden significant to the history of rhododendrons as garden ornamentals in Oregon.

And what of the replacements planted as a result of eager digging by Oregon chapter members in November 2009? During a late June visit this year the trusses of a group of R. ‘Margaret Dunn’ (A. M. 1946) were making a great display. The unusual apricot-tinged pink flowers are attractive and demonstrate Hinsdale’s foresight in choosing varieties for an extended bloom period. Other ‘new’ plants were making good flushes of growth while settling nicely into their surroundings. They have been aided in this through the drier months of summer with supplemental watering from a large storage tank the BLM placed near the garage as a temporary measure.

But wait, there’s more to come. Over the past several months we have been working on a second order of plants to join some twenty species secured last winter, with additions to possibly include some representative members of the Loderi grex along with a healthy number of historically correct deciduous and evergreen azaleas. A gate has been installed on the garden side of new access, and some of the azaleas will likely be planted near it to soften the gate’s effect and to create a welcoming introduction into the garden.

A planting day—or maybe two—for the species and azaleas before winter closes in will be announced later. Members will have another opportunity to add their special expertise to the garden’s restoration, to enjoy the garden, see progress first hand, and to share the special camaraderie of fellow enthusiasts.

Just for the Record: *I’m tired of hearing so much about maintenance-free gardens. If you aren’t going to get out there and live with it – including taking care of it – then what’s the point of gardening anyway? This year I’m going to order fewer new things and concentrate on taking care of what I have. Pamela Lord*

PLACES TO GO – PEOPLE TO SEE

WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, FLORENCE, October 7-10: <http://web.me.com/siuslawars/WRC2010>

Still time to register!

SMITH GARDEN FALL WORK PARTY: October 16: Don't miss it! Ginny Mapes sent the following message: "I promise to bake salmon, so that's on the menu for lunch. It's the weekend following the big Rhody event in Florence, so we should all be in a great gardening frame of mind! Pray for sunshine!" For further information, call Ginny at 503-647-2896 or e-mail her at <ginny@coho.net>

HINSDALE FALL PLANTING DAY - Date to be announced

EMERALD CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY: On Thursday, October 14th, at 7:00 PM, Peter Korn will present "Building for Growing: How to Create Different Environments in the Garden from Deserts to Bogs". Peter is a lecturer on the NARGS western speakers tour and lives and gardens in Sweden. The talk will be held at the Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St. and is sponsored by the Emerald Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information contact Tanya (president@nargsemerald.org or 541-937-1401).

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY HARDY PLANT GROUP: will present Ella May T. Wulff on Tuesday, October 12, 2010, at 7 p.m. at the University of Oregon, Agate Hall, Agate Street at 18th Avenue, Eugene, OR. Ella May is the former president of the North American Heather Society and the Oregon Heather Society, an honorary member of The Heather Society (UK), and co-author of *Gardening with Hardy Heathers*.

Ella's illustrated talk will take us through the year, showcasing heathers that work in northwest gardens for each season. Because they make use of the nitrogen and phosphorus unavailable to most other plants, heathers can be a great choice for difficult places. Copies of her book will be available for purchase.

Doors open at 6:30 for book sales and viewing botanical samples. Admission is \$6 for non-members and \$3 for members. Membership in the Hardy Plant Group is \$20 annually. There is ample parking next to Agate Hall. For more information about the group or this event, visit the website at www.thehardyplantgroup.org or contact Pam Perryman at (541) 344-0896.

AN E-MAIL DISCUSSION HEAVY BUD-SET IN RHODODENDRONS FROM THE EDITOR'S MAILBOX

It began with a statement by Gus Cerini in the Tappan Zee Chapter Sept. NL: We have more buds, on more rhododendrons, than we can remember ever seeing in the past. On a majority of the rhododendrons we have a bud on every terminal. I'm hoping some of the more experienced members of our Chapter can comment on this phenomenon in the past and what may account for it. Last Spring was characterized by very early blooms and I wonder if there is a connection? Will we have a spectacular bloom in the Spring or will these buds be more susceptible to winter damage than they normally are?

