

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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December 2011

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 4-8, 2012 ARS/ASA Convention, Asheville, NC, Asheville
Crowne Plaza Resort

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/
Old Quarterly Bulletins ARS	http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/
Rhododendron Blog	Coming soon

A SIGNIFICANT AND SAD LOSS OF MAC MEMBERS

MAC has just experienced an unprecedented loss of several long time members. Further information about the passing of Ray Brush, John Buschmann, David Lay, Jane McKay, and John Smith is on the inside pages. Color photos are available online if you go to the www.macars.org Website and click on the December 2011 newsletter.

Mundy, owner of Acer Acres giving “An Overview of the Acer Acres Collection.” Bill Bedwell was presented with the Award of Merit. The P4M Sale was open as well as the Book Sale.

Saturday we had a bus tour down Monument Avenue with commentaries from the bus captains telling us about the Confederate General statues. We then were led on a tour of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden where we also had a room reserved for our lunch. After lunch we went to Acer Acres where we got to look around and purchase some rare Japanese maples.

On Saturday evening we viewed the Foliage Show, had a plant auction conducted by our auctioneer Doug Jolley, and had another chance at the Book Sale before our Virginian Barbeque Buffet. Tim Walsh of Eureka, California, gave the after dinner talk about “Highlights of West Coast Gardens with an Emphasis on the New Humboldt Botanical Garden.” This was followed by a last chance at the P4M Sale.

The Foliage Show winners were:

Best Lepidote	Snow Bunting	The Fellers
Best Rhododendron Species	R. impeditum	The Fellers
Best Related Species	Pieris Japonica	The Fellers

2011 FALL MEETING: EASTERN REGIONAL IN RICHMOND

MAC had a turnout of 94 for a lovely weekend for its Eastern Regional Meeting at the Doubletree Hotel-Richmond Airport. The ARS Board met during the day on Friday. The meeting opened with a dinner buffet followed by speaker Elizabeth



Friday night speaker Elizabeth Mundy.
Photo by S. McDonald.

Best Evergreen Azalea	Bunko	Carol Segree
Best Fall Blooming Entry	Opal	Debby Sauer
Best Azalea species	R. oldhamii	Carol Segree
Best Elepidote	Taurus	The Fellers
Best in Show	Taurus	The Fellers

AWARD OF MERIT TO BILL BEDWELL

The Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society Presents to William F. Bedwell this AWARD OF MERIT

We thank you for your many accomplishments and services both to the American Rhododendron Society and to our Middle Atlantic Chapter.

We present this Citation and small trophy in recognition of your many years of service and significant contributions to the Chapter's growth and continued operation.

There are many stars in the A.R.S. whose activities and accomplishments are known to all, but you are a rare individual who has quietly helped keep the A.R.S. and your Chapter functioning well for over four decades.

You have served as Chapter President, Meeting Organizer and Chairman, Budget and Finance Committee Co-Chair, and Awards and Honors Committee Chair and on the Society Plant Rating (ROY) and Nominating Committees, You have attended many Society meetings and virtually all of our Chapter meetings. And received its Bronze Medal in 1985.

As a major participant in our Middle Atlantic Chapter and the American Rhododendron Society you devoted much personal time and effort and your contributions have gone on for so long that they are too many to catalog here.

However, they are welcomed and appreciated by all who have worked and shared time with you at meetings, and on hikes and tours.

Presented this 20th day of October, 2011, in Sandston, Virginia

Signed: Don Smart, ARS President and Lloyd Willis Middle Atlantic Chapter A.R.S. President

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Robert & Marjene MacIntyre, Bandon, OR 97411

Henry Mayo, Arlington, VA 22207

Richard & Virginia Mohr, Potomac, MD 20854-2201

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Linda M.K. Johnson, Pittsburgh, PA 15218

Mary Lloyd Lay, Irvington, VA 22480

DEATHS

Ray Brush

Forrest Raymond Brush, 90, of Charlottesville, Virginia, died July 4, 2011 after suffering a fall. Ray served in the Army in Europe during World War II. After returning home he attended Michigan State College and received both BS and MS degrees. He worked for the USDA, and eventually joined the American Association of Nurserymen where he was quite active.



Ray Brush

He and his wife Betty moved to Madison, VA, in 1986 after his retirement. They moved to Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge in 2004 and then Ray became a Master Gardener.

Ray was MAC Secretary from 1993 to 1996. He then became treasurer from 1996 to 2000. Ray received the MAC ARS Bronze Medal in 2001.

Ray is survived by his wife Betty, his children and grandchildren.

