

Willamette Chapter American Rhododendron Society Newsletter

Volume 2

Issue 3

CHAPTER MEETING March 10, 2020

7:00 pm in the Carrier room (600 State Street entrance) of the First Methodist Church on the corner of Church and State Streets, Salem

PROGRAM: The Connie Hansen Garden, Rhodies and Friends, presented by Karen Brown & Nancy Chase



Remember to set your clocks **ahead 1 hour on Saturday, March 8 so you don't miss any of the awesome program on **March 10!****

Calendar of Events

March 11, 2020	Karen Brown & Nancy Chase	Connie Hansen Garden Rhodies and Friends
April 8, 2020	Gisele Schoniger	Rhody Revival Restore, Revive & Regenerate Building Healthy Soils Organically
May 13, 2020	Spring Potluck and Plant Sales	

February Minutes

Mary Crofts - Secretary February 17, 2020

This month's WCARS meeting was different in several ways. We had our supper get-together at The RAM but it was on a Monday instead of the usual Wednesday. We had our meeting at the beautiful Craftsman-style home of our Prez-4-Life, Wally Reed and his Wife-4-Life, Kathy, instead of the First Methodist Church.

Another thing that was different was a plant sale that was held in the Reeds' carport. The plants, rhodies of course, were courtesy of our evening's speaker, Bob Zimmermann and his charming wife Beth. The plants weren't there just to look at. They were for sale. They'd brought about 60 of the most beautiful and rare large species plants raised from wild collected seed. Bob was speaking at other Chapter meetings during the week and we got first pick of the lot. That "produced" another difference. Instead of meeting first and buying plants after, we all scampered outside to do some shopping. The meeting could just wait.

The business meeting was the final difference. It was short. Very short for our Chapter. Your Secretary was in the loo when it started, and the meeting was almost finished by the time I returned to my seat. And, NO. It was not an hour. It was about 5 minutes. Basically, the meeting portion of the evening consisted of Wally asking us to consider introducing the various speakers at our up-coming Convention. And that was it...on to Bob's talk. One thing that was not "different" were our refreshments, thanks to Gloria Sarlak and her Valentine cookies and Mary Ellen Ramseyer with her heart shaped cherry cheesecake. Delicious!

Finally, we were off with Bob to ARUNACHAL PRADESH. Program Chair, Keith White, introduced Bob as more than "just" a plant explorer and rhody grower. Bob and Beth are also ordained Lutheran ministers, and in the Fall of 2016 tied the knot for Keith and Mary Ellen. Keith and Bob have been friends a long time and have been "tent mates" on a few expeditions to Tibet and China, bringing back seeds that helped grow some of the marvelous plants we'd just purchased for our gardens.

The area of Asia called Arunachal Pradesh is nestled in the Northeast far corner of India with Tibet on the North, the Assam state of India and Brahmaputra River in the south, Bhutan on the West and Myanmar (Burma) on the East. It is a wild, natural area without any civilization except for small villages and monasteries here and there, plus mud-filled "roads" and trails. Otherwise, it is uninhabited.

"Ownership" of this beautiful land has been disputed between China and India for ages. The two countries have had wars over it. China wants it, probably to "develop" it. India wants to keep it just like it is: a natural wilder-

ness barrier to Chinese armies. So far, India's "won out", but tension is on-going between the two countries. If harm were to come to Bob and his fellow explorers, it wouldn't be from wild animals. There is one "real" bridge over one of the larger rivers into that area that still isn't finished although building it has lasted 10 years, so far. The concern is that if it's completed, it would be easier for troops to get over the river in either direction, so the middle spans of the bridge which would connect both sides together, remain unfinished.

So in order to get to the road that would take Bob and his fellow explorers to their final site, they had to board a "ferry" And what a "ferry" it was....small and wooden and crammed with people, animals, cars, and bundles of who-knows-what. To get their Land Rover-type vehicle on board the already over-crowded "ferry" their driver (wearing a "Superman" T-shirt) had to maneuver it very carefully on two boards laid from the "ferry's" side to the steep river bank. No room for even a slight mistake. From the "ferry" they made their way, again slowly but on the ground, to the start of the "trail" they would be taking. Just the "trail" part took about 6 days. I think he said that altogether, getting to their final destination took about two weeks although it wasn't that far in actual miles.

