

## **APS Officers 1947 to 2010.**

(Prepared by Dale Lindgren, APS Historian, February 11, 2010)

Officers and Chairmen of the American Penstemon Society are the leaders that keep the Society active and moving forward. The APS has been blessed with many people who have stepped forward and not only taken on responsibilities but have brought new ideas in to the Society. Changes are needed in any organization to keep up with technology and to try new ideas that keep the organization fresh and relative.

## **APS Presidents**

The APS Presidents have come from all regions of the United States and a variety of backgrounds. They have included both men and women, some younger some a little older. All have brought in special skills that have made this a better Society. The following is a list of the APS Presidents, the times they served as President, and a few of the activities that occurred while they served as APS President.

### **Ralph Bennett(1947- March, 1969)**

The APS's first director and President was Ralph Bennett. In 1947, Ralph was given the title of General Director but in 1949 was designed as APS President. He held this position until 1969, a period of twenty years. He continued to be the Editor of the Bulletin of the APS until 1978. He was a tireless worker and had a great love for plants, penstemon and people. He deserves much of the credit as APS President and as Editor of the Bulletin of the APS for starting the organization and for maintaining it through 25 years. Ralph began the APS in 1945 with 11 members. We are not sure how these first members were recruited. However by 1947, the reports in the bulletin of the APS indicate there were 70 people in the organization. Initially there were no dues to be a member, just a pledge to report to the Society on penstemon performance and penstemon experiences. Dues were later included as a part of membership. Some of the issues of the bulletin were 200 pages long, all mimeographed.

“Ralph was a proud Bostonian who migrated to Virginia to become a Court Reporter for the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington, D. C. This background served him well in his penstemon activities for he was able to take detailed notes during his many trips and research ventures. As a result, he produced a fantastic amount of written material on his great love—the penstemon. Prior to moving to Virginia, he and his wife Annie lived for a number of years in Little Neck, Long Island where they owned a house on Beachknoll Avenue. After retirement in 1962, they moved to Florida where they lived until his death. (submitted by George Yingling)

After Ralph retired as APS President, he was given the title as President Emeritus from 1970 to 1979. (For a summary of Ralph's thoughts on retirement see the Bulletin of the APS, # 28, pages 1-3.)

### **Bruce Meyers, Acting President (March 27, 1969 – December 31, 1969)**

Ralph Bennett retired on March 27, 1969 because of advancing age and Bruce Meyers was appointed Acting APS President until Frank Sayre became the elected APS President. The APS, under Bruce Meyer's guidance, presented a plaque to Ralph Bennett for his dedicated work to the American Penstemon Society. The formation of a National Research Committee under the

directorship of Glenn Viehmeyer was formed. Bruce felt greater attention should be devoted to the hybridization of Penstemon. Bruce stated “I don’t regret having had the chance at this experience. I feel I have gained some valuable insights into human relationships from having worked with such a fine group of people.”

### **Frank Sayre (1970-1973)**

The second elected APS President was Frank Sayre, another tireless worker. Frank Sayre was from Ritzville, Washington, where he had resided since 1950. In professional life, he had been a teacher and school superintendent in the State of Washington for many years. Grace Sayre, Frank’s wife, joined the Penstemon Society in 1959. Her husband shared her interest in gardening and the outdoors, and they came to the Northwest meetings together. Since people found that he was always willing to take on extra work, and did a beautiful job every time, he was soon organizing the yearly field trip of the Northwest group and acting as master of ceremonies at the actual meetings. Somehow Frank did not actually become a member of the Society himself until 1969, a few months before he was proposed for President, and elected.

Several changes in the workings of the Society, including the simplified By-Laws, were brought about by him. He also pushed for publicity on the genus Penstemon in various publications including the well-known western magazine, “Sunset”. He was instrumental in putting advertising in horticultural magazines, which brought in new members. He was a quiet but tireless worker for anything he was interested in. He enjoyed the Penstemon meetings as much as or more than anyone and his commentaries, whether joking or serious, added much interest to meetings.

