The Pittsburgh Garden Center

Our Pittsburgh Rose Society was started through the efforts of the Pittsburgh Garden Center and the influential people from it that loved roses. As far as I could find the rose was just another classification in the Centers annual flower shows. Also during the late 30's and especially after the war the hybrid tea roses were growing in popularity the way the Knock Out rose is taking over today (This will be covered in next months issue). The rose growing members of the center were not happy with the situation of their blooms being just a part of a flower show that exhibited everything that flowered.

In 1945 they solicited the aid of Frank Curto. At the time Frank was a very highly though of horticulturist with the City Department of Parks and Recreation and very influential in that field. He was named the cities head horticulturist the next year and took over Phipps Conservatory.

His lifework was seeded in the admiration for the toil of his father, Sylvester, as a landscape contractor. He devoted himself to it at Ohio State University where he earned a master's degree in ornamental horticulture. Surveying for the National Park Service followed.

The Herbarium was only one of his dreams – a painstaking, delicate effort he never finished: taking the job of inventorying the herbs up until his death.

Another of his great expectations was to instill in young children his own knowledge of flowers and plants. He always hoped to prepare teachers for that. He had many dreams of creating Pittsburgh into a city of lushly planted parks and gardens near well traveled highways.

Many honors were bestowed on him by organization of his professional peers in this country and abroad, and he visited practically every conservatory in North America looking for ways to improve ours. For 24 years he put together Phipps Spring, Fall and Christmas Flower Shows working on the plans, seeking the material, growing many of he plants and getting down and dirty putting them together in time for there openings.

He was anu accredited instructor with the National Federation of Garden Clubs, an instructor in horticulture at Carnegie-Mellon University; an adult education instructor in horticulture at Buhl Planetarium and was known by his peers as a "pro's pro."

Mr. Curto was an officer in many professional and amateur plant organizations including the Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association, the Pittsburgh Florists and Gardeners Club. He was also the recipient of many awards, among them the Sylvan Award of the Society of American florists and the Johnny Appleseed Award of the Men's Garden Club in America.

He died of a heart attack at age 72 in 1971 and will always be known as Pittsburgh's "Mr. Flower Man" a title he received in the late 50's and was often introduced in that way.

Another person that was very influential in starting the rose society was James F. Hillman, a well known pioneer in conservation, for starting the drive to clean the air and rivers of our city and a philanthropist that gave land and money to develop the parks around Western Pennsylvania. As President of the Harmon Creek Coal Corporation which had extensive strip mining in our area, he voluntarily began restoring strip mine pits to fertile, productive land years before State laws were passed in 1945 requiring land restoration. He started

projects to make Pittsburgh a cleaner and more attractive city long before he became chairman of the Mayor's Committee for a Cleaner City in 1948 and went on to organize PA Pitt's Partners.

His wife, Marguerite, was an avid rose lover and was very active in the Garden Center. Through her, he used his influences to promote the Center through all three of the cities daily newspapers and in other Medias.

Mr. Hillman passed away in 1972 at the age of 83.

During the mid 1940's, there were no certified rose judges in this area and few people that knew what to look for when judging the rose. The Garden Center turned to Dr. R. C. Allen of Harrisburg who was the American Rose Society District III Chairman for this area at the time. He forwarded the ARS Judges Guide and many books for the people that were to act as judges. He and Dr. McFarland, also of the Harrisburg area requested that the ARS members close to the Pittsburgh area help in both the organizing of the show and the society.

The Rose Up Till '49

(This month I will cover the rose, a brief history of it, and how it played a part in the development of our society.)

The rose is native to the United States. The oldest fossilized imprint of the rose in America was found in Colorado – estimated to be 35 million years old. The oldest fossil records on the rose on earth date back 3.5 billion years.

It has been written that on October 11, 1492, one of Christopher Columbus' crewmen picked a rose branch from the water while at sea. This sign that land was near gave them hope for survival and courage to continue on.

George Washington was our first U. S. Rose breeder and maintained a rose garden at Mt. Vernon. One of his varieties was named for his mother and is still being grown today.

In 1798, Empress Josephine acquired her palace at Malmaison and created the most remarkable rose garden ever planted. It included every variety known at the time (about 250). There are more than 30,000 rose varieties known today.

The American Rose Society is the International Registrar of roses. Their classification system divides roses into two groups: 'Old garden roses', which are species roses and those that were cultivated mostly in Europe before 1867, and 'modern roses' which were cultivated in England, France and the United States after 1867. That date is important because it is the date of the introduction of the first Hybrid Tea rose, LaFrance.

The most popular rose ever bred, an international favorite and a spontaneous symbol of the hope for peace, is the Hybrid Tea rose named 'Peace'. In 1939, a young and gifted rose breeder, Francis Meilland, discovered a remarkable rose he nurtured from a single seed. Realizing the beginning of World War II posed threats to the flower's fate, he sent seedlings to growers in Italy, Germany and the United States. Bud wood to Pennsylvania grower Robert Pyle almost did not make it. The precious parcel was slipped aboard the last plane to leave Paris before France was occupied by Nazi forces in 1940.

History remembers the same rose being introduced to the world on V-E Day, May 8th, 1945, and presented to all 49 delegates at the very first United Nations Conference. It received the American Rose Society's Gold Metal the day the peace treaty was signed with Japan.

The Peace rose was cultivated by Conard-Pyle (Star Roses), a wholesale only nursery in West Grove, Pennsylvania. Realizing that this rose having such large blooms and great coloration along with good fragrance would set the rosarians fighting to buy and grow it that its introduction was held off until 1945. Right they were. It held the record as the best selling rose in history for 60 years until the cherry red 'Knock Out' came along and sold between 10 and 12 million plants in this country alone. The sales of that "Knock Out' along with its sister color introductions are revolutionizing the rose selling industry.

