

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXXV No.1

February 2009

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

April 29-May 3, 2009  
May 8-10, 2009

ARS meeting in Everett, Washington  
MAC meeting, Holiday Inn Tanglewood, Roanoke, VA

### Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

<b>American Rhododendron Society</b>	<a href="http://www.rhododendron.org/">http://www.rhododendron.org/</a>
<b>MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)</b>	<a href="http://www.macars.org/">http://www.macars.org/</a>
<b>U VA Science &amp; Engineering Libraries</b>	<a href="http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm">http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm</a>
<b>UVA Special Collections</b>	<a href="http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/">http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/</a>
<b>Henry Skinner Website</b>	<a href="http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/">http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/</a>
<b>Old Quarterly Bulletins ARS</b>	<a href="http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/">http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/</a>

### MAC SPRING MEETING by Sharon Horn

May 8-10, 2009 at remodeled Holiday Inn  
Tanglewood in Roanoke, Virginia

C o m e  
from North,  
South, East  
and West, and  
join us the  
weekend of  
May 8-10,  
2009 to  
experience  
"Gardening at



The Peaks" in Roanoke, Virginia. We will be based near the Peaks of the Blue Ridge Parkway at the Holiday Inn Tanglewood which is conveniently located for our planned activities - just south of Roanoke near the intersection of I-581 and Route 419. Our plans for the weekend include banquet, Flower Show, Book Sale and Seedling Sale and tours of two Peak gardens – MAC member Paul James and Glebe Hill Garden, and two Peak speakers – Kristine Johnson and Pamela Harper. The second weekend in May promises to be peak viewing time for our garden visits, as well as along the Blue Ridge Parkway – so make plans to include a drive on the Parkway as you travel to or from the meeting.

The weekend kicks off on Friday afternoon with meeting registration open and Flower Show entries beginning at 4:00 pm., and continues after dinner (on your own) on Friday evening with our MAC Chapter

business meeting to elect officers, followed by our first Peak speaker Kristine Johnson, supervisory forester at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where her duties include forest insect and disease management, exotic plant control, and restoration of native plant communities, including our current MAC project on Gregory Bald, with the Seedling Sale and Book Sale rounding out the evening. Saturday morning will begin with a continental breakfast buffet (included in your meeting registration) and then we will board buses for the short trip to Paul James' garden – constructed by a Peak plants person situated just below the Peaks of the Parkway. We do not believe that Paul has ever met a plant that he did not have a place for in his extensive garden and so, his garden includes incredible collections of many species, not only azaleas and rhododendrons, but also maples, conifers, perennials and native wildflowers. After lunch at Paul's we will re-board the buses to travel to Glebe Hill Garden, owned by Gary and Carol Osbourne, in Daleville, Virginia. Glebe Hill Gardens features world-class collections of over 1400 varieties of daylilies, 800 plus varieties of hostas, hundreds of conifers, shady paths and a cascading man-made stream. Saturday evening will begin with a Cash Bar and our Plant Auction of choice plants and (friendly) competitive bidding, then a sumptuous dinner buffet. After dinner we will welcome our keynote speaker Pamela Harper, noted plants person, author of *Perennials – How to Select, Grow & Enjoy*, *Designing With Perennials*, *Color Echoes*, and *Time*

*Tested Plants*, and owner of the Harper Horticultural Slide Library of over 100,000 slides of plants and gardens. Her topic for the evening presentation is "Just Because Its Beautiful" and we know she will have a wealth of information to share. Pamela Harper has been honored by the Garden Writers Association of America and with the Horticultural Writing Award from the American Horticultural Society. Her garden has been featured on the Home and Garden Channel and in articles in *Virginia Living*, *Fine Gardening* and *Horticulture* magazines. The weekend will conclude on Sunday morning with the Species Study Group meeting and several options for tours on your own as you return home.

A detailed schedule of the weekend plans (including more information about the Sunday Tag-A-Long Tour to North Carolina with the Species Study group), the meeting registration form, hotel registration information and deadlines, and Spring Flower Show rules will be available on our website in early February – <http://www.macars.org>. Registration is required for the Saturday garden tours and the banquet. Guests are welcome to attend the Friday evening and/or Saturday evening speakers at no cost.

