

as the final wrapup on the meeting. All in all, it looks excellent on paper and I am sure with the cooperation of everyone in the room we will have an outstanding meeting. I thank you for your indulgence during this discourse and promise not to bore you with too many announcements during the meeting.

It is my distinct honor to introduce to you the gentleman who will present the first paper of this meeting. His paper is entitled "The International Plant Propagators' Society Philosophy" and the speaker is James Wells of the James S. Wells Nursery in Redbank, New Jersey. It is hard to use enough adjectives to praise Jim Wells adequately but he is the man who was the first president of the Eastern Region, and who presented the first paper to the Society on November 8, 1951 at 10:00 A.M. He served two years: the 1951-1952 term and the 1952-1953 term. He is also a recipient of the Award of Merit in 1959. He is a well renowned author and an excellent nurseryman. One of Jim's loves is the International Plant Propagators' Society, and he has seen many of his dreams come true including the recent founding of our Great Britain and Ireland Region several years ago. I now present to you James Wells and "The International Plant Propagators' Society Philosophy".

THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROPAGATORS' SOCIETY PHILOSOPHY

JAMES WELLS
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On November 8, 1951, as a result of the initiative of Edward H. Scanlon, the first organizational meeting of our Society was convened.

I wonder how many of us who met 20 years ago in Cleveland had any idea that the Plant Propagators' Society would reach — in this short time — the stature and the size that it now has.

I know that I speak for all of us who were at that first meeting when I say that this is indeed a most splendid day — a day to remember — for we see here, in this assembled company, the living and working essence of the Society's philosophy. Twenty years ago it was but a dim outline of the clear and simple pattern by which we all now work together.

Certainly our Society is much larger than we then thought possible or even desirable, and I think it says a great deal for both the philosophy itself and the officers of the Society through these formative years, that the inevitable increase in size has in no way

diminished or diluted the individual and collective will to maintain our Society at the highest possible level.

We are indebted to one of our Past-presidents, Peter Vermeulen, for giving us our motto “TO SEEK AND TO SHARE” and this motto sums up neatly and clearly the essence of our philosophy. There is nothing unique about these sentiments — they are as old as mankind, and indeed form the essential basis of most religions, but there is often a wide gap between the idea and its everyday application and practice by individuals.

We who were at that first meeting, cannot therefore take kudos for thinking of the theme — our main task was to try to establish a fair and reasonable method to apply the theme and make it work. I would assure you that this problem was most carefully thought through and with the procedures established, has been most carefully nurtured over the past 20 years. It is because of the inherent soundness of the plan, and the careful guarding of the basic principles of sharing with each other, that we now see the strong and thriving Society to which we are all proud to belong.

You might be interested to know how all this came about. Unfortunately I no longer have my files for the year 1950, but I recall that a letter came from Ed Scanlon saying that he was contacting a number of people about the possible formation of a plant propagators’ society, and would I be interested. Of course I was, and with similar support from everyone, Ed called the first meeting. For no good reason that I recall, it fell to my lot to suggest the manner in which we might organize, and I can assure you that a great deal of thought was given to the remarks I made at the first meeting in which it was stressed that there should be three essentials for a person to become a member in good standing.

1. Knowledge and experience.
2. A high standard of integrity.
3. A ready willingness — nay more — a compelling desire to share knowledge and skills with other members.

These three criteria were accepted as the cornerstone of our society, and it has been a steady source of wonder to us “oldsters” how readily these criteria have been accepted and maintained by each group as our Society widened. I recall that in the initial discussions for the formation of the Western and the English regions, both were all for establishing even more stringent requirements for membership, and in the interests of equality and uniformity, we had to urge them both to modify their requirements a little.

I am sure that very few of us really bother to read the By-laws, but they are important, and especially is this true of Article 2, which is deceptively short and simple. It reads:

“The purpose of this organization is to secure recognition of the plant propagator as a craftsman, to provide for the dissemination of knowledge through proper channels, and to provide helpful guidance and assistance to plant propagators.”

It is impossible to say now how many hours of thoughtful consideration and study went into the phrasing of this simple sentence, but if you read it carefully and think about it, surely here is the simple essence of our philosophy.

First — recognition of the plant propagator as a craftsman. To achieve such recognition it is obvious that the person must indeed be a craftsman — a person of experience, knowledge and skill. We wished to seek out such people, recognize them, help them where possible, but especially ask them to make available to similar people, their wisdom in dealing with plants.

Second — In order to gather this knowledge, we needed to provide a method of collection and dissemination — our meetings and our publications — and thus ensure that this knowledge would be recorded; and finally, we realized that we have a prime responsibility to help the young student, to encourage the new generation to learn what we knew and to carry on the good work, extending the frontiers of knowledge, refining and, more especially, adapting our work to the rapidly changing techniques and vastly increased knowledge of this modern age.

These then were our objectives, and I think I can state, without fear of contradiction that they have been amply fulfilled.