In the late 30's and the 40's the Hybrid Teas developed into the rose of the decades. Its popularity, lead by Peace, soon saw such great roses being introduced as Lowell Thomas, Red Pink\Pinocchio, Crimson Glory, Will Rogers, Enchantment, Poinsettia, President Hoover and the Doctor. That list was the favorites of the Charter Members of our society. There was also a couple that was not Hybrid Teas.

Putting the importance of the hybrid teas in prospective with the development of rose shows in our area and around the country here is a list of introduction and the amount of HT's introduced around the 40's. In 1943 there were 60 roses registered by the ARS of which 49 were HT's. In '44 only 34 were registered with 25 being Hybrid Teas. Jumping to '48 the year before we were founded there were 21 Tea's out of 30 and in '49 there were 152 registered with 106 HT's, 30

Hybrid Polyantha's . This was all driven by the increasing interest in rose shows, the subject of the next in our series of how our society got started.

In case your wondering, yes, this was before introduction of Floribunda's (a category where most Polyantha's where placed), Grandiflora's and Miniatures (there were a few minis but massive hybridizing of them was only getting started).

Rose Shows Big Start

Many of us older rosarians probably remember that during the Second World War every family that had a plot of ground, regardless of its size, planted a Victory Garden every year. After the war many people that found great interest and excitement in gardening gave up veggies and turned to the beauty of flowering plants. This put a big demand on greenhouse's to supply these plants. In the mid 40's Garden Centers were hard to come by. There were only a few listed in the 1946 phone book. The biggies were Hahn's in the North Hills (with a group of greenhouses overlooking Babcock Blvd.), and a small Garden Center along the road that contained a florist shop. It is interesting to note that Grand pap Hahn was one of the country's leading hybridizers. Even today if you pick up an ivy at any retail outlet chances are its name will start or end with Hahnii. Another around town was that of the Verscharen Family in the South Hills who ran a group of large green houses and had three stores. But basically all there was was a group of specialty merchants selling only what they could grow, greenhouses sold their seasonal offerings and nurseries sold trees and shrubs.

The largest Garden Centers, selling a complete line of growing needs and plants year round was Sears, Roebuck and Co. An interesting fact is that they were also the largest purveyor of roses in the United States between 1936 and 1955.

Each year, there were two big flower shows in the Pittsburgh area. In June, the Garden Center had one and over the Labor Day Holiday the Allegheny County Fair had one in the Agriculture Building in South Park. In 1945 the Garden Center started a have a show exclusively for roses. Before this roses were only a part of their June Flower show. The records show that the Fair had a separate Show dedicated to roses in '46. Every year saw more and more interest in growing and showing roses.

At the Centers first rose show in '45, which was open to all amateur rose growers, they copied there show schedule from an American Rose Society schedule that one of the local ARS members had. In '45 the ARS had almost 40,000 members and was growing very rapidly much because of the efforts and publications of Dr. McFarland.

The Schedules consisted of Section A, **the Hybrid Teas – one bloom**: Classes 1 Red, 2 white, 3 Yellow, 4 Multicolor, 5 Pink and 6 single any color. **Three bloom, same or different color**: Class 7 Red, 8 White, 9 Yellow, 10 Multicolor, 11 Pink and 12 Collection of any color not named, not less than 3 or more than 7. Section B **Hybrid Perpetuals** – Class 13 one bloom any color or variety and 14 Best and largest collection – all different – all named. Section C **was for Climbers – One bloom lateral flowering stem**. Class 15 Red, 16 White, !7 Yellow, 18 Multicolor, !9 Pink, 20 three bloom laterals, ramblers same variety and 21 Best and largest collection of climbers and ramblers, all different, one bloom lateral of each variety, all named.. Section D – **Polyanthas (Floribunda)** Class 22 Three sprays, one variety and 23 Best and largest collection, one spray each variety, all named.

Displays Not Competitive – Exhibitors are urged to make as many entries in these displays as possible. I. New roses since 1940. II. Miscellaneous roses, Rugosa, Moss, Species, Old-fashioned, Miniatures, etc. – labeled if possible. III. Arrangements by invitation only, they will not be judged.

The following are the rules for these shows: 1. All specimen roses must be grown outdoors by the exhibitor. 2. All specimen roses must be correctly named, if possible. 3. All specimen blooms must be grown disbudded, side buds or evidence of recent disbudding will be penalized at half the score for stems. 4. In collections, side buds are permitted but not counted. 5. An exhibitor may make only one entry in a class, but may enter as many classes as he desires. 6 All roses entered

must be left until the show is over, but may be removed by the show committee if their condition becomes poor. All roses must be removed by the exhibitors at the close of the show, or they will be disposed of by the committee. 7. Roses will be judged according to the rules of the American Rose Society and its score of points for judging. 8. First, second and third prize ribbons will be awarded in each class. 9. The exhibitor having the highest number of total points shall be awarded the Silver Metal Certificate of the American Rose Society. 10. The exhibitor having the second highest number of points shall be awarded the Bronze Metal Certificate of the American Rose Society. 11. The best rose in the show shall be chosen as King of the Show. 12. The next best rose in the show shall be chosen as Queen of the Show. 13. Entries will be received from 9 to 11:30 A.M. only.

This first show in 1945 saw 17 exhibitors displaying 96 Hybrid Teas and a total of 560 entries in all classes along with fourteen arrangements.

The next year the Centers show grow to 21 exhibitors showing 130 Hybrid Teas, 507 total entries and the arrangements exploded to 27 entries. There was little change in the number of entries in 1947 and in '48 the biggest change was the arrangements building up to 39. However, there was a big change in the number of Hybrid Teas being entered. During these four years they went from 96 to 184 while the total entries in '48 were 582.