Frank resigned as APS President in April of 1973 due to ill health and died a month later on May 30, 1973 after a brief illness. After Frank died, Kenneth Lodewick became acting APS President until Glenn Viehmeyer was elected President beginning in January 1974.

### **Kenneth Lodewick, Acting APS President (April, 1973 to December, 1973)**

Carl Amason was appointed as the new Director of the Seed Exchange. Enough seed for 500 packets of *P. barrettiae* were requested by the American Horticultural Society because they have found that pents are popular among their members.

### **Glenn Viehmeyer ( January 1, 1974 to June 10, 1974)**

Glenn Viehmeyer from North Platte, Nebraska became the APS President in January 1974. For the second year in a row, tragedy beset the office of the APS President. Glenn died June 10, 1974, less than 6 months after he became APS President. Kenneth Lodewick again became Acting President. Glenn’s death came just five days before the Midwest APS meeting, which he was to host at North Platte, Nebraska. Roger Uhlinger handled the meeting although there was a special sadness of the members that attended.

Ralph Bennett included these comments about Glenn in the 1974 issue of the Bulletin of the APS: “To do full justice to Glenn Viehmeyer we should add a few more facts about his contributions to the American Penstemon Society and the cause of penstemons. Nearly twenty years ago, around 1955, before anyone was doing any really serious work at hybridizing penstemons in the Penstemon Society or elsewhere, Fern Irving, a long-time member of the

Society, on a visit to the Experimental Station at North Platte, Nebr., mentioned casually to Mr. Viehmeyer, who was working there as a plant breeder, that if he wanted to do something worthwhile in the field of horticulture beyond what he was doing then, he could take up the improvement of penstemons. Glenn took Fern's suggestion seriously and immediately organized a program of hybridizing penstemons on a large scale. When the society held its 1958 national meeting at North Platte, Glenn had large fields full of countless rows of tall penstemon hybrids, which were an eye-opener as well as great surprise to the members of the society. Since that time, until his retirement a few years ago, he extended the scope of hybridization efforts until he had brought a very great number of wild species into his hybrid pool. These hybrids were distributed by seeds in our yearly seed exchanges, as well as plants by nurseries, and nearly all our members have tried them in their gardens. In some parts of the country the North Platte hybrids do very well and are much grown. In others sites, the climate does not suit them and they are not grown to a large extent. When Glenn began his efforts to cross wild species of penstemons, it was the firm belief of our members that penstemons were one genus of wild flowers which it was impossible to cross. Up to that time the only successful crosses had been one between *P. grandiflorus* and *P. murranyanus*. It was almost taken for granted that no other species would cross. But Glenn, ignoring this traditional belief in the society, started experimenting and soon discovered a remarkable fact – that one form of penstemon that we had been growing for many years under the name of 'Flathead Lake', possessed the almost unbelievable capability of accepting pollen from almost any other species. The resulting crosses, moreover, also proved capable of being crossed with other species. The result of this remarkable discovery was that Mr. Viehmeyer began coming out every year with new crosses between species which we have never considered capable of being crosses, thus putting an end to the notion that penstemon species will not cross." The Arboretum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's West Central Research and Extension Center (North Platte, NE), is named for Glenn Viehmeyer.

### **Kenneth Lodewick (1974- 1975)**

Kenneth Lodewick served as APS President from June 1974 through 1975. He also served as Vice-President before and after his term as Acting President/President. Kenneth is from Eugene, Oregon.

Kenneth and his wife Robin joined the American Penstemon Society in 1962. They have been leaders in summarizing and publishing information on the classification, nomenclature and historical background of Penstemon. Their booklets Penstemon Notes, Penstemon Nomenclature, Penstemon Field Identifier, and Keys to the Genus Penstemon have been published as supplements to the Bulletin of the American Penstemon Society. In addition, Kenneth has published articles in the American Rock Garden Society Bulletin, in Fremontia, in Kalmiopsis, and in the Oregon Historical Quarterly. Kenneth was born in Orono, Maine. He received a B.S. in Structures Design from the University of Oregon. He has worked as a newspaper librarian, engineering aide, civic engineer, and cartographer. Kenneth and Robin were married in 1963.

