

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

A Publication of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American
Rhododendron Society

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December 2007

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

Apr 16-19, 2008	ARS Annual Convention, Tulsa, OK
May 7-11, 2008	International Rhododendron Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland
June 6-8, 2008	MAC meeting Canaan Valley Resort & Conference Center, WV

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society	http://www.rhododendron.org/
MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)	http://www.macars.org/
U VA Science & Engineering Libraries	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm
UVA Special Collections	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/
Henry Skinner Website	http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/

MAC'S RETURN TO LYNCHBURG by Bill Bedwell

Nice weather and 72 enthusiastic registrants combined with the planning and work of Jim Brant, Celia Dollarhide, Sharon Horn, Theresa Brents, and Slim Lockerman to bring us a fun weekend Oct. 12-14, 2007, at the Ramada Inn in Lynchburg. It had been 37 years since MAC last held a meeting in Lynchburg, also at the Ramada Inn, with 25 attendees. Back in those days, meeting attendance was running about 25-35.

Many of today's members may not know that the second president of our ARS Chapter, back in 1953, was Anne Glass who, with her husband, Powell Glass, had an important rhododendron garden at the Glass Estate in Lynchburg, not far from our 2007 meeting location. Their garden featured unnamed rhododendron hybrids from the Dexter Estate, similar to Winterthur and other estates that bought the Dexter plants after his death. One of those Dexter hybrids was eventually named 'Anne Glass,' and it was propagated and sold by MAC founder, Dr. Thomas F. Wheeldon. The Glass estate is now the location of Liberty University and the house is the Administration Building. I asked someone at our Fall 2007 meeting about the garden and was told that not much remains.

This fall our Saturday bus tour went out of town, passing beautiful houses and countryside until we arrived at Richard Wroncy's lovely house and garden high on a hill at Quail Hollow Farm. There we were greeted by Barbara McEwan who had started the

formal gardens with her husband John in 1962. Although Richard bought the property in 1991 and began adding other gardens, Barbara still comes back from Lynchburg twice a week to tend to "her" portion of the garden. Our arrival was serenaded by several large dogs in a pen near the house, but soon they became friendly. It was a beautiful setting and a time for attendees to compare how bad the 2007 drought was in their area.

We toured Duis Nursery, which was founded by an early member of MAC and is now owned by his



MAC members touring Duis Nursery. Photo by W. Przypek

son Fred Duis, also a MAC member. Fred Duis gave a brief talk on a testing program to select plants especially well suited for our area. After a box lunch at the Bedford visitors center, we toured the enormously impressive D-Day Memorial with an

excellent guide. Then we went to the southwestern section of Smith Mountain Lake where everyone was blown away by Slim and Ellen Lockerman's beautifully landscaped house overlooking gorgeous lake scenery, plus Slim's commuter plane, just off shore. They even had two very beautiful florist azaleas in full bloom and happily surviving in the microclimate between the water and the house.



Richard Wroncy & Evi Neumaier. Photo by W. Przypek

Both Paul James and Ed Collins gave us fascinating talks on their long-time experiences with rhododendrons and azaleas, full of laughs and insight. When MAC members first toured Paul James' spectacular garden south of Roanoke many



Jim Brant, Sybil Przypek, bus driver, Theresa Brents. Photo by W. Przypek

years ago, one member turned to me and said, wistfully, "This is a dream come true!" Paul told us of his experiences growing older while living in the midst of that dream.

Ed Collins told us of his experiences as one of the early members of the loose-knit Sandwich Club,



Lunch on the road. Photo by W. Przypek

annually exploring and evaluating the many unnamed, one-of-a-kind Dexter hybrids and derivatives that resulted from further breeding by Jack Cowles.



National D-Day Memorial. Photo by W. Przypek

Many of these plants are now growing in semi-wild conditions on the grounds of what is now Heritage Plantation on Cape Cod. Someone in that group told Ed about the red form of *R. maximum*, recently referred to as 'Red Max,' growing near Curtis Creek on Mount Mitchell north of Asheville, North Carolina. In 1965 David Leach selected a seedling of the original red *maximum* plant and named it 'Mount Mitchell' (information from American Rhododendron Hybrids by Kraxburger). Ed told us that he and some others in North Carolina went in search of it a few years ago and found the original plant dead, but there was a red seedling or

regeneration of it nearby, and he showed us his photographs. Then, in the fall of 2003, Ed Collins and Bob Stelloh took Don Hyatt to the plant and Don collected seeds from which he raised the plants that were distributed as table favors at the 2006 ARS Convention in Rockville, Maryland. Some of those



MAC members at National D-Day Memorial. Photo by S. Przypek

seedlings were also available in MAC's P4M Sale at the Fall 2007 meeting. The people who got those plants should realize there will be variability, and every seedling is different. Therefore, at best, the name 'Red Max' is a convenient group name for all the seedlings from the currently existing Curtis Creek form of red *R. maximum*, which may or may not be the original plant known to Joseph Gable and David Leach.



