



# American Rhododendron Society

**VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER**

Web Site: <http://ValleyForgeARS.org>

## ***NEWSLETTER***

***January/February/March 2010***

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### ***At a Glance***

- **January 17 (Sunday), 2 p.m., at Jenkins: Great Gardens of Scotland and N. England**
- **February 21 (Sunday) 2 p.m., at Uwchlan Mtg House, Lionville: Gardening in Phila. Area**
- **March 18, (Thursday), 7.30 p.m., at Jenkins: Rhododendron Propagation**
- **April 15 (Thursday), 7.30 p.m., at Jenkins: 4 Seasons at Jenkins Arboretum**
- **April 30-May 2 (Friday-Sunday): VF Plant Sale at Jenkins Arboretum**
- **May 9 (Sunday): Flower Show at Morris Arboretum (hosted by Philadelphia Chapter)**
- **June 27 (Sunday): Annual Meeting and Picnic**
- **August 15 (Sunday): Cuttings Exchange and Plant Auction**

**Unless specified otherwise, regular meetings will be held at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon**

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### ***President's Message***

### ***Happy New Year!***

Welcome to our newest members: Gus Johnson and Robin Sowers. I hope everyone remembered to renew their membership. If you are not sure, please contact Darlene Henning at 610-987-6184.

The 2009 banquet was again a great success, thanks to Mimi Favre and those who helped her. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful afternoon at St. David's Golf Club with Rick Darke's interesting program and the release of his newest book.

The ARS Fall Conference held in Lionville was a great success, with 166 people attending and all 2,000 plants sold. Many Valley Forge Chapter members were instrumental in the success.

Our September and October meetings were at the new John J. Willaman Education Center at Jenkins Arboretum. Our January meeting is also at Jenkins on a Sunday afternoon. I will take you with me on our trip to the International Rhododendron Conference in Scotland, where we visited 24 of the oldest and most beautiful rhododendron gardens in the world.

The February meeting, also in the afternoon, will be a joint meeting with the Philadelphia Chapter at the Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House in Lionville.

The March meeting will be back at Jenkins Arboretum, on a Thursday evening, featuring Jerry Van de Sande, the Propagator and Garden Curator at RareFind.

Thanks for a great job to our outgoing webmaster, Jim Willhite, and welcome to our incoming webmaster, Randell Jesup.

Steve Henning (610-987-6184)

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**January 17 (Sunday), 2 p.m.  
at Jenkins Arboretum, Devon**

**Speaker: Steve Henning**  
***Great Gardens of Scotland and Northern England***  
(2008 International Rhododendron Conference in Scotland)

Steve will lead us through 24 great old gardens of Scotland and the Lake District in northern England, including the Vireya collection of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden, Glendoick (Cox), and Branklyn. The gardens were all beautiful and full of rhododendrons at their prime.

**Refreshments:** We ask those whose names begin with the letters K to R to bring fingerfood (sweet or savory).

**February 21 (Sunday) , 2 p.m.  
at Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House, Lionville  
Joint Meeting with the Greater Philadelphia Chapter**

**Speaker: Liz Ball**

A Philadelphia Chapter Member, Liz Ball is a popular gardening expert and a prolific author of gardening books. *Gardening in Pennsylvania* is one of her more recent titles.

***Gardening in Philadelphia: A sense of Place***

Those of us who have lived and gardened in this area all of our lives take for granted how special it is. With her slides, Liz describes how we are the beneficiaries of a unique horticultural heritage, good geographical location, and gentle climate. Therefore, it is no coincidence that our rolling hills are dotted with wonderful trees, extraordinary gardens, and many nurseries and garden centers. Liz discusses how exploiting these natural resources, particularly the native flora, makes gardening such a joy and assures that our landscapes are able to sustain wildlife that is losing habitats elsewhere.

**Refreshments will be provided by the two chapters**

**Directions to Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House, 5 N. Village Ave., Exton, PA 19341.**  
**From the Exton Mall,** at Rt. 100 and Lincoln Highway: Go north on Rt. 100 for 2.9 miles, turn left on Rt. 113, Uwchlan Ave. and go 0.4 miles, turn right onto Eagleview Blvd. (the 2nd light from Rte. 100), make a right and then another right at Dowlin Forge Rd. (the 2nd light from Rte. 113, and come in to the Meeting House.

**From Pennsylvania Turnpike Exit 312 at Rt. 100:** Go south on Rt. 100 for 1 mile, turn right onto Rt. 113, Uwchlan Ave. and go for 0.4 miles, then turn right onto Eagleview Blvd. (the 2nd light from Rte. 100), make a right and then another right at Dowlin Forge Rd. (the 2nd light from Rte. 113, and come in to the Meeting House.

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**March 18 (Thursday), 7:30 p.m.  
at Jenkins Arboretum, Devon**

**Speaker: Jerry Van de Sande of RareFind Nursery  
*Rhododendron Propagation***

Jerry is the Garden Curator and Propagator at RareFind Nursery in Jackson, N.J. He has been a rhododendron grower and propagator for many years. With a BA in English from Rutgers University, he taught for over 30 years. In his retirement "job" with RareFind, he does much of the propagation and conducts seminars on the subject. Anyone interested in increasing their collection of rhododendrons and azaleas should not miss this program.

**Refreshments:** We ask those whose names begin with the letters S to Z to bring sweet or savory fingerfood.

**Important Notice**

The newsletters will "go electronic" and be **e-mailed** to those with an e-mail address.

