

# American Rhododendron Society

## Valley Forge Chapter

P.O. Box 715, Southeastern, PA 19399-0715  
www.ValleyForgeARS.org

## NEWSLETTER

*June/July 2005*

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### President's Message

This is our favorite time of year. The blooms on the rhododendrons appeared a little late this year due to the cool temperatures, but when they did appear, they are beautiful.

Of course we got a precursor to spring by going to the ARS Convention in Victoria, B.C. We toured many gardens, both public and private and they were all absolutely gorgeous. They can grow plants out there that we have no chance of growing. It was a thoroughly enjoyable convention, and Victoria is a lovely city. There were quite a few members from the east coast attending also.

I am happy to announce that our new Eastern Vice-President is one of us, as Ted Stecki from the Pine Barrens chapter in our district was so nominated at the convention. Congratulations, Ted.

Our plant sale did well again this year, and thank you to all who helped with it, especially those who manned it while we were away in Canada. The donations table did not do as well as usual, as there was not the number of donations as usual. The total raised there was only \$246.00

Those of us who participated in the Owen J. Roberts Friends of the Arts tours were happy to see so many visitors to our gardens. We especially had people who were interested in the Rhododendron Society, and our plant sale, so we hope that we will see some of them again!

Don't forget our next get together that will be our picnic on June 26<sup>th</sup>, to be held at Chris and Bob Smetana's. We hope to see many of you there as it is also our annual meeting and election of officers.

The District 8 Cuttings Exchange will be on August 14<sup>th</sup> at Chris and Bob Stamper's – more to come on that.

We are still looking for a couple of officers on our board of directors, so please offer your services to any of the present board members. There are always many activities to get involved in, so show your support for your chapter.

Enjoy your gardens.

Joan Warren.  
President  
srwjmw@att.net

***Valley Forge ARS Calendar of Events***  
**2005 MEETINGS SCHEDULE:**

**June 26, 2005 (Sunday): Annual meeting and picnic, 2:00 p.m.**

Our annual picnic will be hosted by Bob and Chris Smetana. Hope to see everyone there!

Everyone should **bring a side dish or dessert**, enough for 4-5 people. Beverages and a meat (e.g., ham) will be provided. **Annual election** of officers and board member seats up for election will be held.

Everyone is encouraged to **bring folding chairs**.

**August 14, 2005 (Sunday): District 8 Cutting Exchange and Auction.** Details will be in the next newsletter.

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***Welcome, New Members!***

Janet Alvarez  
Randell Jesup

Lathrop Nelson, Jr.  
Mike and Chris O'Hara

***Slate of Officers***

The nominating committee presents the slate of officers for the upcoming year as follows:

President: Bob Smetana  
Vice Presidents: Vacant  
Treasurer: Chris Smetana  
Recording Secretary: William Dennis  
Corresponding  
Secretary: Penny D'Alessandro  
Directors: Joe Bellanca  
Steve Henning  
Darlene Henning  
Jim Willhite  
John Edinger

### ***Garden Tours*** (-Reid Warren)

Yesterday was a glorious day, and our garden, along with the Winter's and Howes' was on the Owen J. Roberts Friends of the Arts Garden Tours. Over a hundred folks drifted in during the day, and there was always someone here meandering through.

We're amazed at how much is in bloom - some plants for the first time in five years - but the profusion of color is enough to knock your socks off. We seldom just sit and look at the garden, but yesterday was a wonderful opportunity, and even we admired it!

With all the recent interest in native deciduous azaleas we've forgotten how exciting and showy the Ghent and Knaphill azaleas can be in full bloom. Quite a number of folks were even interested in the celandine poppies - those yellow flowers which can become invasive if you don't watch them. Also, the yellow Lady Slippers are out and the native viburnum which came with the property.

### ***KEYSTONE WILD! NOTES*** (-Reid)

This little newsletter comes out several times a year from the Wild Resource Conservation Fund - free. If you don't get it you should. The Spring copy has articles on the following:

- The northcentral woodlands of Pennsylvania, comprised of a 13 county region. The "region boasts the largest block of public lands between New York and Chicago, the biggest elk herd in the Northeast, the darkest nighttime skies this side of the Mississippi, pristine trout streams, thousands of miles of hiking....."
- Ephemeral wetlands with seasonal pools which do not support fish, but are places where frogs, toads, and salamanders can lay spawn.
- The development of the Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail.

To subscribe write: WRCF, P.O. Box 8764, Harrisburg, PA. 17105.  
A contribution would not go amiss either.

### ***Farewell Gentle Margaret*** (-Reid and Joan)

The Valley Forge Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society has lost a good friend with the death of Margaret Fawcett on May 27, 2005. She fought valiantly against the cancer that finally took her life, and two days before her last brief hospitalization she was out planting flowers.

For 15 years, Margaret actively served the chapter as a board member, program chair, membership chair, volunteer at the annual plant sale fund raiser and was always ready to take part in any chapter event. Among other activities, and along with her close companion, Frank Brouse, she attended the Southern Highlands Conservancy meetings in North Carolina, garden tour bus trips, and the native plant study group.

Last November she mustered up the energy and enthusiasm to go on a two week garden and sight seeing tour to Italy with Frank and with Tony and Penny D'Alessandro. The four close friends had a marvelous time together.

As a board member, hers was always the voice of reasonableness and encouragement. She never had an unkind word to express about another or any situation. She also had a keen sense of humor, told risqué jokes, and two months before her death, she showed off her returning hair, lost to chemo, to some of the balding men of the chapter.

