ALPINE LINE



Allegheny Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

April, May, June 2016

NARGS Allegheny Chapter 48th Annual Rock Garden Plant Show and Sale

The Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society will hold its 48th annual Rock Garden Plant Show and Sale at Soergel Orchards on Sunday, May 1st.

The event will be located behind the market on the patio and inside the barn. Soergel's is located at 2573 Brandt School Road, Wexford, PA 15090, just off the intersection of I-79 and Route 910.





We look forward to greeting the general public and showing them the unique plants we rock gardeners routinely grow. Consider entering some of your favorite rock garden plants.

Here's an overview of the schedule for the day.

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Entries received by show committee

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Plant sale open to public

10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Judging of exhibits (show floor closed to public)

11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Show open to public

See inside this issue for entry rules and classes, as well as the awards list.

A Message from the Chair, Karen Schmidt

It is mid-March already, and we just heard at our March meeting about the importance of soil and how to make compost tea from Keith McNeish. It was a timely topic so we can get our soil test done and prepare our soil for growing better plants this year. Soil test kits are available at the Cooperative Extension Office in your county.

The weather has been varying almost daily, and I hope you were able to get out when it was warm to enjoy the outdoors. I was able to check out my garden, and the orange and red witch hazels are blooming and, of course, the snow drops and hellebores are putting on a show. I planted hundreds of daffodils, and I am looking forward to seeing them all in bloom, too.

Earlier in the week I was able to attend the famous Philadelphia Flower Show. The theme was National Parks so most of the display gardens were woodland settings. The plant show consisted of many wonderful examples of plants and many were relative to rock gardening. The pictures are of two troughs that were entered.





(Yes Al, there were fairy garden troughs in the show, too.)



On April 17th, Carol Knock will do a presentation on Sedum. That is a very versatile plant, and I am looking forward to hearing about uses, different varieties, and what is new in the market.

A Message from the Chair (continued)

The Annual Show and Sale will be held at Soergel's on May 1st. See additional information included in the newsletter. Remember there will be a new award for the Chair's Choice plant. Members received the Iris 'Hot Coals' to be entered into the show, and the best specimen will win. If you have not shown before, this will be a great opportunity to start. Hope you all will attend the show to help out, purchase and show plants, and attend the show to see all the great entries. The committee does a wonderful job, and the show is well worth attending.

Our May 15th meeting will be one of the highlights of the year with Brent Heath from Brent and Becky Bulbs doing a presentation on Minor Bulbs with Major Impact at the Aviary. He is a wonderful speaker and will have great information to share on little bulbs for the rock garden. This is also an opportunity to visit the rock garden that our group maintains. Thanks to the committee for a wonderful garden.

If possible, please join the committee at least once this year to help maintain the garden.



Date, Event, and Location for Chapter Activities in 2016

* Jan 17 - St John's Lutheran Church, 311 Cumberland Road, 412-364-1606, 2:30 PM. Note change in time.

Speaker: Len Lehman - Rock Gardening 101

We will meet at the church since the library is not available. Members to bring snacks: A-H.

* Feb 21 - Northland Library, 2:00 PM, 300 Cumberland Road, 412-366-8100.

Speaker: Len Lehman - Seed Starting Workshop

Members to bring snacks: I-P

* Mar 13 - Northland Library, 2:00 PM

Speaker: Keith McNeish Topic: Soil the gardener's most precious asset

Members to bring snacks: Q-Z

* Apr 17 - Northland Library, 2:00 PM

Speaker: Carol A. Knock Topic: Sedum

Members to bring snacks: A-H

* May 1 – Soergel Orchards, Allegheny Chapter's Annual Rock Garden Plant Show and Sale, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Chairs: Debra Meyer, Carol Przyborski and Lyn Lang

* May 15 - National Aviary, 2:00 PM

Speaker: Brent Heath, owner Brent and Becky's Bulbs Topic: Lovely Little Bulbs Minor Bulbs with Major Impact

