

# Prairie Hosta Herald

## Illinois Prairie Hosta Society

Promoting knowledge and interest in Hostas, fostering the development of new and improved Hosta varieties and encouraging cultivation and usefulness of Hostas in landscapes.

### IPHS March 8th Spring 2014 Meeting

#### IPHS Membership

Single membership is \$15 per year,  
Family membership is \$20 per year.

Monthly meeting, March to Sep-  
tember

Contact:

Carol McClure, 1413 S. Western  
Ave, Champaign, IL 61821

Check out our Web Site:

[http://  
www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com](http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com)

**First Spring Meeting – Saturday, March 8, 2014 10:00 AM until Noon at the U of I Extension Office, 801 N. Country Fair Drive, Champaign .  
Potluck brunch with dishes made by you!**

**Program: Tom Micheletti, “Hostas in the Landscape” Tom’s presentation will cover Hostas in general, starting with the various color combinations, leaf sizes, shapes, textures, etc. It will include information on using Hostas in the garden as well as some general care issues. Don’t forget to bring your questions and let’s think Spring!**

You may already know Tom: he’s been around, including talking to the IPHS a few years back. Tom is a retired middle school Technology teacher whose interest in Hostas began when he was first given “the green Hosta, the green one with a white edge, and the green one with the white in the center” (during the days of Hosta Innocence). Through an article in a gardening magazine, he discovered there was an American Hosta Society (AHS), joined it in 1990, and eventually became its president. Through the AHS he joined the Midwest Regional Hosta Society in 1991 and served as their president as well.

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### Remarks by Ruth Walker

As I sit here looking out my window I’m thinking I need to mow the beautiful green grass, pull some pesky weeds, mulch a little and plant a few hostas, at least 20, that I just bought from IPHS plant sale. It looks like a full day of work – sunny blue sky and around 80 degrees.

Then I hear the buzzing sound – thought that was a bumble bee – NO, it’s my alarm clock and I am awakened from my lovely dream. I get up, look out the window and see the beautiful grass – opps – white ground and the snowflakes have come again and we have over a foot of snow in the yard. The temperature is -12, the wind is blowing and it is time to turn over and go back to

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## Officers and Committees

### Officers for 2014

**President—Ruth Walker**  
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 Philanthropic—Susan Weber  
 Plant Raffle—Liza Weber  
 Annual Plant Sale—Susan Krumm  
 Publicity— Barb Schroeder  
 Annual Trip—Rick Schroeder

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The MRHS holds a Winter Scientific Meeting the last week of January each year and Tom organized that event for sixteen years. Eventually he started a mail-order business and began selling his Hostas, which led to his joining the American Hosta Growers Association; he is currently on its board as Publicity Director. This Hostophile Extraordinaire also founded the Northern Illinois Hosta Society in 1992 and served as its first president as well. In 2013 he was the recipient of the Alex J. Summers Award for distinguished service to the AHS, its most prestigious award. Tom currently has over 800 different varieties of Hostas in his collection which he sells through his business The Hosta Patch. We're very fortunate to have this friendly Man-in-Demand come to Champaign to speak to us!

Come join us for a kickoff of the gardening season.

## 2013 Meeting Schedule

**March 8, 2014 – 10:00 AM – U of I Extension office, 801 N. Country Fair Drive, Champaign—Tom Micheletti “Hostas in the Landscape”. This will be a Brunch Potluck Meeting**

**April 13, 2014 - 2:00 PM – U of I Extension office, Country Fair Drive, Diann Thoma “Hot Tips and Big Tricks for Gardeners” (Date/Time subject to change).**

**May 17, 2014 – 8:00 AM – 2 :00 PM – Plant Sale at Schroeder’s, 1819 Coventry Dr. Lee Coates will be selling Japanese Maples.**