Margaret was a bright and engaging woman with an untiring enthusiasm for life. She never lost that positive attitude, even at the end. We will all miss her.



### ***Top 10*** (-Kelly)

In the spirit of fellow Hoosier (David Letterman) as I step down from three years as your Newsletter Editor, I tried to come up with my top 10 reasons for having enjoyed my time as Editor. Every time I tried to come up with this list, however, it all kept coming back to one thing: the people. So, in lieu of a list, I thought I would let everyone know how much I've appreciated all of you. Many thanks to those of you who have had kind words about the newsletter. To those of you who said hello to me at meetings/picnics/auctions/etc. and welcomed me in as a more active member of the Chapter. To those of you who helped get me up to speed on the newsletter (Eva) and answered my questions. To all of you who submitted articles and/or photos; to those of you I've had the privilege to know a little bit better than if I hadn't volunteered. To all the faithful readers. To Chris Smetana who for the past year has helped me immensely with the printing and mailing of the newsletter, and to Joan and Reid for their constant support. A special thanks to Margaret, for always making me feel welcomed into the group. Her warmth and graciousness will be missed by all of us.

### ***Trip to the Northwest*** (-Kelly)

Bev and I recently returned from a quick trip to Seattle and the surrounding islands, and I thought I'd share our adventure with all of you. Our primary destination was the "garden open" at Dan Hinkley's Heronswood Nursery, in Kingston, on the Kitsap peninsula. We stayed the first night in Seattle, at The Gaslight Inn Bed and Breakfast in the Capital Hill area. It is the perfect arts and crafts house with a great glass collection. We had stayed there years before. We were remarkably shocked in the morning to discover a large fishpond had been installed outside the dining room window. It was rainy, but the rhodies were all in bloom, the fish swam, the biscuits were warm and well, heaven. Leaving reluctantly, we made our way via ferry to Bainbridge Island. We traveled across island, eating, looking in independent book stores, and nurseries as we went. We ultimately ended up for one night's stay in the Norwegian town of Poulsbo. This is a cute town and has a dynamite restaurant serving the best handmade mushroom ravioli, with a morel sauce. For anyone looking for a convenient place to stay near Heronswood, Poulsbo is about a 10-15 minute drive from Kingston (plus the Scandinavian Bakery is worth the trip). We immediately recognized, and were recognized by, fellow Heronswood-devotees at the hotel breakfast buffet. I wonder if our respective catalogs had a role in that? :) Heronswood began as a small nursery by Dan Hinkley. Dan scoured the world for plants that he could bring back, propagate and introduce in the U.S. He has received numerous awards for educating the public to the plant world. We spent most of a day at the "garden open," enjoying a talk by Dan the man himself on "Effective Plant Marriages." He spent a bit of time talking about textural contrast and good foliage, and how flowers are just the icing on the cake. He advised us to think of our gardens in terms of black and white. Among the many plants he showed in his slide show, one boggles this east coast gardener's mind – *Gunnera tinctoria* with leaves 10 FEET (!) across. Definitely have NW garden envy.

We then took a slow drive (and a couple of ferry rides) to our remaining destination, Langley Inn, on Whidbey Island. Much to our delight, upon check-in at the inn, we spotted whales from our room!! And also, at the same time, the next day. These gray whales were returning to northern, Arctic waters for the summer, and were just stopping by to eat. To top off the trip, we had realized the day before (while waiting in line to get in to Heronswood), that we would be very near a notable woodland garden during our stay on Whidbey Island, Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens. The manager of the gardens, Kristi O'Donnell, and others (Mel) were wonderful hosts. Meerkerk Gardens is fabulous! It's a private, not-for profit garden, open to the public, and has 10 acres of display and educational gardens surrounded by 43 acres of forest preserve. It's supported by many organizations, including several local rhododendron society chapters. Highlights for us were the Hybrid Rhododendron Test Garden, the Big Leaf Valley (*sinogrande*, *macebeanum*, etc.), the Diamond Bark maple, and the Monkey Puzzle Tree. As a novice gardener, I was wowed by the display of rhododendrons such as Patty Bee, Invitation, and Seaview Sunset (I hope I have these names right – still learning and trying to memorize names).

A picture from our trip (other photo in this newsletter is from Meerkerk Gardens):



**Heronswood**

**AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY  
VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER  
NEWSLETTER  
709 Dixon Lane  
Gladwyne, PA 19035**

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**

**NEWSLETTER**  
**June/July 2005**

<b>President</b>	Joan Warren	610/913-0005 ('05)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> V. P.</b>	Bob Smetana	610/688-5249 ('05)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> V. P.</b>	Reid Warren	610/913-0005 ('05)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Chris Smetana	610/688-5249 ('06)
<b>Rec.Secy.</b>	Bill Dennis	
<b>Corr. Secy's</b>	Penny and Tony D'Alessandro ('06)	717/687-8188
<b>NL Editor</b>	Kelly Reese	610/642-0611 ('05)
<i>(above terms ending as indicated)</i>		
<b>Directors:</b>		
Joe Bellanca		610/647-4875 ('06)
Win Howe		610/458-5291 ('05)
Anne Howe		610/458-5291 ('05)
Steve Henning		610/987-6184 ('07)
Darlene Henning		610/987-6184 ('07)

For next Newsletter, please send news, photos, etc. by **July 20** to the Newsletter Editor:  
**Kelly Reese, 709 Dixon Lane, Gladwyne, PA 19035,**  
**tel. : 610/ 642-0611, email: kelr@earthlink.net**

**ARS Web Site** <http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html>  
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