Ted Stecki replied: I believe drought has a lot to do with it. Even with daily watering the plants still see drought. I had a lot of problems getting bud set because I fertilized heavily. I stopped fertilizing and got a lot of buds. We also had high daily temps. It could be that. No matter what, your plants look good. Enjoy the blooms.

Peg Van Patten added: Ted, I agree with your response. This can also be seen in cone bearing trees which produce an abundance of cones/seeds when the tree is under stress. It's a survival mechanism, or at least a way of continuing the species.

Ted Stecki: This is my opinion.....more buds are formed when rhodies are dry or there is a drought. The reason for this is that the plant thinks it will die, so it produces a lot of buds so that seeds will form, drop and new plants will develop. Propagation by taking cuttings is better when we have dry conditions. This is the way mother nature takes care of plant survival. As for blooming, Unless some unusual things happen in the Winter, extreme cold drought etc. the plant should bloom OK in the spring.

Gus Cerini: Flowering is a reproductive method and there can't be any argument with the reasoning you are applying. If the preponderance of buds is generally occurring throughout our area, which I understand is happening, it certainly explains that observation. My confusion is that almost all of the rhododendrons on our property have always bloomed sparsely, even through past droughts, and now, after the second year of installing a sprinkler system, where they are seeing water early every morning during the summer, we can't count the buds on the plants. Maybe they are not worried about surviving, but, rather, rewarding me for helping to get them through the drought! Perhaps to explain our experience, you should use the axiom politicians use for elections, all gardens are local.

The new edition of the Members' Handbook was distributed to members at the September 9 meeting or mailed to those members not in attendance. The intention of the handbook is to provide a large amount of information about the ARS and the Eugene Chapter including the rich history of the chapter and information about how to grow rhododendrons successfully. I think many of you will enjoy reading through the booklet and then find a convenient place to keep it where you can refer to it over time. The intention is to update the handbook and publish it every five years, but extra copies have been printed to provide new members with the information. The Members' Roster will continue to be issued annually in January and, of course, members can find information about chapter activities in the Newsletter and on the chapter website, www.eugene-chapter-ars.org

In spite of extensive proof reading, there is an omission in the list of Bronze Medal winners for which apologies go to Nancy Greer as she was awarded the Bronze Medal by the Eugene Chapter in April of 1997 for her extensive contributions.

Continued from Page 3

environment to be unfavorable to disease. *Phytophthora* loves puddles. To prevent disease, do whatever you can to ensure good drainage. Prepare the nursery site to have an adequate slope and install tile drains and irrigation ditches to convey water to a central location for treatment.

5. Never put pots on bare soil. any growers do an excellent job of producing healthy plants but then set their container plants on contaminated ground. *Phytophthora* moves easily from soil to pots by swimming through films of water or by being splashed onto plants. You should assume that all soil ... is laden with *Phytophthora* spp. Place a barrier between the soil and the containers: a layer of gravel or rock, or permeable fabric mesh.

6. Prevent the ground from getting contaminated. A common source of contamination is often infested soil or gravel beds. Although the infected container plants have been destroyed, the ground under them has been contaminated by leafy debris that has fallen from infected plants. These spores survive in the top few inches of ground, embedded in the organic debris. When environmental conditions favor their germination several months later, they can produce millions of spores which can infect a new crop of container plants placed on the gravel.

7. Don't let container plants tip over. Research showed that foliage of tipped over rhododendron plants could become infected after just a 10-second exposure to zoospore-infested water on the ground.

8. Use only clean water for irrigation.

Phytophthora species are water molds – aquatic organisms that have evolved to attack plants. They live in rivers and ponds, and are abundant in recirculated water systems. Assume that your water is contaminated with *Phytophthora* unless it is from a well or municipal source. You can test your water for the presence of *Phytophthora* species with a leaf baiting method and ELISA test kit. The test will not tell you which species of *Phytophthora* is present, but it will tell you if your water is contaminated. Several water treatment methods are effective. To learn more, attend a water treatment and water quality workshop.

