

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 10-12, 2013	Hampton Inn & Comfort Inn, Gloucester, VA
October 25-27, 2013	Virginia Beach, VA
Spring 2016	National Convention, Norfolk area, VA

### Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society	<a href="http://www.rhododendron.org/">http://www.rhododendron.org/</a>
MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)	<a href="http://www.macars.org/">http://www.macars.org/</a>
U VA Science & Engineering Libraries	<a href="http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm">http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm</a>
UVA Special Collections	<a href="http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/">http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/</a>
Henry Skinner Website	<a href="http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/">http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/</a>
Old Quarterly Bulletins ARS	<a href="http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/">http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/</a>
Rhododendron Blog	<a href="http://www.rhododendron.org/blog/">www.rhododendron.org/blog/</a>
Friends of the National Arboretum	<a href="http://savetheazaleas.org/">http://savetheazaleas.org/</a>
FONA's Save the Azaleas and Boxwood site	

## SPRING MEETING AT THE HAMPTON & COMFORT INNS IN GLOUCESTER, VA

The MAC Spring Meeting is scheduled for the Hampton and Comfort Inns in Gloucester on May 10-12, 2013. They are right next to each other. Our activities room will be in the Hampton Inn. Sharon Horn plans to have the meeting registration packet mailed out March 1.

George McLellan has great gardens lined up for us on Saturday. We will visit the garden of William Cawthorn near Deltaville. His restored home dates back to 1760. The house and garden have been beautifully restored and was on the Virginia Garden Tour last year. We will also see Brent and Becky's Bulbs and one or two more gardens.

Our speakers are yet to be announced. It sounds like a very good meeting so reserve the date!

## OBITUARY OF CELIA PORTER DOLLARHIDE

Our MAC Past President Celia Porter Dollarhide died on December 6, 2012, at her home in Alexandria, Virginia, after a lengthy bout with cancer. Celia was the daughter of long time MAC member and board member General



Celia Dollarhide

Robert Porter, Jr. who had brought her into the chapter. Celia was MAC President from May 2009 to April 2011. Previously she had served on the board. She worked hard for MAC and brought several friends and relatives to the meetings.

Celia retired in 2001 from a 34 year career at the Veteran's Administration where she was Director of Education Services. She received several awards there.

MAC had prepared the Bronze Medal Award for Celia which they tried to award at three different meetings. But Celia was not able to attend any of those meetings due to her health and transportation problems. The award was given posthumously to her sister Susan Walker at the reception following Celia's Memorial Service on December 12, 2012, in Madison, Virginia.

## BRONZE MEDAL AWARD TO CELIA PORTER DOLLARHIDE

The Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society presents to Celia Porter Dollarhide this Bronze Medal Award

We first met you accompanying your father, General Robert W. Porter, Jr., to our meetings; then you followed in his footsteps with distinguished service on our Chapter's Board of Directors, assisting with the 2006 ARS-ASA Convention Flower Show in Maryland, advising the Chapter Finance Committee, and developing a relationship for our Chapter's support of the National Arboretum through FONA. While maintaining the Middle River Farm rhododendron

garden established by your father, opening it for our meeting tours, you also served as Chapter Vice President and President, working on the committee that organized and conducted some of our most memorable meetings, tours and speakers, including the ARS Eastern Regional in 2011. Then, as Past President, you have continued to provide valuable services. For these and other exceptional contributions we gratefully present our Chapter's highest honor.

Presented posthumously, December 15, 2012  
Lloyd Willis, President Madison, VA

### OTHER DEATHS

Former long time MAC member Evelyn Fray Watts of Harrisonburg, wife of the late Williamson Watts, died on December 21, 2012. They were members of MAC until a few years ago. Evelyn was very much into plants and grew azaleas and rhododendrons and



Evelyn and Williamson Watts.

hybridized daylilies in addition to doing vegetable and other gardening and was also a Master Gardener. Her father had been commandant of Virginia Military Institute. Her husband, Williamson Watts, was an attorney and pre-deceased her.

### MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

**David Parmer** of Hinton, WV, has written a book about the forgotten railroad town of Orlando, not far from his hometown of Burnsville. *Tales of Old Orlando* contains more than 300 photographs and stories. The book was published by McClain Printing Co, in Parsons. The small railroad town of Orlando straddles Lewis and Braxton counties and was in its heyday when railroads were the way to travel in West

Virginia. It was a changeover stop on the Baltimore and Ohio and Coal & Coke railways. When the automobile came along the town declined. David Parmer taught high school history before going to law school. He practiced law in Hinton for about 40 years. Anyone interested in purchasing the book can contact David at [gbrcliffs@frontier.com](mailto:gbrcliffs@frontier.com) or by phone at 304-466-4466.