### **Kenneth Hixson (1976-1977)**

Kenneth Hixson became the APS President in 1976. Mr. Hixson's home address was listed as 5440 Barger Drive, Eugene, Oregon. During these two years, the Society made few changes. Mr. Hixson states in 1977 "at present, our annual dues continue to cover expenses, but even a

small increase in the cost of the Bulletin would change that situation. Let it also be pointed out that our Editor, Ralph Bennett, and Publisher, Earl Holl, both labor mightily for the Society in producing the Bulletin. These two people do a great deal to hold the Society together, and to them a special thank you. Looking back on my term as president, I can't help but regret not accomplishing more, yet that regret is all but forgotten in the pleasure of meeting and working with various people in the Society."

#### **Cliff Lewis (1978-1984)**

Cliff Lewis became the APS President in 1978. During 1978, Ralph Bennett announced his retirement. Cliff convinced George Yingling to be the APS Editor. What a great choice that was for the Society. It was in 1978, as well, that the executive board voted to publish a bulletin twice every year. The July 1979 issue was the first issue to contain colored pictures and the articles concentrated on special articles, technical reports and education matters rather than robin and trip reports. It was during Cliff's Presidency that several longtime members passed away, Ralph Bennett, Myrtle Hebert, Stanley Glowinski, and Aileen McWilliam. Those left vacancies that were hard to replace. In addition, Cliff's wife Olga passed away but Cliff later married Luella Moulton, an APS member. A cutting exchange was also initiated. In 1984 dues were raised to \$7.50. In 1984, Cliff Lewis underwent open-heart surgery: seven by-passes and a mechanical heart valve.

#### **Panayoti Kelaidis (1985-1987)**

Panayoti Kelaidis of Denver became the Society's the next APS President. During his tenure, the APS Librarian, Nina Johnson, requested she be relieved of her duties. The library material was moved to the Cox Arboretum in Dayton, Ohio. Elizabeth Bolender agreed to be the new librarian. The annual 1986 APS meeting was combined with the Alpines '86' in Denver. It was also during this term that George Yingling achieved non-profit status with the IRS for the APS and the APS was also approved for non-profit mailing status. Our APS President became a father! Panayoti was an elegant writer in his "Letters from the President" as well with his penstemon articles.

#### **Gwen Kelaidis(1988-1989)**

Gwen continued in the fine tradition of writing educational articles for the Bulletin of the APS. Gwen traded jobs with George Yingling. She became the Editor and George became the President.

#### **George Yingling (1989-1991)**

George Yingling was another President that brought in new skills. His greatest contribution, however, may have been before he became President, as editor of the Bulletin. He became editor of the APS bulletin in 1978 and continued with those responsibilities until 1988. He contributed many articles to the Bulletin and was very interested in the history of the Society. The form of the bulletin of the APS changed from mimeographed pages to a professional, offset published format when George took over as the editor. He introduced color into the bulletin and began publishing two issues a year. The bulletin size was reduced from 8 ½ x 11 inches to 8 ½ x 5 ½ inches in December 1979 to cut costs of production and postage. Bulletin content with George as

editor included more scientific articles plus the traditional material (trip reports, garden reports, etc.). More contributions from overseas members were also featured. It was during his editorship that the Society starting publishing two issues a year instead of one. The Society approved a \$200 grant for the slide library and an additional \$100 per year for maintenance and updating. The APS Board disapproved selling or giving our mailing list to other organizations. Ellen Wilde also proposed in 1991 to George and the APS Board to consider putting out a book on penstemons, not scientific, but on garden worthiness with lots of color photos of different species.

George attended the Midwest Regional Meeting in 1991 in North Platte, Nebraska. On Friday evening, we had a nice get together and viewed the indoor display of penstemon. The next morning, George had a heart attack at the motel he was staying at. This was George's 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack. He was in the hospital for about a week. His wife Mary came and stayed with the Lindgren's until George was strong enough to leave. This was the third APS President that I know of who had a heart attack/heart surgery while in office.

