

Rhododendron News

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter vol. LII no 10 October 2007

American Rhododendron Society www.rhodies.org

October, 2007

- 09 - METHRO study group, 7PM at the Van Veen Nursery
- 18 - Chapter Meeting: Larry Stanley NO SPECIES AUCTION
- 23 - Board meeting at the Van Veen Nursery
- November 2007
- 09 - METHRO study group, 7PM at the Van Veen Nursery
- 15 - Chapter Meeting
- 20 - Board meeting at the Van Veen Nursery
- December 2007
- 20 - Christmas Potluck

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TREASURE HUNT – PART TWO

It was reported in this Newsletter last December that the Snyders and the Stewarts went on a treasure hunt, discovered Ben Lancaster's former gardens in Camas and took about 190 cuttings. They are rooting nicely under Mike Stewart's care. We returned to these gardens in the middle of last May with the naïve expectation that we could identify the plants now in bloom, from whence we took the cuttings.

Ben Lancaster was a prolific hybridizer whose former yard is full of plants. Some of the plants we could definitely identify. Many more were obviously related to Lancaster's named hybrids but were part of the plethora of unnamed hybrids that came out of his creative mind.

Lancaster's back yard was very large, and it is now overgrown and blends into the contiguous forest land. As we were wandering about, I discovered that Mike and Maria were missing. After looking and calling, I found them deep in the woods admiring some orphan rhododendrons growing in the dense forest. Maybe they were remembering their species expedition to China. Meanwhile I was fascinated with a R. Loderi King George that makes the King George at Crystal Springs look like a bush.

Along the south side of the property is a 20 foot tall thick wall of camellia bushes. There are a whole variety of camellia bushes with blossoms that I have never seen before. We learned that Ben Lancaster originally worked with camellias as a hobby. However, he became interested in rhododendrons soon after his arrival in Camas

Haiku FROM ALASKA

By Peter Kendall

*The fluttering leaves
The stillness of the mountain
in a moment's glance*

*A mountain's reaches --
only the borrowed dust of
yesterday's valley*

*Sheep on the ridge line
A towering peak
clothed in ice.*

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from Michigan. There are still some very nice Camellias to take cuttings from.

During this visit, the Stewarts invited Ben Lancaster's granddaughter Ellen Lancaster to join us. She brought along Ben Lancaster's log books from his hybridizing activities. He took meticulous notes identifying the sources of his seeds. These books may be of interest for people studying the parentage of some of the hybrids in the Northwest. The Stewarts will have copies made of these notebooks, and one copy will be placed in the ARS archives.

One day when visiting his eye doctor, Ben Lancaster convinced the doctor he should be interested in rhododendrons and gave him a plant of "Snow Lady." And thus Frank Mossman was drawn into the rhododendron family. Lancaster was also a friend and mentor of Dave Goheen.

The second treasure hunt was as fun as the first. We left humbled realizing that about half of the cuttings which we took will probably remain unnamed.

---Irv Snyder

Kath Collier has been appointed by the President to fill out the term of Vice President Jan Snyder.

Thank you Barb MacArthur, the hostess who provided the coffee and home-made cookies for our September meeting.

THE OCTOBER PROGRAM
S MALL AND MINIATURE
CONIFERS

LARRY STANLEY, conifer specialist, is the owner and president of Stanley and Sons Nursery, Inc. Started in 1976 and located in Boring, Oregon the property includes a 1 acre display garden containing over 3,000 plants tagged with botanical descriptions. The nursery propagates about 350,000 plants by cuttings and another 90,000 are grafted each year. They ship

plants to the US, Canada, Japan, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Their product line features 425 varieties of Japanese maples and 3,000 varieties of conifers.

Mr. Stanley is a past president of the American Conifer Society and has served two terms as president of the Western Region of the ACS. He is also a member of the American Rhododendron Society.

He is one of the 10 people who planned the conifer section and donated material to the Oregon Garden. He also donated plant material for the Chinese Garden in Portland.

