

The American Rhododendron Society

Susquehanna Valley Chapter

February 18, 2011

Officers and Directors

President - Tom Schuetz (to 3/11) **766-0374**
Vice President - John Bartlett (to 3/11) **359-9474**
Treasurer - Bill Hersh (to 3/11) **766-5131**
Secretary - Maryann Billet (to 3/11) **792-0534**
Director - Betty Wilson (to 3/13) **252-3060**
Director - Earl Cordy (to 3/13) **766-5131**
Director - Laura Hershey (to 3/12) **528-4412**
Director - Bill Hersh (to 3/12) **927-9650**
Director - Carol Schmidt (to 3/11) **238-3656**
Director - Fran Schuetz (to 3/11) **766-0374**

Committee Chairs

Membership - Maryann Billet
Ways and Means - Tom Schuetz (acting)
Truss Show - Linda and Lew Brown
Newsletter - Tom Schuetz
Publicity - Carol Schmidt
Garden Tours - Lew and Linda Brown
Banquet - Bill Hersh
Hospitality - Maryann Billet
Meetings and Programs - John Bartlett
Awards - Bill Hersh and Laura Hershey

Calendar of Events for 2011

Feb. 12	(Sat.)	<i>Board Meeting</i> , 2:00 PM,
Mar.6 -13		Philadelphia Flower Show.
Mar. 19	(Sat.)	Annual meeting - 4 PM - covered dish in Mechanicsburg Fellowship Hall.
April 17	(Sun.)	Members meeting - 2 PM - Mechanicsburg. <i>Board meeting will follow.</i>
April 28 - May 1		Azalea Society of America meeting , Evansville, IN.
May 7 & 8	(Sat & Sun)	Flower Show - Hershey Gardens, Hershey, PA (Set-up on Friday, May 7).
May 7 & 8	(Sat & Sun.)	Plant Sale - Hershey Gardens, Hershey, PA (Set-up on Friday, May 7).
May 11 - 15		Annual ARS convention , Vancouver WA
May 11	(Wed.)	Local Garden Tour.
July 17	(Sun.)	Picnic (1 PM) at Hershey Campground. <i>Board meeting will follow.</i>
Sep. 11	(Sun.)	Booth at Hershey Gardens 'Garden Fest 2010, 9 AM - 5 PM.
Sep. 18	(Sun.)	Meeting and cutting exchange , 2 PM, Mechanicsburg.
Oct. 23	(Sun.)	Annual Banquet at Messiah College, Grantham, PA., 1:00 PM.
Nov. 20	(Sun.)	Meeting , 2 PM in Mechanicsburg. <i>Board meeting will follow.</i>

Please enter these dates in your calendar now.



**Annual Meeting - Saturday March 19 - St Mark Lutheran Church
in Mechanicsburg at 4:00 PM.**

Annual Meeting agenda: ☛ Brief business meeting ☛ Election of officers and directors ☛
Dinner ☛ A great program.

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The annual meeting will again be on **Saturday**, so please note the day and date, **Saturday March 19 at 4:00 PM**. This meeting is the first of the new year and the beginning of our Chapter's meeting calendar. It will be great to get together and see our rhododendron friends after a dreary February with lots of snow storms and weeks of low temperatures.

Please Note: The starting time has been moved from 6 PM to **4 PM** to enable everyone to return home before it gets late. We will be starting with a brief business meeting and elections. Please arrive on time since we will be starting on time in order to keep hot food hot.

Dinner Following tradition, the format will be a family style covered dish dinner. Members should bring **two** dishes, one a meat dish and one a vegetable or salad. Dessert and beverages will be provided. **Please bring your own table setting, including utensils.**

Business Meeting and 2011 election The nominating committee reports the following slate of nominees for election: **The following are nominated for two year terms in office.** **For President** - John Bartlett, **For Vice-President** - No one volunteered to accept the nomination, however **Joe Minahan** agreed to serve if no other nominee could be found so Joe is the nominee. **For Treasurer** - Tom Schuetz, **For Secretary** - MaryAnn Billet for another term. For three year terms on the board of Directors, Lew Brown and Fran Schuetz to succeed Carol Schmidt and Fran Schuetz. Bill Hersh has been appointed to fill the unexpired term of Jossel Fears (to 3/2012), who resigned from the board. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting with the approval of the nominee. For your reference, the Board of Directors along with the elected officers do the business of running the chapter. If you have an interest in participating, if you would like to see changes in the chapter, or just feel you would like to contribute, this is a good time to step up and make yourself heard.