MAC is fortunate to have another writer and photographer in its membership. Most of you know **Doug Jolley** is a superb photographer and has published occasionally in the *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine. In 2012, Doug outdid himself and had articles in four issues. The Website for *Wonderful West Virginia* is [www.wonderfulwv.com](http://www.wonderfulwv.com). His article "The Woodland Orchids of August" was available online there when I looked. I could not find the other articles and a subscription is likely needed to be able to see them since they seem to post only one article per issue.

Doug's articles were:

January 2012, pp 24-27: Finding Winter Ferns

May 2012, pp 26-29: Getting to Know Native Azaleas  
[There are some of Doug's gorgeous native azalea photos in this article.]

August 2012, pp10-13: The Woodland Orchids of August

September 2012, pp 24-27: Looking Back . . . at Haystacks

### LETTER FROM MARY LLOYD LAY

December 2012

Dear Friends,

This fall I decided it was time to dismantle the library that David and I built over 50 years. It was a hard job physically and emotionally. It was both sad and bittersweet. As I looked through books it brought back so many periods and enthusiasms of our life together.

The seeds of our library were already planted as we inherited books from David's father's rare book store in Sante Fe. When I met David he was playing chess by mail, and he did so until about the last two years of his life. I counted something like 250 books on chess, which I gave to a state chess club. I felt I had to find good homes for some of his books.



David knew John Updike slightly in college because he borrowed David's tux once. Therefore we had all of Updike's books. Unfortunately nothing signed. Matter of fact, I kept looking for things that were of value but never could find anything in good condition. Among tired looking first additions were Fitzgerald (3 novels), Rachael Carson, John Dos Passos and others. I found several first editions of Alex Waugh who wrote travel books, a genre that David collected as well. I found Nancy Hale, Ellen Glasgow, Oliver Lafarge, and numerous other writers no one talks about any more.

We started our married life in Old Town Alexandria. That meant collections of books on old houses, architecture, and oriental rugs. We had inherited about 50 Victorian Tinsel Prints and that started a long running collection about the Theatre in England. We spent two years in Japan. I found we had about 25 novels by Japanese writers. Those found space near an entire section on the Far East that David had collected over the years starting before I met him.

When we moved to the country, David and I both began collecting gardening books. I collected chatty books by gardeners and design books. David collected tomes on rhododendron, hollies, maples, magnolia—your name it—as well as first editions of garden writers. We added a wine cellar at one point and the wine books arrived. Needless to say, we drank lots of good wine in our house. We traveled to England numerous times, and I found I had collected dozens of novels by English women published by Virago Press. I have no idea if I read them all as I cannot remember them that well.

I brought bags of books to Irvington, would go through them, keep some and give the rest to the library sale. Now that I look at my shelves I wonder why I saved what I did and not other books. There is just no way to downsize a library and feel content afterwards. When I went to the recent local library I kept seeing the books I gave them. I would run my fingers over them and then sign “no”.

Did David read all these books? A lot more than you might think, except what he called “Women's novels”. I remember him sitting in our library for hours pouring over books. He seemed to love to find a subject to delve into and really learn about. We could never get him interested in a computer. It certainly would have cut into his study time.

Did he like to take care of our leather bound books we inherited? No, nor did I. I brought over for the new very small library the ones that still looked decent. I am debating a Kindle and I am sure the children and grand

children will get most of their books that way. But I am glad to have a library, even if small, for them to visit.

A good friend lent me a book which I just love. It is what got me started on this letter. It would have been a perfect book for David. Do read it if you like libraries: *The Library at Night* by Alberto Manuel, my choice for best book in 2012.

We miss David, his bright conversations and wit. Happy reading.

#### **GLOUCESTER GARDEN NOTES** by Barbara Hall

We're ahead of where we were this time last year as far as fall clean-up of leaves is concerned. However, there are so many sticks and limbs down everywhere that I don't think we'll ever be able to catch up on getting them up. Every time we have a little wind, more comedown! I think that some of the bad storms (hurricanes, tropical storms, ice storms, etc.) that we've had over the last couple of decades have damaged a lot of limbs that have finally died and decayed enough so that they are falling off the trees now. We're both surprised at how quickly just about all of the leaves have fallen off of our trees this year. Even the ones on the lower limbs of some of the oaks that usually don't come off until the new ones push them off in the spring have already fallen. Has anyone else noticed that?