Since the area of Arunachal Pradesh is not developed, Bob's photos of the mountain ranges and the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayan Mountains and the valleys between were gorgeous. This expedition was in May of 2017. Bob and two other fellows (whose names I didn't write down and I hope they'll forgive me) were accompanied by a guide, 10 porters with almost as many furry oxen all loaded down with the stuff you need to have when you're really roughing it for a long time. They also had a chef with them...a real chef with his own cooking equipment, so they didn't starve.

The porters spoke English in addition to the local dialect of their village (each village has its own dialect). They all grew up together in the same little village. I may have misunderstood this, but I think Bob said their guide was from that village as well.

The trail itself was little more than a rut between grass and/or bushes. Some looked more like spaces where water runs down in trickles when the snow melts. Some were real trails, used annually by Buddhist pilgrims. Creeping along, they found rhodies and other beautiful plants as well. In one place, they found a huge bunch of orchids. They had grown up in a tree and over time became so heavy with blooms that the branch broke.

One of the main reasons for these expeditions to retrieve seeds has to do with how rhodies are handled by the villagers in that part of Asia. Rhodies grow there like weeds. Or almost like weeds. In any case, there are lots and lots and LOTS of them, some as big as one of our Douglas fir trees. The villagers use them for firewood. This is permitted by the Indian government since the villagers are doing the cutting for their daily living. It's hard to think

of a rhody being as tall as a tree, but some of them are. One of Bob's photos showed a huge rhody tree and he asked "Where's Waldo"? Like the cartoon character of that name, one of the men had climbed it and was almost totally hidden by leaves and branches. Because of all the cutting down of rhodies, there is a possibility that species as yet not discovered, could be lost forever. So the plant explorers search hard for those seeds before their bearing rhododendrons can be burned up.

Nights were spent in the luxury of "shelters" made for the explorers use. I'm not sure if they spent every night in one of these shelters, but "shelter" is not really much of a word for these places. According to Bob, explorers are "treated like royalty". If so, what did "non-royalty" sleep in? Some were actually pretty well-made; most were not and looked like something kids would build up in a tree. And built in a really big hurry with what ever you could find in the back yard. The explorers put their tents inside the shelters which is a good thing as they'd easily leak. When the time came to rest, they had their chef to get them boosted up for the next days' creeping along the trails, so they ate well.

Bob had some really funny stories about various traditions the villagers practiced. One involved killing squirrels, "drying" them out and giving them to members of a wedding party. Another involved an animal called a "takin". It is truly a real animal. Bob had the photos to prove it. This animal is described as having a head sort of like that of a moose, the horns of a cow, the body of a buffalo, and feet like that of a sheep or goat. They are scarce now because in China they were eliminated for their government's purposes. In India they are protected by their government, but villagers are allowed to kill them for their meat. One of the porters killed one on this trip. The rest of the porters went off to help him butcher the beast on the spot and bring it back to camp for skinning and smoking. Bob's lovely photos showed the takin's head separated from its feet separated from its body. It must have been quite big, judging from the size of the body parts. In any case, despite their disgust at the killing of this rare protected animal, the explorers had some hearty meals prepped by the chef. The rest of the meat was taken back to the village where the porter who shot it lived.

And that led to another of the porters' village traditions. The young man who shot the takin was highly honored as meat like that just wasn't found in their supermarket. But the "honoring" involved his dressing up in women's clothing and so forth. You just really had to be at the meeting, because sometimes your Secretary can't write notes as fast as the speaker can speak and even then, it's sometimes note-taking through tears of laughter.

And yes, they did find very interesting rhodies. Some of the seeds they brought back may yield new species. It's hard to tell from a few leaves and seeds exactly what rhody they are. They did find a huge *R. edgeworthy* and a *R. griffithianum* with a huge trunk and estimat-

ed to be about 100 years old. They found *R. hookeri* growing up another tree (not a rhody tree). Epiphytes are the rule here. Thus, a number of other plants were discovered among the roots of other plants or up in trees or semi-hidden amid other plants.