Questions? Please contact Sharon Horn, Meeting Registrar, by phone: 540-350-2666 or by email: [oldturnpikefarm@gmail.com](mailto:oldturnpikefarm@gmail.com)

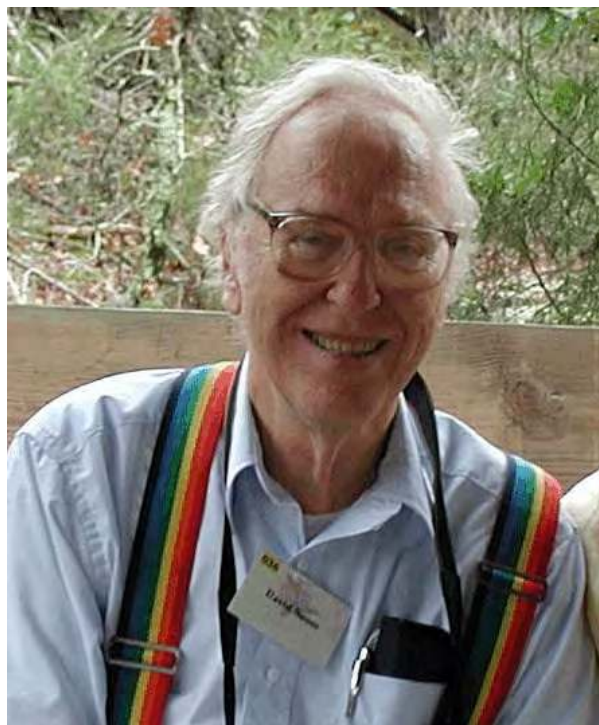
## DEATHS

### David Sauer

Long-time MAC member **David French Sauer** of Chester, Virginia, died on January 12, 2009. He was born in Richmond in 1929. David was an artist with a B.F.A. from Richmond Professional Institute (now VCU). He received a M.F.A. from Columbia University in Oriental Art History and also did further post graduate work there. He specialized in Southern Sung painting. He came back to Richmond and taught art at VCU. Later photography caught his interest and he studied under Ansel Adams at the Yosemite Workshop Series. During his impressive 60 year career as a painter he exhibited in New York City, Atlanta, Richmond, North Carolina, Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and San Francisco.

David was a strong supporter of MAC since about 1976 and was well known to all the members who attended meetings. He was especially interested in evergreen azaleas, and he and Debby had fine collections of them, including some rare kurumes.

They opened their garden in Chester for many MAC garden tours. David also gave talks about azaleas and had a Web site about them.



David Sauer

David and Debby were in the MAC Species Study Group and were among the group who made the famous extra long hike up Gregory Bald when the bridge was out.

### John Withers

Long-time MAC member **John Cure Withers**, 87, of Mc-Gaheysville, Virginia, passed away on Thursday, January 29, 2009. He was born in Roanoke, Virginia on Dec. 10, 1921, and was a son of the late Douglas and Dorothy Cure Withers. John's father Douglas (known



John Withers. Photo by W. Przypek

as D.D. to MAC friends) had been a MAC member for some years previously. John had been a member since before 1967.

John graduated from Roanoke College and was a World War II Air Force Veteran with the 339th Fighter Squadron. Among his accomplished citations, Captain Withers received the Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal with seven oak leaf clusters. John was a nurseryman and owned and operated Hi-Meadows Gardens in Mount Solon for many years. He enjoyed raising horses, cattle and tending to his azaleas and rhododendrons.

His wife LuDean Withers survives as does his daughter Dell Taylor (also a MAC member) and two sons, Dean Withers and John Withers, brother Douglas Withers and six grandchildren.

John was MAC's first P4M (Plants for Members) propagator back when Austin Kennell instigated our program before the Sheuchenkos then David Lay took it over. John took cuttings from some of his own plants and probably others also. John had been active in the chapter until the last few years.

#### **ARS MEETING IN EVERETT, WA**

Details about the up-coming ARS convention April 29<sup>th</sup> - May 3<sup>rd</sup> are on the Web at: [www.ars-2009-convention.org](http://www.ars-2009-convention.org)

#### **HOOPER BALD PROJECT SPRING 2009**

The Species Study Group of the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS has undertaken a new project to help restore Hooper Bald. This North Carolina mountaintop wilderness area is south of the Great Smoky Mountains near the Tennessee border in the Nantahala National Forest, just off the scenic Cherohala Skyway.

Like many of the open balds in the Southern Appalachians, Hooper Bald is getting overgrown. Rather than staying an open meadow, the area is filling up with successional trees and shrubs which crowd out the native meadow wildflower, azalea and rhododendron populations. Without intervention the top of the mountain will no longer be an open meadow bald, but will become pine and hardwood forestland. This invasive regression is threatening native wildflowers, and especially the exceptional forms of the flame azalea (*R. calendulaceum*) which have been identified on Hooper Bald. One of those exceptional plants has been informally named "Hooper's Copper" and is a bright coppery orange flame azalea that has

some of the largest flowers we have seen on this species with blossoms of more than 3" across.