P4M. Photo by W. Przypek

Davetta and Doug Jolley stole the show with their country outfits on Saturday night when Doug conducted the plant auction and Davetta recorded the bids. Despite the severe drought affecting much of the MAC territory, Sharon Horn was able to stage an interesting foliage show with good participation from

those in the less affected areas to the west. The Jolleys swept most of the top awards with Bill Massie getting Best Lepidote Species entry. Barbara and David Parmer did well as new exhibitors, and Slim Lockerman brought in 'Blue Ensign' with some fall flowers. See the results in a separate article.

The Friday night Plants for Members sale featured some excellent plants grown on by Jay Gillenwater. For descriptive information on the plants to help you decide where to plant them, you can refer to the MAC Website information about the Fall 2007 P4M Sale at: <http://www.macars.org/plants.html>

Additional information on the rhododendrons is available at this link to the rhododendron photos and descriptions at Briggs Nursery, where the small plants were obtained:

<http://www.briggsnursery.com/ListItem.cfm?StartRow=51&Photo=1>

The latter is subject to change, but I think the descriptive list will remain on the MAC website a while for future reference.

On Sunday morning, George McLellan and Don Hyatt showed photos and video of this year's trips to see native azaleas and rhododendrons, including the beautiful *R. vaseyi*. After that, many attendees went to see Bill and Annie Massie's country lodge in a peaceful woodland setting with a front lawn of moss backed by rhododendrons and azaleas. This was a great place to gather and reminisce about the fun weekend we all experienced at Lynchburg.

Over that weekend in Lynchburg, I was reminded of my early years reading the *American Rhododendron Society Quarterly Bulletin* where there were stories of Powell Glass finding a very white form of *R. catawbiense* near Lynchburg, and this plant, or cuttings of it, were taken by Joseph Gable, the famous rhododendron hybridizing pioneer in Pennsylvania, who also was an early member of



Best-In-Show 'Harry's Happy Hour'. Photo by W. Przypek

our Middle Atlantic Chapter. Guy Nearing, another rhododendron pioneer, and Gable raised several generations of seedlings from this plant, crossing the two purist whites until one such cross resulted in all pure white seedlings and Gable named one of them 'Catagla' (1959), with the "gla" referring to Powell Glass. This was used in hybridizing to pass on the hardiness of *R. catawbiense* without influencing color.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

It's Election Day and fall is definitely with us. We had a light frost a few days ago but the only evidence is the damage to some coleus. The very welcome rain came a few weeks ago but the ground is starting to look dry again. We had a very brief shower pass by early this morning but not enough to register in our rain gauge. We were fortunate in that we did not have watering restrictions this summer but one can never replace a good rainfall. Considering the drought, our garden is looking pretty good.

We did lose a few large rhododendrons *R. 'Janet Blair'* and *R. 'Great Smokey'* along with an unnamed seedling that was growing just fine but had a *Corylopsis* growing over the top of it. I decided to cut back the *Corylopsis* to give the rhododendron additional light and proceeded to do so, in two days the rhododendron was dead! I have no idea why this happened, the plant was still in a considerable amount of shade so I doubt it burned. I no longer try to figure out why certain plants die and others survive, I just am happy to have an empty spot to plant something new. Our plants had more dieback than usual but I saw very little evidence of borer. I guess we'll accept the good with the bad.

Our rhododendrons are very well budded this fall. *R. 'Dexter's Victoria'* and *R. 'Long Island'* have always been very shy bloomers but this fall they are full of buds. The buds on a few plants seem smaller than usual but we'll have to wait and see what happens to the flowers. Approximately one month into the drought I noticed the buds on one rhododendron that I neglected to water were soft. I



Jane McKay

watered it well and made sure it was watered at least once a week and now the buds feel nice and hard. It remains to be seen what the flowers will be like.

