

# Crossing Over by David Jewell, Ontario

No, I didn't die this summer or have a near death experience but I really must say that I think I was close to Heaven or at least got to see what it might look like.

By nature, I am a bit of a homebody and don't travel far and wide like I used to. Maybe I am getting old or I could just be set in my ways. This summer, I jumped at a chance to venture off and I am sure glad I did. That fateful email that read "hey, why don't you come to the Region 2 summer meeting" was all it took.

The journey began at 1 AM in the morning with my alarm blasting in my ear and waking me from a semi-deep sleep; I had been trying to sleep since 6 pm with varied success. My car was preloaded and full of gas so I loaded up my last minute items and jumped in the car. My ETA for Ohio was around 10 am; getting older (geez I can't believe I said it) makes driving at night less desirable but as the sun began to rise I knew I was approaching the border.

I'm not sure about you but I always find border crossing a nerve-wracking experience. My first shot at the border took me to the wrong lane with a man screaming and waving his arms at me indicating I was in the wrong lane so I backed up and approached from the other side. I have never considered myself a suspicious or shady looking person but I guess the border guard thought otherwise. I had nothing to fear other than the fact my bladder was full; I had a phyto for the plants that I was taking down and there was nothing suspicious in my car. "Shut your car off, take nothing out", I was told... so that's what I did. I guess they needed to communicate better because after ripping my car apart a man came in with my envelope of American money handed it to me and told me I was required to take that with me. I sat in a dirty, enclosed area where I was refused access to relieve my swelling bladder filled with coffee to keep me reasonably awake from the drive. After about 45 minutes I was called up and a pill bottle was shoved in my face. "What's this?" barked the guard. I couldn't see through the dark blue bottle and he refused to

open it to let me look inside nor could I touch it. Finally he tipped it enough that I could make out an orchid seed pod someone had given me long past in a bottle which got buried in the center console of my car. This was it. Was I going to be refused entry because they think I am a criminal seed smuggler?

I apologized and told him that I had no idea it was in there; he just glared at me and walked away. Time ticked on as I watched tearful housewives emerge from the back obviously upset while their children and families waited out front. Then came my time.... I was called up and interrogated as to why I was entering the USA. They kept asking the address where I was going and I kept on saying "I don't know-- the information was all in my car". You could see the frustration on the man's face. Finally, they allowed me to go to my car to get the registration forms and information for the Region 2 summer meeting. I exited the building and walked towards my car. The guard looked at me with a glint in his eye and asked, "You got the paper work for those plants?", pointing to my bin with plants in it. I could tell he was hoping that I didn't have a phyto so he could



have my new introductions and other plants, but with a smirk on my face I looked him in the eye and said ..."Why yes I do". With a shocked look on his face he followed me back into the office where I produced the paperwork and he congratulated me on doing the right thing. Within seconds the whole tune changed and I was allowed to pee and go on my way an hour and a half late.

I met a friend of mine, Eric Simpson, at a McDonalds just off I75 and made my way to my first stop, Bob Faulkner's garden [photos of Faulkner's garden gate and a Faulkner seedling below left]. A breathtaking display of the latest and greatest in diploid patterned seedlings spread across the property as I received my personalized tour of his garden. Leaving Bob's garden, it was time to get some lunch before I headed off to the garden of Mike and Sandy Holmes. My trusty GPS in hand led me to a beautiful house in the middle of a subdivision



(hmmmm) with little back yard (hmmmm), a few daylilies (HMMMMM). Well, it was their house but not their garden. Luckily, their phone number was close at hand and within a few minutes I was quickly relocated to their proper address for the garden. Driving in, I was in total awe. I had never seen anything so breathtaking as fields of daylilies. Had I died and gone to heaven? I was afforded the luxury of walking through the property seeing what Sandy and Mike had been working on and even the ability to pick some seedlings out of the acres of flowers to bring back home to Canada. [Above, left to right: David Jewell, Sandy Holmes, Eric Simpson. Photo by Ed Krauss]

As late afternoon approached, like a

daylily bloom, I began to show signs of wear and tear and it was time to leave. I headed to the hotel to check in and rest up for what was to be a big weekend and an early morning the next day.

The auxiliary bus tour started early the next morning and we were off and running. The bus headed back towards Sandy and Mike Holmes' and Kim McCutcheon's gardens. Equally as breathtaking the next day, I didn't look much in Sandy and Mike's seedling beds although I heard the sweet siren calling my name and beckoning me to buy more... I bought introductions instead, there was also quite the spread of food and some great treats for the morning. Nobody needed breakfast before the trip. I have to say I could spend hours or even days at that garden but before you knew it, we were off to Amity Abloom, the Garden of Charles and Cynthia Lucius, a massive sprawling garden. The well-manicured garden featured some interesting sculptures. My favorite piece was a massive horse



[above] which appeared to be made out of steel. Having toured the morning away, our next stop was for lunch at Der Dutchman. For those that were at the Region 2 Regional last year you will remember it as a German buffet with a nice gift shop attached.