In between eating takin meat, sleeping in a tent inside a shelter built by a 5-year old, wandering up trails that would challenge mountain goats, knocking leeches out of their boots, staring at rhodies in huge trees or staring at trees that were rhodies, they collected seeds. The daily finds were put in small paper envelopes (rather than plastic because the plastic keeps in moisture and promotes fungal growth) as they were found, and then labeled. When evening came, the seeds were cleaned and put into equally clean envelopes and again labeled. Seed brought back that is not planted can be stored in jars and frozen up to 5 or 6 years. Some seeds were planted in November of the same year they were acquired. If the seeds were collected late in the year, then they would be held over until the next year before planting.

Well...they finally trekked their way almost to their goal. And then the weather shifted, snow came and the weather became impossible for the explorers to go farther. So they turned around and went back the way they had come up. And that was just about the way Bob told it. I guess nothing happened on the trek back down nor did they spy any great plants. Nevertheless....it was a great talk full of great photos. We thank you Bob. These minutes are just your Secretary's "high-lights".

While we polished off the rest of the refreshments, Anne Gross brought in two of her rhodies to auction. They were very pretty, blooming plants: *R. seta* and *R. Mary Fleming*. But no one did any bidding ! A "first" for our Chapter. I'm suspecting that we had all spent our bucks on Bob and Beth's rhodies. So Wally and Kathy bought the two of them for \$40. They will be planted at the Bush Park Hillside Garden and the money will go to Dana Malby to put in our Treasury.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Crofts - Secretary -WCARS

Herb and Edie Spady Living in New Memory Care Center

Herb and Edie are now at Battle Creek Memory Center. It is across the street from the Battle Creek Courthouse Athletic Club on S Commercial Street in Salem. The address is 1805 Waln Dr. SE Salem, OR 97306. Phone 503-967-7815.

Keith White and Mary Ellen Ramseyer met them at lunch on Sunday, Feb. 24th. They both could hold up a good conversation. Herb still has a great sense of humor and laughs a lot. Herb's granddaughter, Carissa and Edie's sons, Rob and Justin were there and **strongly** encourage all rhody society members to visit. Best is weekdays but call ahead to make sure that they are there.

March Program and Speakers:



Connie Hansen Garden is a non-profit public garden in Lincoln City, formed to save the garden developed by Connie Hansen, a retired botanist. Connie moved to Lincoln City from Berkely, CA, in 1973, purchased the land and began to plant and develop it into an extensive garden of rhododendrons, azaleas, iris, primula, heathers and many other interesting plantings. Shortly before her death in 1993, she sold the property to a realtor. Her friends and neighbors, realizing that the garden could be destroyed to subdivide the lots, formed a group determined to save this treasure for public enjoyment. Over the years, additions and improvements have been accomplished, bringing the garden to 1 1/4 acres of beauty, open for self-guided visiting during daylight hours or by prearranged tours. Connie's house, remodeled for public access, includes a library of plant information and a gift shop, which are open limited hours with volunteer attendants. More information is available at the website, conniehansengarden.com.

Our speaker, Karen Brown, Connie Hansen Garden treasurer, became a board member soon after the garden was established as a legal entity about 25 years ago. She and her husband, Wally, were "Mom and Pop" at Brown's Rose Lodge Nursery, eight miles east of Lincoln City. Karen wrote a garden article for the local newspaper for most of those years. They became more active volunteering at the garden after retiring in 2004. They now grow and donate a large number of plants for sale at CHG during the year, and manage the office tasks plus occasional maintenance work outdoors in the garden. Karen will speak on who Connie Hansen was, how the garden came into being, and how it is today. She will be joined by Nancy Chase, also a board member, who will present a delightful slide show of the garden through the year. Nancy, a retired graphic artist, has been active as garden photographer and mapper for a number of years, as well as manager of memberships. Karen and Nancy work together to edit both print and electronic editions of the garden's quarterly newsletter, the "Connie Hansen Garden Gazette".



Opportunity to get Down & Dirty!!

Our Spring work day is March 21.

