

GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODO GRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society :::::::::: Summer 2015

Our own Gold Medalist

Karel Bernady is awarded the top ARS honor

There's no doubting the appropriateness of an honor when the award committee elevates the honoree to a level higher than the nominators were thinking. That's the back story to the news that Karel F. Bernady, former president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter and indispensable man-about-the-genus, was awarded the American Rhododendron Society's Gold Medal.

The award was presented on May 9, 2015, at the society's annual conference in Sidney, British Columbia. It took some coaxing, but Karel was there to receive the award in person. (Hewing to his sense of duty, he had intended to stay in Philadelphia to coordinate the chapter's plant sale, which coincided with the convention on the West Coast.)

The Gold Medal is the highest award given by the society, and its recipients through the years include some exalted

individuals, such as Joseph Gable, David Leach, Fred Galle, Peter Cox, and Hans Hachmann.

Karel is the fifth chapter member to receive the Gold Medal. The first four were John Wister (1962), Alfred Martin (1976), Gertrude Wister (1982) and Polly Hill (1990).

Peg Van Patton was the driving force in organizing nominating letters for Karel to receive the Silver Medal. Well into the process, word was passed to Peg that the nominators might think more grandly. Various letters touting Karel's award-worthiness were amended to recommend the gold. The Honors Committee of the society, chaired by Dee Daneri, receives nominations and determines whether an award is to be granted.

At the chapter picnic in June, Ann Mangels, Eastern

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A notable meeting

Two chapters' boards confer

Harold Sweetman, director of Jenkins Arboretum, called it a "historic meeting."

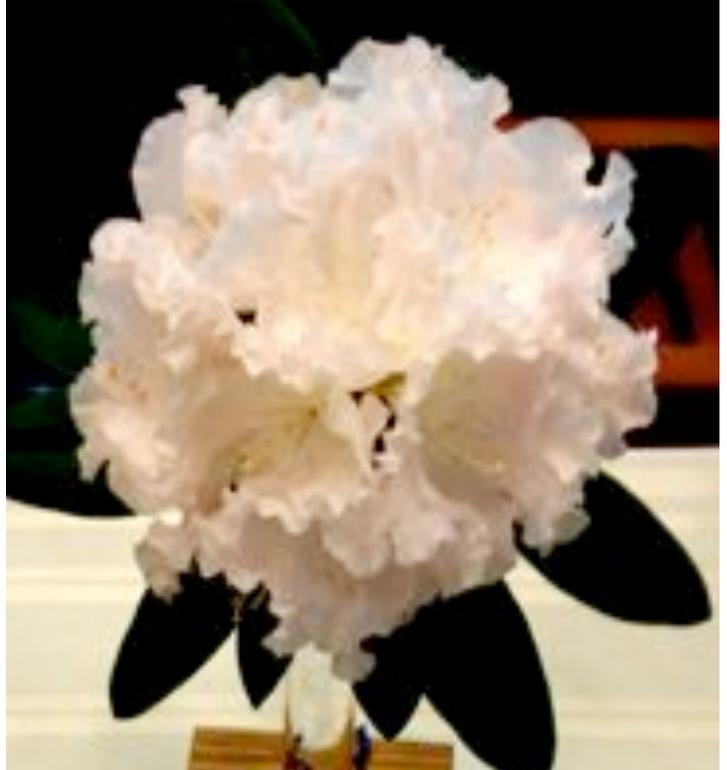
On June 2, the boards of the Greater Philadelphia and Valley Forge Chapters of the ARS held a joint meeting. After each board met separately to tend to chapter-specific affairs, the two sets of officers and directors sat down together and talked. The editor of the RhodoGravure was in attendance, in his capacity as Greater Philadelphia secretary.

The meeting, which Greater Philadelphia President Kim Kopple proposed to Valley Forge President Robert Smetana, was fairly open-ended. There was an agenda, but "*an agenda*" on anyone's part. It quickly became evident that all in attendance were interested in finding ways to cooperate, streamline, and un-duplicate ARS activities in this corner of Pennsylvania. Everyone was aware that our membership rosters are shrinking and aging, that a small core of people are repeatedly called on to do more than their share, and that efforts to draw in younger members are nothing to write home about.

In recent years, there have been two recurring bi-chapter activities: the annual joint meeting in February and the truss show, which alternates yearly between the two chapters. All agree that these are fine successes. Are there others?

One decision by the group involves each chapter's

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Fred Minahan photo

Best in Show

R. 'Cape White' took the top prize at the May flower competition. It was entered by Joe Minahan. Article on Page 2.

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American Rhododendron Society
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The American Rhododendron Society is a horticultural organization devoted to the genus *Rhododendron* – which includes azaleas. At the national level, the society holds annual conferences, publishes the quarterly *Journal of the ARS*, and fosters plant research and conservation. Its website, www.rhododendron.org, is a trove.