It is interesting to note that also during those four years that the Peace rose toke the top honor of King of Show in '45, '48 and was the Queen in '47. Truly the rose that set the competitive pace and high standards of the rose shows.

These shows were judged mainly by local ARS members and a Certified Judge obtained through Dr. R. C. Allen of Harrisburg the ARS District III Chairperson.

The County Fair Rose Shows were even bigger than the Centers shows but unfortunately they were not as well documented so it is impossible to give real details. From old newspaper clippings I was able to find out their first show was held in '46 and under Frank Curtos guidance they followed the Garden Centers Schedule very closely however they had a special show for arrangements that consisted of a section for armatures and one for professionals representing florist shops. They also had a category for gardeners and landscapers that consisted of ten foot by ten foot gardens using only live plant materials. This was all held in one of the parks largest buildings. It is interesting to note that all displays had to be maintained for the entire length of the fair, a ten day event which drew over a million people. Unlike the Centers Rose Shows they drew exhibitors from all over the county as most exhibitors entering the centers shows came from within the city and many from the east end neighborhoods. An article in the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph stated their first show had over a thousand blooms exhibited. The judges came from the florist industry, local garden clubs and members of the garden center.

On Labor Day and the weekends the lines to view these exhibits wrapped around the building.

THE FIRST ROSE SHOW

(Many might find the article below to be rather boring and in too much detail especially if they are not exhibitors. It is a gathering of facts from the minutes of the meetings from that year, letters written and recorded and old newspaper articles. Some might like to compare how it is today with how it was back then not only in the shows but what was available and popular back then.)

When the society was first started they had a general meeting on the second Tuesday of every month. At their first February meeting, on Valentine's Day 1950, it was decided that their first official rose show should be held on June 10th and 11th and that they should follow all rules set forth by the American Rose Society. It was also decided that $20.00 be budgeted for all supplies and awards and that every member be involved and assigned to a committee head by the April meeting. Committee heads would be assigned at the March meeting. The show was to be held in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Garden Center with the Center handling the arrangement classes.

Here are the rules as set forth by the ARS

The show is open to all amateur rose growers and entries will be received from 9 to 11:30 A.M. only.
All specimen hybrid tea and hybrid perpetual roses must be grown outside by the exhibitor.
All specimen roses should be correctly named, if possible.
All specimen blooms must be grown disbudded.
An exhibitor may make only one entry in a class, but may enter as many classes as he desires.
All roses entered must remain until the show is over. All roses should be removed by the exhibitors at the close of the show, or they will be disposed of by the Committee.
Roses will be judged according to the rules of the American Rose Society and its score of points for judging.
First, second, third and fourth prizes will be awarded in each class.
The best rose in the show will be chosen King of the show.
The next best rose in the show will be chosen Queen of the show.
The exhibitor having the highest number of points will be awarded the Silver Metal Certificate of the American Rose Society.
The exhibitor having the second highest number of points shall be awarded the Bronze Metal Certificate of the American Rose Society.

The Specimen Schedule was as follows:
Section A – Hybrid Teas – One bloom: Class 1. Red, 2. White, 3. Yellow,
4. Multicolor, 4a. Peace rose, 5. Pink, 5a. The Doctor rose, 6. Single (any color).
Three blooms, same or different varieties: 7. Red, 8. White, 9. Yellow,
10. Multicolor, 10a. Peace, 11. Pink, 11a. the Doctor, 12. Collection any color not named, not less than 3 or more than 7, 13. Three specimens of one variety,
One bud, one half blown, one full blown.
Section B – Hybrid Perpetuals 14. One bloom any color or variety, 15. Best and largest collection – all different – all named.
Section C – Climbers One bloom lateral (flowering stems)
16. Red, 17. White, 18. Yellow, 19. Multicolor, 20. Pink, 21. Rambler, any color,
22. Vase of climbers, 3 or more sprays, different varieties,
Section D – Polyanthas (Floribunda) – One Spray
23. Red, 24. White, 25. Yellow, 26. Multicolor, 27. Pink, 28. Collection any color not named, not less than 3 or more than 7, 29. Vase of polyanthas, 3 or more sprays different varieties.
Miniatures 30. 1 spray any color, 31. Collection any variety not named, not less than 3 or more than 7,
32. Miscellaneous roses, Rugosa, Moss, Species, Old-fashioned, etc., labeled if possible.

It is interesting to note that of the membership had grown to 77 by the time of the first show and that 37 of these served on various committees staging the Specimen classes during the show. There were 33 members and 14 nonmembers exhibiting the 477 entries, Other facts about the show were: The rose most exhibited was the Peace rose with 26 blooms. Second was the Doctor with only 9. There were also 304 of the Hybrid Teas. The rest of the show consisted of 53 Polyanthas, 44 Climbers, 14 Hybrid Perpetuals, 5 miniatures, 10 Old Fashions, 6 Regosas, 4 Moss, and 3 Species. By this you can see that the Minis were only being born while the Hybrid Teas were by far the most popular.

The King of show was won by Kurt Albrecht with Mme. Chiang Kai-shek. The Queen was won by Mr. and Mrs. George Hofmeister with Peace. The ARS Silver Certificate for the most points was won by Mr. and Mrs. C. Hafer and the Bronze went to Mr. Hugh Cobb.

