

Down Memory Lane in Region 2

The Birth of The Metropolitan Columbus Daylily Society

By Dr. Patricia Crooks Henley



The Metropolitan Columbus Daylily Society (MCDS) is proudly celebrating its 20th year in 2005. The little snowball that initiated the MCDS avalanche coalesced at an organizational meeting with 21 attending on September 8th, 1985, at Inniswood Metro Park in Westerville, Ohio, and it has been growing ever since. Today it is one of the largest in AHS, with 333 members, of whom 165 are AHS members, including 11 Youth members.

Although Columbus had a long history of devoted and distinguished hemerocallians, and had even hosted an AHS Region 2 meeting in 1983, no local club existed before 1985. In August, Bonnie Gordon, Dick Henley, and I decided to call the 13 members listed in the American Hemerocallis Society roster to ask if they would be interested. With the enthusiastic support and help of most of the other area daylily “old-timers,” such as Dorris and Lura Emig, Bernie and Dora Mae Grebus, Handy Hatfield, Gene Kepler, Ruth Pardue, Don Piper, and Bob and Marge Terbeek, notices were printed in the paper and elsewhere. Word was passed among friends and the organizational meeting set. Given that only 13 AHS members were in the area and not all of them attended, the turnout of 21 at that first, tentative, meeting was encouraging. There were new faces, and all were excited at the prospect of a local daylily club.

At the second organizational meeting on November 3, the name *Metropolitan Columbus Daylily Society* was established, a constitution was adopted, and a nominating committee was appointed.

The first official MCDS meeting was held November 24. The slate nominated by the committee was unanimously elected: Dick Henley, President; Bernie Grebus, Vice-President; Janet Withers, Treasurer; and Pat Crooks (Henley), Secretary. To kick off the treasury, 21 “Charter” members paid \$10 dues for the “honor” that first year. Since then, dues have been \$5 for individuals.

Ruth Pardue, then the Education Director at Inniswood, volunteered to chair an AHS-accredited show to be held on July 6. Thanks to her long experience with daffodil shows, she knew how to do all

the paperwork and invite judges. She also knew how to recruit talented arrangers, and so MCDS had the unusual distinction of being able to award the AHS Tricolor Rosette at its very first show [and every show since] with 20 entries in the artistic division. With 129 daylily entries in the Horticultural Division, it was a good first showing by any standard. Competition was already stiff, with high quality entries earning purple rosettes in several classes, including an AHS Queen of Show Rosette for *Hemerocallis* ‘Stand In’ (by a local hybridizer, Dottie Warrell) entered by Dorris Emig. Sweepstakes Rosette went to Bonnie Gordon. DeMonye’s Greenhouse donated gift certificates for the top award winners, and Inniswood Volunteers presented an engraved silver tray which is still awarded to the Queen of Show winner. As an educational event at Inniswood, some of the expenses were defrayed, so that MCDS had to pay only \$300 for its share. A good thing, since the treasury only had about \$400.

The first grand social event was a caravan tour on June 29th visiting the gardens of Don Piper, Dick Henley, Dick Meyer, and Ken & Shirley Jones.

On August 30, a plant sale set the example still followed today, with generous plant contributions from members bringing in \$482. MCDS ended the year with \$224 above its expenses, and has been well in the black ever since.

To celebrate the year’s success, Ruth and Bill Pardue invited members to their home for a potluck-dinner party in December. The dinner became an annual event, but soon outgrew being held in members’ homes!

We like to think the robust growth of MCDS results from the early and ongoing emphasis on friendliness, inclusiveness, generosity, sharing, contributing, and educating—not to mention just plain having fun. The Henleys, the Myers, the Emig sisters, Bernie and Dora Mae Grebus, and Donna Dietsch are among the few Charter members still active, in addition to others mentioned. ♪

Here are images of some still active Metropolitan Columbus DS’s charter members.



Left: Lura and Dorris Emig. (Image: Sharon Fitzpatrick)

Below Left: Dick Henley, Dr. Patricia Crooks Henley (Member of the AHS Scientific Studies Committee), Virginia Myers (2001-2002 and 2003-2004 Region 2 Secretary), Ed Myers (1994-95 Reg 2 Editor, 2000-2001 RPD, and 2003-2004 RVP). (Image: G. Meckstroth)



Below middle: Donna Dietsch with her 2005 MCDS show, blue ribbon winning arrangement. (Image: Sharon Fitzpatrick)

Below right: Dora Mae and Bernie Grebus. (Image: Sharon Fitzpatrick)