### **Gwen Kelaidis (1992-1993)**

Gwen reported there were 13 robins in 1992. The Lodewicks had a new booklet available for \$3.00 called *Penstemon Notes*. Dale Lindgren and Betty Davenport collaborated to produce a contribution entitled *List and Description of Named Cultivars in the Genus Penstemon*.

### **Dale Lindgren (1994 -1997)**

During this period of time, the Society decided to increase membership fees (as of 1/1/95) for overseas members from \$10 to \$15 to reflect the expense of overseas postage. The Society decided to increase charges related to the Seed Exchange to make it self-funding. All seed packets will be increased in cost from 25 cents to 50 cents. Seed donors will get a free pick for each different seed donation. In 1996, the Society celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Penstemon Society at Snowbird, Utah. Three APS awards were presented in 1995. National meetings were started to be held on a regular basis.

### **Jack Ferreri (1998-1999)**

It should be noted that the last four APS Presidents were editors of the APS Bulletin either before or after their term as President. The Society agreed to donate \$1000.00 to Professor Andrea Wolfe to support an assistant for her work on penstemon. Worked with Peter James on planning the 2000 APS meeting in England. 74 people attended the 1999 APS meeting in New Mexico.

### **Bob Pennington (2000-2001)**

The beginning of Penstemon-L, started by Louise Parsons. The first national APS Meeting outside of the United States was held in England in 2000.

### **Jim Ault (2002-2003)**

The 2002 APS meeting held in Moab, Utah. Jim Ault resigned as President in 2003 and Louise Parsons became President.

**Louise Parsons (2003-2006)**

Louise actively organized national meetings in Arizona and Idaho and started the L-penstemon. The APS book *Growing Penstemons: Species, Cultivars, and Hybrids*, by Ellen Wilde and Dale Lindgren was published while Louise was President as well as the companion CD on Penstemons by William Gray. The national 2005 APS meeting was held in California. As a result of board actions, it was voted as a by-law revision that charges the vice-president to be responsible for program planning with a three year horizon. The APS publication "Updated list and Description of Named Cultivars in the Genus Penstemon" by Dale Lindgren was published. An APS questionnaire administered by Barbara Lewis was distributed to members to set a future course for the Society. An APS web page was developed.

**Bob McFarlane (2007-2010)**

Dr. Bob McFarlane became President in 2007. Previously, Bob and wife Phoebe served as director of the APS Seed Exchange. With Bob's leadership, major changes occurred in the APS. A penstemon website was started, and a penstemon newsletter was initiated. An auditor for the Society's financial records was appointed and a successful meeting/trip was held in northern Mexico. There was a change in the publication of the APS bulletin from two bulletins a year to one bulletin a year. A project to fund Special Projects was initiated.

**Vice Presidents**

There have been fewer Vice-Presidents of the Society than Presidents. The only Vice President that became President of the Society was Kenneth Lodewich and he moved up when the President, Glenn Viehmeyer died in 1974. Kenneth was President for one year, 1975. He then moved back to the office of Vice-President until 1984.

The Vice Presidents and their terms were:

**1964-1967 – Fred Case**

**1968-1974, 1976-1984, Mr. Kenneth Lodewick**

**1975 vacant**

**1985-1987- James Taylor**

**1988-1991- Orville Steward**

**1992- 2002- Romona Osburn**

**2003- 2006 -Bill King**

**2007-2010 -Ginny Maffitt**

**APS Editors**

The Editor for the Bulletin of the APS is a very important job, that of "communicating" with the membership. There is one **Editor** of the APS Bulletin. However, there were different types

of editors that were appointed to help the **Editor** since the organization of the Society. These included: Assistant Editor, Editor and Publisher, Co-editors for Special Articles, Co-editors for Reports from Non-robin Members, Assistant Editor for Northwestern Affairs, and Assistant Editor for Midwestern Affairs. The following list is a summary the Bulletin Editors of the APS:

## **Editor**

1946-1978 – Ralph Bennett  
 1979-1988 – George Yingling (also listed as Publisher)  
 1989- 1991 Gwen Kelaidis  
 1992- Jeanie Vesall  
 1993- 1997 Jack Ferreri  
 1998- 2007 Dale Lindgren  
 2008- 2010 Stephen Love