John Buschmann

John B. Buschmann, 88, US Air Force, retired, of Bear Garden Farm in New Canton, Virginia, died on October 22, 2011. John was a P51 Mustang fighter pilot, and later a test pilot and flight instructor. At Bear Garden Farm he was an active farmer and participated in several organizations. He was into conservation and was helping to restore the American Chestnut trees and blue birds.

John was a great source of support for MAC both through financial contributions and his educational

efforts promoting the culture of rhododendrons at many meetings including several workshops at Bear Garden Farm. He was very social and often found talking about his favorite plant and animal conservation projects during the MAC social hours.

John served on the MAC board of directors in the mid 1980s. He received the MAC ARS Bronze Medal in 1990, and the Award of Merit in 2004.

John is survived by his wife Jean, his children and grand children.



John Buschmann.

David Lay

David Lay, 80, of Weems, VA, (PO Box 773, Irvington, VA), died on October 20, 2011. He grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He graduated from Groton School and received his degree from Harvard College. He was a career officer with the Central Intelligence Agency, specializing in East Asian political affairs. He was stationed in the Far East for several years where he had his family with him.

David was a bibliophile and liked to play chess. David's father who ran a bookshop died when David was in his teens.

In the mid-1970s David moved his family from Alexandria, Virginia, to the Northern Neck where he opened Northern Neck Nurseries, specializing in azaleas and camellias. He joined the MAC ARS in this time frame, his first meeting being in the fall of

1978 at Poor Robert's Retreat. He was an avid plantsman and active in many plant societies. David and his wife Mary Lloyd had a beautiful garden which had even appeared in a TV gardening documentary. They welcomed visits to their garden for many meetings and even hosted two luncheons during MAC tours.

David grew plants for the chapter's Plants for Members (P4M) program for about 20 years, starting about 1983. He was chairman of the huge plant sale at the 1988 convention.

David had served on the MAC board and was its president from 1985 to 1987. He contributed many articles to the MAC newsletter. David received the MAC ARS Bronze Medal in 1988, and the MAC Distinguished Service Citation in 2003.

David is survived by his wife Mary Lloyd, his children, and grand children.



David Lay.

Jane McKay

Jane McKay, 76, of Palymra, Virginia, died suddenly on November 15, 2011. In 1992 Jane and her husband Wally moved down to Palmyra, Virginia, from New York where they had been long time members of the New York Chapter ARS. Wally had retired from the US Postal Service. Jane was an

associate member of MAC starting at least in 1988 and later moved her primary membership to MAC from the NY Chapter.

Jane had been interested in azaleas, rhododendrons and other plants going back into the



Jane McKay.

1960s when she would attend NY Chapter ARS meetings with her father. Jane worked at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico in the early days of her marriage while Wally was stationed in New Mexico in the service.

She knew many of the well-known rhododendron people in NY from that era. Jane had served a term as New York Chapter president, and was awarded the Bronze Medal by the NY Chapter.

Jane was also active in the Holly Society of America in both the chapter in New York and later in the Colonial Virginia Chapter. She belonged to several other plant societies.

Jane served as Registrar for the 1999 Eastern Regional Meeting hosted by MAC which drew 257 attendees.. She was on the MAC board of directors for many years and also served as Membership

Chairman for 13 years. She wrote a column in our chapter newsletter which was popular with the membership.

Jane received the Certificate of Appreciation from MAC in 2004, and then received the Bronze Medal from MAC in 2008.

Jane is survived by her son Darren McKay of Holbrook, NY, his wife, and children.

John Smith

John Smith, 84, of Stuart, Virginia, died on November 7, 2011. He was a graduate of Emory University with a BS degree in mathematics. He served with the Merchant Marines, and had retired as a cryptologist with the National Security Agency where he worked from 1950 through 1985, then later as an encryption consultant for E-Systems.

He loved growing azaleas and rhododendrons and was a Master Gardener in addition to being a member of MAC since 2000. He is survived by his wife Carolyn, and children, grand children and great grandchildren.



John Smith.

BARBARA HALL'S MOTHER

Barbara Hall's mother, Dorothy Tuttle Rowe, 92, of Gloucester, died Monday, Oct 10, 2011, after a brief illness.



Bill Bedwell receiving the Award of Merit from MAC President Lloyd Willis and ARS President Don Smart. Photo by W. Przypek.



Carolyn Beck & friends at Hooper Bald Planting. Photo by Don Hyatt.



Doug Jolley auctioning a rhododendron at the Richmond meeting. Photo by S. McDonald.



Dinner speaker Tim Walsh at Richmond meeting. Photo by S. McDonald.