Members to bring snacks: I-P

* June 26 - Breakfast at DJs Greenhouse, Transfer, PA, 9:30 AM

Speaker: Kokedamas Workshop

· July - No meeting

* August 21 - Member's Only Picnic, Pine Township Community Park, 2:00 PM

* September 11 - Northland Library, 2:00 PM

Speaker: Joseph Tychonievich Topic: The World of Rock Gardening

Members to bring snacks: Q-Z

* October 15 – Annual Awards Banquet, St John's Lutheran Church, 5:00 PM

* November 20 - Northland Library, 2:00 PM

Speaker: Mark C. Tebbitt, Ph.D. Topic: Plant Hunting in the Andes

Members to bring snacks: I - P

* December 8 – Seed Packaging, Northland Library, 9:00 AM

Allegheny Chapter, Rock Garden Minutes

The February 21, 2016 meeting of the Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society was called to order at Northland Public Library at 2:15 p.m. by Chair Karen Schmidt. There were 37 members and 3 guests in attendance.

The Business Meeting began with the reading of the January 17, 2016 minutes by Dianne Passoth. Jeff Passoth moved and Liz Low seconded that the minutes be approved as read. The motion passed unanimously.

Patty McGuire gave the Treasurer's Report. There were 2 checks written and 2 deposits made. Bonnie Plato moved and Steve Plato seconded that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as received. The motion unanimously passed.

Patty McGuire reviewed the donations the Club had made to various organizations throughout the years. Gina Teams moved and Sandy Feather seconded that the following checks be written:

Western PA Conservancy \$100.00 National Aviary \$100.00 And in lieu of a monetary contribution to the Horticultural Society, that Chair Karen Schmidt look into purchasing a stepping stone (the price not to exceed \$100.00). The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

Lorraine Duffola moved and Sandy Feather seconded that the Business Meeting be adjourned. With no objections, the meeting ended at 2:35 p.m.

Following a refreshment break and the raffle, and prior to the seed starting workshop, Len Lehman presented an extremely informative program on seed germination. He reminded us that starting seeds is good for the human spirit. It allows us to work with miracles of nature. With that thought in mind, everyone proceeded to get their hands dirty!

Dianne Passoth, Secretary



The Chapter's Aviary Rock Garden ~ Al Deurbrouck

On March 10th, and the dedicated maintenance crew of the Allegheny Chapter of the was out in force. This was our first visit to our garden this year.

The garden looked great, no doubt the result of our mild winter. A few plants were in bloom including two LOVELY Helleborus orientalis, a crocus, and a couple more that I have forgotten.

As always, a few passers-by stopped and told us how much they enjoyed the garden. Obviously, even the most beautiful perennial garden does not provide such beauty year-around.



Among the colorful plants were Sedum Angelina--a multicolored succulent plant, rock hardy and quick to form a significant ground cover that is easy to keep in bounds--and a number of sempervivums of varied color and form. Perhaps the most outstanding plant in the garden is the bright golden dwarf conifer Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Golden Mantle'.

Our next meeting will be on March 24th at 10:00, and from there on until winter we will meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month.



Come join us for a lot of fresh air and satisfying team work!

<u>Show and Sale – Help Needed!</u>

~ Lyn Lang

The Show and Sale on May 1st is our only public display and fundraiser, and member participation is vital to its success. There are many ways Allegheny Chapter members can contribute. First and foremost, consider bringing a trough, container, or cut flower arrangement of rock garden plants you have grown. The show is our opportunity to exhibit the beautiful and sometimes challenging plants we grow in our rock gardens and troughs.

The Show

See the show rules and classes in this newsletter for details. Carl Gehenio's article offers some useful tips on

selecting and preparing your entries. Also, you can visit the Allegheny Chapter's website http://nargspittsburgh.wix.com/rock-garden to see photographs of previous shows and the variety of exhibits. Member Jim Bucklad's show photographs are located by selecting *More* and then *Photographs* on the Chapter's home page.

Remember that 'Hot Coals' iris rhizome your received last fall? It was chosen by Len Lehman for members to grow and bring to this year's show. If your 'Hot Coals' is planted in the ground, now is the time to transplant it into a container and get it ready to display in the Chair's Choice class.

If you are the 2015 winner of a traveling trophy, please bring your plaque to this year's show. Traveling trophies will be displayed for the public during the show and then collected for engraving. Awards for 2016 show winners will be presented at the annual banquet in October.