Our next stop was Jamie and Diana Gossard's Heavenly Gardens [top, right] which was one of my most anticipated stops. True to its name, the heavens opened up just as we were getting on the bus as if someone was throwing buckets of water from the sky. I knew there would be trouble. By the time we arrived at the garden, the skies had cleared, leaving behind a series of mud puddles and a slightly washed garden. Still plenty to see, I toured around but



did not make it to the back; perhaps Jamie had created a moat to hide his latest and greatest. I caught up on sleep while on my way back to the convention hotel, and upon arrival, daylily city was in full swing with a host of vendors, games, auctions all under way. Most of all there was a sales table, organized in the most amazing way from lowest to highest priced items. I started at the highest price end and worked my way backwards, not wanting to miss anything great and I surely didn't.

The next day was the big event, so again I arose early. I'm sure I had hit the fun bus good or bad I am not sure; Nikki Schmidt and Kim McCutcheon were the bus captains. Our first stop was the gardens of JR & Donna Blanton and the hybridizing garden of Tom and Rita Isgro.

We were warned not to go to the back where the Isgro garden was because of all the rain and the soggy soil. Not to be put out, I ventured back and gladly found one of the most



beautiful seedlings [below] I have seen in ages (with the exception of my own of course). Once again, the food! I can't believe all the Region 2 people don't weigh in at 500 plus pounds. The next stop was the buffet at Dan Bachman's. Foolishly, he let his wife put on a spread like I have never seen before which filled his entire garage. I think he had some

daylilies that I might have passed by on the way to all the fresh baked goodies.

Now, I will say every great event does have a hiccup or two, and the only thing I can really say was off was the lunch on Saturday; we arrived for lunch and to our surprise, we were there before the food was. Most of us wandered to a nearby antique mall and when we arrived back for lunch, well, it still wasn't there. Lunch finally arrived about 10 minutes before our departure. All the buses were backed up and people were waiting. It was ok though, I had eaten plenty at the gardens. The afternoon was rounded out with the gardens of the Ruoffs, the Gratz garden and the Braunstein garden which was one of the most beautiful manicured gardens and was the host of the Englerth seedling bed. I only wish we would have had more time to spend there.

Returning to the hotel, the prices of the daylilies in the boutique had been slashed... grab grab grab. A quick rest and then it was back to the show with an amazing banquet and speaker after dinner followed by a live auction.

Sleep, get up, tour... the next day was back to the gardens of Bob Faulkner and Tom Polston. Bob's garden was spit and polished up and you could see the pleasure in his eyes sharing his garden with the group. The Polston-Sterling garden [above] was another of my anticipated stops and it did not disappoint. It was a menagerie of concrete, animals and daylilies that was well worth the visit. I only wish I could have pried a toothy double pink seedling [opposite page] out of his hands. The bus loaded and I knew that was it, time to say goodbye to my new daylily friends and continue my



great adventures south of the border. The back of my car was loaded with

daylilies as I headed south to Kentucky to visit a garden I had only dreamed of. I spent the night in a hotel and at the crack of dawn I ventured to Daylily World .... or so I thought. Two lanes,



side by side, I picked the first one, I heard it was an adventure up the lane but when I arrived at the top of the hill after a long slow drive, all I saw was a trailer, a hound dog and some odd farm animals. I knew I was not at daylily world. I quickly spun around with the faint sound of banjos playing in my head

and quickly made it to the road and up the next driveway... I had arrived at nirvana.

I have to say that David and Mort were amazing hosts and to get a personalized tour of their gardens was a special treat. David walked me through the gardens, then I was driven in a golf cart around the property. I remember looking at David and saying, "This reminds me of a ride at Disney World". [Below, part of Daylily World]

As noon approached I knew it was time to leave and head for home. After all, it was Canada Day and I should be in Canada at some point for it. I drove



north remembering the fond memories of places I had been, my daylilies were swaying in the back seat of my car. As I reached the border crossing, my heart began to pound after the terrible experience I had going down. I reached the gate, I was there inches from home; what would happen? A friendly Canadian face greeted me and asked the usual questions: how long, how much and then the fatal question... What's in the back seat? "Plants!!" I said proudly and handed him my phyto. I am sure he really didn't know what it was but he read it over, handed it back to me and exclaimed "Have a Nice Day".

It wasn't a just a great day, it was a great 5 days and 5 days I won't soon forget.[Photos by David Jewell unless otherwise specified.]

## AHS Region 4 Local Organizations

### **Association des Amateurs d'Hémérocailles du Québec (l'AAHQ)**

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### **Canadian Hemerocallis Society (CHS)**

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