The Smith Garden work day is March 21, 2020. Start around 8- 9, or when ever you can manage, and work as long as you want. Bring gloves and your favorite hand tools. There are chores for all skill levels. Lunch will be served. We would really appreciate all the help we can get. I will be doing my sun dance but this will be a rain or shine event so come prepared. It is also a good opportunity to visit the garden. **There will be about 200 people visiting the Garden on April 29 on one of the convention tours so we want it looking its best.** If anyone would like more information, give me a call at 503-625-6331. Directions can be found at www.rhodies.org.

Thank You,
Anne Gross & Dick Cavender

ADDENDUM FROM LAST MONTH: Your help is needed now more than before due to the damage and debris from the winds on February 23. Please plan to help if you can!

Contact Keith at 503-559-5796 if you need a ride or would like to carpool!

"O'Rhodies" for March

Aren't all rhododendrons Irish on March 17? Here are 2 that definitely are:



The dwarf Shamrock Rhododendron created by renowned research horticulturist Robert Ticknor PhD. from Oregon. It is usually blooming on March 17.



Rhododendron Lapoinya Leprechaun, a hybrid from Australia

Volunteers Still Needed for Smith Garden Open Days

There still are many open days to volunteer at the Smith Garden to take admissions or sell plants. It is only for 5 hours from 11:00am to 4:00pm on a Saturday or a Sunday in April or May. It is easy. The plants usually sell themselves and there is Greer's Guide for back up. We are open to the public only 14 days out of 365. Only 2 people a day are needed but 4 people is nice as it is a good time to enjoy visiting with another person or couple. Sometimes it is so busy that you hardly have time to visit, but visiting with customers is also fun and you may be able to talk them into joining the rhododendron society. It is only for 5 hours not including travel time. Bring a sack lunch if you like, munch cookies (yours) and enjoy the day. The garden is gorgeous in the spring.

Volunteers still desperately needed for April 4, 19 and May 2, 3, 10 and 17. I can't think of a more beautiful place to be on Mother's Day than in a gorgeous blooming garden. Please help and volunteer. To sign up, please call, e-mail or snail mail: Anne Gross agross@teleport.com or Dick Cavender red@redsrhodies.com 503-625-6331

Hosting the May Potluck

Wednesday, May 13, is our Spring Potluck and Plant Sale and we are looking for someone who would like to host it. If we are as lucky as last year, it will be a beautiful evening and there will be lots of interesting, maybe even rare plants, for auction. I'm sure you will find at least one or two calling out that it wants to be planted in your yard. This is a perfect time of year to show off the rhododendrons blooming in your yard and let others reap the benefit of your long hours and hard work in the garden. Please contact Wally if you would host this event.

Getting the Most Out of Your Yard Space

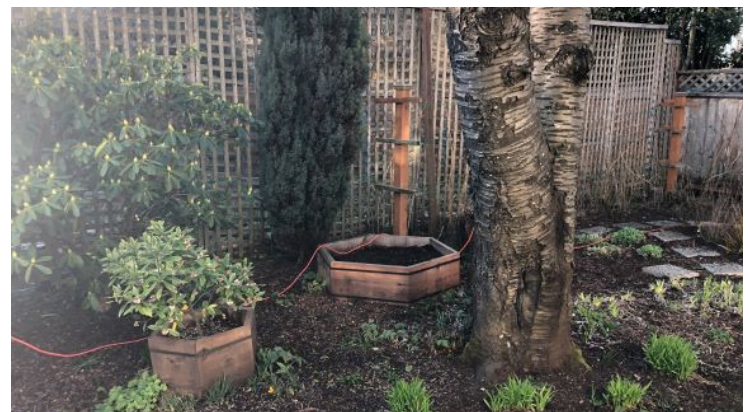
Last summer when Keith and I stopped by Wally and Kathy Reed's home I was so impressed with Kathy's ability to combine her plants, flowers, rhodies and vegetables attractively into such a small yard space that I felt an obligation to share this with you. We have all known Kathy for her exceptional cooking talents but now I find she has many others as well.

