



International Oaks

The Journal of the International Oak Society

*...the new classification of oaks, truffles,
treehouses, oaks of Lebanon and Iran,
desperately seeking Q. tardifolia,
the IOS 25th anniversary...*

Issue No. 29 / 2018 / ISSN 1941-2061



*This issue is dedicated to
Michel Timacheff
whose memory will live on in his beautiful
photographs and in the hearts of the many in
this Society who were his friends.*

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Photos. Cover: John Harris (*Quercus robur*). Page 7: Béatrice Chassé Page 9: Cécile Souquet-Basiege.

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FOREWORD

Turn to Oaks in a Time of Uncertainty

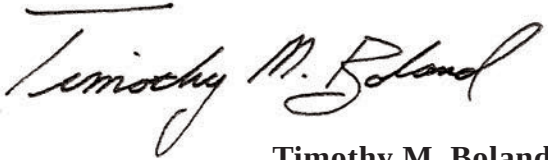
Reading the news on a daily basis it's safe to say the geopolitical world has changed so dramatically that many of us live in a state of quiet desperation as to what comes next. To counteract this feeling of anxiety, not surprisingly, I turn to trees. This has been a lifelong place of comfort for me that started in my teenage years and led to my academic pursuits to become a horticulturist, botanist, curator, and eventually an arboretum director. Not surprisingly, it also led me to the International Oak Society. Currently, I live on the oak-dominated island of Martha's Vineyard with six species of *Quercus* and associated hybrids. My winter days start with sitting quietly and watching the sunrise behind the silhouettes of black oaks. Onward, my mornings have a ritualistic procession: loading our woodstove with oak logs, and driving a short distance to work on oak-canopied roads.

In my day-to-day work as the Director of the Polly Hill Arboretum, I often have little contact with actual trees. That may seem surprising but finances, personnel matters, building maintenance, board work, insurance rates, and more eat away at the enjoyment of my chosen vocation and avocation: trees. Each year I try to carve out more time to focus on plants, and those plants, more often than not, are oak trees!

I was recently asked to give an inspirational talk – a Sunday morning sermon – about trees at a local church. I fretted over this commitment for weeks. I'm not a religious person as such, yet when in wild, beautiful, serene, biodiverse places, I catch the fever. And though I may not practice a traditional faith, I do have faith in trees. My address went well as I rattled off statistics about the world's largest and oldest trees, and summoned every exemplary tree factoid that I could muster in hopes the congregation would stay with me. Of course, as a card-carrying member of the IOS, I included the symbolism, culturalism, and the long association of humans with oaks. I also shared that oak ecosystems in many parts of the world are critical biological infrastructure, hosting an amazing assortment of co-dependent lifeforms (microbial, fungal, and macroinvertebrates). It was a sermon disguised as an Arbor Day speech on steroids! Unplanned, I went off topic and brought forth the real and troubling relationship we have with nature, a separation that places man in "dominion" over the earth's resources. I challenged the attendees to become better stewards of the earth, and suggested a good place to start ... trees!

As IOS members, when we consider the world of oaks, we find them inspirational and endlessly challenging. Our emotions place us in awe of their grandeur and resiliency. We are young once again and energized when holding for the first time the acorns of *Quercus ithaburensis*! We are humbled by the centuries-old English oaks in Sherwood Forest, and troubled about red-listed oaks that need empathy and righteous action to shield them from extinction. Our rational intelligence delves into the incredible advances we are making as investigative oak scientists. Imagine unravelling the Oak Tree of Life? The pages within this edition of *International Oaks* reveal new discoveries driven by intelligent inquiry and the scientific method. I know I speak for all of us when I say it's an honor to work with such a magnificent genus.

The other half of the oak equation is what we do as citizens of the world to spread the gospel of oaks? That's where you come in as a member of the IOS. It's never too late to engage both the young and old in oak conversations. Yes, some may run in the other direction, but many will be inspired by your earnest (and somewhat peculiar?) devotion to oak trees. 2018 promises to be interesting to say the least! I hope to see many of you at the 9th International Oak Society Conference in California in October. If ever there was a self-help group meeting for a genus, this is the one. Here we can find comfort in all things *Quercus*. In the meantime, stay curious, and turn to trees. That's how you arrived here in the first place!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy M. Boland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent horizontal line above the first name.

Timothy M. Boland