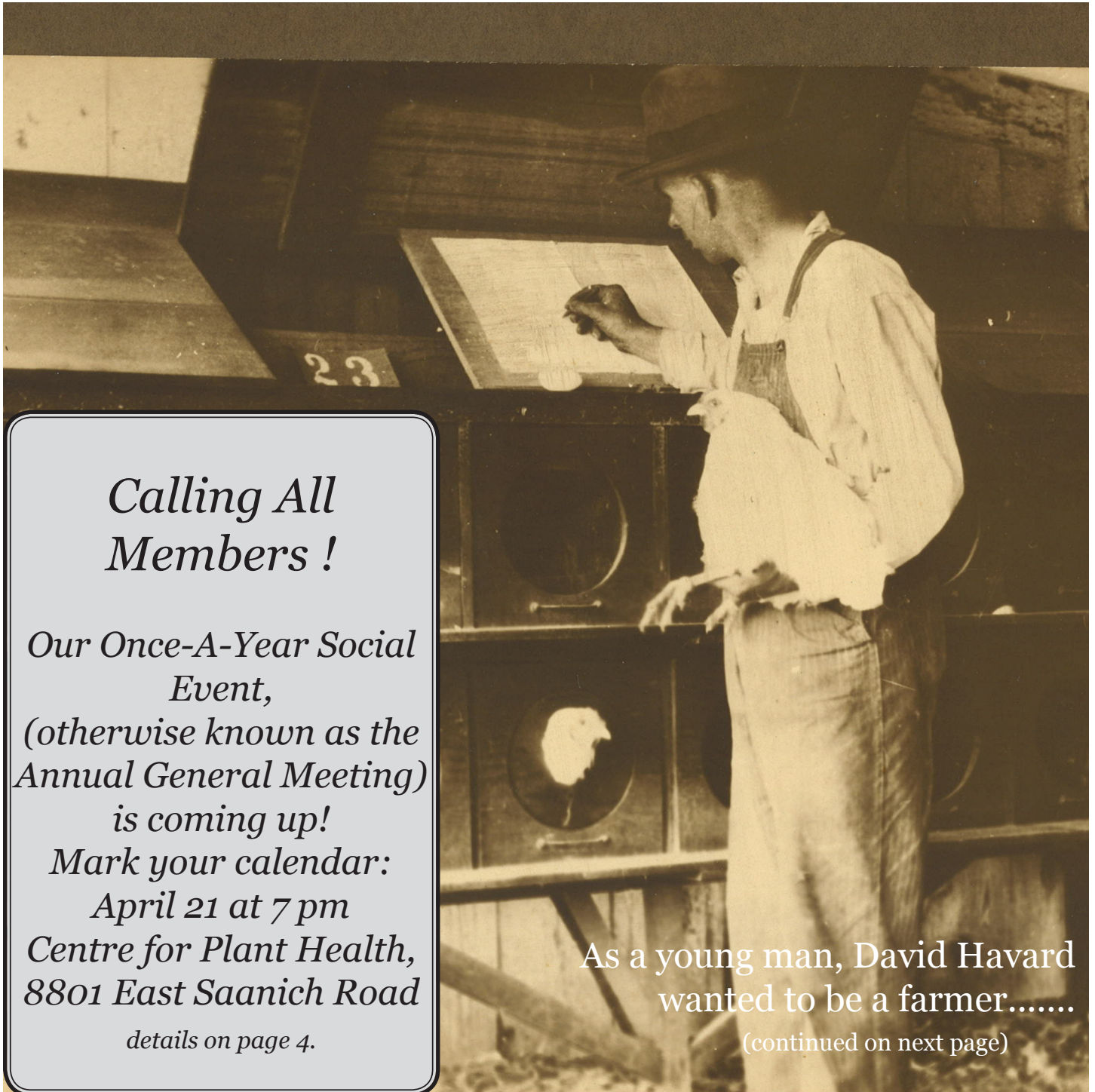


Life At Dominion Brook Farm, ca. 1939

## Bert Sansbury Ruled The Roost



### *Calling All Members !*

*Our Once-A-Year Social  
Event,  
(otherwise known as the  
Annual General Meeting)  
is coming up!*

*Mark your calendar:  
April 21 at 7 pm  
Centre for Plant Health,  
8801 East Saanich Road*

*details on page 4.*

As a young man, David Havard  
wanted to be a farmer.....

(continued on next page)

*Continued from Page 1...*

In 1939 farmers were still struggling to survive and none wanted a novice teenage farmhand. Through a family friend arrangements were made for David to work at the Dominion Experimental Farm for the summer months. He was to be paid for piecework cherry picking but the balance of the time was working for the love of it.

As there was no accommodation at the Farm, he slept in a pup tent in the picnic area. Breakfast and supper was thrown together in the picnic shelter. A good midday meal was taken at the boarding house of Mrs. Holmes adjacent to the Farm.