The camellias have had the best bloom this fall that I've ever seen. A couple that David Lay gave us many years ago have gotten huge and are covered in pink blooms...They're the size of small trees! Unfortunately, I haven't taken time to go to that part of the woods to take pictures of them. I'm becoming more and more smitten with camellias, especially the fall-blooming varieties, even seedlings! They bloom over such a long period and so many of them have a delightful fragrance. Of course, here in Gloucester we're on the borderline for hardiness for many of them, so we don't have a large variety...Most are pink or white and a few reds, but not a lot of variety in the bloom. However, especially from a distance, they all look beautiful whether they are hybrids or seedlings. Some years ago I collected seeds off of the camellias in our garden and planted them in containers. At least 95% of them germinated! We have finally finished getting all of those planted, but there are still so many spontaneous seedlings that have appeared around the garden. I hate to



just rip them up and discard them, but there are so many and some have come up under other plants where they can't stay!

I saw a new camellia at Anderson's Show Place the other day that I'm probably going to get. It is pink with a white picotee edge that is a 'Yuletide' sport. Very pretty! As hybridizers develop more hardiness in some of the fancier cultivars, I probably will be tempted to add some of them to the garden. I think that we probably have enough rhodos. I know, that's blasphemy coming from me, but it's true. A lot of them haven't fared well though the difficult summers we've had and even a lot of our azaleas aren't looking that great. We also have a lot of trouble with petal blight so many of the blooms are spoiled almost as soon as they open. Spraying all of the plants that we have is just too difficult. I'm still particularly attracted to deciduous azaleas, especially the yellows and ones with fragrance...I will probably add some of them to the garden if I come across some nice plants. I'm afraid that I've gotten to the point that I don't want to fool with small bushes that have to be taken care of for years before they are big enough to plant in the landscape.

Both Al and I are sick of seeing countless ugly pots sitting around our place, so we're turning over a new leaf and buying fewer but larger plants. We also hope to be able to spend more time on maintenance of the garden than planting new things that need more care to get established. Gardening is really hard work and I'm just not up to it anymore. Maybe this is just a part of aging, compounded by health problems, or maybe I'm just getting lazy.

#### **IN THE CROZET GARDEN** by Lloyd Willis

Last Thursday Crozet was expected to get 2 to 6 inches of snow—we got zero inches. Margaret called the relatives in the Galax, Virginia, area, and they had 10 inches of “very beautiful snow”. The rain we got that day was slow and cold. I went out to do yard work in my rain gear. After about two hours it felt like I was standing in ice water, looked down and saw the pants had helped move the rain water into the work boots. That was the end of that work day.

The next day I started stacking limbs the older son-in-law had cut up for fire wood. He gets the wood for free if he gets it out of the yard before I stack it. The



Lloyd Willis

cutup limbs are a great size for firewood and as of today my stack is about 25 feet long by 2 ½ feet tall.

There are many yaks and azaleas on one side of the new wood stack and boxwood and Japanese maples on the other side. Sometimes the wood stacks look so nice they never get used for firewood!

The next task is getting leaves out of more of the rhodos and azaleas. Maybe I will even return to raking the side of the lot of the estimated 10,000 plus twigs. Sections of our side lot are finally looking a bit neater.

#### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:**

Chris Wetmore, Charlotte, NC

28202

Margaret Willis, Crozet, VA

22932-3500

#### **WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS, FEBRUARY 2013** by Doug Jolley

Although neighboring areas of West Virginia have experienced trying winter conditions, we have had a very mild winter here in central West Virginia. Crocuses and winter aconite are in full bloom during this second week of February. Oriental witch-hazels have been in bloom since late January and more varieties



Doug Jolley

are about to open. Some weekends have been so mild that some of our shade pergolas have received new coats of paint and stain!

The newest feature of our garden is a 6 foot by 8 foot bog garden. Seven species of pitcher plants from Enchanter's Garden in Hinton are the anchor plants. Sundews and native orchid species also have been included. Adjacent to the lined bog space are companions such as *R. atlanticum*, *R. viscosum* 'Lemon Viscosum', *R. viscosum*, Netted Chain Fern (*Woodwardia aerolata*) and more.

One chore that has been easily accomplished this winter is that of manuring the rhododendron and azalea beds. I wouldn't have considered this until I read Gertrude Jekyll doing so to her rhodos and who is going to question her? Also, when visitors learn of the mulch material, they stay on the pathways! Also, the plants treated to an inch of stable dressing and an inch of pine needles seem quite content.

With a generous bud set on the rhododendrons and azaleas throughout the garden, hopefully the weather will treat us kindly!

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. Telephone numbers and towns are listed below. **Memberships and renewals should be sent to our Membership Chairman Jeanne Hammer at 815 Porter St. Apt 301, Richmond, VA 23224.** Annual membership dues are \$40 per year. Miscellaneous inquiries may be sent to the editor (address below) for forwarding to proper individual.

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