## **Printer**

1948 – Amel Priest

## **Publisher and Distributor of Bulletin**

1951- 1952 – Mr. Priest

## **Publisher of the Bulletin**

1970- 1978 – Mr. Earl Holl

## **Assistant Editor**

1956- 1957 – Mrs. Babb  
 1958- 1960 – Mrs. Dowbridge  
 1985- 1988- Gwen Kelaidis  
 1991- Betty Davenport and George Yingling  
 1992- Gwen Kelaidis

## **Co-editor for Special Articles**

1966- 1970 – Mrs. Carl Backman

## **Co-editor for Reports from Non-robin members**

1966 – Mrs. Sassaman

## **Assistant Editor for Northwestern Affairs**

1970 – Bruce Meyers (White Salmon, WA)

## **Assistant Editor for Midwestern Affairs**

1970 – To be appointed

## **Treasurer**

1946- 1951 – Amel Priest  
 1952-1956 – Mr. James Bradfield  
 1957 –1960 -Mrs. Andrew Olson (Oakland, NE)  
 1961- 1969 – Mr. Earl A. Holl  
 1970-1983 -Mr. Stanley Glowski (Marlboro, N.J.)  
 1984- 1987- Mrs. Clark Burell  
 1988 -Ted Hodobe  
 1989-2006- Steve Hotink  
 2007- 2009 Dave Bentzin

## **Director of the Seed Exchange**

1948- 1949 – Mrs. Edward M. Babb, Portland, Maine  
 1950 – Mrs. Babb and Mrs. Broe  
 1951 – Mrs. Babb  
 1952- Ralph Bennett– Acting Director  
 1953-1959 – Mrs. Hebert  
 1960- 1963 Mrs. Hebert and Mrs. Anderson  
 1964 – To Be announced  
 1965-1968 – Marjorie Sassaman  
 1969- 1973- Mrs. Robert McQueen  
 1974- Mr. Carl Amason  
 1975- 1979- Dr. Howard P. Hinde  
 1980- 1988- Mrs. Bette Peterson  
 1989- 1993- Ellen Wilde  
 1994- 1996- Dale Lindgren  
 1997- 2001- Jim Ault  
 2002- 2003- Jim Swayne  
 2004- 2006- Bob McFarlane  
 2007- 2008- Ginny Maffitt  
 2009 Louise Parsons

## **Director of Seed Exchange for Species**

1960-1963, – Mrs. Hebert

## **Director of Seed Exchange for hybrids**

1960-1963 – Mrs. W. E. Anderson

## **Co-Director of the Seed Exchange –**

1958-1959 – Mrs. W. A. Anderson, Underwood, Iowa

## **Asst. Director for for Hybrid Seeds**

1966- 1968 – Mrs. Merle Emerson  
 1973- Mrs. Carl Backman



## **Distributor of Named Varieties**

1956 -1957– Mr. Fred Fate

## **Registrar of Named Varieties and Hybrids**

The Registrar of Named Varieties and Hybrids for Penstemon was first appointed in 1956. It is the responsibility of the Registrar to register new names of cultivars and make sure the name meets the guidelines set up by the *International Cultivar Registration Authority*. Several penstemon publications of cultivar names have been published to meet these requirements. The last one was published in 2006 and titled “*List and Description of Named Cultivars in the Genus Penstemon (2000)*” and was authored by Dr. Dale Lindgren.

1956- 1966 – Mrs. E. A. Boyrie

1967-1968 – No registrar listed

1969- 1979- Miss Aileen McWilliams

1980 To be announced

1981- 1984- Carl Amason

1985- 1988- Mark McDonough

1989- 2009- Dale Lindgren

## **Committee for the Preservation and Distribution of Superior Forms of Penstemon**

1958- 1959 – Miss Alice Casson (McClelland, Iowa)

## **Secretaries**

In the early years of the American Penstemon Society (1950 to 1959), there was an APS officer designated as Secretary for the APS. In 1960, this name was changed to Membership Secretary. The membership secretary is responsible for maintaining a current list of members. There was also a corresponding secretary from 1960 to 1964 and a corresponding Secretary and Coordinator of Robin Circles from 1966 to 1979. In 2009, the APS President also appointed a Membership Marketing Secretary.