The Sale

Unusually warm weather has brought us daffodil blooms and early growth on our alpine and rock garden plants. Now is the perfect time to divide and pot up some of those clumps that may be encroaching on their neighbors and donate the extra divisions to the plant sale. Extra plants from last year's seed starting workshop may be donated, as well as seedlings that have self-sown in your garden.



Show and Sale – Help Needed! (continued)

Divisions and seedlings of rock garden suitable plants for the sale need to be potted up by the first week in April to allow time for the roots to recover from transplanting. All sale plants must be identified at least by genus, and a label containing genus and species or cultivar name is preferred. You may contact sale co-chair Lyn Lang with any questions about plant sale donations.

Help will be needed at Soergel's on Saturday evening, April 30, to set up for the show and sale. The sale will be open to the public on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and your participation all morning, afternoon, or the full day will be greatly appreciated.

Many hands will be needed early Sunday morning starting at 8 a.m. to mark prices and place donated plants on the sale tables. Sale plants will be arranged by light requirements—sun, shade, and part sun—and members will be needed throughout the day to assist the public in selecting plants that will thrive in their garden conditions. If you are not familiar with the many varieties of plants in our sale, this will be an excellent learning opportunity.

Tell Your Friends!

Finally, if you use Facebook and have not yet seen the Allegheny Chapter's page, please visit and "like" our page at https://www.facebook.com/NARGS.AlleghenyChapter. Share our postings with your friends, and direct them to our website to learn all about our group and to get details about the show and sale.

NARGS Allegheny Chapter Annual Rock Garden Plant Show

RULES

- 1. Nonmembers of the Allegheny Chapter of NARGS are encouraged to enter but will not qualify for high cumulative score monies or trophies.
- 2. There are no limits on the number of entries per class.
- 3. The term "rock garden plant" shall mean any plant suitable for the rock garden be it a bog garden, shade garden, native garden, or alpine house.
- 4. All plants for competition must be the property of the entrant and must be in their possession for at least two months (60 days*).
- 5. All plants entered for competition should be clearly labeled, and the names should be displayed. Inaccurate identification shall not be grounds for disqualification.
- 6. The judges are the final authority for awards.
- 7. No exhibit shall be removed from the floor from the time of judging to the close of the show without express permission of the show chair.
- 8. The Allegheny Chapter will not assume responsibility for exhibits left on the tables after the show ends.

CLASSES of ENTRIES

A committee will be available to assist exhibitors in the proper identification and placement of their entries.

Class #1	One pan rock garden plant in flower**		
Class #2	One pan native plant in flower, suitable for the rock garden		
Class #3	One pan primulaceae in flower, including primula and androsace		
Class #4	One pan bulbous or rhizomatous plant in flower, suitable for the rock garden		
Class #5	One pan succulent including sempervivum, sedum and crassulaceae		
Class #6	One pan rock garden plant grown primarily for foliage, including hosta, saxifrage and ferns		
Class #7	One pan dwarf shrub, tree, or conifer		
Class #8	One bowl of cut flowers of rock garden plants, to be judged for quality, delicacy and artistic		
	arrangement		
Class #9	A trough of three or more distinct species rock garden suitable plants arranged for effect		
Class #10	10 Miniature Garden: A trough of three or more distinct species rock garden suitable plants along with		
	accessories arranged to create a miniature garden landscape		
Class #11	Chair's Choice: One pan Chair's Choice plant grown by Allegheny Chapter member for current		
	year's plant show. 2016 Chair's Choice plant: Iris 'Hot Coals'		



AWARDS

Best Plant in Show - Clare Williamson Award

Presented in honor of a former Allegheny Chapter member, given to the entry judged best in show classes 1-8. Winner will receive Best in Show ribbon, traveling trophy, and \$25 Soergel's gift certificate. Trophy will be held for one year and then passed on to the next winner.

Best Trough in Show - Audrey Rauch Award

Selected from classes 9-10. Presented in honor of an Allegheny Chapter member who pioneered the building and planting of troughs in the tri-state area. Winner will receive traveling trophy and \$25 Soergel's gift certificate. Trophy will be held for one year and then passed on to the next winner.

Best Dwarf Tree, Shrub, or Conifer in Show – Connie McKeever Award

Entry judged best in class 7. Presented in honor of an Allegheny Chapter member who grew choice dwarf conifers for many years. Winner will receive traveling trophy and \$25 Soergel's gift certificate. Trophy will be held for one year and then passed on to the next winner.