Most of the deciduous azaleas shed their leaves early without coloring up as they usually do. One exception is *R. vaseyi* which is gorgeous right now. We have seven or eight plants of *R. vaseyi* and they are all beautiful. Many of the evergreen azaleas are showing a few flowers I enjoy these individual blooms almost as much as the big spring show. One azalea Kehr's 'White Rosebud' has a witches broom on it that is blooming. The flowers are smaller but very ruffled and lovely. If the broom lives through the winter I will try to propagate it next year. We are running out of room to plant inside the deer fence so I find myself wishing for some fastigiate rhododendrons.

Any hybridizers out there?

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Pat Benson, Naples, FL

Sandra & Tom Carlson,

Alexandria, VA

Dr. Arthur Kroll, Keswick, VA

Deborah Mackes, Manassas,
VA

Wesley Olson, Summerville,
WV

DISTRICT 9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT OF FALL ARS BOARD MEETING, EASTLAKE, OHIO

The ARS Board met at 9am Oct. 12, 2007 in Eastlake, Ohio. District 9 members Sandra McDonald, Ann Mangels, Ray Smith, Bill Mangels and Ken McDonald attended for a total of 24 present initially.

Future meetings will be:

Tulsa, OK April 16-19, 2008 BOD

International Rhododendron Conference
Edinburgh, Scotland May 7-11, 2008

Hilo, Hawaii Sept. 23-28, 2008 BOD

Everett, WA April 30-May 3, 2009 BOD

Eastern Region Fall, 2009 BOD (site & host chapter needed)

Long Island, NY May 14-17, 2010 BOD

German Rhododendron Society Bremen,
Germany, May 19-23, 2010

Florence, OR Fall 2010 BOD

Vancouver Island Spring 2011 BOD

A slight deficit budget was adopted along with small salary increases for Sonja Nelson and Laura Grant. A new membership chair and a policies and bylaws chair are needed. A new secretary should be selected by next fall to replace June Walsh in 2009. There is no long range planning committee active at this time. The budget can be balanced if declining membership and a new accounting format are reconciled.

ARS and chapter insurance was discussed, and an ‘official policy statement is being prepared’. This will protect the Society in total. Our thanks to Ray Doggett (MAC) for reviewing the ARS insurance policy and for his advice about it.

A new Vireya Guide was shown and will be available soon. These could be distributed to Orchid Societies (similar cultural requirements), to Garden Centers and Senior Care facilities as Vireyas adapt well to indoor container growing. Membership brochures, Care Guides, ROY Postcards and Posters and back Journals are also available.

OARS needs to be kept up to date on chapter presidents, treasurers, newsletter and membership chairs and all member E-mail and/or address changes or corrections, as it is costly to remail or forward journals and all avenues of communications with chapters must be kept open if we are to continue to function efficiently! Are all Life Members alive and desirous of continuing to receive the journal and other communications? Renewal envelopes cost ARS \$1185 this year. Can renewals be done on-line or at chapter meetings? Credit cards should only be used for new and/or foreign members.

Bob Weissman Electronic Media Committee reported that the www.Rhododendron.org site is receiving more than 100,000 visits per month. He also reported that Virginia Tech will be hosting the on-line Journal archive. The Virginia Tech links are not yet public. However, when made public the page <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/> will include a “Journal American Rhododendron Society” link. The ARS will be posting content for Quarterly Bulletin volume 1 to 35 over the coming months. We anticipate all issues will be on-line sometime in early ‘08. ARS will let members know at that time via an article published in the Journal.

There were 120,000 visits to the ARS web site in May. Commercial members get a free ad on it. The

web committee will even prepare a draft design. Let’s recruit those commercial folks!

Members need to be involved with the public at shows, garden centers, talks, etc. To retain members we need to maintain and entertain them. Membership in the Society should be fun for all as well as educational and a public service. How did existing members/leaders become members? Any good stories?

Obituaries or at least notices of chapter members deaths should be sent to Sonja Nelson for inclusion in the Journal when they occur.

We have been invited to participate in the German Rhododendron Society meeting in Bremen, Germany, May 19-22, 2010 which will follow after the Long Island ARS Annual Convention May 14-17, 2010. Those interested should make their own travel arrangements. The meeting commences on Weds. May 19th with an English speaking symposium; followed on Thur-Fri-Sat. with garden and nursery tours. The meeting will wrap up on Sunday morning with a special tour of Bremen Rhododendron Park.