**May 17, 2014 – 5:00 PM – Potluck at the Schroeders – Lee Coates “Growing Japanese Maples in your Hosta Garden”.**

**June 7, 2014— Wisconsin Car Pool trip to Land of Giants Hosta Farm and other locations.**

**June 11-14, 2014 AHS convention in Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

**June 22, 2014— Brenda Mills, program TBA**

**June 26—28, 2014—Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention in Green Bay, Wisconsin**

**July 20, 2014—Location TBA, Trisha Locke “Hosta Leaves in Floral Arrangements”.**

**August—Date, Time and Location TBA**

**September 21, 2014— 1:00 PM Annual Dinner to be held at the Urbana Country Club with Kai-zad Irani presenting ”Inner Sanctum—Creating Healing Environments**

*(Continued from page 1)*

sleep. Soon the daffodils will be blooming and it will be time to get up and work in the yard.

I am like you; I can't wait to get started in the yard again. Our IPHS schedule is filling up with visits to great gardens, plant sales and great programs for all. I am looking forward to seeing all of you again, sharing new ideas and possibilities that will happen this year in our “gardens of hope”.

## Spring Hosta Tips by Bob Solberg

Foliage Emergence Begins March - April

Fertilization: Apply Osmocote 2 weeks after emergence, or apply granular 10-10-10 mid-March, or begin applications of liquid fertilizer mid-March.

Irrigation: As needed to maintain moist soil, but not wet. Remember this Bob Solberg rule:

If you aren't going to water -- DON'T START. If you are going to water -- DON'T STOP.

Protection: Protect from late frosts with light-weight cloth, pots, boxes or newspaper.

Division: Not the best time, since roots are not growing until after leaves form.

Pests: Begin slug control before foliage emerges

## 2014 Membership Renewal

The 2014 membership is due by the end of April so please complete the renewal form that was sent to you via email or snail mail by Carol McClure. Remember to update your membership form with your email address. If you have not renewed yet you will receive one more issue of the newsletter in April and that will be your last. We look forward to seeing you again at meetings and be sure to come to this one and get signed up for 2014.

All newsletters are sent as a PDF file via email so you receive a full color issue. For those that do not have email, or do not want the society to have your email address, your newsletter will be sent in black and white via snail mail. Color is so much better that why would you want black and white for hostas and gardening?



Send your renewal to: Carol McClure, 1413 S. Western Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821

## U of I Arboretum and IPHS Hosta Garden

In January 2010 Susan Weber inquired about the area leading up to the Japan House to be a Hosta Garden. She set up a date to do a walk through and discussed design and plant donations with Bill Kruidenier, Director of the U of I Arboretum.

In the months that followed Deb Guardia, Mary Ann Metz and Karen Meyer became key players. In the fall of 2013 Mike Weber and I decided we might have enough plants to meet the requirements to be an American Hosta Society National Display Garden. The requirements were: be a public garden, minimum of 100 different registered and labeled cultivars, have an educational theme, must be able to post AHS information, must be well maintained and must have some method of permanent care.

We were a public garden. The University of Illinois has set up a 501C3 tax deductible fund for us, <http://arboretum.illinois.edu/involved/give.html>, agreed to the well maintained and permanent care of the garden in the event the IPHS was no longer able and agreed to post AHS information on the sign positioned at our garden. Mike, Rick and I built a database of plant names and checked whether they were registered or not and found we had over 100, so that requirement was met. Rick and I labeled all the plants and prepared a map. Susan already had planned an educational and aesthetics theme. "The goal is to show the public how a hosta garden can be put together to give visual appeal as well as educate the public about Hostas. The Hosta of the Year plants are spread around the garden to give the public an idea of some Hostas that are easy to grow as well as available in garden centers. Botanically correct signage and labels lists the cultivar name along with if a Hosta of the Year." So by September, 2013 we had met all the requirements.