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter gathers eight times a year. Sunday afternoon meetings are held September, October, and January at Morris Arboretum. February through August we are mobile, with a banquet, plant sale and picnic at various sites. Latest meeting information may be found at www.GPChapterARS.org.

Dues are \$40 per year, for chapter and national membership and a subscription to the *Journal*. Contact the president or treasurer (see above) for a form or go to www.GPChapterARS.org; click on “Join us.”

Joint meeting

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annual banquet. A light bulb went off over someone’s head (whose was not recorded), and as a result, neither chapter will have a monthly meeting the same month as the other’s banquet – and both banquets will be listed as chapter meetings for both.

Another level of increased cooperation is likely to involve propagation. While Greater Philadelphia has continued a robust propagation program, now including significant grafting as well as cutting propagation, Valley Forge no longer has its own hands-on propagation operation. By drawing Valley Forge members into the hands-on work of sticking cuttings and making grafts, there is the possibility of making it a joint program. At a minimum, this coming September Greater Philadelphia will supply Valley Forge with those propagations it can spare to be used for a Valley Forge Plants-for-Members sale.

The tenor in the meeting room suggested that additional steps would be welcome in the future. For the record, there was not one word of discussion of merger of the chapters.



Harold Sweetman photo

The trophy table at the May flower competition. From left: unknown elepidote; ‘Pride of Split Rock’; ‘Fort Knox’; ‘Cape White’; ‘Coral Bells’.

‘Cape White’ takes Best in Show

Jenkins Arboretum dominated the trophy table at the 2015 Valley Forge-Greater Philadelphia cut-flower competition at Jenkins Arboretum. Joseph Minahan of Camp Hill, Pa., took Best in Show with his entry of ‘Cape White’, which also won the trophy for Best Elepidote *Rhododendron*.

The winning Jenkins entries were ‘Fort Knox’, Best Deciduous Azalea; ‘Pride of Split Rock’, Best Lepidote *Rhododendron*; and a hybrid of unknown parentage for Best Unnamed Hybrid. Jenkins also won the Sweepstakes Trophy for most points.

Best Evergreen Azalea was ‘Coral Bells’, from the garden of Michael Mills and Randy Dalton.

Debby Schmidt chaired the truss show, as insiders know it, with a supporting cast of clerks and judges that included: Frank Brouse, Mimi Favre, Linda Hartnett, Ann Howe, Win Howe, Bob Smetana, Chris Smetana, Will Smith, Bob Stamper, Christa Stamper, Ellen Steele and Barbara Winter.

As always when the show is at Jenkins on Mothers Day, many arboretum visitors passed through the exhibit and witnessed how diverse the genus is.

The lesson of this year’s competition? If you want to rack up points and trophies, it helps to have a 46-acre garden with staff and hundreds upon hundreds of established azaleas and rhododendrons.

Under the alternating arrangement the two chapters initiated several years ago, next year’s truss show will be hosted by the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, on Saturday, May 7, 2016.

Our intriguing members

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls: a Summer Pop Quiz.

Question No. 1:

Who of the following did *NOT* attend Woodstock?

- A. Craig Conover
- B. Randy Dalton
- C. Linda Hartnett
- D. None of the above.

It was a mere 46 years ago, and the event was billed as “An Aquarian Exposition: Three Days of Peace and Music.” The magic dates were August 15-18, 1969. A rainy weekend when 400,000 (so they say) arrived at Max Yasgur’s farm.

The correct answer to No. 1 is D. All three of these members of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter were indeed at the Woodstock Festival.

Question No. 2:

What sorts of things did they do together while Janis Joplin and the Who and Jefferson Airplane and Arlo Guthrie and Joan Baez and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young were saving the world?

Answer: Nothing. They didn’t know each other then, and if any of them bumped into another they have no idea because, hey, nametags were not part of that weekend’s groove.

“It was fun, a whole lot of fun,” reports Linda. “Very wet. The music was fabulous, it was great, it was wet, everybody was happy. We were one of the last cars let off the New York Thruway. All pretty exciting. We had a tent pitched in somebody’s yard. I was, let me just see, 20. If you wanted to take the blue pill you went to this tent and if you wanted to take the orange pill you went to that tent – not that I did. Peaceful but busy, and the music was fabulous.”

This from Randy, also 20 at the time: “It was a trip, there’s no doubt about it, it was a trip from the beginning, because we took acid crossing from Canada at Niagara Falls. We got there very late at night, and people were leaving, so it was discouraging at first. We found a place on a hill and sat down, and then it got so crowded – it was an immense sea of people. If you had to go to the bathroom you had to find landmarks in the crowd to find your way back, like tarps and tents. It was really hard to know if you’d ever find your friends again. And we spent the day and the music was fabulous. It was a really friendly tribe of people and it was really heartwarming.”

