

The American GARDENER

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NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

IN MY GARDEN in Dayton, Oregon, I look forward to spring as a time of renewal and regrowth. It starts with the bold colors of spring-flowering bulbs, eases into the striking accents offered by flowering trees and shrubs, and concludes with a new flush of growth throughout the garden. This year, I am especially looking forward to the explosion of wisterias and clematis along my arbor, and the symphony of hydrangeas, forsythias, lilacs, lavender, and cannas blooming along my garden path. Regardless of what part of the country you live and garden in, I hope that you share the joys of the changing seasons with me—however subtle or dramatic they may be.

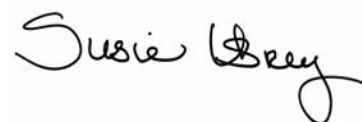
Just as our gardens go through cycles, so do organizations such as the American Horticultural Society. With each cycle or change, we are called upon to rise to the occasion, tackle the matter at hand, identify the challenges we face, and seize the opportunities that we are presented with. Such was the case this past January when the AHS Board of Directors gathered for our annual planning workshop at River Farm.

One of the first challenges we faced was the day-to-day leadership for the Society's work. Just prior to our January workshop, Deane Hundley announced his resignation as AHS President. Deane shared with me that it was with mixed emotions that he decided to leave the AHS in order to pursue other professional interests and spend more time with his family. I wish Deane the very best in his new endeavors and thank him for the many contributions he made to the Society.

With change comes opportunity, and our AHS Board of Directors felt the timing was right to reassess our leadership structure—both staff and volunteer—to make certain that we are positioning the Society for success in today's rapidly changing world. I am pleased to share that as our first step towards this renewal, we selected Tom Underwood to fill the newly created position of Executive Director of the American Horticultural Society. Many of you already know Tom from his work with the Society's programs over the past five years, and I am sure you will join me in congratulating him and welcoming him in this new role. I am truly excited by this new direction and look forward to partnering with Tom and the staff in the months ahead as we continue to position the Society for even greater success.

Another challenge we faced at our planning workshop was identifying and agreeing on a set of strategic imperatives for the Society for 2008. Ensuring that we are continually moving forward with visionary new programs, while not losing sight of our day-to-day responsibilities, requires steady commitment from both the AHS staff and our Board members. At the end of the workshop, I was very pleased to see that the staff and Board emerged with a clear sense of direction and a solid list of assignments. I look forward to sharing our progress with you in the coming months.

As we move into this most exciting time of year for gardeners across America, please be assured that your AHS continues to be in capable and caring hands. I hope you enjoy all that this issue has to offer and that it will be an inspiration to your gardening this spring.



—Susie Usrey, *Chair, AHS Board of Directors*



KASSIE BAKER