She starts very early in the year (February) with planting her leafy plants, like spinach, chard, kale, leeks and a variety of lettuce. In Kathy's words, "you need to plant what you will eat", so it involves some thinking ahead of time. You need to evaluate what is readily available locally at a reasonable price vs what isn't to determine what to plant in your limited space.



Once that decision is made, you need to "plot" your space. As you can see, Kathy has some things planted in rows, with stepping squares in between for availability to the plant without removing or tracking dirt, plus they are very decorative.

She grows herbs in planters that fit in and around trees and flowers. Many of her raised bed containers do not have bottoms, but provide above ground area for planting and harvesting. The planters come in all sizes and shapes and compliment the surrounding trees, flowers and ground cover.



Utilizing her existing back fence, Kathy has a corner area where she has blueberry, huckleberry and raspberry bushes, as well as a brightly colored quince on the corner. Once again you can see the benefit of the decorative stepping squares to access this area as well as what she plants in the forefront.



And to top off her ingenuity, there is a espalier (horizontal) apple tree trained along her patio fence that grows 4 different varieties. That was the deciding factor – she is now my “all around mentor”.



Kathy said she does not use pesticides or insecticides as a rule on her rhodies and flowers, but if she needs to use them, she will not plant vegetables near them.

So, as you can see, you can creatively intersperse a vegetable, herb and fruit garden in with your rhododendrons and flowers to utilize a small space efficiently and attractively. Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to visit Kathy’s garden in the summer to see the beauty of it all.

Do We Do A Rhody Show This Year?

Critical in our ability to stage a show are volunteers. This year we have two opportunities for shows other than the outdoor annual Bush Garden plant sale. But we need to know who would be willing to volunteer and for what.

Dana Malby has been given booth 537 for our display at the Salem Yard, Garden and Home Show on March 20 – 22. The show will be in Columbia Hall at the Oregon

State Fairgrounds. The hours are 11-6 on Friday March 20, 9-6 on Saturday and 10-5 on Sunday. In order to do this we will need volunteers to set up (on Mar 19) and take down (Mar 22) the display and man the booth during the show hours. One complication is that the show takes place on the Saturday of March 21, which is the Cecil and Molly Smith Garden Cleanup Day. This year the Smith Cleanup is a priority because the recent wind storm blew down a lot of branches and limbs from the trees and the garden is part of the ARS 75th Anniversary Convention tour. Perhaps those who would not go to the work party could man the booth.

An alternative possibility is the Master Gardeners show at the Polk County Fairgrounds in Rickreall on May 8 and 9. This would not conflict with the ARS national meeting in Vancouver/Portland nor the Smith Garden Cleanup. Right now we are exploring details re both sites. We will know more by the time of the March chapter meeting. We will have sign up clipboards for both and the Smith Garden.

Unlike the usual yearly sale at Bush Park, these will be all inside (thus warmer) and occupy a smaller area. So it will be less hassle to set up the displays and there will be no tent (which required a big crew to set up). We will have enough trusses to display because this is an early spring and there are always lots of blooms in Early May. I have several rhodies blooming now and will in May as well. Also, there are earlier and later blooming plants from the nurseries that we can sell. I think that 1 gallon pots are the best size since they are easy to handle and not rootbound or root pruned, they are cheap and likely to do better in one’s garden than bigger plants.

These are our big chances to meet the public and recruit members as well as do some education. The Yard, Home and Garden Show in March will be a different population than those that come to plant sales, a fresh audience that we have not addressed for many years. For either group I think that it is important to emphasize that chapter meetings are a lot of fun and that our programs are frequently on subjects other than rhodies, including exotic expeditions, companion plants, garden soil and pests, including weeds, exceptional local plant nurseries, landscaping, etc., etc.

So if you can volunteer for the Smith Garden Work Party on March 21 and/or the Salem Yard Home and Garden Show on March 20-22 and/or the Master Gardener’s plant sale May 8 and 9 **please let me know ASAP** via email: rhodoc@msn.com or phone 503 559 5796. The shows at the Salem Yard, Garden and Home Show and the Master Gardeners Plant Sale are mutually exclusive, meaning that we will do one or the other depending on how many volunteers can come forward for either. It is OK to say that you would volunteer for all 3. Time is of the essence because we need to get registered for these events before opportunities are lost. I will pass the information called or emailed on to Wally, Dana and Anne Gross.