And what does Craig recall? “It was quite a wild year, there was a lot going on that year. I had graduated from high school that summer. We got up there Thursday night and hiked in with a tent. And by that time it was a free event (although we had tickets). The music was part of it, but the other part was all these people and the electricity of just being there. We were all tuned into the same sort of vibes, free spirits, free love. One of the most memorable things was the rain – all these people slogging around in the mud.”

So, other than the serendipitous fact that decades after Woodstock, Randy, Linda and Craig all ended up as members of the same ARS chapter, is there a rhododendron connection here? Good question, Watson. It is reliably reported that *Rhododendron maximum* and *R. perichlymenoides* are native to Sullivan County, home of Woodstock. And in Bethel, the town of the festival site, there is a Rhododendron Road. All other answers, my friend, are blowin’ in the wind.

Calendar

Important: If you do not receive this newsletter electronically, you will not receive email reminders a week before events. Please use this calendar to mark your own.

Aug. 16, Sunday District 8 Cutting Exchange and Plant Auction. Home of Wayne and Doris Guymon, 10 Lafayette Place, Chadds Ford, Pa. 19317. 2 p.m. (See article on Page 6.)

Aug. 22, Saturday Propagation workday at Kristoph Nursery, central New Jersey. Cuttings will be stuck for rooting over the winter. 9 a.m.-early afternoon, BYO lunch. Contact Karel Bernady (phone, email at left) for directions and more information.

September 13, Sunday Chapter meeting. Plants For Members sale – rooted cuttings, 2-year-old grafts. Morris Arboretum, Widener Center. 1:30 p.m. (nonmembers admitted at 2:30).

October 11, Sunday Chapter meeting. Morris Arboretum, Widener Center. 1:30 p.m.

October 16-18 ARS Fall Conference, Islandia, Long Island, N.Y. “Long Island’s Legacy Revisited.” See Spring ARS Journal for details and registration forms or go to <http://www.nyrhododendron.org>

November 8 or 15, Sunday Valley Forge Chapter Banquet/Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting. St. David’s Country Club. Buffet luncheon.

January 10, 2016 Chapter meeting. Morris Arboretum, Widener Center. 1:30 p.m.

April 20-24, 2016 Joint ARS-Azalea Society Convention, Williamsburg, Va.

A gardener’s wish list

Inventors are working at warp speed. Next up is likely to be the ultimate in miniaturization: internet, phone and camera all in a device that bears a striking resemblance to a signet ring. (Yes, the keyboard will be tiny, but it will take dictation.)

Why can’t some of the following be invented instead?

The weed cauldron. There is a touch of remorse when weeding – all that organic matter, soil clinging to the roots, but the fear of introducing weed seeds and worse keeps us from adding it to the compost. But when you toss them all into the weed cauldron, add water and flick the switch, in no time it is a boiling earthy soup, seeds and pathogens cooked into oblivion. Let it cool overnight and use as a superior soil amendment.

The glass magnet. Have you done anything more stultifying than picking shards of glass out of the lawn after a jolly garden party? With a glass magnet, it would be a cinch – picks up pieces of glass just like a traditional magnet.

Truly selective herbicide. How in hell does one successfully extirpate one of those spreading weeds once it is among the desirables? With this please-invent-me device, the gardener clips a sprig of the relevant weed and inserts it in the hopper; in short order, it mixes an earth-friendly herbicide that affects *only* the designated weed. Spray with abandon.

Pitless cherries. Like seedless watermelon!

Bernady receives Gold Medal

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Vice President of the society, did a reprise presentation of the Gold Medal, reading the citation for all to hear.

Ann, who is next in line to become national ARS president, also explained the differences in the three medals the society bestows. Bronze Medals are awarded by chapters to individuals who have made a significant mark on chapters affairs. Both the Silver and Bronze are awarded at the national level. The Silver, Ann explained, is not a “junior gold medal,” but is intended to recognize exemplary work at a regional level. Someone receiving the Gold Medal has offered noteworthy service to the society on a national level.

