

American Rhododendron Society

Valley Forge Chapter

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www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER

December 2004/January 2005

President's Message

I hope that everyone had a good Thanksgiving, and now it is only a very few weeks until Christmas. How the time does fly!

Our annual banquet was a great success, well attended by our members and members from other chapters. Kathy Van Veen amused us with her talk about the story of Van Veen Nursery in Portland, Oregon. She is very adept at recycling, and doesn't waste a thing. She presented the chapter with an inscribed copy of *The Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story*, which I would like to circulate rather than have it sit in the library. Please let me know if you would like to read it.

A copy of Kathy's message to the Portland Chapter is included in this newsletter.

We got a final accounting of the ARS Convention held here in May, and it appears that we made a profit from it. The 5 planning chapters, and the ARS Endowment and Research funds shared that. We, at Valley Forge, received \$3,700, as did the other chapters. While on finances, a reminder that DUES are due. Please get them in by this month, so that you will receive your winter journal.

The Plants for Members program is coming along well. We now have a place to stick rhododendron cuttings, as Frank Brouse has offered us a place in his greenhouse to do this. A hardy few of us will be doing this in early December, hoping for a sunny day! Thank you, Frank.

Don't forget that our first 2 meetings in 2005, in January and February, will be held on Sunday afternoons.

Anyone interested in evaluating the Rhododendron collection at Tyler Arboretum, please contact Robert Herald at 610-566-9134 extension 304. This does not have to be a time-consuming task, and the more people who volunteer, the less work.

Happy Holidays to Everyone

Joan Warren, President

Valley Forge ARS Calendar of Events
2004/2005 MEETINGS SCHEDULE:

January 4, 2005 (Tuesday): 7:30 pm, Board Meeting

January 16, 2005 (Sunday), 2:30 pm: Tips for gardeners – what works and what doesn't work. A panel of "experts" will share their experiences and ideas that work. Audience participation is expected and welcome! We hope to come up with some good ideas, so take notes. People with last names beginning with letters I through O are kindly requested to bring a dessert.

February 13, 2005 (Sunday), 2:00 pm: Joint Meeting with the Philadelphia Chapter ARS. At the Uwchlan Meeting House. Speaker is George McClellan. Details and directions will be in the next newsletter.

March 17, 2005: Meeting on animal management, by representative from PA Game Commission. Details will be in the next newsletter.

April 22-25, 2005: Our chapter's Annual plant sale. Take note...this will be held a week earlier than usual.

May 8 (Mother's Day), 2005: Truss Show at Jenkins Arboretum.

Note: Unless otherwise specified, meetings are held at Jenkins Arboretum
As always, if you have program suggestions, with suggestions of presenters, please contact Reid Warren.

Kathy Van Veen from Van Veen Nurseries, Oregon

Below is the message that Kathy Van Veen sent to the Portland Chapter, ARS:

Having just returned yesterday from Philadelphia where I was privileged (i.e. blown away, flattered out of my mind!) to be the speaker at the Valley Forge chapter annual banquet, I thought to write a few words about the experience. Usually, people think of banquets as a springtime activity. Valley Forge decided to change theirs to the fall because people are so busy in the spring. Despite a conflict with a hybridizer's meeting, they had excellent attendance, drawing people from several Pennsylvania chapters as well as from New York and New Jersey.

Those of you who went to national meeting in May already know what a fine bunch of people run the show back in the Valley Forge area. I, being a step or so behind, finally got there 6 months later. (oh well). The trees were bare, the plants had no flowers, it was cold and windy, but the people were warm and friendly as can be. I stayed at the home of chapter president Joan Warren and her husband Reid, outside Philadelphia near the Amish country.

At the banquet, we as a chapter extended our friendship by presenting them with an inscribed copy of 'The Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story.' After remarking that South Philadelphia is the birthplace of singer Mario Lanza, I, in turn, was presented with an old 1954 RCA Victor LP record of him performing Sigmund Romberg's 'The Student Prince', my absolute tops all time favorite. And then, Fred Winter, whose med. school friend was a roommate of Mario's, proceeded to sing to the assembled banquetees in the grand Lanza style, his thanks for my

presence there that day. Wow , what a show! I got to meet lots of people I only knew by voice over the telephone. It's always fun to see what people really look like. Some were WAY different than what I had thought. It's also a little disconcerting to think those people are probably thinking the same of me!! The next day before the plane left, we (Joan, Reid and I) went over to Hank Schannen's Rarefind Nursery in New Jersey. He spent a couple of hours showing us around his ever growing retirement "hobby" and treated us to Dunkin Donuts (don't ask how many I ate!) I hope that people who visit our Portland Chapter take home as good an impression of us as I got from the Valley Forge Chapter.

-Kathy

ARS Journals

Ron Gatto has quite a large number of earlier ARS journals to give away. Anyone having an interest should contact him directly at: 610-566-5946. Many members cherish these early journals for the history of the ARS, the development of individual cultivars and the hands on articles about how to grow rhodies. Quite a number of the articles are by folks we all know.

Italy – Prize from our ARS Convention, by Margaret Fawcett

Tony and Penny D'Alessandro were the winners of the trip to Italy, one of the prizes at the recent ARS National Convention held in Valley Forge this year.

They are shown on a Mediterranean beach with Frank Brouse and me. We went along as chaperones. Upon arrival we were met at the airport by our host Piero Sambucci. He is a member of ARS and a nurseryman who specializes in growing camellias and azaleas in Valletri a small city located 20 miles from Rome and located in the famed Alban Hills. Comfortable accommodations were had in his villa. In his care we didn't worry about a thing. He had breakfast ready and a plan for each day. He was a fountain of knowledge of Italian history past and present. With the perseverance and cunning of a gladiator he navigated the van through the narrow cobblestone streets of the towns and cities dodging Vespas and Smart Cars and always finding parking. He knew all the right places to go. We sat back and relaxed and enjoyed the views. Among the many places we visited were Rome (ad all its treasures), Villa d'Edste, Assisi, Pompeii, Hadrian's' Villa, Florence, ancient hillside towns and Anzio beach with a visit to the US military cemetery. Then there was always a restful stop for cappuccino.