The 20 years that we have been in existence have seen enormous changes — just think that there were no plastic houses in 1951 — and container growing then was largely confined to Florida and California. Many techniques now in daily use were then unheard of, but then so also was pollution.

The world is changing at an alarming pace, and it is idle to suppose that we can remain as we were — we must change and adapt to meet the new conditions. Yet, realizing this, I believe that the vital role of the plant propagator in our scheme of things is still to be recognized.

The remarks which I made 20 years ago, at our first meeting, were entitled, “The Plant Propagator — The Basis Of Our Industry”, and while I believe this still to be true, I also believe that the time will come soon, when the plant propagator will not only be the basis of the horticultural industry, but the mainstay of a balanced ecology upon which all forms of life ultimately depend.

I heard two rather frightening statistics recently. First, that it required about 60 fair sized trees to provide the necessary oxygen for each person, and second, that about 1,000,000 acres of land are being denuded of vegetation and covered with asphalt or concrete annually in the U.S.A. The inference is obvious.

Scientists also report a significant world-wide increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere due to the vast amount of combustion taking place, combined with the reduction on land covered with plants.

It may seem ridiculous now, but I believe that the time will come when the planned production of plants and the re-establishment of areas of land covered with plants may well be essential for the maintenance of a normal life balance. This is the work of the plant propagator.

If such a condition comes about, then the principles upon which we have organized and developed will be of vital — truly vital — importance, for “commercialism” and “profit” may well have to be put on one side at least for a time, and the skills and unselfish interest of the plant propagator used to the fullest if we are to survive. The yeast which is the philosophy of our society has risen well during these last 20 years. The spirit of helpful cooperation has spread first through the horticultural industry of this country and of Canada, resulting in the formation of the Western group. Now the ferment has moved beyond these shores and we have the British group — young, strong, and clearly well on the way to much bigger and better things. But this is by no means the end — it is really the end of the beginning, for there are many, many more fine propagators throughout the world to whom this Society would be of enormous value. And I am glad to be able to tell you that your Society is not lagging in missionary work, for I have received a couple of letters recently, one from a very good friend of mine in Denmark, Tony Thompson, who is a member of the G.B. & I. Region and he said, “I have talked with a few people here in Denmark about the Society and there seems to be some interest. We are having another meeting in September and I’m going to tell them about the meaning of the Society. In the latter part of September we have a meeting for nurserymen at which time I’ll follow the case up. I believe there should be a fair chance to get the ball rolling.” I also have a letter from one of our members, Mr. M. Richards, who is Reader in Horticulture at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand and he said, “I think at the Minneapolis meeting you might report that there is some possibility of starting a chapter in New Zealand. As soon as it becomes a practical possibility to have a preliminary meeting I will keep you advised — this may not be until February 1971.” So you see things are moving elsewhere.

The success which we all enjoy is due, I believe, to each and every one of us. It is due to the spirit of helpfulness, cooperation and friendly brotherhood which has been the hallmark of our Society from the beginning, and which now is beginning to be seen throughout the horticultural industry.

This attitude was, and still is new, yet because of it we have established a Society of people of the highest quality, dedicated to the

advancement of knowledge and the improvement of our industry, as a whole. Ladies and gentlemen, I salute you.

RALPH SHUGERT: Thank you very much, Jim. On behalf of the chair, I congratulate you on your tribute (a standing ovation) to Jim Wells.

An author once said that there is a tremendous amount of correlation between philosophy and history, and with these sage works in mind, your program committee felt it would be apropos to use this philosophy at this meeting. The next gentleman on the program is unquestionably one of the most dedicated Society members. He served as Eastern Region President in 1961, and as International President in 1963; he was recipient of the Award of Merit in 1964 and has served faithfully and capably as the International Secretary-Treasurer. A close personal friend of mine and a friend of all Society members — Dr. William Snyder. Bill, it's a pleasure to have you speak on the history of the International Plant Propagators' Society.

THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROPAGATORS' SOCIETY:

1951 to 1970

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At the invitation of Edward H. Scanlon, 68 persons interested in plant propagation met at the Statler Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio, on November 8-9, 1951. The purpose of this meeting was two-fold: first, to hear talks by six well-known plant propagators and second, to consider whether or not an organization of plant propagators should be formed. The result: 20 years later these six speakers at the First Annual Meeting have been followed by more than 450 persons who have presented talks on plant propagation and related subjects and the membership has increased from 68 to 886 persons affiliated with the three regional organizations.

An organization known as the National Association of Propagating Nurserymen was formed in 1919 and survived until 1931, when, due to internal problems and the severe economic conditions of that period, it foundered. In 1926 the first of six annual reports was published. At the 1958 meeting of the Plant Propagators' Society, Roy M. Nordine made an appeal for a set of these reports for the archives of this Society. Dr. Richard P. White, Executive Secretary of the American Association of Nurserymen, donated a complete set to Mr. Nordine and at the 1959 meeting in Philadelphia Mr. Nordine presented the reports to the Plant Propagators' Society. Based on these reports, Alfred J. Fordham has