The Garden Center was very aggressive in developing the Arrangement Classes which also was open to amateur arrangers only. They were permitted to use bought roses, flowers and filler for the first time in any show that the Center sponsored. Themes were developed for the five arrangement Classes with 3 prizes and 1 honorable mention in each class. Of the 31 arrangements entered 17 were awarded prizes

The show received great publicity in all the local papers and radio stations. It was also observed that on that Sunday the street car stop on Fifth Avenue in front of the Center was the most popular stop that day as many people that bought the Sunday ride-all-day pass offered by the Pittsburgh Railway Company for 25 cents at the time made that their destination.

The show was deemed a great success and the following notes were put into the records: Schedules and entry cards were provided by the Society. Expenses for the show, lunches and help cost $18.19.
The Garden Center provided the space, properties, name bands, seals and ribbons, Classification cards and containers.
Holding the show on weekends and keeping it open for two days wss felt to be an advantage. The suggestions was made many times by visitors that more if not all varieties should be named in the specimen and arrangement classes. Also that all those entering the show put their full name, address and garden club, if any, and variety exhibited on the entry card.

Early Activities

One would have to be impressed by the activities and involvements of the society in its first few years of existence. In November of 1949, when the PRS was only five months old several members got involved in the rose garden that was being planned to be established in Mellon Park. Frank Curto heard of their plans and reported that the Garden Club of Allegheny County had already undertaken the project. However, they did invite our society to work with them in planning and preparing the garden. The Board of Directors of the PRS decided that a committee made up of its members would give every possible assistance to that garden club except in a monetary manner. Many members cooperated during the next four years in developing and installing that garden.

Every May the Garden Club of Pittsburgh would hold their annual fund raiser called the May Market. Every society involved in the Center was expected to develop a booth and sell plants, plant related articles, food and so on to raise money for their group. The center would ask for seventy-five percent of their gross. This money was used to cover the operating expense of the center. Although this seems like an awful high percentage to take from the societies involved one must remember that the center was the home, meeting place and furnished much of the supplies needed by these groups. Also, in order to attract the public to this market the various societies were given space to present gardens featuring their plants. This became a very competitive venture and many societies would plan all year to try to capture one of the top prize ribbons for their effort. It is interesting to note that the PRS took many such awards even though the event was held a month before the peak blooming season for roses. They had good contacts with some local growers and greenhouses to produce top exhibits. Most years they would install two gardens. In their first five years they won three blue, two red and three yellow ribbons and never entered a garden that did not receive a ribbon.

Many of our members will remember the Allegheny County Fairs that were held over the Labor Day weekends back in the mid 1900's. They were the highlight of the summer season for many residents of the area. A fair so big that many would spend a week there and claim that they didn't see everything. During its running it would attract a couple million people with stage shows running from the morning till midnight. Many society members would enter the flower show with their roses winning many of the prizes. They not only competed for the best roses but against all other blooms for the best of show. It is interesting to note that Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Blair and Mrs. Eric T. Laurin took best of show with a Peace rose and Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Beard with the Doctor between 1951 & 56.

Another big competition that the PRS entered yearly at the fair was competing in the garden class. This was a 25 X 25 foot garden that was to be designed and installed by armature gardeners. There was also a class for professional landscapers and greenhouses. It was easier for the PRS to put together a rose garden in early September then in their May efforts. Naturally, I would not write about this effort if our early rosarians did not excel in this undertaking. Although they were only budgeted $25.00 by our board they did go out and solicited funds and material from greenhouses and garden shops. Their gardens took the blue ribbons for design and over all beauty at ever fair between 1951and 56. This was a real accomplishment for a group that was only six years old. They truly promoted rose growing in our area. By December of 1956 the membership grew to 106 and the treasurer reported $520.02 on hand.

Ventures and Adventures

In 1954, when our society was just five years old it's first President, C. Hugh Blair established 'The Pilgrimage Committee' whose job it was to put together interesting two day trips dealing with roses. These overnight ventures were put together and offered to society members and after an established time were then open to other society members that were connected to the Garden Center. In a very short time 23 rose society members joined in the trip with the bus being filled up and a waiting list of 12 more coming from the Garden Center.

The First pilgrimage left very early in the morning and had brunch in Kennett Square before visiting Longwood Gardens. This was a very organized tour as they were escorted by docents through the conservatories and gardens. The only time they had to rest their feet was while they viewed the 40 minute fountain and dancing waters show. They then had dinner at the Brandywine Valley Inn, an historic restaurant dating back to the Revolutionary War. At seven-thirty, they took a guided twilight tour and stroll through the 60-acre garden and landscape of DuPont's Winterthur Mansion. At nine o'clock they broke into groups of 10 for a candlelight tour of the museum's magnificent collection of American antiques. Up since the wee hours of that morning these exhausted travelers welcomed the chance to lay their heads on the pillows at the historic Brandywine hotel.

The next morning they were off to West Grove Pennsylvania and a tour of the Conard Pyle Nursery hosted and guided by its staff and owners. After a late lunch they headed back to Pittsburgh with most admitting that it was a great trip, enjoyed by all but now they needed some rest.

The next year they went west visiting two nurseries specializing in roses, three roses gardens and staying overnight in Toledo.

In '56 it was off to the Hershey Rose Garden, Breeze Hill (the garden and home of John Horace McFarland), Doctor R.C. Allen's (District III Chairman) and two other gardens of well known rosarians. After those three years it was hard to pull a group together because there was nowhere else to go within a distance conducive to a one night stay over.