Please continue to send copies of publicity articles on chapter activities to Jerry Reynolds 1220 E. California Ave., Arcata, CA 95521-5241. (707-822-6580) E-mail- jerry_reynolds@suddenlink.net. Program Library DVD,s are available from Wing Fong:

DVD001-Londonwood Gardens

DVD002-Garden Walks 2006

DVD003-Frank Fujioka’s France Program

The cost is one for \$15 +\$2.50 shipping and handling or two of the same title \$25 + \$3 S&H payable to ARS. Send to:

Wing Fong

E-mail: rhodyfong@verizon.net

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

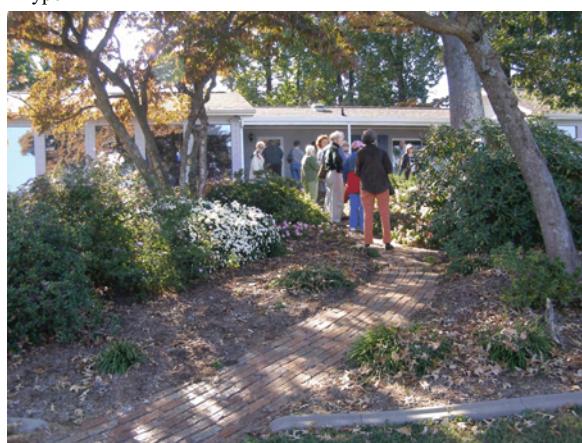
Thanks to Jane McKay for her continued input of “From the Middle of MAC” articles, Walter Przypek for his continued MAC photography, and Bill Bedwell for writing up the Lynchburg meeting since I was unable to attend that meeting. Without the input from them I would have a much more difficult job. I am always glad to hear from others with articles or other items of interest. Sandra



MAC members enjoying the view at Lockerman's. Photo by W. Przypek



Slim Lockerman. Photo by W. Przypek



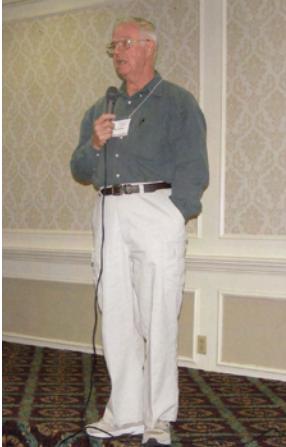
MAC members in the Lockerman garden. Photo by W. Przypek



A view of Richard Wroncy's formal garden. Photo by W. Przypek



Davetta Jolley dressed for the Ribs & Bibs dinner. Photo by W. Przypek



Speaker Ed Collins. Photo by W. Przypek



National D-Day Memorial. Photo by W. Bedwell



Sharon Collins. Photo by W. Przypek



Speaker Paul James. Photo by W. Przypek



Jim Brant, Caroline Neal, Davetta & Doug Jolley. Photo by W. Bedwell

MAC ARS 2007 Foliage Show, Lynchburg, Virginia

October 12-14, 2007

Rhododendron Species

elepidote (non-scaly series)

Blue

Bill Massie

R. maximum

lepidote (scaly series)

Blue

Bill Massie

R. minus var. minus (carolinianum)

Rhododendron Hybrids

elepidote - w/o indumentum

Blue

Bill Massie

"Gomer Waterer"

Red

Bill Massie

"Chionoides"

White

David Parmer

"Phyllis Korn"

White

David Parmer

"Solidarity"

elepidote - w/ indumentum

Blue

Doug & Davetta Jolley

"Harry's Happy Hour"

Blue

David Parmer

R. degronianum var.

yakushimanum × *R. degronianum*

var. *heptamerum* (*metternichii*)

R. bureaurii × *R. degronianum*

var. *yakushimanum*

Red

Richard Wroncy

Specimen Plant

Rhododendron hybrid

Blue

Doug & Davetta Jolley

R. maximum × *R. makinoi*

Fall Blooming Species and Hybrids

Rhododendron hybrid - elepidote

Blue

Slim Lockerman

"Blue Ensign"

Related Species in the Ericaceae Family

Blue

Bill Massie

Kalmia latifolia

Blue

Doug & Davetta Jolley

Sourwood

Fall 2007 Foliage Show Class Awards

Best Rhododendron Species

Bill Massie

R.. minus var. *minus (carolianum)*

Best Rhododendron Hybrid

Doug & Davetta Jolley

"Harry's Happy Hour"

Best Fall Blooming Species or Hybrid

Slim Lockerman

"Blue Ensign"

Best Related Species

Doug & Davetta Jolley

Sourwood

Best In Show

Doug & Davetta Jolley

"Harry's Happy Hour"

GARDENS OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS - New members are encouraged to visit members' gardens in their area. The officers and board members have agreed to show new members through their gardens if the member will call ahead and arrange a convenient time.

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor
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