Here’s are excerpts from nominators’ letters:

“Karel is a facilitator, one of those behind-the-scenes persons who is a catalyst that causes many other wonderful things to happen in our organization. He is extremely generous with his time and resources, and yet he never seeks praise for his efforts. ... Karel is both a leader and a team player. ... Few people in the ARS realize that Karel has a Ph.D. in chemistry because he never boasts of his accomplishments. His strong background in science has served our society well, since he has ably chaired the ARS Research Foundation for a number of years.” – Donald Hyatt

“If you're curious about propagation, this Mr. Rhododendron is a one-stop-shopping font of expertise. The number of plants he has propagated for the Greater Philadelphia Chapter is flabbergasting – but not uncountable, because he keeps immaculate and copious records.” – Michael Martin Mills

“Dr. Karel Bemady has lived up to the term amateur in the true sense of the word, which is derived from the French word meaning ‘lover of.’ This is the fundamental motivation for all of his dedicated efforts. He loves this work and the genus rhododendron, from the bogs of Sandwich to his efforts on Roan Mountain to conserve the native deciduous azaleas. Driven by Karel’s search for knowledge, this body of work represents a true labor of love.” – Peter Norris

And here’s the text of the citation presented to Gold Medalist Bernady in May:

“Over the course of more than three decades you have distinguished yourself in countless ways as a member of the American Rhododendron Society contributing time, talent, and boundless energy to scores of projects which have educated and informed others.

“You have served as president Greater Philadelphia ARS Chapter; Chairman "Plants Members"; District 8 Director; Co-Chaired the 2004 ARS International Convention; Chaired the 2009 Eastern Regional Conference; Chaired the Board of ARS Research Foundation; served on ARS Native Azalea Committee; on ARS Endowment Committee; and, ARS *Journal* Editorial Board

“In 2006 you received the Greater Philadelphia Bronze Award. Now teaching members grafting techniques, you have created a valuable electronic rooting/grafting database as a resource tool for ARS.

“For outstanding work and tireless efforts, the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to award Karel F. Bernady, Ph.D. the Gold Medal.”



Cathy Bird photo

Karel Bernady, flanked by Steve Hinning and Donald Hyatt, upon receiving the ARS Gold Medal in Sidney, British Columbia, at the ARS national conference in May.

Scenes from the picnic



Betts Layman's insistence that "it never rains on the Rhododendron Society picnic" was borne out once again as chapter members gathered at the home of Randy Dalton and Michael Mills on June 21. President Kim Kopple presided (upper right). Two directors, Karel Bernady (above) and Kate Deregibus (far right) were re-elected; Craig Conover was elected to the board as well. Ann Mangels (upper right, seated) reprised the presentation of Karel's Gold Medal. The weather was steamy, but cooling the feet was as far as anyone went at the swimming pool, witness Kate and Marilyn Gressman (right). Kate even brought the lace cookies that Betts so often supplied at meetings.



M. Mills photos

Cutting Exchange and Auction

It's getting nigh unto rhododendron propagation time, followed by the beginning of fall planting. Thus District 8 of the ARS will conduct its annual Cutting Exchange and Plant Auction, on Sunday, August 16, 2 p.m.

Wayne Guymon is the host at his home in Chadds Ford. Cuttings, ready for your relatively prompt sticking to root over the cooler months, will be available in the magical surprise-package array of what people bring from their gardens. Some will be old favorites and others will be rhodo-delights that the shrewd will snap up quickly. Only 25 cents a bag.

The auction portion of the afternoon has plants donated by chapters, maybe a nursery or two, and ARS members. Perennials and woodies of other sorts will be among the choices.

Proceeds of the sale and auction benefit the ARS Endowment Fund and the ARS Research Foundation. Karel Bernady will reprise his role as auctioneer. Frank Brouse will demonstrate propagation technique. The afternoon is coordinated by Ellin Hlebig.

Here's the schedule of events:

Feel free to brown-bag your own lunch. Beverages will be provided. Please bring a dessert to share later. If possible, bring a chair. This is a rain-or-shine event.

If donating cuttings, please arrive around 1:30. Use

plastic bags for each cultivar, clearly labeled. Three to four elepidote cuttings per bag, five to six lepidote or evergreen azalea cuttings per bag. Best to take cuttings early in the day, ideally from the lower portions of the shrub; if there has been a dry spell, water the night before. Add just a few drops of water to each bag. Transporting the bags in a cooler is also a good idea.

The cutting sale begins at 2 p.m. The auction of plants will begin around 2:30 p.m. Your donations are solicited; please provide a description so the auctioneer can induce the bidders to run up the bids. Frank's propagation demonstration follows the auction, and then we shift into dessert mode.

Directions to the Guymon residence, 10 Lafayette Place, Chadds Ford, Pa. 19317:

Get to U.S. Route 1 in Chester County. From Route 202, go west on Route 1, 2.1 miles to Webb Road, turn right (north) onto Webb. From points southwest on Route 1, go 3.1 miles past Longwood Gardens to Webb Road, turn left (north) onto Webb. Go 1.2 miles on Webb, turn left onto Lafayette Place. Go 0.2 mile; the Guymons are on the cul-de-sac at the end of Lafayette Place. Plenty of on-street parking. Their home phone is 610-459-0477.

Ellin Hlebig requests reservations by August 9 at 610-584-9764 or leftwall@yahoo.com. Questions? Contact Ellin.