Chair's Choice Award - 2016 Plant: Iris 'Hot Coals'

Entry judged best in class 11. Winner will receive traveling trophy and \$25 Soergel's gift certificate. Trophy will be held for one year and then passed on to the next winner.

Ribbons – 1st (blue), 2nd (red), 3rd (yellow) if merited in each class. Honorable Mention may be given at the judges' discretion.

HIGH CUMULATIVE SCORES – Soergel's gift certificates: 1st (\$20), 2nd (\$15), 3rd (\$10). Total is based on 5 points for 1st place ribbons, 3 points for 2nd place ribbons, and 1 point for 3rd place ribbons. Also, 5 additional points for best in class plus an additional 5 points for best in show.

AWARDS TABLE will be comprised of the best entry in each class. From these best entries in each class, a Best in Show will be selected. From the best entries in classes 9-10, Best Trough in Show will be selected. Gift certificate awards will be given at the conclusion of the Show.

Trophies will be presented at the Allegheny Chapter's annual awards banquet in October.

One sale plant will be given to any Allegheny Chapter member who enters 3-5 plants, and two sale plants will be given any Allegheny Chapter member who enters six or more.

^{*}The 60-day plant ownership rule was established to limit entries to hardy plants that have been grown by the entrant as opposed to a commercial grower for a minimum of 60 days.

^{**}A pan is any container; a trough is a container that simulates a stone trough.

READYING PLANTS FOR ROCK GARDEN SHOW by Carl Gehenio

The Annual Rock Garden Plant Show and Sale is only several weeks in the offing. Though there are some plants that may take a year or more of coddling and special care to have them in prime condition for a given show, there are very many that can still be selected and groomed for a blue ribbon in the time frame remaining before the event.

Classes that require plants to be in flower may be a little tricky due to vagaries in the weather

and the timing of the show. However, there are many that may be in prime condition that can be safely lifted, potted, and groomed within a few days of the show. Fibrous rooted sorts respond best to this treatment. Most *primulas*, many species of which are in peak flowering condition at this time do not resent lifting and potting. Huge multi-stemmed 'cabbages' of the candelabra types, such as *P. japonica* may require a correspondingly huge pot while those of the efarinose section can be comfortably accommodated in a tiny 2 ½" or 3" pot. Other easy do-gooders are the micro mini *phlox* hybrids which bloom right on target most years. Sizeable cushions from the garden (4" to 6") or the previous year cuttings in a 3" pot can well be blue ribbon contenders. A list of other do-gooders is quite extensive.



Tap rooted plants such as *pulsatilla* are difficult to accommodate on short notice and may need a whole growing season to attain a presentable condition. Bulbous and rhizomatous plants are always more appealing when presented in groupings of three or more rather than single stem specimens.

Do not overlook the common and ordinary. Properly groomed and presented, they can gain premier awards. *Houstonia caerulea* – growing abundantly along roadsides, pastures, and open woodlands took blue ribbons in the wild flower class several times.

Some plants can be forced to flower several days or weeks earlier than normal by supplying extra light and warmth. I tried this with *Arisaema candidissimum* but there was no way it could be induced to come along early.

READYING PLANTS FOR ROCK GARDEN SHOW (continued)

Non-flowering plants grown for their form and foliage are well within the range of possible entries for every member. *Sempervivums* and *sedums*, ferns, dwarf trees and shrubs, and conifers are foolproof and can be readied early or just before show day.



PRESENTATION - This is where even mediocre plant species can outshine a 'crème de la crème'.

Starting with the container in which the entry is presented—clay, plastic, ceramic, wood, etc.—it should be of a size that comfortably accommodates the plant selected. All good plants deserve a good clean container.



Grooming is another essential for presenting a plant at its best. With some it is a simple matter while with others it can be tedious and time consuming. Off color foliage and spent flowers should be removed. Inspect for any possible insect presence or damage. Some preliminary grooming can and should be done on the likes of ferns, where if done near show time the tender fronds can be easily damaged.