He majored in the field of horticulture at Mt. Hood Community College and has worked in the nursery business for over 30 years. He is an avid plant collector and has visited New Zealand and Europe on plant gathering missions. Mr. Stanley returned from Europe on the 28th of July having shot 4430 pictures in 10 days at 25 locations and saw at least 500 varieties of plants that "we do not grow here."

At our next Chapter meeting we can hope to see a few of these pictures and share in his broad knowledge of conifers during what promises to be a fascinating presentation by this gifted nurseryman.

---Kath Collier

NOTE: There will NOT be a species auction at the October meeting which will be held in the sanctuary of the church at the regular location. The auction will be rescheduled to a later date.



We substituted US measurements for the metric ones in the following article for the benefit of those not conversant with the conversions - ed.

 **LINDA IN THE SNOW**
BY SIMON BEGG, OF THE
AUSTRALIAN
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Readers in Portland will wonder what I am on about. You look out at snow covered Mt Hood. Every winter snow falls on Portland and your temperatures drop below freezing. No one could grow vireyas or maddenias in the open. Olinda is at latitude 38 degrees South and an altitude of 1950 feet. Importantly it is just 28 miles east of Melbourne, a city of close to 4 million people. Snow at Olinda is a once in every other year event and a decent fall a one in five years event. But the temperature rarely falls much below freezing at Olinda these days. Just below the mountain, in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, 23°F is quite possible so growing vireyas in exposed sites in the open is very risky. At Olinda, vireyas are risky only on flat exposed sites or in unsheltered valleys without air movement. Snow is no problem. In our part of the world maddenias are never a problem.

On July 18th this year Olinda had its best (or worst, depending how you look at it) snowfall for several years. At National Rhododendron Gardens the cover lasted all day. All the vireya species plantings survived unscathed but some hybrids suffered some damage. This probably had to do with the precise site rather than greater or lesser tolerance. My wife Marcia's and my garden, "Beechmont" is close to NRG but 300 ft lower at 1625 ft. We got much less frost at 35° F. We had some leaf reddening on some potted vireya hybrids on an exposed trolley but no other damage at all. Indeed the *R. tuba* in flower in the front lawn was surrounded in snow but was totally unaffected.

One of our Society members Inga Hammer got out in the snow and took some wonderful pictures I'd like to share with you. Click on <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic> and you can see Inga's snow photos as well as many other Society photos.

Today's benign temperatures at Olinda are relatively recent. I can vividly recall 12 years ago a severe frost just around the corner from NRG that burnt rooted vireya cuttings on a hotbed inside a glasshouse! Whether this is simply a cyclical weather pattern, global warming or the urban heat island effect from an expanding Melbourne is a matter on which experts are divided. Meantime we at Olinda are getting bolder by the year about where we grow vireyas: Rare snow is fun!

Our Society and yours have some common members and we exchange Newsletters. I enjoy reading your news, so I was pleased when Vicki Molina asked me to write a note for you. Kind regards to Kathy Van Veen, Vicki Molina, Dick Cavender, White Smith and Lucy Sorensen. I hope to revisit Portland soon.

Kind regards

--- *Simon*

Post Scriptum:

I have started a Vireya Species Photo collection on the ARSV Picasaweb Site.

Go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic> by clicking on the link.

The common link is that I have taken all the photos; some at RBGE, some at "Beechmont" (including some Andrew Rouse Species) and some at Lyn Craven's. The photos are shown alphabetically. They can't compare with the number of species that Chris Callard shows; however the files are bigger so more usable when downloaded. I am trying to capture a plant as well as flowers where possible. Some photos taken at RBGE are poor photos that I hope to get another go at next May. I hope to add more species this coming year as ARS and my recent acquisitions flower

for the first time, or I capture the flowers on digital. I am finding the photos are a very useful first check in identifying doubtful plants. Trouble is I keep finding more doubts! All comments gratefully accepted.

---Simon

R. VIRGINIA RICHARDS FEATURED HYBRID

By KATHY VEEN

Virginia Richards is quite a lady. She comes in yellow, apricot, and pink and originated with Bill Whitney, ARS charter member and friend of my grandfather.