Elizabeth Mundy of Acer Acres in front of her staff greeting the MAC tour. Photo by S. McDonald.



Executive Director Laura Grant and Yvonne Iuppenlatz. Photo by S. McDonald.



Western Vice President Bob MacIntyre and wife Marjene.
Photo by S. McDonald.



Registrar Sharon Horn and MAC Vice President Theresa Brents.
Photo by S. McDonald.



Taurus, the Feller's Best-In-Show
winner in the Foliage Show.



A view of the lake at Ginter Botanic Garden.



Anne Glass (in yellow) talking with Helen and Kenneth McDonald ca.
1960-1961.

Hooper Bald Planting Trip 2011 by Carolyn Beck

On October 7th and 8th, a diverse and robust group converged on a section of the Nantahala Forest, about 100 miles west of Asheville, NC, and very close to the Tennessee border. Some of the workers lived locally. Others came from Georgia, DC, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Alabama, Maryland, Virginia, and other parts of North Carolina. Represented were members of the ARS, ASA, Boy Scouts, and even a descendent of the Hoopers for whom Hooper Bald was named. All were there with a common goal: to plant 800 native azalea seedlings back into the wild.

Travelers arrived at the planting areas via the scenic Cherohala Skyway, an undulating course across the crest of the pristine Unicoi Mountains. With its many twists and turns, it is a route much favored by motorcyclists. As we approached the higher elevations, we were greeted with panoramic views and breathtaking displays of fall color.

The first of the planting spots was located a short climb from the highway on top of Oak Knob. This large, grassy knoll is a sub-peak of Huckleberry Knob, the highest elevation in the range at 5,560 feet. On Friday morning, the crew set to work. Some were diggers, others planters; a real team machine. They followed the green spots sprayed on the grass, which meant "This is the place to plant one." The process was thus: remove a small section of turf, loosen the wonderfully loamy soil, and nestle in one of the *Rhododendron calendulaceum* seedlings. By Saturday midmorning, 700 plants were in the ground. And then it was on to the nearby Hooper Bald for the last 100. All had been grown by The Southern Highland Reserve from seed collected on Hooper Bald.

We could not have asked for more perfect weather. The mornings were cool, the skies marbled with interesting cloud formations, and there was but a whisper of a breeze. By midday we were glad for some peripheral shade in which to lunch, relax, and chat. It was here that we heard how individuals had spent their time on the way from home. Some had included stretches of the Blue Ridge Parkway in their route. Some had stopped at J Jackson's nursery in Mountain City, Tennessee, called Appalachian Native Plants; a great place to purchase native azaleas. A few had visited Roan Mountain.

After our break, we were treated to a tour by George McLellan. As we walked down the ridge, he

pointed out the local flora, including some of the many *R. calendulaceum* specimens that have been documented, named, and tagged. Also present were *Kalmia* (Mountain Laurel), conifers, Ground Cedar, mosses, and natural *R. calendulaceum* seedlings. At the end of the trail, we were introduced to "Hooper Copper", discovered by George and named for its coppery foliage and star-shaped flowers of yellow, orange, and coppery-gold. This had been one of the first plants to be freed from encroaching trees and shrubs. And it responded with vigor, putting on new growth and flowering abundantly, possibly giving rise to the idea of expanding the restoration effort.

We saw evidence of the hard work that had gone into this venture over the years in the form of huge piles of brush. And we heard stories of the history behind the Hooper Bald Project.

Blunt summits, known as balds, had historically been grazed by livestock. These open expanses of native grasses were a great home for *R. calendulaceum* and they had flourished. In spring, their flowers paraded a sea of oranges, reds, yellows, and golds. In fall, the foliage presented another burst of color, which could be seen from miles away. But when the Forest Service started buying land in the 1930s and ended the grazing practices, trees and shrubs seized the opportunity, quickly crowding out the less aggressive understory plants. So the native azaleas were at serious risk of losing their place in the sun.

Starting in the 1990s, a few members of the Species Study Group from the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the ARS would explore numerous sites each year, searching for native azaleas. It was during one of these trips that a treasure trove of *R. calendulaceum* was noted on Hooper Bald. These azaleas had exceptionally large flowers for the type, many attaining diameters of 2-3", and the group discussed the importance of preserving the gene pool.

Jim Brant took on the task of organizing the effort. He contacted Dr Duke Rankin, a botanist with the Nantahala National Forest. Duke was able to open the doors that lead to approval for the ARS and ASA to proceed with what became known as the Hooper Bald Project. The objective was to reclaim the balds for the native azaleas.