Another venture of the society in its early years was when it started the Greater Pittsburgh Mum Society. *You are probably shaking your head in disbelief but this is what happened.* Mr. Dana Vincent was the guest speaker at the May 8th, 1951 monthly meeting and his subject was 'Chrysanthemum Growing'. At the end of his presentation he asked how many attendees grew mums and of the 47 rosarians there 45 admitted to growing them. He then made a statement that it was a shame that no one put together a mum show. Several of our officers and many members thought that it would be fun to put a show together for early October. So one was planned for the second Saturday of that month. It would be open to all who grew mums. Held at the Center using their basic flower show rules. They were able to put on a pretty successful mum show however practically everything on the table was of the same few verities. The next year they moved the show forward a month and the same thing happened. In '53 it went to mid- October with no better results, The newly formed Mum Society, a spinoff of the Rose Society, Frank Curto and the other groups operating out of the Pittsburgh Garden Center all came to the same conclusion. Although there are many beautiful verities of Mums. Each verity blooms at a different time spread over a four month period. Some in early August while others peek in late October to late November and all are very dependent on the weather. This made it hard to plan a show that was fair to the growers and the Mum Society disbands completely the end of 1956.

The Year Before Our Day of Glory

Many of us may think that the Penn Jersey District was around long before the Pittsburgh Rose Society was formed. That is not true because back after the second World War most organized rosarians were members of the American Rose Society which was a national organization some 40,000 strong. Most belonged directly to the National and there wasn't many district or local organizations. Its headquarters were in Harrisburg Pennsylvania them to Columbus Ohio before moving to its present home in Shreveport Louisiana. (I think that the most interesting article that I ever wrote and did research for was the one that I wrote back in November 2006 about the first District Convention that was held by our society. In the articles that I am putting together now and for the next three months I will elaborate on this event and provide more information on that and the societies history. I hope that you enjoy them as much as I enjoyed doing them.)

On March 22, 1950 at the American Rose Society Headquarters in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a meeting was held to organize the Penn/Jersey District. It was to consist of all the societies with over 1,800 active members. The first District Director to be appointed was Fred S. Glaes the hard working and well liked head of the 13 Consulting Rosarians in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey area. Even before our society was formed in '49 Hugh L. Cobb, Hugh C Blair and Mrs. J. L. Cotter were CR's from Pittsburgh and very instrumental in forming our group.

Many of our society members became active in district events and meetings although it meant traveling a long distance. Most activities were held in Harrisburg. Their first convention and rose show was held in Cape May, NJ and the second had its Rose Show and Meetings in Montclair with those attending traveling to the nearby town of East Orange for sleeping accommodations. During the April 1954 meeting, C. Hugh Blair (PRS Treasurer and Executive Committee Chairperson) suggested that our city has an obligation and should invite the District to hold their third Convention in our newly cleaned up City. At the May meeting Mr. Blair reported that he contacted the Chamber of Commerce and they promised to cooperate and make every effort to bring the convention to our town, They also had the William Penn Hotel reserve their Ballroom on the 17th floor along with a large block of rooms for the months of June and September 1955 until the District could make a decision. The Aluminum Company of America offered, through Mr. Blair, the entire first floor of its world-class new building for the rose show. The Pittsburgh Railway Company and the Pittsburgh Motor Coach Company were both available to provide buses for tours of the City. Mr. Blair also arranged for the cost of these tours, the entertainment and most of the supplies needed be paid for by sponsorships. Mayor David L. Lawrence sent a letter to the District urging them to hold their Convention here and to witness first-hand the changes in what was known at one time as the smoky City.

In late August, Edgar A. Beard President of our society received an acceptance letter from Fred Glaes. Everyone involved became very enthusiastic about using the Alcoa building. It was decided to use the entire large entrance lobby on the first floor for displays by commercial growers. Pittsburgh Cut Flower promised to build the main display garden and to also distribute 15,000 blooms to visitors during the event.

It was also decided that the first day of the convention be given over to business meetings, the second day to lectures, garden tours of Sewickley and Fox Chapel and a fashion show in the Hotels ball room. Saturday, to prepare, judge and open the Rose Show and all its displays. Saving Sunday for the show and tours of our City. These timetables must be put together in a few days so that the Publicity Committee and Alcoa's Public Relations Department could put together a colored brochure to be handed out at the District Convention to be held during September in Montclair NJ.

At the October meeting, Mr. Blair announced that committees are being formed for the Convention and that everyone that is able will be named to at least one. He also told the members that the Board came up with a slogan for the convention and our society, "We Serve. People who put the most into life get the most out of it."

The Hype

The First Annual Convention of the Penn Jersey District was held on September 26th and 27th 1953at the oldest seashore resort on the Atlantic coast in historic Cape May, New Jersey. The meetings were held in the auditorium of the Cape May High School with the Friday night high light being the choosing and crowing of the conventions 'Queen of Roses'. The rose show was held in the famous ball room of the Convention Centers on the Pier. The dinners and banquet were held at the Macomber Hotel where the conventioneers resided. This was said to be the convention that was impossible to top.

The second convention and rose show was held at the beautiful Montclair Garden Center in Montclair NJ. Friday, the opening day, started with a three hour tour of the centers gardens. That evenings 'Get Together Dinner', the Banquet and a few of the other events and meetings were held in the near-by town of East Orange in the Suburban Hotel, the headquarters for the overnight guests. It was at this convention that a very impressive beautiful full colored brochure was handed out to all announcing that the 1955 convention was to be held in Pittsburgh.

It was decided by the PRS board at the next general meeting after the Montclair convention that during the next year, before their convention, that they would try to put together and mail to all members of the Penn/Jersey district, and ARS members from Ohio, New York, West Virginia and others rosarians that they befriended at rose shows and conventions. They gathered over 2,800 names and went to work soliciting Companies from this area to help defray the cost of this venture. They were very successful as many prominent businessmen were members or spouses of PRS members. They were able to fund the publishing of and the postage for two of brochures. However, they lucked out when the Mayor, David L. Lawrence said that he would like their list of manes to personally invite them to the convention to display the progress made during the Renascence and cleaning up of the city. The first mailing went out in January, the second in March and the finial one was mailed in early July.