Program. The program will be a presentation by Steve Henning on the **Gardens, Hybrids and Hybridizers of Long Island**. Steve is a past president of Valley Forge Chapter ARS. The photos in the presentation were taken at the Conference held in Long Island last Spring. Steve has been retired for several years and he and his wife have used the time to travel extensively. He has a talent for photography as you will see from his presentation.



President's Message

As I write this, the temperature yesterday reached 67°F outside, a new record for this date and the highest temperature since October 30, 2010. This is welcome after a monotonous six weeks of cold and snowcover. Another record of 72°F was reached today. Before opening up the swimming pool, be assured that it will not last and cooler weather is on the way, maybe tomorrow. This may be an opportunity to clean up, oil, and generally get garden tools ready for a new season. Also, if you have overwintered small plants and want to give them a boost of growth in the spring, this is a good time to give them a shot of fertilizer.

Each year there are two meetings which are special to our members, the annual meeting with the covered dish format and the annual banquet. I look forward to see you all at these meetings, especially those who for one reason or another often do not get to meetings.

Some of you may be aware of the bru-ha-ha that the **National Arboretum** created in Washington DC by declaring that the mass azalea plantings on Mt. Hamilton would be cut down. This is an issue with which Steve Henning (see his web site dedicated to the issue at <http://savetheazaleas.org/>) has been very

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active on the internet in rallying ARS members to fight the situation. *I have asked Peg Van Patten of the Princeton Chapter ARS if I could borrow her write-up on the problem. It follows:*

For those of you who may have somehow missed hearing about the planned destruction of both the original Glenn Dale azaleas, as well as the arboretum's famed boxwood collection, here is a brief summary taken from Don Hyatt's Potomac Valley newsletter: In early November, we learned some devastating news. The National Arboretum announced at a staff meeting that all of the original Glenn Dale azaleas on Mt. Hamilton at the Arboretum would be cut down in 2011 and their stumps painted with herbicide. The approximately six acre site was planted in 1947 by the Arboretum's first Director, Ben Morrison. These azaleas have provided one of the most spectacular floral displays in our nation's capital for over 60 years.

People could not believe what they had heard and contacted the Arboretum, assuming this was some kind of cruel hoax. Scott Aker, the Gardens Unit Director [and apparently the prime mover behind this arbitrary and capricious scheme] confirmed our worst fears, and the Interim Director, Dr. Ramon Jordan, backed up his decision. Sadly, a big problem at the Arboretum is that years ago USDA did away with their official Advisory Board which provided oversight over major decisions of this sort, as well as expert opinion. Scott Aker is free to do what he wants.

The Glenn Dale Hillside is not the only targeted collection Aker has in his crosshairs. The Arboretum announced that they planned to cut down the National Boxwood Collection, as well as the associated Perennial Collections including Daffodils, the Daylilies, and the Peonies. The Boxwood Collection is also considered a national treasure and the most complete and well documented reference collection in the world.

FONA, the Friends of the National Arboretum, an organization with a Board of Directors made up of well-known business leaders, attorneys, and civic organizations [including an Honorary Board with members of Congress and even former Supreme Court Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor] has strongly denounced the proposal to destroy these rare plant collections, and has sent letters opposing this senseless plan. Believe it or not, FONA, a major supporter of the Arboretum, was *never* consulted in the decision making process until after the fact. Has their outrage stopped Aker and his cohorts? Apparently, not.

One of the main reasons Aker gives for his plans to destroy the gardens concerns the loss of funding from a private trust which annually provided \$110,000 for two gardeners. These funds will no longer be available as of February 2012. In response FONA wrote in their letter to the Interim Director of the Arboretum, Dr. Ramon Jordan, "We believe that the decision [to destroy the collections] will cause *irreparable harm that could not be undone if additional funds were later found*. . . . Therefore, we cannot understand how the future loss of these funds can *justify such a drastic and irrevocable decision* affecting other collections." [Emphasis added. Translated, once something's done, it can't be undone. Interestingly enough, the Arboretum was given \$9 million in federal stimulus money to build additional public toilets for the tens of thousands who visit every year including the huge crowds that come to see the azaleas. Ed. note]

The bottom line - **you and I are the owners of the National Arboretum**, not Scott Aker alone. This is our garden, the people's garden. – and as such we have a right and a responsibility to speak up and say what happens to America's best known garden.