George McLellan, Bob and Audrey Stelloh, Don Hyatt, and John Brown, along with Jim, became the core of this project. With the help of others, like the Sierra Club, areas around the azaleas were cleared so

that they could bask in the light that they need to thrive and set seed. Mowing twice a year keeps the areas from reverting back to dense thickets.

Each year, *R. calendulaceum* seed is collected on Hooper Bald, and later shared via various group seed exchanges. The hope is to perpetuate the best of the species, and prevent theft of plants from the wild. If you are interested in seed from this special area, please contact Don Hyatt at don@donaldhyatt.com.

For more information and photographs of *R. calendulaceum* on Hooper Bald, visit Don Hyatt's website, <http://www.donaldhyatt.com/natives>.

There is also a MAC Chapter PDF of a PowerPoint show which you can view at <http://www.macars.org/HooperBald.pdf>.

Carolyn Beck, ASA Northern Virginia Chapter
Photos by Don Hyatt.

**THE LEGACY OF MID ATLANTIC MEN:
Kenneth McDonald (born 1903), a brief history of
him and Le-Mac Nurseries** by Kenneth
McDonald, Jr. (*Birth years are used with some of the
McDonald names for clarification since the common
names were used repeatedly.*)

This story should pick up where Bill Bedwell ended with the Dr. Wheeldon connection in this series of MAC-ARS notables. Please read on to learn of Dr. Wheeldon's association with my father, Kenneth McDonald, who was also a MAC charter member.

Dad died July 11th, 1965, now over 46 years ago. Many memories fade with time, and I may be fuzzy on some of this, but of course what I do remember personally is quite vivid.

Dad's great great grandfather, Kenneth McDonald (b.1791), came from the Isle of Mull on the West coast of Scotland in 1820 to Ontario, Canada. John (b. 1815), one of his sons who was also born in Scotland, became a farmer in Cumberland, Ontario, taking over the family farm at his father's death. One of John's six children was Kenneth (b.1845) who became a teacher in 1864, then in 1876 he established a business in the Ottawa market area. They displayed farm implements, cutters, surreys, hand washing machines and farm seeds. After 1900 Kenneth (1845) moved on to northeast Saskatchewan and started a lumber business, leaving the Ottawa retail nursery and catalogue business to be run by his sons John Alfred (b.1874) and Kenneth Perigo (b.1882). Kenneth Perigo McDonald's sons Doug and Ted later ran the

business. By 1963 it went by the name of Kenneth McDonald and Sons and was Canada's largest lawn and turf grass supplier and was expanding into many other areas of horticulture. It went out of business in about 1965.

Since Dad's uncle and cousins ran the business in Canada, Dad needed to do something else. He attended MacDonald College of the McGill University, served in the Royal Canadian Army Signal Corps, and worked in western Canada possibly at the lumber and timber operations.

He was also sent to other nurseries to 'learn the trade' and at Princeton Nursery in Princeton, New Jersey, he worked with a Frenchman by the name of Jacques LeGendre. On April 1st, 1927, Dad and Jacques LeGendre purchased a farm on what was then Sawyer Swamp Road, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, (now Hampton) to start their own nursery. This area was picked for its relatively mild climate and good access for shipping. Dad was just 23 years old at this time.

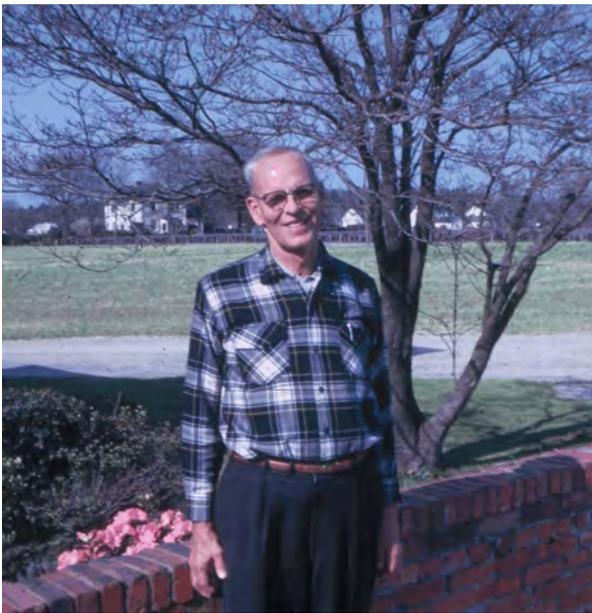
This became Le-Mac Nurseries, a partnership. In January, 1932, Dad married Helen Morris from Ottawa. Shortly afterwards, Jacques was recalled to Orleans, France, due to a death in his family. Le-Mac then became a sole-proprietorship and later was incorporated. Le-Mac grew a wide range of nursery and florist plants including azaleas and rhododendrons and was bringing in many new varieties both from Europe and from Dad's father John Alfred McDonald, who was still at Kenneth McDonald and Sons in Canada. Le-Mac sold retail and wholesale.