Before moving to Hood Canal and what was to become Whitney Gardens in 1955, Bill lived in Camas and was an appliance repairman. He was very interested in rhododendrons and made many crosses every year. He gave the seed to my grandfather to grow.

By 1962 there was an agreement between Bill and my dad. He would introduce the plants Bill named and they were featured in the Van Veen catalog, or handbook as it was then called.

Every year in August we would make a run up to Washington. There we would fill gunny sacks full of cuttings under Bill's guidance. My job was to water the sacks. At noon we went into the house for a fancy meal prepared by his wife Faye. One time it was pheasant! By the end of the day the station wagon was jammed full of cuttings and the blueberries we had picked.

R. Virginia Richards was in the handbook for two years before she became available for purchase in small quantities in 1964. She was a big deal back then. I still remember Don Dieringer and his dad Henry J. warning us kids not to touch those particular plants. They were SPECIAL and not yet for sale. It made such an impression that I can see them still, planted in house 5, row F, NE corner.

In the first handbooks Virginia Richards was listed as R. wardii x China x Mrs. Betty Robertson, no parentheses. And she was yellow. But in later handbooks and the official registration she is (R. wardii x F.C. Puddle) x Mrs. Betty Robertson. This does seem more reasonable, because of the foliage. She was named for Bill's friend back in Camas, whose husband Leverett loved flying and wrote for the Oregonian newspaper.

By 1970 Bill was getting older and sold his place to his volunteer helpers George and Anne Sather. He passed away in 1973, the same year he was awarded, posthumously, the ARS gold medal.

The Sathers set about cataloguing Bill's plants, registering the named ones, and naming worthwhile seedlings. When they got to Virginia in 1975, she is described as "not the form illustrated in Rhododendrons of America by Van Veen"! Her color is apricot changing to something called Chinese yellow. Another of the same cross they called Leverett Richards. It is a yellow.

So what did we have in 1962? I do know that we had a yellow one, a pink one, and one that could be called apricot. But we had none that we called Leverett Richards.

I guess that it really doesn't matter much. Although Virginia has R. wardii in her, she is not particularly susceptible to root rot. But she has proven to be very susceptible to the mildew that has been an increasing problem over the last 10 years. In fact, R. Virginia Richards is only rarely found anymore "in the wild" that is outside of nurseries that regularly treat with fungicides. Too bad. She was a great lady in her scant 40 years

---Kathy

¶

Virginia Richards in 2003



R. BRACHYCARPUM GROWN FROM SEED

BY VIRGINIA RICHARDS

(Virginia Richards is alive and well, and living in Vancouver, WA and still loves rhododendrons. --ed)

I don't know who bought the brachycarpum seedling that I raised from seed brought back from our trip to Mt. Fuji. I have since learned that only about 25% of the seedlings ever bloom. When mine were under stress from too little water a couple of summers ago, they finally bloomed the following year when I gave them plenty of water. Dr. Goheen says that cuttings from a plant that has never bloomed may bloom when stressed like that.



There is both a red and a white version of the brachycarpum. Mine are white with a sort of gold flush and green freckles. It blooms in June. I would like to let the person who bought my seedling plant know about our luck in getting it to bloom. I still have our mailing list and think I will send out a note to let whoever bought the plant that it is possible to make it bloom and the trusses are really nice. White is a good color for June.

Did I say that the seeds were from the climb made in 1986? The plant that was left in the ground with plenty of food and water has so far never bloomed. I am wondering if it ever will. (Pictures of this bloom are in the e-mail newsletter)

--- Virginia

END THE DROUGHT - NOW - LET US PARTY



text by Luurt Nieuwenhuis

The months of the long, hot summer bring a dearth of the welcome rains that fall in the spring. Little rainfall comes to Portland



during the summer, in a climate that can best be described as seasonally arid.

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In the same way, the summer social life of Chapter members suffers from a dearth of gatherings. This year the drought was ended by the Memorial Day gathering at the Hopkins-Ziegler residence. Just about everyone in local driving range of the Chapter was invited - Brenda wishes to apologize to anyone that she overlooked during the invitation process.