When the final grooming is finished, any exposed soil surface should be covered with a complimentary topping that is fitting for the plant. Use moist peat moss or rubbed leaf litter for woodland or shade lovers, pine needles for conifers and some acid lovers, and natural tone gravel for a wide range of alpines. Steer clear of the brightly colored aquarium gravels and the glaring, white decorative stone mulches. Small flat stone inserted under small cushion plants can be both attractive and beneficial to the plant. Labels should be clearly printed on a horizontal plane and inserted at the edge of the container.

The day before the show, soak the plants and allow for any excess water to drain before packing entries in sturdy containers for transport to the venue.

Sunday, May 1, 2016: Free Gardening Demonstration Schedule

Presented by Garden Experts at Soergel Orchards' Shelter and Barn in Wexford, PA

Time	Presenters	Topic
9:30 AM	Randy Soergel, Soergel Orchards	Selection and Culture of Hardy Dwarf Conifers
10:30 AM	Linda Henry and Dawn Lovic, All Things Small, Greenville, Mercer County, and Randy Soergel	Legends of Fairy Gardens* followed by How to Plant a True Fairy Garden, with plant selection suggestions
11:30 AM	Jim Kalka, Daffodil & Hosta Society of Western PA	Hosta Grooming Clinic. Proper Techniques to Use When Entering the Upcoming Hosta Show, June 6 at Soergel's
1:00 PM	Linda Henry and Dawn Lovic, All Things Small, Greenville, Mercer County, and Randy Soergel	Legends of Fairy Gardens* followed by How to Plant a True Fairy Garden, with plant selection suggestions
2:00 PM	Jim Kalka, Daffodil & Hosta Society of Western PA	Dividing Herbaceous Perennials including Hostas

A favorite for the kids! Linda Henry, Dawn Lovic, and Randy Soergel present the legends of fairies, and how to plant true fairy gardens. Fairy garden items will be available for purchase from Linda and Dawn's shop, All Things Small, on Rt. 58 in Greenville, PA.

Expert gardener Randy Soergel will close the presentation with his matter-of-fact lesson on how to plant and maintain a "true" fairy garden using an array of small plants and objects to create a miniature magical environment.

Don't miss this special event! If you have a small lot or would just like to create an intimate garden area, consider rock gardening. This is a great opportunity to meet members of the Allegheny Chapter of NARGS and learn about the unique plants rock gardeners routinely grow in this area. Chapter membership is free to new members for the remainder of the year. Monthly meetings are usually held at the Northland Public Library. The Allegheny Chapter maintains a beautiful public rock garden that they built in 2011 by the National Aviary in a city park on the North Side and is the largest public rock garden in Pennsylvania. It is located by the Bald Eagle cage.

Visit the Allegheny Chapter's website:

(http://nargspittsburgh.wix.com/rock-garden) for details on upcoming events, informative newsletters, and a photo gallery.

Anyone may enter an original plant display in the juried show. Entry rules and entry classes will be available at the Rock Garden Chapter's website (http://nargspittsburgh.wix.com/rock-garden) in the newest Alpine Newsletter.

2016 Daffodil & Hosta Society of W PA Bus Trip

Southern Michigan and Toledo, OH Area

June 11 and 12, 2016



The bus will pick up in Butler and Cranberry Twp. Area.

Cost \$200.00; includes bus, room, admission and meals.

Hosta Hillside at Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, MI

Hallson Gardens in Cement City, MI

Tom Schmid private gardens, Jackson, MI

Jim & Sandy Wilkins private garden, Napoleon, MI

Toledo Botanical Garden, Toledo, OH

Simpson Garden, Bowling Green, OH

Charlie Harper private garden, Bowling Green, OH



Allegheny Chapter Membership

The Allegheny Chapter welcomes new member, **Joanne van Linden,** who joined our group at the February seed starting workshop.



We look forward to seeing you at future rock gardening meetings and events!

Last Call for 2016 Membership Renewals

The Chapter's recent programs have been very well attended, and nearly everyone has renewed his/her membership for 2016. Thank you!

If your membership has lapsed, please consider renewing today to remain eligible for members-only benefits and activities. The annual fees are \$10 for individuals and \$15 for a family membership.