The long time Farm Superintendent was old school and had no rapport with those would do the work for 35 cents per hour. He held the purse strings tightly and decreed David was not to have eggs, tomatoes or any other farm produce despite the fact he was unpaid and had to feed himself.

It wasn't all work as David made frequent use of the tennis court and played with the Hall sisters whose Father was the plant pathologist for many years. (Barry Hall, brother of the sisters, is a Park volunteer.)

He spent a second summer at the Farm under the same non-paying arrangement. Daily work was varied but most of his time was spent in the poultry department and he had a ball. It was due to his boss, amiable and very likeable **Bert Sansbury**. One of his jobs was to let the chickens out after egg laying, at the same time recording the leg band number thus providing a record of performance. Bert would put an egg in the nest, then trap a rooster in with it. David says, "I was green but not that green". Bert supplied David's Mother with beautiful sweet peas which he would tie to his handlebars and pedal home to Ten Mile Point on the weekend. His Sunday night return was with a sack of goodies: a welcome change from bread, peanut butter and jam.

David kept his life-long interest in agriculture.

*Compiled from Growing Up in Victoria by David Havard*

## 2010 Volunteer Work Program



The 2010 Work Program is in place for this season. As always, work will continue on the North Border and Island Beds with removal of noxious growth and rehabilitation of the existing plant material.

We hope to acquire funding to begin replacing lost plant material in three sections of the North Border. The work will depend on private donations and nurseries will be approached to contribute trees/shrubs to help fill in the areas left vacant by loss of plant material over the years.

Our main focus this year will be the continued restoration of the area around the main pond and the picnic area. We will also be working on the Ravine edges to remove unwanted plant material and general clean up.

Even with the loss of four weeks of volunteer work, we were able to complete almost all of the 2009 Work Program and I hope we can accomplish that feat again this year.

There is an amazing team of volunteers who continue working week after week along side the District of North Saanich crew to keep the Park in the best shape possible. Without their efforts, there would be no forward movement in the rehabilitation of Dominion Brook Park. Kudos to the Wednesday Work Party!

The first work day of the season getting ready for the April 4 Easter Egg Hunt. It was bring a "Friend to Work Day" and we had 20 brave volunteer and a beautiful day to begin the year. The coffee/tea and muffins donated by **Alexander's Coffee Shop** in Sidney were a treat after the a morning's work.

*In 1913 there were five nurseries instrumental in the acquisition of plant material by the new Dominion Experimental Farm. All have interesting histories and will be outlined in successive issues of our newsletter.*

## Spath Plant Nursery

The Spath dynasty created one of the world's most notable plant nurseries of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Nursery had been founded in 1720 by Christoph Spath and in 1863 moved to south-east Berlin when Franz Ludwig Spath, (1839-1913) better known outside Germany as Louis Spath, became manager. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nursery was the largest in the world, occupying 120 hectares. In 1874 Louis built a mansion on the site, now part of Humboldt University and five years later established an arboretum.

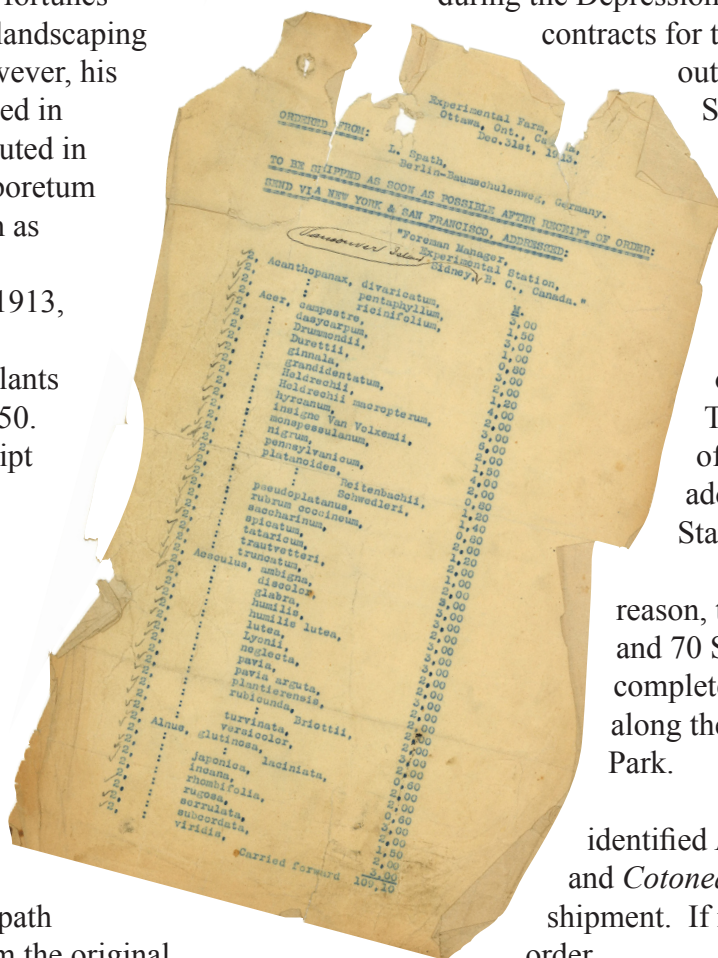
After his death in 1913, Nursery's flagging fortunes securing lucrative landscaping public works. However, his saw him incarcerated in where he was executed in and in 1947 the arboretum and became known as