**This** newsletter will be mailed **also** by U.S. Mail to everyone.

If you received this newsletter by e-mail, your e-mail on file is correct.

If you have e-mail but did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, your e-mail address on file is incorrect or not up to date, and we ask you to notify Steve Henning at of the correct address, or anytime you make a change.

Members with no e-mail address will continue to receive a paper copy by U.S. Mail.

**Electronic mailing should reduce our printing and postage costs, so please cooperate as we make the transition.**

**We welcome the following new Members** (if you live near one, please establish friendly contact and maybe car-pool to some events):

**Gus Johnson**, 65 West 5th Ave, Collegeville, PA 19426

**Robin Sowers**, 791 Geigertown Rd., Birdsboro, PA 19508, 610-582-1599

**New Associate Members:**

Bud Gressman, 2326 E. Sherman Ave, Vineland, NJ 08361, \_\_\_\_\_  
856-692-2341

Raymond Smith, P.O. Box 218, Glenwood, MD 21738, 410/489-  
4256

If you have not yet paid your dues for the current membership year, please send check, payable to Valley Forge ARS, to our Treasurer, Chris Smetana, 14 Northwoods Rd, Radnor, PA 19087 (tel. 610/688-5249). If in doubt, check with Darlene Henning at 610-987-6184 . \_\_\_\_\_

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**In the past few months, we have lost good friends:**

**Henry “Hank” Schannen**, a Gold Medal recipient of the ARS, will be eulogized in the upcoming issue of the ARS Journal. He collapsed and died on September 16 at age 71 at his 11-acre RareFind Nursery in Jackson, N.J., which he had started in 1995. He was a founding partner of Hase-Schannen Research Associates, but his passion was rhododendrons. As an active and renowned hybridizer, he named his “signature” plant, R. ‘Solidarity’, for his Polish heritage. He visited gardens both nationally and internationally, propagated over 1,000 rhododendron cultivars, and had 20,000 seedlings under observation. Hank was a good friend of the Valley Forge Chapter and for many years the knowledgeable and witty auctioneer for our successful summer plant auction, which benefited the National Endowment Fund and other rhododendron-related activities. We will sorely miss him. (Compiled from various sources.)

**Clarence Rahn**, a long-time member of the Valley Forge Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society died on November 20 at age 97. In recent years, he and his wife, Evelyn, who died in 2004, had lived at a Lutheran home, but relatives brought Clarence to several chapter events and to the dedication of a bench in Jenkins Arboretum in memory of his wife.

Both Clarence and Evelyn, who had been awarded the Bronze Medal in 1980, had been very active since the founding of the chapter and were very generous with giving plants to other chapter members, especially new ones, and giving sound advice on raising rhododendrons and azaleas. Clarence and Evelyn operated Rahn’s Nursery in Berks County, specializing in deciduous and evergreen azaleas. When they retired from their home and garden in Douglassville, they gave many of their plants to Fred and Barbara Winter, who still care for the Rahn Garden at the Winter’s home.

Clarence contributed to chapter plant sales, judged truss shows, and was active on several committees, the board of directors, and in many chapter activities. He had started the Azalea Study Group at the Valley Forge Chapter. Both he and Evelyn were also associate members of the Pine Barrens Chapter, and of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, for which they helped plan and put together the exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show for many years. In addition, Clarence was instrumental in establishing the Charlie Herbert Memorial Azalea Garden at Swiss Pines in Charlestown Township.

Clarence was of Pennsylvania-German extraction and still talked (and was teased for it) with the accent of that dialect.

Chapter members old enough to remember Clarence and Evelyn may also remember folks like Lloyd Partain, Albert Reid, Joe Becales, Don Mannion, Francis Raughley, Ross Davis, Walter Kern, Charlie Herbert, and other old-timers who were instrumental in propagating, distributing, and educating so many of us about rhododendrons. (Courtesy of Joan and Reid Warren)

**Organizations that we support** include

**Tyler Arboretum, 515 Painter Road, Media, PA**, to which we contribute for the upkeep of its Wister Rhododendron Collection. The collection, named after Dr. John Caspar Wister (1887 - 1982), Tyler Arboretum’s first director, and first director of Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College, is considered one of the most diverse and important in this part of the U.S.

**Rhododendron Species Foundation**, which “is dedicated to the conservation, research, acquisition, evaluation, cultivation, public display and distribution of Rhododendron species. The Foundation provides education relating to the genus and serves as a unique resource for scientific, horticultural and general gardening communities worldwide.”

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## Plant Labels

The Plant Label machine at Jenkins Arboretum is again available to us in January, February, and March. Members who are up to date on their dues are eligible, and priority is given to those who help with the plant sale and other Chapter functions. The cost for 96 permanent labels/membership is \$20, which covers material cost. The label information must be submitted first in paper form for verification and then in diskette or CD form. For further information, please contact Wenner Smith, 610/642-3833.

## Plant Sale/Volunteer Functions

Plans for our upcoming spring plant sale at Jenkins Arboretum have been under way since early last fall, and volunteers are needed for all kinds of jobs, now as well as later. Please contact Chris Smetana, who will be in charge of the plant sale, to see how you can help (610/688-5240).

Contributions to the Newsletter, published for 3-month periods in early September, early January, and early April; in the summer; and as needed, should be directed to Eva Jackson.

**American Rhododendron Society  
Valley Forge Chapter  
P.O. Box 715  
Southeastern, PA 19399-0715**

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**



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