Edgar A Beard, Society President, said that he would like to see between 450 and 600 rosarians attend this convention. Mr. Cotter spoke up and announced that only 90 attended the first P/J Convention and 103 the second. Mrs. Cotter mentioned that rosarians would not be interested in touring the city and its embellishments and only came because of the rose show and the meetings. The idea of enthusiastically promoting the city along with the rose convention was approved. However, they all agreed that they would build the budget around 150 to 200 attendees and hope for more. To further help offset expense they would seek funds or charge the commercial exhibitors, the companies selling rose plants, cut roses and rose supplies and charge rent for other spaces in both the hotel and Alcoa Building. They also sold advertising space in all their programs.

The first news release to the general public appeared in all the newspapers around Western Pennsylvania the second week of January dealing with the Rosy Picture kicking off the summer and what was in store for local residence. By April many articles were urging all rose growers including amateurs to get their roses ready to enter in the big show coming in June. It was also announced that Fred Glaes arranged for many special trophies, such as the McFarland Memorial Trophy, the M.S. Hershey Bowl and others be awarded to ARS members and many others to the amateur exhibitors. Also, during that month, the Wall Street Journal carried a column on the rose growing industry, citing the increased in demand for plants and the upcoming convention in Pittsburgh. Another help by the news media occurred on April 17th when they announced that the PRS would hold a competition for commercial rose growers in the Alcoa Building on June 11th. This was the first time that a local group would host this floral affair. There was also excellent coverage of the upcoming event on radio both as news updates and several editorials by staff of KDKA and WQED. But the real boost to the convention

was an eight page insert by the Sun-Telegraph covering the scope of the event both in pictures and print. Many other papers picked up some copy from this coverage. The Sun also printed 2,500 extra copies of this insert to be handed out to the conventioneers during June.

Fred Glaes, the District Director commented at the May society meeting held at the Garden Center that he had never seem any rose event receive the PR that this event was receiving.

As an interesting foot note – During May of year a proposal was made by the American Rose Society to the Congress of the United States that the rose be designated as the countries National Floral Emblem. As we know, this didn't happen until 1986, some 31 years later.

Down to the Nitti Gritty

With all the hype in the news media and publications put out by the American Rose Society and local societies there was much excitement and anticipation of what was going to happen during the last month before the convention and the event itself. Most members of the PRS were working diligently with their assigned committees.

The Public Relation committee was headed up by the PR director of Alcoa and one of her staff plus a PR employee on loan from Shadyside Hospital and two members of the rose society. Hardly a day went by that a story about a society member or event that would take place during the convention didn't appear in one of the three daily newspapers. Some local papers like the Brentwood Times had an article in every one of its weekly papers from April till the week of the event. Doctor James Morgan, a society member, worked with the PR team and was able to coordinate 15 interviews of members on local radio station and three on television during the month before the event.

During the month of May, the Western Pennsylvania Flower Growers Association sent out an invitation to its members and all growers of roses across the state to enter in the professional rose grower's competition. Alcoa arranged to have all the carpenter labor and material for the show to be made by the carpenters union at the company's expense. They assigned the assistant building maintenance engineer to work with the society and to coordinate their needs with the Company. They also helped the society finance committee secure enough donations from district corporations to cover all the expenses incurred by the rose society.

Frank Curto arranged for David L. Lawrence to proclaim the week of the convention 'Pittsburgh Rose Week' and that the Mayor would personally welcome the conventioneers at the welcome dinner that was to be held on Friday, June 10th in the main ballroom of the William Penn Hotel. He also arranged for the Honorable George M. Leader, Governor of the state to cut the ribbon opening the rose show at 2 o'clock on Saturday, June 11th. Unfortunately, something came up preventing the governor from coming so the Mayor graciously did the honors. Mr. Curto also coordinated the professional florist displays that were put in the lobby of the Alcoa building. Pittsburgh Cut Flower was one of the biggest distributors of cut roses in the country at that time and they built the main display around the fountain featuring over 5,000 roses. It was estimated that the lobby contained between 11,000 and 14,000 roses in the 27 professional growers displays.

Fred S. Glaes, Director of the Penn Jersey District personally arranged for all the show trophies and awards. One of the most coveted trophies was to be the new Jacobus Perpetual Trophy and Mr. Jacobus requested that it be awarded to the best Hybrid Tea rose in the show that was of American origin. This was the first time that any award had that stipulation and he made it clear that if the King of show wasn't by an American Hybridizer the trophy should go to the Queen of show and so on down the line until a rose of American origin was found. This new trophy and all the other trophies were put on display in the main window of Kaufmann's starting ten days before the show. They also had a display featuring the rose show on the other two sides of their store. Inside the store vases of red roses were featured throughout the first floor along with signage telling of the upcoming event. The Joseph Horne's' Department store always featured roses during the month of June and tied their event in with the show. Many of the other retail stores in the area also did something to promote this event.

The city made arrangements to have traffic police stationed around the Alcoa Building on Thursday and Friday as a help to the professional exhibitors to unload their displays and on Saturday and Sunday to assist the show patrons.

On Wednesday, June 8th the society held its monthly meeting in the Theater of the Alcoa Building bringing all of the convention committees together to be sure that any existing problem could be addressed. The business meeting started at 8:00 P.M. and every committee stated that they had no pending problems and were looking toward a successful convention. They also admitted that they are looking forward to Monday when it will all be over. The Alcoa Company treated the members to refreshment after the meeting ended

In my November article I will write about what happened during the event and in December the results of their effort.