### **Secretary**

1950-1957 – Mrs. E. M. Babb

1958- 1959–Mrs. Andrew Dombridge (Springvale, Maine)

### **Membership Secretary**

1960- 1967 – Mrs. E. A. Boyrie

1968- 1971 - Mrs. Merle Emerson

1972, 1973- Mrs. F. J. Schmeeckle

1974- 1977 -Mr. Howard McCready

1978- 1987 - Mr. Orville Steward

1988- 2004 -Ann Bartlett

2005- 2008 -Dwayne Dickerson

2009-2010 -Joan and Truel West

### **Corresponding Secretary**

1960- 1964 -Mrs. Andrew Dowbridge

### **Membership Marketing**

2009 Dwayne Dickerson

### **Corresponding Secretary and Coordinator of Robin Circles**

1966 -1967 - Mrs. David Blake

1968- 1971-Mrs. Helen Malloy

1972- 1975- Mrs. Myrtle Hebert

1976- 1978 - Mrs. Vivienne Harold

### **Robin Circle Coordinator**

1946-1960- No Robin Circle Coordinator listed (Ralph Bennett probably acted as Director)

1961 – Mrs. Andrew Dombridge

1962- 1978- No Robin Circle Coordinator listed (Ralph Bennett probably acted as Director)

1979- 1984- Mrs. Vivienne Harold

1985 -To be announced

1986 - Mrs. Vivienne Harold

1987- 1991- Betty Davenport

1992 Shirley Backman

1993 OPEN

1994- 2003- Shirley Backman

2004- 2009 Ginny Maffitt

### **Custodian of Society's collection of 35-mm color slides**

Slides were important to the APS. Many members and non-members used slides in their local, regional and national penstemon programs. They could borrow them from the Custodian of the APS collection of 35-mm color slides. When digital pictures became popular, slides became less popular. However, the APS maintains some slides, especially the historical ones and ones related to cultivars.

1950- 1952 - Mr. Priest

1953- 1962 – Mr. Bradfield

1963- 1965 – Fred Fate

1966- 1975 – Joe Hennen

1976-1994- James Taylor

1995- 2008 - Ellen Wilde

### **Librarian**

1952- 1965 – Mrs. Henry Seeba

1969-1984- Mrs. Nina Johnson

1985-1996- Mrs. Elizabeth Bolender

1997- 2009- Ellen Wilde

**Librarian and Assistant Editor for Exchange Materials**

1966- 1967 – Mrs. Edward Hutmire

**Distributor of Names Varieties**

1955 – Fred Fate

**Identification Committee:**

1960-1968 Mrs. Boyrie and Mrs. Hebert

**Assembly and Preservation Committee:**

1960- 1964 – Miss Alice Casson

**In Charge of all Aspects of our Preservation Project:**

1965 - Fred Case

**Bulletin Cover Artist:**

1973- 1977 - Bruce Meyers

1979 -Miss Sukii Saito

**Director of Research:**

1975- 1976 -Dr. Roger Uhlinger

**Director of Cutting Exchange:**

1983 -Mark McDonough

**More recently beginning in 2007/2008, several new positions were added to the APS. These were added to ensure the successful future of the Society. These will also help keep the Society modern and solvent.**

**Web Site Administrator:** The web Site Administrator maintains the Society's web page.

2007-2010 - Hugh MacMillan

**Finance-Auditor:** The Auditor has responsibility of auditing the treasurer's records.

2009-Ed Godleski

**News Letter Editor:** In 2008, the APS initiated the APS Newsletter. The newsletter is published 6 times a year and brings a faster response to bringing information to the membership.

2008-2009 Val Myrick

2010 – Mike Evans

**Nominating Committee Chair:** Although there have been unofficial nominating committees for the APS Officers, an official chair for nominations were appointed and listed in the APS bulletin and newsletter.

2009 -Libby Wheeler

**APS Historian**

2010-Dale Lindgren