I updated our web site <http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com> and started the case to ask the American Hosta Society for the designation. This was finished in November and

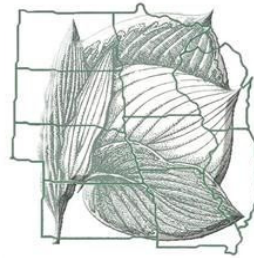
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## Upcoming Hosta Conventions—2014

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention sponsored by the Green and Gold Hosta Society of Northern Wisconsin on June 26 – 28, 2014. The Radisson Hotel and Conference Center will be the headquarters hotel. For the latest details, schedules, registration sheet and updates go to <http://greenandgoldhosta.org/2014-convention.html>

The American Hosta Society 2014 Convention will be sponsored by the Harshbarger Hosta Society of Cedar Rapids, Iowa on June 11-14, 2014 held June 13 to 15, 2013. <http://harshbargerhostasociety.weebly.com>

We will be listing more information in future issues. Be sure to put this date on your calendar so you can attend as these conventions are relative close to us. The 2015 AHS Convention will be in North Carolina and the 2015 MRHS Convention will be in Dubuque, IA.



## Midwest Regional Hosta Society

The Midwest Regional Hosta Society represents Region 5 of the American Hosta Society that includes 9 states. Our mission is to promote education, research, development and enjoyment of Hosta.

Membership in the society is \$20.00 for 2 years, which includes two issues per year of the newsletter. This publication reports on events and information on Hostas in general.

Please mail a check made payable to **MRHS** to:

Kristine James  
523 E Calhoun St.  
Woodstock, IL 60098

along with Name, Address, phone, and email (Most correspondence is by email). For questions email [MRHS.Hosta@gmail.com](mailto:MRHS.Hosta@gmail.com).

## 2014 Hosta of the Year H. 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd'

'Abiqua Drinking Gourd' was introduced in 1989 by Walden West and Chuck Purtymun and is a 'Tokudama' x *H. sieboldiana* hybrid. Once established, it is very easy to grow. Slugs, heat, humidity and even drought don't seem to bother this plant. It will accept light shade to deep shade. It is a slow grower, but when mature it reaches 16 to 18 inches high and 24 to 36 inches wide. Creamy-white flowers appear in early to midsummer, but the real attraction of this hosta is the foliage. Blue-green, 8 by 8 inch, heavily textured leaves with a fascinating, rounded cup shape up to 3 inches deep that trap rain-water beautifully! After a rain, 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd' will sparkle with small pools of water.

The American Hosta Growers Association established the Hosta of the Year in 1996. It is selected by a vote of AHGA members. Award winning hostas are good garden plants in all regions of the country, are widely available in sufficient supply and retail for about \$15 in the year of selection.



**Our IPHS Friends—be sure to visit them**



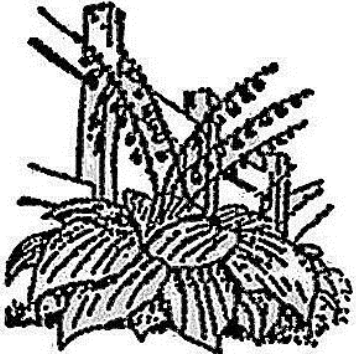
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**Sandy Mason – Things you shouldn't say to a hosta gardener:**  
"Surprise, I cleaned the hosta garden for you and here are all of your plant labels."  
"Good news honey, the dog just dug a new hosta bed for you."  
"Good news honey, the rabbits have pruned your hostas again."

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## What Makes a Good Hosta Great

Hosta College 2013

a presentation by Bob Solberg

*By Karen Strider-Iames, Miami Valley Hosta Society*

Bob Solberg, a popular teacher and vendor at the Great Lakes Region Hosta College, shared a list of traits that he feels makes a hosta great. He is a hosta hybridizer and owner of Green Hill Farm, Inc. in Franklinton, North Carolina.

While there are many good hostas in the 8,000 named hostas, Solberg feels only a few are truly “great.” He said ‘Sum and Substance’ is a truly great hosta: big and showy, and recognizable, even to many non-hosta people. It survives in many locations. ‘Guacamole,’ introduced by Solberg, is another great hosta. He also mentioned ‘Parhelion’ that he grows in a plastic pot inside a concrete pot.

He asked the class, “What’s your favorite hosta?” One class member mentioned ‘Victory.’ Solberg said that is a good hosta, but the scapes can go crazy. Another class member said ‘Rainforest Sunrise,’ which Bob explained can get a fungus in June.

Someone else said they like ‘Paradigm.’ The point is that there are many factors that affect how a hosta looks and grows.

Solberg noted that the American Hosta Society measures greatness through the Benedict Garden Performance Award: based on aesthetics, distinctiveness, multi-seasonal interest, vigor and environmental tolerance.

The American Hosta Growers Association chooses a Hosta of the Year. These grow well in all regions of the country, are widely available and in sufficient supply, and retail for about \$15 in the year of selection.

Here are the traits of greatness, according to Solberg. Using this list will help you look at hostas a little more critically.

### 1. GROWS WELL

An example is ‘Guacamole,’ especially for a beginner. As far as growing, it’s hard to beat. Solberg explained that hybridizers don’t select seedlings based on how well they will grow, so that can be a problem.

### 2. COLOR

This is why you buy a plant and it has been Solberg’s number one trait in selecting seedlings. Colors—such as blues, greens, golds, whites and creams—are the reason we bring a hosta into the garden. ‘Paradigm’ is an example of a hosta with good color. This has the best color combination in his opinion. There’s not much wrong with this plant except the yellow may burn.

Hosta ‘Paradigm’

### 3. VARIATION

Solberg loves blue margined hostas with white or yellow centers. He especially likes ‘High Society,’ a form of ‘June,’ because the color is tremendous. It’s hard to grow and slow, but once you get it there, it’s good.

### 4. ACCESSORIES

Ruffles, puckers, cupping, twisting, petiole and scape color are popular attributes. However, having a lot of accessories doesn’t automatically make it a great hosta. ‘Candy Dish’ is a good example of shiny and cupped leaves. But they’re slow to grow. They don’t draw up the water as well so they can rot. But it’s a beautiful plant.

### 5. LARGE SIZE

‘Sum and Substance’ is a great hosta because of its size. But all big hostas aren’t great. However, Solberg says a big clump of anything is good. ‘Blueberry Waffles’ is a big hosta with nice puckering and beautiful blue color, but the flowers bloom under

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the leaves. The original gets early morning sun, so he suggests giving it an hour or two of sun. But if you want any hosta to get big, don't let it get too hot.

#### 6. IDENTIFIABLE

Solberg calls it recognizability. 'June,' 'Sum and Substance,' and 'Guacamole' are very recognizable. 'Curly Fries' and 'Blue Mouse Ears' are also recognizable, although smaller.

#### 7. FROM A GREAT HYBRIDIZER?

Solberg said that any of us could find a sport that will be the best hosta ever. Great hostas come from many different sources.

But some people buy hostas based on who hybridized them. Solberg asked the class if any of them buy hostas based on who hybridized them. A few said they did and mentioned Mary Chastain, Mildred Seaver and Solberg as being among their favorite hybridizers.

#### 8. GENETICS

Solberg believes there's a huge gap between what hybridizers produce and what consumers buy. 'Beet Salad' is a fascinating hosta for hybridizers because it has a little red edge on the outside of the leaf and passes it on to its children. But it's not the best plant for a garden because of slugs and it's not the most attractive hosta. But for a hybridizer, it's a great hosta.

#### 9. NAME RECOGNITION

A bad name can ruin a great hosta and a great name can make a good hosta great. Solberg thinks 'Sum and Substance' is one of the best names ever. And 'Blue Mouse Ears' may be the best name ever. Once they put that name on it, they created mouse mania.

#### 10. SERIES OF SPORTS

A great hosta often produces a long line of sports. 'Cameo' is an example.

#### 11. AVAILABILITY

If you can't find it, it's not a great hosta, Solberg said. 'Sum and Substance' is readily available all over. And price is important. If it's too expensive, it's not "available" to you.

#### 12. MARKETING

Marketing matters. Great marketing makes a great hosta. Mostly you look at the pictures. Marketing is mostly by the wholesaler to nurseries and nurseries to collectors. 'Leading Lady' is an example. A great hosta is marketed well. 'Empress Wu' is one of the best marketed hostas. It even has its own website: [www.empresswu.com](http://www.empresswu.com). It has the biggest leaf, but not very blue, and the leaves are not very fancy. Marketing has propelled it to one of the most popular hostas. 'Curly Fries' also is popular because it has been in the media.