As an interesting sidelight I would like to ~~pike~~ picked the brains of some of our members that have lived in the Pittsburgh area during 1955. Pa Pitt Partners handed out a brochure to the conventioneers that featured the eight major hotels in the Pittsburgh area at the time. Today there are only two of them remaining. Can you name the six that no longer exist?

Those Big Day's – June 10th -12th

On May 16th the President of the Pittsburgh Rose Society, Edgar A. Beard, informed Fred Glaes, Director of the Penn/Jersey District that 137 rosarians had already preregistered for the upcoming convention and that they were happy to hear that the district was sending out another invitation to all district members from Mister Gleas office. They also told him that many rooms were reserved at the William Penn Hotel and felt it was because of the great rate they were able to receive (Single room with a bath went from $8.00 to $10.50 Doubles from $11.50 to $16.50 Parlor and Twin Bedrooms 25. to 35 dollars and Suites with a Parlor and two Twin Bedrooms $46.50 and $50.00). Unfortunately, the letter Mister Gleas sent started out by stating, "For my final message as Director of the Penn-Jersey District" which was a sad note as he was the first Director and worked very hard to build it up to well over 500 members in 23 Affiliated and Associated Societies (note, I researched long and hard but cannot find what the difference was between the Affiliated and Associated Societies)

During the spring of 1955 the American Rose Society moved its Headquarters from Harrisburg to Columbus, Ohio. Niels J. Hansen, President and James Gurney, Executive Secretary of the ARS and their wives planned to attend all three days of the convention.

On May 12th, Mayor David L. Lawrence, signed a proclamation designating June 6-13th as Rose Week in Pittsburgh. He also had 17 banners made and placed on the poles in the high traffic areas around the Alcoa Building stating the proclamation and advertising the Rose Show.

On Thursday the 9th of June, the Alcoa building was bustling with activity, tradesman were busy building the commercial displays in the lobby, Alcoa maintenance staff was setting up the main room for the rose show and built the elaborate trophy table. They also were training the engineering staff on keeping the air conditioning on the first floor at a cool 69 degrees by day and even lower when the building was closed. Many complaints were received from their employees that on their last two days of that workweek they froze walking to their offices through the lobby. Two Traffic Patrolmen were stationed outside the building directing traffic around trucks unloading for the show. It looked like everything was going as planned. That evening the Society held a meeting in Alcoa's Little Theater to work out any last minute details.

Conventioneers started arriving on Thursday as many preregistered for the Friday tour of the city that was scheduled for 1:30. The registration tables opened up at 12 noon on Friday and many picked up their name badges, tickets for the events that they signed up for and a bag of souvenirs and goodies (the females attending each received 7 cosmetic samples in addition to the others). At 1:30 two Pittsburgh Railway Buses pulled away from the front entrance of the hotel for a 2 ½ hour tour of the city. That evening, dinner was on your own and all five restaurants in the hotel had elaborate centerpieces on every table featuring roses. At 8 o'clock that evening the official Opening of the Convention was held in the Monongahela Room and started with the Mayor's welcoming address. C. Hugh Blair, the Conventions Chairman, then introduced Audrey Jocelyn, America's foremost floral arranger and artist from New York City. They were then entertained by the Pittsburgh Barber Shoppers and after their one hour act they stayed and lead the conventioneers in song until 11:30.

The preparation areas for the rose show opened at 4 A.M. and were quit full by 7:30. The Show Committees were on hand at 8 and opened up the show room for placement of the rose entries and remained in charge until 11 when the Judges took over. At that time the entries for the rose show were closed.

Back at the Hotel, a one hour meeting was being conducted in the Monongahela Room by Mrs. Joseph A Wilkinson of McKeesport, PA, Rosarian Western Region, Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania, an accredited A.R.S. Judge, founder of the Garden Club of McKeesport, and Instigator of the Arboretum at Renziehausen Park. Her subject: "Roses Illustrated." At 11 A.M. Mr. R. H. Kapp, Vice President of the Zelienople Greenhouse Company took over the meeting room. His subject: "Culture of Roses".

At noon the Exhibition room was closed to all except Judges, their Aides and Photographers. Two more 'Tour of the City" buses pulled out from the Hotel Entrance at 1:30.

It was 2:30 when the ribbon was cut and the doors opened to the lobby for the public, some of which were waiting outside in a very light drizzling rain since 1. As they entered the commercial displays they were greeted by hostess's and presented with a long stem rose courtesy of Pittsburgh Cut Flower. Most guests were in awe viewing the fabulous gardens filled with around 14,000 roses and many companion plants and ferns to highlight them. They then toured the exhibit and trophy area where many lingered making the room crowded.

At 3 o'clock the district held its business meeting and Election of Officers for the next three years. Then a 7:30 an informal banquet was held in the Urban Room with Fred Gleas as the Master of Ceremony. At each place seating was a copy of the eight page insert about the event that appeared in the Sun-Telegraph in April and was distributed throughout the district by other papers plus addition souvenirs' and favors from various firms selling rose related items. Following the dinner a drawing was held for 37 door prizes and a table prize that was awarded to each table. After that were the introduction of guests and the new officers of the Penn-Jersey District. Then an address by Clarence G. Reed, Staff Assistant, Allegheny Conference on Community Development speaking on "Aesthetic Affect of Pittsburgh's Redevelopment Program. The evening was topped off by a Pittsburgh Jazz Band.

On Sunday the 12th the Rose Show opened at10 O'clock but before it opened the brass of the societies along with Alcoa's management worked out a traffic pattern that would prevent visitors from encircling the lobby displays and the exhibits more than once. They also decided that Pittsburgh Cut should pass out the free roses and thank the visitors at the door on the way out and have host and hostess's from the Rose Society welcome them at the entrance. This, they hoped would move the guest through with less congestion. Again, people were assembling outside on another drizzly morning an hour and a half before the doors opened.

Pittsburgh Railways had buses waiting at the door of the Hotel starting at 10:30 to transport conventioneers for a tour of the Arboretum at Renziehausen Park. This was a self guided tour to be taken at one's own pace as the buses were scheduled to depart and return every 30 minutes until 8 that evening. Both the Convention and the Rose Show were official closed at 5:00 P.M.

In my October article I ask how many of the eight major Hotels's in business in 1955 can be named by our older Pittsburghers. Pa Pitt Partners in their welcome brochure showed the still existing William Penn and the Carlton House along with the now extinct Fort Pitt, Schenley, Roosevelt, Webster Hall and the Hotel Pittsbugher. They also invited people to shop in the seven Department Store within a mile and a half of the Convention. None of them exist today. How many do you remember and can you name them?

That Feeling of Success

On Sunday evening after the Convention and Rose Show closed just about every member of the Pittsburgh Rose Society was on hand to perform the task of dismantling the show. The vases and many other props needed for the show were barrowed from the Harrisburg Society which furnished and stored them for the many shows held by the National Society that recently moved to Ohio and the Pittsburgh Garden Center. Most of the items used had a color dot affixed to their base to show who owned them. It turned out to be a time consuming task sorting everything and making sure that they got back to the proper owner. Another big job was empting the plants and cut flowers from the lobby area. Everything had to be removed by 6 O'clock Monday morning when Alcoa's employees starting arriving for work. Beside the society members many of Alcoa's maintenance and engineering staff plus 13 union tradesmen were on hand to help. Although they were under pressure to get the clean up job done they all still made time to gloat about their success.

Gleas

One of the statements made by Fred Gleas as he closed the show that evening was, "I am proud of the society that put this show together and coordinated this convention. As I spoke to my colleges that attended the A.R.S. national with me that was held out in St. Louis two weeks ago we were all in agreement that this magnificent event, by far, surpassed theirs and it will be a long time before we see another like this one. Every member of this society should be very proud and we all thank you."

There are some differences in the attendance figures estimated by the different organizations. Alcoa and the P.R.S. estimated that 1.500 people attended on Saturday and 5,800 on Sunday. Pittsburgh Cut and the Commercial Grower's claimed 2,250 on Saturday and another 6,750 on Sunday. They gave away 11,600 roses to the patrons entering so they feel their figures are the better of the two. This is what was published in the Pittsburgh Press on Monday, 'It was estimated that more than eight thousand people visited the show. The crowds on Sunday were tremendous, and when the doors opened at 10 o'clock, many people were waiting on the outside. When the doors closed at 5 o'clock, in order to put the lobby in shape for use on Monday, there were still people waiting to get in. Pittsburgh Railway said today that they exceeded their record on the sale of the Sunday Ride-All-Day Pass by over 600 due to the events held that day.' It is difficult to put a real figure on attendance when tickets were not distributed and no one was stationed at the door with a counter.

Other figures for the show were: Total number of amateur exhibiters was 76. Number of roses on display in the amateur show was 2,640. Number of roses on display in the professional show was 1,670. Number of entries in the Arrangement Classes was 26. Number of Educational Exhibits – 2

It is also interesting to note that after all convention expenses were paid the society showed a profit of $123.71. This made many members happy as they thought that the event would bankrupt the treasury.

Here are the 10 big winners' for the show (I will give only the names of the roses as the winning rosarians are probably deceased):

1. J. Horace McFarland Memorial District Trophy (*Five different varieties of Hybrid Tea Roses exhibited in separate containers)* Entries - 1 Queen Elizabeth, 1 Tallyho, 1 Dr. Debat, 1 Tiffany 1 Horace McFarland
2. Consulting Rosarians' Silver Bowl Perpetual Trophy *(Four different varieties – two Hybrid Tea roses and two sprays of Floribundas or Polyanthas exhibited in separate containers.)* Entries - 1 Mrs. Paul Bosley, 1 Peace, 1 Masquerade, 1 Independence

3. Marin R. Jacobus Perpetual Challenge Trophy *(The best Hybrid Tea rose of American origin)* Entry - 1 Pink Dawn
4. William H Mavity Perpetual Challenge Trophy *(Four Hybrid Tea Roses – same or different varieties exhibited in separate containers.)* Entries - 2 Blanche Mallerin, 2 Jules Bouche
5. Pittsburgh Rose Society Perpetual Challenge Trophy *(Five Pink Hybrid Tea roses in colors 8, 9, 10, Same or different varieties, exhibited in separate containers) Entries –Show Girl, Helen Traubel, Mme. Cochet-Cochet*
6. Pittsburgh Rose Society Perpetual Red Rose Trophy Class *(Three red hybrid tea roses of the same variety – one in bud, one half open and one full bloom. Exhibited in separate containers.)* Entries – 3 Crimson Glory
7. The King of Show – Pink Dawn
8. Queen of Show – Pedralbes
9. Maid of Honor – Mrs. Paul Bosley
10. Sweepstakes Winner – Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Cotter 293 points

This concludes my articles about the happenings in the first six years of our society, how it began, developed and its first successes. We must keep in mind that we really started with a bang and developed quickly, with the help of the business community, into one of, if not the largest groups in the A.R.S. We have maintained our numbers and it is up to us, the present members, to continue to do so.

In last month's issue I challenged our old Pittsburgher to name the seven department stores that were in business within a mile and a half of the 1955 convention. They were Kaufmann's, Gimbles, Joseph Hornes, Frank and Cedar's, Rosenbaums all downtown with Boggs and Buhl's and Sears, Roebuck & Company on the near North Side.