The Arboretum was developed over the years by distinguished scientists and directors such as Ben Y. Morrison, Dr. Henry Skinner, Dr. John Lewis Creech, Dr. Henry Cathey, and Dr. Thomas Elias, whose purpose and dedication is summed up in *History of the National Arboretum*. Their goals were:

- To popularize plant knowledge by establishing a close affiliation with garden clubs nursery associations, botanical societies, and schools;

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- To preserve the rarer plant life of the world;
- To maintain species collections;
- To exhibit plants;
- To maintain research;
- To stimulate interest in woody plants;
- To develop a careful appreciation and understanding of plants.

In an updated version of these noble goals, The National Arboretum's **Mission Statement** which can be found on the "facts page" at the Arboretum's website states that the Mission is "To serve the public need for scientific research, education, and gardens that conserve and showcase plants to enhance the environment." Maybe we need to remind our elected officials of this.

What can you do? If you agree that Scott Aker's decision to destroy the collections at the National Arboretum is wrong, that his reasons are specious at best, you can write a simple letter of protest to your Senators, Congressmen, the USDA, or to FONA. The letters need not be complicated or convoluted, but perhaps just a simple "Stop the madness; save all the collections at the National Arboretum."

Since the above was written, just a few days ago, everything changed and the following news release was generated:

"FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM ANNOUNCES MAJOR DONATION"

WASHINGTON, DC (February 14, 2011)—A \$1 million donation to Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) will establish an endowment to help preserve the Azalea and Boxwood Collections at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., the nonprofit organization announced today. FONA will launch a major fundraising campaign this spring to raise the additional \$1 million needed to maintain the treasured collections into the future.

The Azalea Collection has long been a landmark in Washington. The lesser known but nationally recognized Boxwood Collection is the most complete collection in the world.

FONA's announcement coincides with the Arboretum's public statement that it is suspending an earlier decision to eliminate the collections, due to the loss of proceeds from a private trust. A final decision about the future of the collections will be made later this year.

In her announcement, the Arboretum's new director, Colien Hefferan, said: "FONA's efforts in support of the Arboretum pave the way for us to work toward a new, vibrant future for this treasured place." Dr. Hefferan said she is planning to meet with key stakeholders later this spring to discuss the future of the collections. The Arboretum is also soliciting feedback from the public through its Web site.

FONA Board of Directors Chairman Jeanne Connelly applauded the Arboretum's announcement saying: "We are delighted that Dr. Hefferan has listened to the Arboretum's constituents and are heartened by the willingness of the Arboretum's new leadership to engage the public in an open discussion about decisions relating to its collections."

"At the same time," she added, "we are hopeful that funding from this major donation, along with additional support raised in the coming months, will ensure these popular and important collections

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will be enjoyed by future generations.”

Writing Dec. 5 in the *Washington Post*, Connelly and National Bonsai Foundation (NBF) President Felix Laughlin said the Arboretum’s decision “to destroy the most frequently visited section of the historic Azalea Collection and dismantle the entire National Boxwood Collection hit a horticultural nerve throughout the region. Countless fans, including members of FONA and NBF, have expressed opposition to the decision to eliminate one of nature’s most magnificent and scientifically important spring displays.”

Horticultural experts and groups including the Azalea Society of America, the American Boxwood Society, the American Daffodil, Hemerocallis and Rhododendron societies, along with Garden Club of America and National Garden Clubs Inc. galvanized community response and led strong opposition to the Arboretum’s earlier decision by creating a “Save the Azaleas” Web site and letter-writing campaign.

Major Donation

The \$1 million donation—the largest single donation in FONA’s history—was made anonymously by friends in honor of prominent attorney Brendan V. Sullivan Jr. and Lila Sullivan, longtime residents of the Washington area. “This generous donation, offered in the Arboretum’s hour of greatest need, reflects not only the donor’s passion for this national treasure, but also confidence that the Arboretum leadership will make sound decisions relating to the collections in the future,” said Kathy Horan, executive director of FONA.

“FONA recognizes that these are difficult economic times and all government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, will face significant budget cuts in the coming years,” added Connelly. “That is why it is important for private partners to step in to protect one of the nation’s most valuable treasures and one of Washington, D.C.’s most important green spaces.”