On December 31, 1913, Germany from the an estimated 720 plants the sum of \$1,598.50. possible' after receipt and San Francisco, Experimental

For whatever Syringas (Lilac) seemed to have Spirea reside across from the

We have *Amurensis* coming from the Spath seeds gathered from the original

Louis Spath was succeeded by his son, Hellmut, who revived the during the Depression by joining the Nazi Party and contracts for the new autobahns and other outspoken criticism of the Nazi regime Sachsenhausen concentration camp 1945. The nursery closed in 1944 passed into public ownership Spathsches Arboretum.



an order was placed to L. Spath, Experimental Farm in Ottawa for of 100 species, many cultivars, for They were to be shipped 'as soon as of Order and sent via New York addressed to Foreman Manager, Station, Sidney, BC, Canada.

reason, the shipment included over 120 and 70 Spirea varieties. Sadly, the Lilacs completely disappeared but a few of the along the upper roadway in the Arboretum Park.

identified *Ligustrum Stauntonii*, *Berberis* and *Cotoneaster Franchetii* in the Park as shipment. If not the original plant, grown from order.

*The next in the series is on Layritz Nursery of Victoria established by Richard Layritz who worked for a time at the Spath Nursery in Berlin.*

## Thank you....

*Our most grateful thank you to those donors who opened their hearts and wallets to contribute to the Concept Plan Project. Without our donors and volunteers we could not continue the restoration work in this historical treasure of a park in our midst.*

# April 21 7pm AGM

## Guest Speakers:

Joe Daly, Landscape Architect  
Dave Murray, Kerr Wood Leidel

will be speaking and answering questions about the Concept Plan for the Rhodo Ravine Project, an exciting new phase of the restoration of Dominion Brook Park.

## Proposed Slate Officers 2010-11

Chair : Joan Gibb  
Vice-Chair : Bob Williamson  
Treasurer : Ed Johnson  
Secretary : Eleanore Arkesteyn  
Directors-at-large:  
Gerry Warren, Penny Boone,  
Vern Wiebe, Spring Harrison



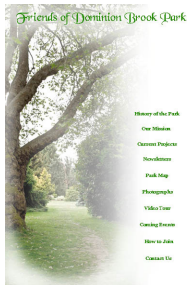
## Featured Plant

### Ligustrum sinense Stauntonii

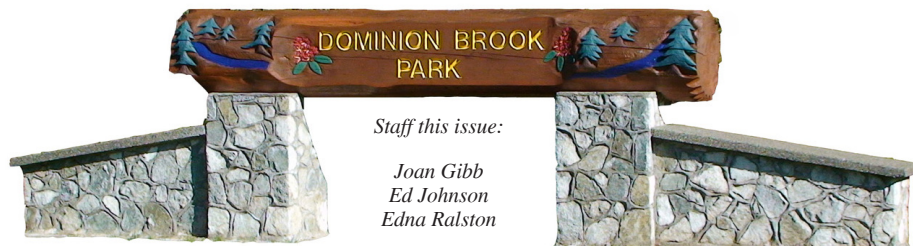
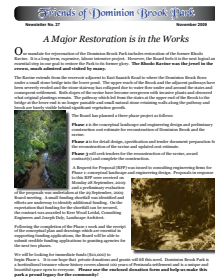
Commonly called Chinese privet. A vigorous, bushy tree-like semi-evergreen shrub with arching branches. White flowers are profuse in mid-summer and followed by spherical purple-black fruit. Fast growing and tolerant of almost any soil. Native to

Himalayas, East and Southeast Asia and Australia with one species in Europe and North Africa.

Our specimens came from Spath Nursery in the 1914 shipment. There are 11 shrubs in the North Border but possibly some grown from seed from the original shrubs. They make a marvellous and fragrant display which attracts thousands of bees.



**DBP Website  
Now On-Line**  
[www.dominionbrookpark.ca](http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca)  
**Maps, Photographs,  
Past Newsletters,  
Future Events, and more !**



Staff this issue:

Joan Gibb  
Ed Johnson  
Edna Ralston

For more information on Dominion Brook Park, please visit <http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca/>  
To contact the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society please write to Box 20007, Sidney, B.C. V8L 5C9  
General and Membership enquiries : 250-656-6574 Volunteers : 250-656-4185  
email : [contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca](mailto:contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca)