Primroses
The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

Volume 74 No 1 Winter 2016

The purpose of this Society is to bring the people interested in Primula together in an organization to increase the general knowledge of and interest in the collecting, growing, breeding, showing and using in the landscape and garden of the genus Primula in all its forms and to serve as a clearing house for collecting and disseminating information about Primula.

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Membership in the Society includes a subscription to Primroses, seed exchange privileges, password to the member's only section of the APS website (including the Pictorial Dictionary) and use of the slide library. Does for individual or household membership, domestic and Canada are:
$25 per calendar year
$70 for three years
Oversea rates are:
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1/8 page: $15
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Contact the treasurer for details.

The View from Here by Elisabeth Zander

When I looked around the room at all the participants of last year’s annual APS meeting in New England, I noticed that there was plenty of gray hair. Tower Hill did an outstanding job of promoting the event, and so many families and 30- and 40-somethings visited the show. And plenty of that cavalcade of visitors stopped and purchased gems from our many excellent vendors. But our New England and APS membership ranks did not swell from this increased exposure.

Now this is not a singular problem, as all of you reading this probably can attest. There was an interesting article by Adrian Higgins in the Washington Post last October about the Chrysanthemum Society’s show fading into obscurity. Horticultural society memberships worldwide are in decline, as are all clubs and leagues. Just 10 years ago, the North American Rock Garden Society’s membership numbered more than twice the current figures. And its numbers are still in decline. Of course, life as we knew it when we all joined no longer exists. Between Facebook, Instagram, texting, and email; social communication methods have forever been changed.

When I joined my first horticultural group, I was a stay-at-home mom living in East Coast suburbs. My vegetable garden was not the only one on the block. Most modern career...
parents today, however, spend more time in front of a screen than outside their dwelling. Smartphones give people instant access to wikis on the Web. If you want more, you simply Google the groups. And Facebook provides a group for just about every genus.

Yes, there is a revival in growing food. Even my remote town now has its own community garden. My niece in Santa Fe proudly posts photos of her every harvested crop. Where? On Facebook. When she was setting up her raised beds just a few years ago, she looked to Facebook pages and blogs. How different from my start. There were flesh and blood mentors all along the way. So how do we, now the “older people,” engage the young?

During the breakdown of last year’s annual meeting, the idea popped up that instead of having a workshop for ourselves, we should try one for a different audience. While a somewhat younger audience would be good, we decided to try for the youngest! Give kids a plant; show them how to pot it; tell them how to grow it. Then encourage them to bring it back next year for a special exhibition class and prize. If we interest just a handful at this age, this seed sown at such an early age can have a chance to flower when they become the parents of the next generation.

So the New England Chapter of the American Primula Society will again hold its show at Tower Hill, on April 29 through May 1, 2016. Again there will be fabulous vendors – Wrightman Alpines, Sunny Border, Mountain Brook, Primrose Hill, and many more. And again there will be a world-class speaker and nurseryman: Ian Christie of Scotland. And this time we will include a free workshop for children: the Primula Challenge! Of course, the program of events all depends on the age group, but we intend to have a slide show and a potting session, and to provide handouts.

Note: The handouts will give Internet links to information. All young people know the Web.

Primula fedtschenkoi

LIZ KNOWLES

Whether looking through Richards’ book on Primula or on Pam Eveleigh’s website Primula World, I happened upon the name of a Russian Primula: Primula fedtschenkoi. I don’t believe we have featured it in the quarterly for some years and it is exotic enough that it should be mentioned. Someone in the society spent some time trying to locate a source in Russia that could supply seeds in the 1990s, but I am not sure they succeeded. I looked up the pictures on Primula World in the Species Gallery and found that some there were by Liz and George Knowles who garden at Larkspur Hollow in the Hockley Valley, Ontario. This is northwest of Toronto. With their kind permission we are able to reproduce their pictures in the quarterly, and Liz has provided a bit of information on the trip they took to where they saw Primula fedtschenkoi. Ed.

We traveled to Central Asia in April 2013 with the UK company Greentours; Chris Gardner and Oron Peri were our leaders. We felt perfectly comfortable traveling both in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan though it is quite a hassle to get from one country to the other (Tajikistan to Uzbekistan) as there is only one land crossing and one cannot fly except via a third country. As the crow flies it’s only about 200km (120 mi) from Dushanbe to Samarkand but it took us 17 hours including a couple of hours at the border and a detour south in Uzbekistan to within 10km (6 mi) of the Afghan border! It took us less time in fact to fly Toronto/Istanbul/Dushanbe!
Someone gave me an offset of ‘Blue Chip’ this fall, and when I looked it up, I found it was raised by Tim Coop. Terry Mitchell, a friend in England, had mentioned Tim Coop a number of times over the years when I visited him, so I looked further to find what information I could. Turns out Tim was a mentor to Terry for some years until his death in 2002. Terry says, “We have had some great Florists over many years but Tim stood out and was my mentor. Jonathan, my son and I would visit them or go to shows with them and though Jonathan was only 6 or 7 years old Tim took him under his wing and looked after him like a father, teaching him the craft of the Florist.” Terry was able to supply me with a number of pictures of the plants Tim raised. The ones I like the best are the lavender, green and grey ones, but Tim raised an amazing array of plants. Terry says, “Tim’s red self, ‘Scorcher’ is the best red ever to my mind.”

“There is a brown self seedling, raised by Tim, a rare creature indeed. It was never named to the best of my knowledge and possibly no longer around. But...”
towards the end, Tim had set it in his mind to raise selfs of every colour you could imagine.”

Terry continues, “His most successful yellow self was ‘Brasso’. ‘Brasso’ and ‘Scorcher’ still dominate the yellow and red self classes. I prefer ‘April Moon’ myself, but there you go. ‘Crinoline,’ which is a fancy, was another Coop introduction. It didn’t seem popular with growers, even though I know Tim liked it.”

Allan Guest’s book, _The Auricula_ (Garden Art Press, 2009), is a great resource for vivid and detailed descriptions of some of Tim’s plants and are accompanied by impressive photographs. You will find pictures of some of these in the color section. The following are some of my favorite descriptions:

**Blue Chip** (Fancy) gives a hint as to both the colour and the regard which Tim Coop had for this plant. It is still the one to beat in this shade, flaunting its deep blue body against a white edge. It even throws a sturdy truss of pips in a circular shape with a reasonably yellow tube and good paste. A strong mature plant is a captivating sight, but ‘Blue Chip’, like a number of other Fancies of this persuasion, will often throw up autumn trusses, thus depriving the grower of the best flowers in the spring. It also likes to throw an unnecessarily large number of offsets which need to be culled if you hope to keep a strong main stem for good blooms. This is a variety to which I look forward every year.

**Crinoline** (Fancy) is another Tim Coop raising which catches the eye as very different from the majority of auriculas but provides a challenge to write an adequate description of its blooms. It also provides something of a challenge to the grower for it has a very lax habit of growth, sending out a long main stem that bends over across the top of the pot and from which odd shoots emerge to provide a small number of new offsets. It does not take kindly to discipline, but a few experts have been known to persuade ‘Crinoline’ to retain a reasonably acceptable shape. Flower scapes may also try to elongate more than one might wish but when a well-shaped plant provides a well-formed scape and truss, the whole thing is a sight to admire.

The blooms are a confection of green, grey and mauve, not quite an Edge, not quite a Stripe and breathtakingly beautiful. The tube is quite nice and the paste as bright as anyone might wish. When exhibited (or just grown in your own frame or greenhouse) in its best form, this plant will cause any viewer to pause, admire and enthuse.

**Chanel, Chiffon and Taffeta** (Any Other Colour Self Show) are, all three, delicate shades of lavender pink bred by Tim Coop. ‘Taffeta’ is widely grown and a sturdy plant. ‘Chiffon’ is slightly more difficult to cultivate successfully. ‘Chanel’ is not met with as frequently as the other two but has appeared more often among the prizewinners at national shows. They are nicely mealed and look quite pleasing when not in bloom. The tube and paste on each one is good and the pip generally round though the odd notch may occur, as it does with many Selfs. This failing seems to affect ‘Taffeta’ more than the other two. Their main fault when they appear at shows is that the colour shades out from the paste to the edge.

I see from looking at Henry Pugh’s website (http://www.auriculaandprimula.org.uk) that he has hybridized one in the purple/green/grey color combination called ‘Aldgate East’. I am so glad that auricula hybridizers are adding these fancies to their repertoire.

Tim Coop considerably increased the range of auriculas available and growers everywhere can admire, and even hope to acquire some of the plants he introduced.

Note: Allan Guest’s book, _The Auricula: History, Cultivation and Varieties_, is about to be re-issued (Publisher: Garden Art Press; Reprint edition 29 July 2015). It is a great resource for information on a number of British auricula varieties and has superb pictures. Look for it on the usual sources soon.
Sweden’s Auricula Club

Searching for pictures of ‘Blue Chip’, I found one on the website for Sweden’s Auricula Club (swedensauriculaclub.blogspot.se). You may want to take a look at this blog. - there are many pictures of auriculas not usually seen in North America.

Looking further, I found that Ray Molin-Wilkinson also has his own blog at rayauriculas.blogspot.ca.

Ray is a keen auricula grower and supporter, and appears to be a prolific hybridizer.

Please take a look at both of these blogs for many great colorful photos.

Here is an example of a wonderful farina-covered auricula in Ray’s Christmas wish to everyone:

We have received news of the passing of Bob Taylor of the NAPS Northern Section. The following note appeared on their website in late December:

**BOB TAYLOR.**

*It is with great sadness I have to inform you I have just been told that Bob Taylor passed away this morning 17 December 2015, I am sure most of you will know Bob has been unwell for a couple of months but even so this has come as a huge shock and I know the society and all its members will want to send heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to Bob’s wife Ann; daughter, Lucy; and son, George.*

*Details for the funeral / service are as follows,*

*Wednesday the 30th of December at 2:00 pm at Nabwood Chapel of Rest, Bingley Road, Nabwood, Shipley, West Yorkshire.*

*Important: it was Bob’s last wish/order that all who attend must wear a hat, preferably of the silly variety. “Seriously”.*

*A donation to the APS has been made by Jay and Ann Lunn in memory of Bob Taylor.*

Jay reports that Terry Mitchell attended the funeral and noted, “Almost all in attendance respected his wish, arriving in all manner of headgear - it had to be seen to be believed.”
Notes from Barnhaven:

Barnhaven is in the final stages of publishing a new book on *Primula* to be called “A Plant Lovers Guide to Primulas” written by Jodie Mitchell and Lynne Lawson (Timber Press). It should be available in April 2016.

http://www.barnhaven.com/

For a treat on a wintery day, take a moment to browse through their website, taking in all the lovely photos. Barnhaven seed is also available through the APS Seed Exchange.

We received a note from Lynne Lawson in late summer, as a follow-up to the information we had on starting sieboldii seeds:

“Talking of sieboldii seed, I haven’t got the APS journal here to re-look it up, but a few journals back I seem to remember an editor’s bit remarking on the need to plant sieboldii seed very fresh. I thought to myself that’s not exactly correct and had a hunt in the fridge for the oldest sieboldii seed I could find. Surprisingly, as I’ve some very old primula seed lurking about, the oldest was only from 2012 and 2013 but I threw some into seed trays in about May, which is extremely late I find for sieboldii, and – they came up fine. Just thought I’d let you know in case you wanted to include a comment somewhere.”

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Tim Coop’s Auriculas

More Tim Coop

This page clockwise from top left: brown seedling, 'Twiggy', 'Scorcher', 'Silverfields', 'Clouded Yellow'

Facing page clockwise from top: 'April Moon', 'Taffeta', 'Kermit', 'Limelight'
       All raised by Tim Coop   Photos taken by Terry Mitchell
Primula fedtschenkoi

“We saw P. fedtschenkoi on April 13 on the Amankutan pass (1730m/5710 mi) which lies about 30km (18 mi) south of Samarkand... The area is covered with large granite boulders and damp grassland.”
Sweden’s Auricula Club
swedensauriculacclub.blogspot.se

Photos courtesy of Ray Molin-Wilkinson


No matter what type of mix you use for *P. allionii* the most important factor is drainage. In their native habitat, *P. allionii* grow on steep rocky slopes and cliffs in two small areas of the Maritime Alps along the border between Italy and France. Wherever *P. allionii* grow they must have room for their long roots to get access to the water which seeps through the rocks. *Primula allionii* have the reputation of being difficult to grow, but if you think about where and how they grow, they are actually remarkably resilient and long-lived if you protect them from rain and give them the drainage that they require.

The composition of a *P. allionii* mix will depend on what is locally available but should always be at least two-thirds coarse grit to provide the necessary drainage.

Before creating your mix, you need to consider what kind of pot you plan to use. The mix I use for plastic is different from the mix I use for terracotta and concrete. Plastic pots don’t ‘breathe’ like terracotta or concrete and the potting mix for plastic pots therefore needs to be even more carefully controlled.
more porous and open. The biggest enemy of \textit{P. allionii} is root rot due to poor drainage.

\textit{Primula allionii} are small clump-forming plants with long roots so I tend to favor tall narrow terracotta pots. These aren’t always easy to find, so if you do find a good source, buy extras. One surprising source of pots is Michael’s, a craft supply store, which carries narrow terracotta pots. Since these pots are being sold for craft projects, you will need to check for cracks, and the drainage holes may need to be enlarged, but they are often on sale and are surprisingly long-lasting. Of course, it is possible to grow large clumps of \textit{P. allionii} in shallow pots, as many successful growers do, but good drainage is always the key to their success.

Grit comes in all shapes and sizes and under various names. Here is my favourite recipe for a \textit{P. allionii} mix. The proportions are only approximate. I use an old kitchen measuring cup and then add more bits until the mix feels right.

- 1 part worm castings (richer and denser than potting soil)
- 1 part sterilized indoor potting soil
- 1 part forestry grit
- 1 part #1 grit
- 4 parts washed and sieved pumice
- 1 part mixed marble chips and limestone stucco chips
- a generous sprinkling of charcoal

This mix gives you a 7 to 2 ratio of grit to soil. This recipe is my favorite mix, but some of the components are hard to find and when \textit{P. allionii} need to be repotted they don’t like to wait. Since forestry grit is almost impossible to find, and limestone stucco is a thing of the past, I have started using a mixture of crushed lava rock, turkey and chicken grit for drainage. Here is my current recipe which has a 3 to 1 ratio of grit to soil, which is the recommended minimum two-thirds grit:

- 2 parts sterilized indoor potting soil
- 1 part #2 grit
- 1 part #3 grit
- 1 part crushed lava rock (washed)
- 3 parts washed and sieved pumice
- a generous sprinkling of charcoal

With practice you will get a feel for the loose, open texture of a good \textit{P. allionii} mix and you can begin to experiment with other components. It is possible to use Perlite in your mix, but try to find the coarser horticultural variety. The small bags usually available in nurseries contain a lot of very fine particles which can clog the mix. Some of the other components may need to be washed and sieved to get rid of the very fine particles which could prevent the free drainage that \textit{P. allionii} need. Pumice in particular should always be washed and sieved. There are several soil additives to avoid using in your \textit{P. allionii} mix: vermiculite, peat, and coir fiber. All these tend to hold too much moisture and don’t allow the mix to stay both evenly moist and free-draining.

Planting \textit{P. allionii} in troughs or in tufa blocks requires a slightly different treatment, but the key to growing \textit{P. allionii} is always an open, porous mixture which allows the water to move freely past the roots.
Chapter Reports 2015

Juneau Chapter
The Juneau Chapter is experiencing what other plant societies/groups are going through: declining membership and participation. After a very low turnout for our October meeting, I made the decision to suspend our monthly winter meetings and only have an annual meeting at the Arboretum during peak bloom in May. I’m doing a ‘Primula Minute’ presentation during the monthly Juneau Garden Club’s meetings to expand information and hopefully interest beyond the Juneau Chapter’s membership. I pick one of our new or unusual species and make an informational handout with photos on card stock so the attendees can start building a Primula notebook. Most of these plants we’ll be selling at the annual plant sale in the future, seed permitting. Our short segment has so far been well received with the Garden Club.

Merril Jensen

New England Chapter
In 2015 New England Chapter Members enjoyed sharing an interest in Primulas with each other during three meetings. The first the ‘Mid-Winter Bash’ in January in Worcester (with the tour of the tropically scented greenhouse and delicious home-cooked lunch of course). The next at the National Show at Tower Hill, which was very well attended by the public and where John Lonsdale gave two presentations which taught us to lust after unusual woodland plants, specially cyclamen. And finally the September meeting with plant sales and swaps, discussion of plans for next year, and a check on our little Primula growing area at the Berkshire Botanic Garden.

Amy Olmsted is running the APS seed exchange, and has received seeds from donors and commercial sources, packaged and listed them, and has already made the order forms available on the APS website. There will be some tempting new offerings this year, so be sure to access the list and request your favorites as soon as possible.

Other members of the Chapter, led by Elisabeth Zander, are planning the NE Chapter’s 2016 Primula Show during the weekend of April 29 to May 1. Every year we look forward to hosting a speaker who is an expert at selecting, propagating, growing, photographing, sharing and writing about the very best Primulas, and this time we are all very pleased that Ian Christie (http://www.ianchristiealpines.com/) has agreed to come from Scotland to give a unique presentation at Tower Hill Botanic Garden.

We hope to introduce young gardeners to Primula growing and encourage their enthusiasm for gardening in general by adding a muddy-hands activity for participation by children at the show. As usual, the weekend will include a Growers’ Round Table to discuss anything and everything Primula. The show will also feature books, gifts and assorted Primulabilia, the Awards Banquet, and other interesting activities. Watch the website for details in early spring.

During this most unusual Indian Summer, many Primulas are flowering in our New England gardens in December, but most
of them will probably readjust by April, and bloom even better in the spring to provide a truly fine display of *Primula* species and hybrids on the benches. We are looking forward to a most enjoyable weekend, and hope many of you will join us.

Judith Sellers

**BC Primula Group**

The BC Primula Group met twice in 2015. The spring meeting was held in conjunction with the presentation by Pam Eveleigh in April. We decided to join the Scottish Rock Garden Society in order to obtain some more unusual *Primula* seeds. We gained one new member at the meeting, as well.

The November meeting, held November 14, had us all discussing just what seeds we would like to order. The list has gone to the Scottish Rock Garden Society. Now we hope to get some *Primula* seeds both from the APS exchange, and the NAPS Northern seed list.

The Group also voted to sponsor the APS National Show in Portland next year. It will again be held in conjunction with the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon Spring Sale, called Hortlandia, and will be April 8, 9 and 10. We await final confirmation from the HPSO but have been in contact with them and are encouraged by their support.

Maedythe Martin

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**American Primrose Society**

**Minutes of the board Meeting held on October 25th, 2015**

The meeting was held online. Quorum and start at 6.00 pm, EST.

**Board members present:** Rodney Barker (President of the New England Chapter), Ed Buyarski (Director), Mark Dyen (Director), Julia Haldorson (Director and Membership Secretary), Alan Lawrence (Interim APS President), Amy Olmsted (Director), Michael Plumb (Interim Secretary and Webmaster), Rhondda Porter (Vice-President)

**A. Approval of the Agenda** (Mark/Rhondda), with the addition under New Business of 'Becoming a NARGS interest group'

**B. Minutes of July 26th 2015** – accepted (Rhondda/Mark)

**C. Business Arising and Old Business**

1. **Nominations for new Board members, including president and secretary** (See item C1 in July Minutes):
   a) Julia (director), Merrill (director), Michael (secretary) and Alan (president) are willing to stand again. No decision from Jon (treasurer) yet.
   b) Nominations from the membership for other candidates for these positions (given in parentheses in item 1a) may be submitted by mail or email to the secretary, or via the webmaster.
   c) Deadline December 31st.
   d) **ACTION:** Rhondda will post the call for nominations and deadline on the APS Facebook page.
   e) **ACTION:** Michael will post the call for nominations and deadline on the APS website.

2. **Application to become the International Cultivar Naming Authority for Primula:**
   a) Alan again requested comments on the form he had prepared, and asked for suggestions for the detailed description of each plant. **ACTION:** The board
   b) Alan will look at some other related materials posted online.
   c) Julia suggested the form be posted on the website for members’ comments.

3. **Update on the disposal of old hardcopy quarterlies**
   a) Copies are not selling. The board decided to give them away to garden clubs, etc., and make them available free on line, provided postage was covered.
   b) Prepaid envelopes may be suitable (cost approximately US$5.00?)
   c) To be sold as far as possible in volume sets (four issues) for ease of handling.
   d) **ACTION:** Ed will share some around in Juneau and bring remainders to the
National Show.

c) ACTION: Rhondda will contact Cheri about the organization of the mailing.

d) ACTION: With Cheri’s agreement, Rhondda will advertise these on Facebook.

e) ACTION: With Cheri’s agreement, Michael will set up online purchasing of quarterlies.

D. Treasurer’s Report: (Emailed before the meeting)

1. Income less expenses July 1st to September 30th 2015: ($1,686.88)
2. Income less expenses January 1st, 2015 to September 30th 2015: ($143.10)
3. Total liabilities and equity as of September 30th 2015: $27,002.32
4. MOTION (Mark / Amy): to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Carried.
5. National Show Financial Report (Item F1 in previous minutes): Still to be prepared and submitted. ACTION: Mark & Rodney will see to this.

E. Committee Reports

1. Membership [Julia, by email]:
   a) Total membership as of October 15th 2015 is 281, down from 301 in October 2014.
   b) Julia will send reminders to pay dues by email.
   c) Reminders will be posted on the website (ACTION: Michael) and in the Quarterly.
   d) MOTION (Amy / Mark): to accept Membership Report. Carried.
2. Editorial Committee [Maedythe, by email]:
   a) The fall issue of the Quarterly is at the printer’s, and should be mailed next week.
   b) Work starts on the winter issue this week.
   c) MOTION (Ed / Amy) to accept Editorial Report. Carried
3. Website [Michael]:
   a) Quarterly Archives: All back issues of the APS Quarterly are now posted in PDF format on our website, free for the public to read.
   b) The gallery of photographs has still to be worked on, and is currently off-line.
   c) MOTION (Ed / Mark): to accept the Website Report. Carried.
4. Seed Exchange [Amy]:
   a) Already in the process of ordering supplies and commercial seed.
   b) Budget expected to be around $1000, as in previous year.
   c) Rhondda and Amy will post reminder to donate seed on their Facebook pages.
   d) MOTION (Ed / Mark): That the Seed Exchange 2015-2016 be allotted a budget of $1000 to cover expenses. Carried

F. Chapters

1. New England: Met in September at the Berkshire Botanic Gardens for clean-up and planting.
   Amy gave a talk on seed collecting and cleaning. Ian Christie will be the speaker at the New England Show to be held in the first week of May, 2016.
2. Alaska: Ed reported that Merrill was working to promote the chapter to local gardening groups.
3. BC Group: They will be meeting mid-November to discuss sponsoring the 2016 APS National Show in Portland, Oregon. It is planned to be held again in conjunction with the Oregon Hardy Plant Society Annual Show at the Portland Convention Center, April 9th-10th. Awaiting final official agreement from the Hardy Plant Soc.
4. MOTION (Mark / Michael): to accept chapter/group reports. Carried.

G. New Business

1. Cy Happy’s collection of materials relating to the APS:
   a) Michael reported that Maedythe was getting in touch with the family.
   b) ACTION: Michael & Rhondda will contact Maedythe to determine progress.
   c) Michael can scan documents for the website archives.
2. Becoming an interest group under NARGS (North American Rock Garden Society):
   a) Membership is slowly dwindling, as is the case with many plant socs.
   b) Under NARGS we could publish just one special issue a year.
   c) We would somehow need to accommodate our 42 Life Members
   d) MOTION (Mark / Ed): That the board consider the idea of becoming an interest group under NARGS and continue the discussion following the current renewal period. Carried

H. Next meeting: January 31st 2016 at 6.00 pm Eastern

I. Adjournment: (Michael) at 7.30 pm Eastern

Respectfully submitted, Michael Plumb, Secretary
Join the National Auricula & Primula Society

Midland & West Section

www.auriculaandprimula.org.uk

£10.00 Overseas Membership.

www.southernauriculaprimula.org

American Primrose Society
Winter 2016

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New Members
New Members
June 25 - September 30, 2015

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