9. Don't keep sick plants. What do you do with plants that look sick or unthrifty? If many plants are affected, it is especially important to diagnose the problem. If you put 'reject' plants in a holding area . . . hoping they will get better, you are asking for trouble. Dispose of these plants, or compost them thoroughly to kill pathogens, otherwise you risk contaminating [other plants.]

10. Be alert for disease symptoms. Monitor

Gene Cockeram has pledged to support the *Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation* funding efforts to provide patient navigator and free screening programs at the Lane County Oregon Imaging Center with the donations received from the sale of the Pink Ribbons plants and the Pink Ribbons quilt raffle. Raffle Tickets



for the gorgeous quilt, designed by Siuslaw Chapter member Darlene Christean, and plants of R. 'Pink Ribbons' hybridized by Gene, will be available at the Western Regional Conference being held at Three Rivers Casino & Hotel on October 8-10, 2010. Buy a plant and some raffle tickets and help support this worthy cause.

Fighting Phytophthora

your plants for disease Symptoms. Learn to recognize symptoms of plant diseases and pests, attend a workshop on *Phytophthora* diseases at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center, or take the online *Phytophthora* course, which is offered in either English or Spanish. When in doubt, submit samples to the OSU Plant Disease Clinic.

The value of prevention: While *P. ramorum* cases in Oregon have dramatically reduced since the "scare" of 2004, nurseries across the U.S. need to pay special attention to sanitation. It's old technology, but it works. The payoff is reduced risk, and protection against *Phytophthora* as well as many other pests and pathogens. Your vigilance in preventing *Phytophthora* diseases is very important for producing and maintaining high quality, healthy plants.

Sept 2010 *The Digger*

Oh suns and skies and clouds of June,
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather.
—Helen Hunt Jackson

TO RECEIVE A WINTER JARS* & BE INCLUDED IN THE JANUARY CHAPTER ROSTER, PAY DUES BY 10/31

Print out and fill in the form below, legibly please,** and mail along with a check (\$US) to:

EUGENE CHAPTER, ARS

P.O. Box 7704, Eugene, Oregon 97401

Name: _____

Affiliation / Second Name: _____

Street/Mail Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____ **Zip/Postal Code:** _____

Telephone: _____ - _____ - _____

Fax: _____ - _____ - _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Confidentiality? (See note below) **Yes** **No**

Chapter: Eugene

Membership Category: (list below) _____

Membership Category Yearly Dues (\$US) _____

Regular (one or two people in same household) \$40.00

Commercial-Corporate \$90.00

Sustaining \$75.00

Sponsoring \$150.00

Life, single \$1,000.00 Payable over 3 year period (\$400, \$300, \$300)

Life, family \$1,500 Payable over 3 year period (\$500, \$500, \$500)

Note: Confidentiality - May we have permission to use this information in our membership roster and other Society publications? All members' addresses appear in our membership roster, but checking "No" will avoid showing your phone, fax and E-mail address.

* **Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, a quarterly magazine**

** **Errors are time-consuming to correct between the local and national offices.**



Thank you!



'Flava' x horaeum



Rhododendron Calendar

Oct. 14 **NO CHAPTER MEETING IS SCHEDULED IN OCTOBER BECAUSE:**

- 1) Our speaker had to cancel,
- 2) WR conference October 7-10, is the week end before, and
- 3) Smith Garden Work day Saturday October 16 – makes a very busy week for all!

Oct. 16 **Smith Garden Fall Work Day:**

Oct. 7-10 **ARS Western Regional Conference**, Florence, OR <http://web.me.com/siuslawars/WRC2010>

Nov. 18 Program **"The Dirt on Dirt"** demo by Douglas Furr, followed by Plant Auction

Dec. 9 Holiday Potluck, Campbell Center

Jan. 13 Program **"Rhodie Insights"** presented by Jack Olson.

Feb. 10 Program **"The BLM Hinsdale Garden Project"** by Steve Samuels, BLM

Mar. 10 Annual Meeting election; Program: **Panel Discussion: Prepping a Truss for Show and Judging**

Apr. 9 **Early Show** at Oregon Electric Station Restaurant

May 11-15 **ARS Annual Convention**, Vancouver, WA, <http://www.heathmanlodge.com>