Other conversations covered general landscaping issues, annuals, and "what did you do all summer?"

Thanks, Steve and Brenda! We had a great gathering. All decided that we needed to attend our regular Chapter meetings so that we wouldn't fall so far out of touch again.



NOTES ON THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

In spite of what we promised, the September program was slightly different from what was advertised - still great, but different.



Guests ranged from the earliest beginnings of the American Rhododendron Society (Sig Berthelsdorf and Bill Robinson) to some who will become members soon: about 50 were in attendance. While we grazed at a large potluck table, Steve Hopkins did his usual marvelous preparations on the chicken and salmon barbecues.



Dr Dave Goheen reminisced about his early days with rhododendrons. He was introduced to rhodies by Ben Lancaster (the same person who is the object of the President's message this month). The oldest picture was one of Ben Lancaster, 45 years ago, changing a rose bed into a rhody bed.



Most of the conversations eddied around the general topic of

rhododendrons. Small gatherings formed continually dealing with one or another aspect of our favorite plants. There were, of course, other topics too. Larry Stanley, our speaker for the October meeting, is a renowned specialist in all manner of conifers and can hold forth at length on the



Dave used to grow at least 500 seedlings every year. Some of the best known named hybrids coming out of these crossings are Cinquero, Amiga and Amiga 2. Dave also took home the Macrophyllum Trophy at the annual show so often that everyone else stopped entering the category.

Dr. Goheen worked for the Crown Zellerbach Corporation, who sent him all over the world - Dave figures about 6 round-the-world trips. Not every place was a rhododendron haven but there were enough to fill up his yard with overseas collections grown from seed.

We were treated to a three carousel slide show of his travels, with pictures of many early rhododendron giants scattered throughout. Rudolf Henny, Dietrich Hobbie, David Leach, Bill Whitney, Warren Berg, H.H.

Davidian, Peter Cox, Dell James, Dr. Forrest Bump, and Dr. Frank Mossman.

Some parts of the travelogue covered areas where there were few rhodies (Egypt and the Russian Winter Palace come to mind) but no one minded because the pictures were fascinating as well as old. Other pictures were of some of the great rhody sanctuaries of the world; Borneo and its Mt Kinibalu with incredible vireyas, Tibet, Szechuan, and parts of China where most of our rhodies originated. Dr. Goheen, Dr. Bump, and Dr. Mossman went together on some of these plant hunting trips, and a few of the pictures showed these worthies when they were younger.

After Dr. Goheen had finished his three carousels of well-commented slides, Dr. Bump stood up and admitted that there was no way that he could top such a presentation and that in consideration of the lateness of the hour, he would forego his presentation.

Dr. Mossman had scheduling conflicts and couldn't make it to the meeting

---Lwurt

The Portland Chapter shares many members with the nearby Tualatin Valley Chapter. The following event is within reach of everyone who comes to the Portland meetings.

FALL RHODODENDRON AUCTION AT TUALATIN

The prime time planting season is quickly approaching. As soon as we get enough rain to soften our summer baked soil it will be safe to plant our new fall treasures in our gardens. You may have thought that everyone plants in the spring, but actually our rhodies do best when planted in the fall. Planted now, they are not stressed with hot summer sun, the soil gets rained upon to make sure the roots are settled in and they then have all winter to grow and get

established before next summer's heat arrives.

The prime time buying season just happens to coincide with the prime time planting season. The prime time buying season is heralded with the TV Chapter Fall Plant Auction on the 8th day of October at 7:00 pm. The meetings are held at the First Baptist Church on 2nd and N.E. Lincoln, Tualatin, OR. Of course, there is the small matter of getting a short business meeting cleared up and then some coffee, tea, cookies and maybe some cake along with a bit of small talk before diving into the evening's featured event.

This is your opportunity to fill in and/or expand your rhododendron collection and possibly some choice companion plants and trees. The public is very welcome so this is also your opportunity to bring a friend or neighbor to visit our meeting to see how much fun we have and bid on plants for their yard too.