#### 13. CELEBRITY

We want a hosta to reach celebrity status and for people to think it is fantastic. 'Sum and Substance' is an example. Solberg says it has faults, too, but we ignore its crazy wild flower scapes. 'Praying Hands' is another celebrity plant.

#### 14. LONGEVITY

Solberg explained how the greatness of a hosta can change over the years. For example, 'Patriot' was the second Hosta of the Year and bumped out all the other white edged hostas. But since the edge burns in a lot of places, some people aren't as enthralled with it as when it first came out.

'Frances Williams' was one of the most popular hostas in the '80s and everybody wanted it—and ignored the brown edges. Now it's not on the popularity poll.

Solberg discussed some other nice hostas:

H. 'Millennium,' wins the "huge lottery." It has interesting color, although not the bluest, and grows

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## American Hosta Society

(Continued from page 7)

fairly fast. It came out in 2000, thus the name. The problem is availability.

H. 'Night Before Christmas' has good color and grows well for a white-centered plant. The scapes aren't bad.

H. 'First Frost' is also a great hosta. It's pretty distinct and still looks good in September. It grows reasonably well. Solberg named it and marketed it, though it is not his plant.

*Via the Michigan Hosta Happenings of the Michigan Hosta Society*

*Editor: Bob also gave this talk at the , and MRHS Winter Scientific 2014 held last month. You should have been there to learn more and see the slides.*

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emailed it to Rob Mortko, Vice President of Member Services; Phyllis Weidman, AHS Display Garden Chair; and Pat Gwidt, Midwest Regional Hosta Society Representative. They approved the application and it was sent to the American Hosta Society Executive Board for their approval. In December 2013 we were awarded the American Hosta Society National Display Garden Status.

We are one of 19 AHS National Display Gardens in the world. We are the second garden in Illinois with other gardens in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Wisconsin and Quebec. To see where they are go to <http://www.americanhostasociety.org> and click on Display Gardens.

We are currently in the planning stages with the University of Illinois to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony in July.



For \$30 per year (\$34 for family) you can join the American Hosta Society because it gives you –

- \* The bi-yearly publication, THE HOSTA JOURNAL, probably one of the best publications you will receive about hostas.

- \* An opportunity to attend national meetings and conventions which offer educational and scientific presentations, garden tours, judge's clinics, buy plants from hosts dealers or the auction and a chance to see the latest and best hosta in the hosta show.

- \* A Biennial AHS Membership Directory

- \* Access to the "Member's Only" section of the AHS Website which includes the November ONLINE JOURNAL listing the summer convention gardens and many other gardening articles.

To learn more and join go to: [www.americanhostasociety.org](http://www.americanhostasociety.org) where you will find an application and mail it to the Membership Secretary listed.

This all would not have been possible without Susan Weber's spearheading and Deb, Gary, Mary Ann, Karen, Mike, and Rick doing the planning and directing. But it would not have happened had not all of the volunteers help dig, plant, pull weeds and sweat (it was hot many work days) to get the garden to this status.

I know I can speak for Ruth Walker, our president, in saying THANK YOU to everyone involved. Without you we would have never accomplished this wonderful achievement. We all should be proud.

*Barb Schroeder, one of the founders of the IPHS and Past President.*



## Wisconsin One or Two Day Trip—June 7 & 8.

As you may remember, last year we did not get enough members to sign up for a two-day bus trip to the Janesville, Wisconsin area. This year I am planning something around the same area but a different way of doing the trip.

This year I am planning a “car pool trip” in which you can buddy up with other IPHS members and make a one-day or two-day trip to the Janesville area. So what is available in that area?

First, I have setup a visit with Jeff Miller and Land of the Giants Hosta Farm located in Milton, just north of Janesville. Jeff has some 200,000 hostas of which most area available for sale and for our visit we will need to know ahead of time if you want a



large number so he can dig early. That said the weekend is also his open house so there will be a number of people visiting that day. Allow 2+ hours for the visit.