“In the short term, we hope to save the Azalea and Boxwood Collections. Over time, our broader goal is to work with the Arboretum and Department of Agriculture leadership to develop a plan for the long-term sustainability of the Arboretum,” Connelly said. In addition to the azaleas and boxwoods, the Arboretum houses other world-class gardens and collections including the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum and the Asian Collections which form a beautiful garden swath leading to the Anacostia River, as well as the Gotelli conifer collection, Fern Valley native plant collection with shaded paths and wooden walkways that seem a world away from the urban metropolis that surrounds the Arboretum, the two-and-a-half acre National Herb Garden and the Washington Youth Garden.

Located 10 minutes from the U.S. Capitol, the National Arboretum is a U.S. Department of Agriculture research and education facility and a living museum. Admission is free. Founded in 1982, FONA supports research and educational projects at the Arboretum, as well as the gardens and collections. Over the years, FONA, NBF and their members, along with corporate partners, foundations and other stakeholders, have contributed millions of dollars in support of this 446-acre green space.

Further information is available from FONA, www.fona.org or (202) 544-8733"

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Editors comment: I am gratified that the threat of destruction of major collections at the National Arboretum has been averted.

I am appalled that the powers-that-be who run the arboretum thought that they could (and actually did) blackmail the public into providing additional funding. Maybe this is the new paradigm of how government works. I, for one, hope it never occurs again and I would be not be the least concerned if those involved in the initial decisions to destroy the plantings lost their jobs.

Tom Schuetz



Door Prizes

Two door prizes will be given at each meeting in 2010 to attendees selected by random drawing. Also, each person bringing a **GUEST** will receive a rooted cutting for their trouble. New members will receive a one time gift of a 2-3 year old plant. Call Tom Schuetz (717-766-03740) or John Bartlett (717-359-9474) before the meeting so the plants will be available for you.



Rooted Cuttings / Liners

Betty Wilson has once again agreed to work with WW Nurseries to make available rooted cuttings and liners to members. A descriptive order form which should be returned to Betty by March 19 is enclosed. If you have 2uestions, please call her at 717-697-9112.



Brief Notes

- More than half of the members of the chapter have e-mail addresses and e-mailing of newsletters can save mailing costs. If you prefer to receive hard copies of newsletters and notices by USPS please notify Tom Schuetz at schuetz101@verizon.net of your preference.
- **For this meeting only, I am sending out both hard copies of the newsletter and attachments and also digital copies**
- An updated membership list is enclosed with this newsletter.
- The official ARS web site is at <http://www.rhododendron.org> and The Azalea Society web site is at <http://www.azaleas.org.index.html>
- The annual convention of the Rhododendron Society will be May11 - 15, 2011 in Vancouver, WA. For details see: <http://www.ars2011convention.com/> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcqOPvmeGo8>
- There is a wealth of information on rhododendrons, rhododendron breeding, etc. on the internet from the Massachusetts chapter at <http://rosebayblog.blogspot.com:80/>
- Check out our own web page at <http://www.susquehannavalleychapterars.com/#>

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Upcoming District 8 Chapter Activities

- **Sunday, February 20 at 2 p.m.** at Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House, Lionville, Greater Philadelphia Chapter will host a joint meeting and winter social with the Valley Forge Chapter, complete with snacks and wine. Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting. Karel Bernady attended the celebration of the milestone of 75v years of The Deutsche Rhododendron Gesellschaft, (DRG), German Rhododendron Society, and will present highlights of the tours, which included public gardens and commercial nurseries.
- **THE PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW** – The Philadelphia International Flower Show will occur **March 6 - March-13**.
- **Saturday, April 9** , Greater Philadelphia Chapter will have it's annual banquet at Whitemarsh Country Club. The speaker will be Don Hyatt.
- **Sunday March 20** at 1 PM, Princeton Chapter will have it's annual banquet at Mercer Oaks Country Club featuring Robert Herald of Chanticleer and Tyler Arboretum.
- **Thursday March 17** at 7:30 PM, Valley Forge Chapter will have a meeting at Jenkins Arboretum featuring Steve Henning who will talk about Long Island Gardens and hybrids.

See you at the March meeting,

Tom Schuetz

Newsletter Articles - All members, particularly officers, committee chairpersons, etc. are encouraged to submit material to the editor for inclusion in the newsletter. Please send to Tom Schuetz, 10 Broadmoor Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. Phone (717)-766-0374. E-mail schuetz101@verizon.net.

Regular ARS annual membership is \$40 / individual or family. Associate membership for members of other chapters is \$10. Contact Maryann Billet, Membership Chair, 2289 Catherine St., York, PA 17408 phone (717)-792-0534 billet2289@comcast.net