District 4 Chapters:
As hosts of the
ARS 2020 Spring Convention,
let's show our support with
strong member participation!



This is a rare opportunity to attend the ARS highlight event of the year in our own “backyard.” You have probably already visited local gardens included on the tours. Consider, however, what a special opportunity it is to (1) see the Iseli Nursery, a world-renowned conifer nursery and display garden, not open to the public, included on Thursday tours (C & D), (2) explore the Stewart Garden, formerly Dover Nursery, where lunch will be served surrounded by a spectacular private rhododendron garden, (3) enjoy Mike Stewart and Harold Greer’s introduction to the convention, including the history of the ARS and its origins in Portland, and (4) experience presentations from an impressive group of international speakers.

For just the registration fee of \$59, you’re able to attend all speaker events, poster sessions, plant sales, photo exhibit/contest and more. You can pick and choose among the other tour and event options available to suit your interests—whether or not you use overnight accommodations. Join us! You can be proud of hosting an event for attendees from all over the world who will be forever grateful for the memories you’ll share with them at this 75th Anniversary ARS meeting.

THANK YOU

The 2020 Convention Committee

American Rhododendron Society
75th Anniversary
20/20
VISION
Looking forward, reflecting back
Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020



ARS75.org

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What's Blooming in The Yard

Even though this has been a mild winter with plenty of sunshine, it's still refreshing when the rhodies and azaleas begin to bloom. It gives one the psychological feeling that spring is coming and all is well with the world. Below are pictures of what's currently blooming in our yard.



R Seta



R irratorum "Spatter Paint"



R sutchense ssp. geraldii



Hellebores



R leucapsis

Online Shopping and the ARS Store - A Reminder to Help

Anytime you shop online for just about anything, please consider first going through the American Rhododendron Society Online Store. The ARS Online Store is reached by the link <http://arsstore.org/>

On this site you will find a range of merchants who have agreed to give the American Rhododendron Society a referral fee back on each sale "referred" by ARSStore.org. Just use a link from the ARS Online Store site to go to a merchant's site and buy something like you normally would. You get the same low price and help the ARS. Wally Reed - President

MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS

EUGENE CHAPTER

Third Wednesday from Oct to March at 7:30pm
The Springs at Greer Gardens, 1280 Goodpasture Island Rd, Eugene, OR

PORTLAND CHAPTER

Third Thursday from Sept to May at 7:00pm
All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 SE Woodstock Ave, Portland, OR

SALEM HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

First Tuesday from Oct to May at 7:00pm
Dye House at Willamette Heritage Center, 1313 Mill Street SE, Salem, OR

SUISLAW CHAPTER

Third Tuesday at 7:00pm
First Presbyterian Church, 3996 Highway 101, Florence, OR

TUALATIN VALLEY CHAPTER

First Tuesday from Sept to April (except for Jan) at 6:45pm
Washington County Fire District 2, 31370 NW Commercial Street, North Plains, OR

DISTRICT 4 CHAPTER WEB SITES

Willamette Chapter	arswillamette.com
Eugene Chapter	eugene-chapter-ars.org
Portland Chapter	rhodies.org
Suislaw Chapter	No current website
Tualatin Valley	tualatinvalleyars.org

All other web sites can be found on rhododendron.org

Under "chapters" under web sites

ARS BULLETINS are available online at:

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

WILLAMETTE CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Wally Reed503-588-3666
V-President:
Programs Chair: Keith White ...503-559-5796
Secretary: Mary Crofts.....503-838-4122
Treasurer: Dana Malby 503-393-6463
Librarian: Keith White503-559-5796
Newsletter
Editor: Mary Ellen Ramseyer503-689-3733
Print. & Mail: Mary Ellen Ramseyer - 503-689-3733
Board Members:
Tom Bailey503-364-7741
Bill Vagt503-581-8654
Susan Doellinger503-838-4884
Greeter Susan Doellinger.....503-838-4884
Past President: Chuck Dehn503-362-9271
Web Site Kathy Lintault.....503-434-5472