Make checks payable to: NARGS Allegheny Chapter

For those interested in joining the national NARGS, membership

information is available online: www.nargs.org

Registrations Available

2016 Garden and Landscape Symposium

Saturday, April 23, 2016 8:00 AM—4:00 PM Shady Side Academy, Fox Chapel

The *Garden and Landscape Symposium* features presentations by expert horticulturists. This year's speakers are: Claudia West, author, North Creek Nursery; Thomas Rainer, author, Landscape Architect; Laura Deeter, Ph.D., Ohio State University; Kelly Norris, author, Horticulture Manager.

Further information: 412-263-1000 or Extension.psu.edu/Allegheny

Western PA Garden Marketplace

8:00 AM-3:00 PM

Daffodil Show: 10:30 AM—3:00 PM

Ice Rink at Shady Side Academy Senior School Campus

Free and open to the public

The Garden Marketplace features new, unique, hard-to-find perennials, annuals, fruit and vegetable plants and shrubs, and garden books, tools and accessories. Entirely indoors.

Parking is convenient and plentiful.

Come shop the Marketplace!







2016 NARGS Annual Meeting Steamboat Springs, CO June 22-27th



--- SOLD OUT ---

What Makes Northwest Colorado so Special? By Mike Kintgen, Rocky Mountain Chapter-NARGS

Some people would say it's the Champagne powder that falls on the ski slopes in the winter, others would say it's the curse the Utes supposedly placed on the Yampa valley, but wildflower lovers would say it's the sheer magnitude of displays and the variety. Whatever the reason, Northwest Colorado has been drawing humans for millennia to partake in its natural beauty and restorative settings.

Northwest Colorado is special since it lies at the meeting point of several biomes: flora from the South Rockies form the backbone of the flora, with a broad stroke of Great Basin flora brushing through the lower valleys and steppes. The Great Plains flora sweep in from the Northeast and rub up against the Park Range.

At higher elevations, flora from the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies can be found hundreds of miles south of their normal range.

Trillium ovatum, Rhododendron albiflorum and Mimulus lewisii are a few of the flagship plants from the NW

biome; mixed into the rest of the landscape is a cast of classic western flowers from bright blue penstemon, to scarlet paintbrush (Castilleja), to scarlet gilia (Ipomopsis) and yellow composites of infinite variety.

The conference opens the afternoon of the 22nd in Denver with lectures. On Thursday, participants have the option of driving on their own or taking a van trip to Steamboat Springs. The conference resumes in the evening with plant and book sales, and 2 lectures by internationally-known Johan Nilsson and Nick Courtens. National superstars Kelly Norris and Jim Lochlear will be speaking Friday night, followed by Saturday and Sunday hikes.

The Sunday night lecture will be by the very special and heart-warming Marcela Ferreyra from Patagonia. This will be her first lecture to an audience from outside of Colorado in the United States.

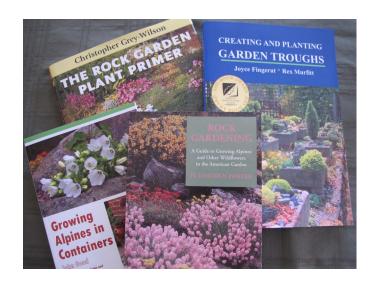
Garden tours and visits to Denver Botanic Garden's renowned alpine collection, along with the fabulous Yampa River Botanic Park and several wonderful private gardens in the Steamboat area, will round out the conference.

For details and information visit the NARGS website, https://www.nargs.org/2016-annual-general-meeting-steamboat-springs-colorado or the conference Facebook page www.facebook.com/2016NARGSmeeting. Direct questions to kintgem@botanicgardens.org

Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society The Ruth Young Library 2015 Book List

Patty McGuire, Librarian

MEMBERS ONLY SERVICE



The list of books available for loan to Allegheny Chapter members has been updated and placed on the Chapter's website for your review. If you would like to borrow one or more books from our Ruth Young Library, visit the website at

http://nargspittsburgh.wix.com/rock-garden . From there you can make your selection and then click the on-screen envelope to send Patty McGuire your request via email.

NOTE - To request a book, please email Patty McGuire . Patty is our librarian and treasurer. She has all of the books contained in the Chapter's library. We periodically publish the list of available books that members can check out.

She will bring your specific book request to the requested meeting you will be attending. Please make the job of librarian easier by returning borrowed books promptly.

Thank you!