In November 2008, the Species Study Group began discussions about this project with the Forest Service Officials in the region. Working in coordination with the National Forest administration, a restoration clean-up of the Bald has been scheduled for the weekend of April 3 - 5, 2009. We are looking for volunteers to participate in this preservation of the important plant communities of Hooper Bald. This restoration is similar to the ones currently in progress in the Roan Highlands and on Gregory Bald. The National Forest Service has approved the plan and will be assisting us in cutting of invasive trees and shrubs, and bush hogging to open up the Bald. Many volunteers from the Middle Atlantic Chapter and others interested in the project are needed to help with the chipping of the cut trees, cleaning up around the identified azaleas and pruning other vegetation.

A real advantage to this project on Hooper Bald is the relatively easy access. Using any of the several motels in Robbinsville, NC as our base, only a short drive is needed to get to the scenic Cherohala Skyway. From the Skyway entrance to the parking area at Hooper Bald is not far, a little less than 12 miles. After parking, we have just a short walk of about a quarter mile along a gravel path to get from the parking area to the Bald. (There are even restroom facilities - not typical conditions for most wilderness areas.)



*R. calendulaceum* on Hooper Bald. Photo by Don Hyatt

For more information or to sign up for the project, please contact Jim Brant, MAC President, by phone: 804 693-7556 or by e-mail: [jandpbrant@verison.net](mailto:jandpbrant@verison.net)

## CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Correction: Although the text was correct in the Certificate of Appreciation in the December newsletter, your editor regrets the name error in the photo caption. It should say "Bill Bedwell presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. Jay Y. Gillenwater. Photo by W. Przypek."

## FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

I started the last 'From the Middle of MAC' report to you with a statement regarding the mild weather we had last fall, within two days it turned cold and has remained cold, with many cloudy days, so far this winter (I'm writing this on January 25). A few days ago the thermometer outside my window read 5 degrees. Looking back in my 'Gardeners Journal'



Jane McKay

over the previous winters on many days the temperature reached 70 degrees, not so this winter. It is with a great deal of trepidation that I mention that we have not had more than an occasional few flurries of snow so far this winter. I hope I have not put a jinx on the chance for snow for the remaining months of winter especially since I will be flying to New York in February (where they have had quite a bit of snow) and yes, I will be flying in and out of LaGuardia airport and on U.S. Airways.

Now lets talk about the garden, most plants look good but a few rhododendrons have had some branch dieback in the last few weeks. When I removed the branches I saw no evidence of borer, ambrosia beetle or disease, in fact the wood looks perfectly healthy. I'm sure the weather was not a factor since these are all hardy plants. Could this still be from the drought last summer and my lack of watering? I did have a large oak branch come down on a windy day. It landed on the fence and folded it up like an accordion but I managed to fix it at least temporarily until warmer weather. Most important, no plants were damaged even though it came very close to a new double hellebore. Replacing a fence is nothing compared to losing a favorite plant.

Most winter afternoons are spent going through the many garden catalogs that at this time of the year

arrive almost daily. Of course I'm make lists of what to order. Do I consider the two large cement block frames under the deck filled with pots of plants that I can't find room to get them in the ground? Of course not, I'm a gardener and acquiring new plants is what it's all about.

See you in Roanoke.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Samuel D. Jr. & Virginia Burd,  
., Vienna, VA 22181-3028  
Elissa Steeves, Blacksburg, VA 23060  
Sharon & John Trezise,  
Bethesda, MD 20817-4102

## MAC MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

The December08/January09 issue of *The Virginia Sportsman* featured the garden of Paul James on pages 53-57. The article, "A Planting Below Cahas Mountain," was written by Ian Robertson with photos courtesy of Paul James. The article captured elements of Paul's unique personality and both humorous and thoughtful comments. The color photos with the article were impressive.

The January 2009 issue of *Wonderful West Virginia* contained an article "An Orchid for All Seasons" on pages 29-30. Text and illustration were by Betsy Trammell, and photographs were by Doug Jolley.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** To see all photos in color go to our MACARS.org website and look at the newsletter there.



Jim Brant & George McLellan at Hooper Bald. Photo by Don Hyatt

5GARDENS 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. Telephone numbers and towns are listed below.

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor  
Mid-Atlantic Rhododendron News and Notes  
4302 Chesapeake Ave  
Hampton, VA 23669