Close by to the east is Al's Auto Body and Arboretum in Walworth. In some 10 acres of wooded hills Al has over 100,000 hostas growing with many for sale. I will be coordinating a visit by anyone wishing to stop by.

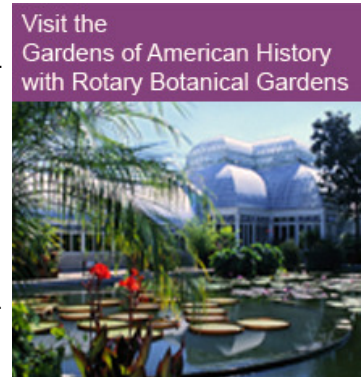
North and west of Janesville near Oregon is The Flower Factory with over 4,000 perennials and hundreds annuals along with hostas available. The acres of greenhouses will take you 1-2 hours to visit plus check out the various garden areas from the rock garden to the train garden.



Slightly west and south is the Stonewall Nursery known for their “Unique Plant Material” of collectable conifers, Japanese Maples and unique trees and shrubs? Looks like visiting this place you need to bring the truck. Remember, these two places grow

items for southern Wisconsin and all should easily grow here.

In Janesville check out the beautiful Rotary Botanical Gardens just off I-90 on the south side of town. Over 6,000 perennials and 3,000 trees and shrubs are in the garden along with the AHS Hosta Display Garden featuring the Eunice Fisher Hosta Collection. There is a fee to visit the botanical garden.



Now that you have looked at all of the great places to visit and shop for plants maybe you want to stay overnight. For that I will be giving you the name and phone number for one of the local hotels that will be the center of your travel with all of these locations being within a 25 mile radius. Barb and I are already planning to make it a 2-day trip, but if you only want to do one day, and maybe a long one at that, then you can pick and choose the locations you want to go. We will be planning to leave Champaign around 7 AM. We will all be able to travel together in a caravan with the first stop at Jeff's, but after that you are on your own to visit and maybe purchase from whatever site suits your tastes.

So put June 7th, and maybe the 8th, on your calendar and plan a visit with us. There will be more later as I firm up some of the stops and there will be a form to sign up but costs will be on your own. In addition, this allows you to check with a friend or friends and see if they want a one or two day trip and work your schedule and costs to fit your needs.

Rick

## *Illinois Prairie Hosta Society*

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Email: rickschro1@gmail.com

We are on the Web at:  
[http://  
www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com](http://www.illinoisprairiehostasociety.com)

### **Spring is coming—really, and the Friendship Plant**

As I write this on the last day of January we finally got to around 30 degrees. If you are younger than the 1977/78 winters you probably don't remember one this bad, but then again we live in the Midwest and can expect these every so often. It will be interesting to see what plants survive but maybe at the same time some of the bugs that affect our gardens will not be around the summer of 2014 – that would be good. We have an ornamental cherry on the north side of the house. Last summer was the best it ever bloomed and they stayed on for 2-3 weeks. This winter I found that the trunk, about 8 inches in diameter on a 25 foot tree, was split open for 10 feet to the point you can almost see through the tree. Now it looks like moving hostas again as we will be having a sun garden.

We returned from the Midwest Regional Hosta Society Winter Scientific meeting in a snow storm – something that seems to happen each year. If you

have not been to these meetings you should really go. Members Jim and Holly O'Donnell, Mary Ann Metz and the Schroeder's were there braving the cold and snow. In addition to meeting our gardening friends we have a great time learning about hostas, history of the MRHS and new woodies for the garden. You really need to put the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in January on your calendar for 2015.

This year's meeting will be earlier than normal to fit the schedule of our first speaker, Tom Micheletti. Tom spoke to our group back in back in 2007 and we welcome him back. With this winter the early meeting should get you ready to hit the dirt – sorry, I should have said SOIL.

By the way – I AM ALWAYS LOOKING FOR ARTICLES!

Rick