When Mr LeGendre returned from France he settled in Wachapreague, Virginia, and started Gulf Stream Nurseries.

During the early days at Le-Mac, flats of seedling florist-type evergreen azaleas were purchased from Alphonse Pericat in Collingdale, Pennsylvania. Some of these were selected and propagated. One special selection was named 'Hampton Beauty'. It was found that many of these florist-type azaleas of 'Formosa-Kurume' hybrids could survive as young plants with some protection in most of our fairly mild Zone 8 winters.

According to Fred Galle's *Azalea Book*, page 277, Le-Mac also introduced azaleas 'Barbara Gail', 'Glory', 'Hampton Rose', 'Harmony', 'Marjorie Ann', 'Melody', 'Rhythm', and 'Symphony'. I do not recall working with most of these. Other Pericats

that we grew and I recall are 'China Seas', 'Dawn', 'Mrs. Fisher', 'New Dawn', 'Pericat Orchid', 'Pericat Pink', 'Pericat White', 'Pink Supreme' and 'Sweetheart Supreme'.



Kenneth McDonald ca. early 1960s.

In 1939 the first and only multi page Le-Mac Nurseries catalog with pictures was published and distributed. Most of our sales brochures were at first typed sheets and later printed on heavier paper with 2 folds.

When World War II started the retail business was closed due to the loss of many employees to the war effort. It was reopened in 1946 with my uncle, John R. McDonald, as manager. The new retail nursery and garden center was known as McDonald Garden Center. This garden center was later sold and expanded, but still is operating under that name.

During the war, production of the varied horticultural crops was cut back and after the war the wholesale nursery specialized and only sold azaleas. Some sales during the war were to Ft. Monroe, Langley Army Air Force Base, and to beautify a USO canteen.

After so many years of walking plowed fields and nursery rows where plants had been dug leaving holes, Dad had bad ankles and feet and required special sturdy shoes. Sometime in the early 1940s an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Thomas F. Wheeldon, with offices in Richmond and elsewhere, opened a satellite office in Hampton where he came about once a week. He and Dad became friends beyond just

doctor and patient due to Dr. Wheeldon's interest in rhododendrons and other plants. This became a long-term friendship during which they purchased and exchanged many plants.

In the fall of 1949, they both joined the rather new (1945) American Rhododendron Society, headquartered in Portland Oregon. In May 1952 they and others chartered the Middle Atlantic Chapter, which became just the second chapter after New York on the East Coast. Many of the charter members were medical doctors or nurserymen recruited by the Dr. Wheeldon and my father.

Dad bought some rhododendrons from Dr. Wheeldon in 1963 when I came out of Army Reserve service, and we began growing increasing numbers of them after that. In 1965 when my father died, I continued the MAC membership. I had also been a patient of Dr. Wheeldon's and he kept after me to buy and sell rhododendrons and to attend an occasional meeting mostly in Richmond.

Sandra and I were married in 1974. I became chapter president the following year, and Sandra started her long run with the chapter newsletter. Dr Wheeldon died in July, 1976.

Dad had been highly involved in the Hampton community and was known to some by the nickname "Scotch". He helped start the Virginia Nurseryman's Association and the Hampton Lions Club. He served on the Board of the Merchants National Bank which through several mergers and name changes became Bank of America. Coincidentally, Merchants National Bank was the bank which loaned Dad and Jacques LeGendre money to help get started in business in the beginning.

Dad had a slight stutter at times and preferred working in the background and was never president of the MAC ARS. I have also heard that in those early days that ARS did not want nurserymen as presidents for fear that the organization might become too commercialized.

I still have a few old slides of the early MAC meetings. The meetings were fairly formal and quite elegant with the ladies wearing white gloves and frequently high heels. Our chapter is more relaxed and less formal these days!

HELP NEEDED

Articles from the membership are welcome more than ever with the passing of Jane McKay and David Lay. Sandra McDonald

**Memberships and renewals should be sent temporarily to our treasurer Debby Sauer, 14201
Ramblewood Dr., Chester, VA 23836-5716**

Annual membership dues are \$40 per year.

Miscellaneous inquiries may be sent to the editor (address below) for forwarding to proper individual.

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor
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