As you may suspect, the beautiful selection of rhodies, trees and companion plants are not delivered free by Home Depot or Fred Meyer. No, every one of our plants is lovingly grown and donated by our generous members of the Tualatin Valley Chapter of the ARS.

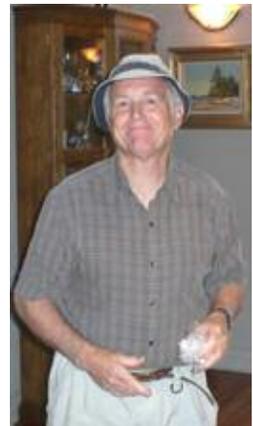
Plan to bring your stash of money or even checks and prepare for a fun evening with your Rhody friends.

We all look forward to seeing you there. Remember, the auctioneer promises to have everything cleared by 9:30 pm.

---Ren Mapes, TV Chapter ARS and chapter auctioneer

Here are some more pictures of our *dance to bring on the rain* party. See how many of the people that you can identify.

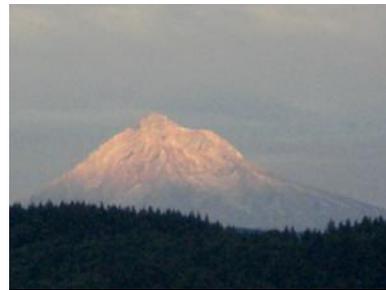
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MORE PARTY PICTURES, most by Brenda Ziegler







Mt Hood - the view from party headquarters



CHAPTER OFFICERS

(All area codes are 503 unless noted)

President: **Irv Snyder** 509-427-7738

Vice President: **Kath Collier**

Secretary: **Carol McCarthy** 245-3533

Treasurer: **Dick Cavender** 625-6331

Past President: **Kathy Van Veen** 777-1734

BOARD MEMBERS

Through 6/30/07

Ray Clack, Mike Stewart, Kath Collier, Dave Collier

Mike Domaschofsky

Through 6/30/08

Steve Hopkins, Brenda Ziegler, Steve Kaminski

Donna Sell, Maria Stewart

GARDEN CHAIRS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN

Bob MacArthur 360-256-2522

Beverly Watkin 503-244-0537

CECIL & MOLLY SMITH GARDEN

Ginny Mapes 503-647-2896

PORTLAND CHAPTER WEB SITE

www.rhodies.org/index.htm

Membership and ownership

The Portland Chapter is a local chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined annual dues to both the Society and the Chapter are \$35 for one person, \$40 for family. Annual subscription price to the 9+ times yearly newsletter *Rhododendron News* is included in Chapter membership

Online Discussion Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com> and look for rhododendrons. Participants include renowned hybridizers, growers and hobbyists.

Tualatin Valley Chapter

Regularly scheduled meetings on the **second Monday of the month**
at 7 p.m. - at the:

First Baptist Church
177 NE Lincoln Street
Hillsboro, OR.

Phone: **Ginny Mapes** 503-647-2896

Email: ginny@coho.net

Siuslaw Chapter

Meets on the **third Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.**
at the:

Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw,
3996 Hwy 101 N.
Florence, OR

A pre-meeting dinner is held at a different restaurant each time at 5 pm. Visit www.siuslawars.org to find out where.

Newsletter

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Meeting time and place

Regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month except in June, July, and August, starting at 7 pm with a social half-hour which precedes the main meeting.

For location, see

www.rhodies.org/pdx_meeting.htm

All Saints Episcopal Church

at the corner of SE 40th and Woodstock

(4 blocks east of the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden) in Portland, OR

Vireya Vine Newsletter

Receive a newsletter about Vireya Rhododendrons.

Submit your Subscription request to:

E White Smith,

% Bovees Nursery

1737 SW Coronado

Portland, OR 97219

4 issues a year. Send \$10 to join - that's one ten dollar bill that lasts forever or until you want to send another to keep it company. info@bovees.com

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