

# Willamette Chapter American Rhododendron Society Newsletter

Volume 2

Issue 2

## **CHAPTER MEETING February 17, 2020**

**7:00 pm at the home of Kathy and Wally Reed, 940 Leffelle St. SE, Salem, Or 97302. Phone is: 503-588-3666; Email is: wallacereed@comcast.net. Please RSVP if you plan to attend so enough chairs are set up**

**PROGRAM: Robert Zimmermann - Arunachel Pradesch - Wilderness Untouched**

## **HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!!**



### **Calendar of Events**

**February 17, 2020**

**Robert Zimmermann**

**Arunachel Pradesch  
Wilderness Untouched**

**March 11, 2020**

**Karen Brown**

**Connie Hansen Garden**

**April 8, 2020**

**Gisele Schoniger**

**Rhody Revival  
Restore, Revive & Regenerate  
Building Healthy Soils Organically**

**May 13, 2020**

**Spring Potluck and Plant Sales**

# January Minutes

## Mary Crofts - Secretary

### January 8, 2020

Our first meeting for 2020 was held in the Carrier Room of the First Methodist Church, Salem, OR after we devoured large servings of goodies at our 2019 "watering hole", the Ram. While we waited for our "Electrical Engineer", Adam, to finish helping set up the projector and any other stuff needed for the program, we did some mighty chatting and chewing on the refreshments provided by Kathy Reed (who is sort of your Secretary's idol). Our beloved Prez-4-Life, Wally Reed, opened the meeting by announcing that there were no new faces to introduce. And that our Christmas Potluck was a success, as usual. Also, as usual, someone left something behind at the Reeds. This year it was a tea towel with little yellow flowers on it. It must be assumed that someone in our vast network will read this and say "AHA...THAT'S where I left it." Give the Reeds a jingle if you recognize the description. They are losing sleep wondering who owns it....

MEMBERS, ASSOCIATES, FRIENDS...our February meeting will be held at a different time and a different place. It will be MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, at the HOME of KATHY AND WALLY REED. The change is to accommodate our February speaker, Bob Zimmerman and his charming wife, Beth Orling. Bob is speaking at several other Chapters in the Valley this same week. Since the Carrier Room is already reserved for that Monday for another group, we will meet at the Reeds. Our supper bunch will still meet at the Ram at the usual time before heading to the Reeds. The Zimmerman's will be staying with Keith and Mary Ellen. In addition to being rhody lovers, Beth and Bob are also ordained Lutheran pastors and joined the two in marriage several years ago, doing a really good thing for their families.

Mary Ellen Ramseyer is also our new newsletter Editor and did a great job on last month's edition. She asked that more of us contribute more stuff to the newsletter. So, get busy out there. It's January...too early, too cold, too wet to play with your plants.

Our annual Truss Show, usually held in April and in the past few years with the Bush Bunch, is sort of "on hold". If we did it, it would be the last weekend in April, which is also the weekend of our 2020 Vision 75th Anniversary Convention. Dana Malby suggested we do it the following weekend in May.

Which, of course, moved the conversation to the Convention. Wally said the Heathman Lodge, which is where all activities will be held, is nearly full and advised us that if we want to stay IN the hotel, we get our reservations in, pronto. He would also like to know which and who of us will be staying IN the hotel itself, as he'd like to recruit some of us as persons to introduce speakers.

Dick Cavender, for the first time in my memory (which really doesn't say much), did NOT have a clip board to pass around for the Portland Home and Garden Show. And that's because we won't be at the show this year. There has been a change in who plans it and we weren't included. A tradition has died. Dick added that he and Karen will be leading at least 2 bus-loads of Coventioners at Smith Garden, approximately 100 altogether.

Anne Gross relayed that Herb and Edie Spady have moved to Boone Ridge Senior Living, a new facility in their area. She suggested that if we go to visit, go at lunch time as there'd be a better chance that they are awake, in the dining room and not napping. If you'd like their phone number, get in touch with Anne.

Keith White, our newest WCARS Librarian, brought 8 new books for us to look over and/or check out for the month. Keith reminded us that our Chapter is a member of the RSBG. As such, we can order "as a chapter" from the RSBG spring plant and seed distribution catalog. Keith will represent us in this. Just email him the details from the catalog (on the RSBG website: [www.rhodygarden.org](http://www.rhodygarden.org)). Keith will complete the order with delivery to him. The catalog items will still be available for several more weeks. But act early, because supplies are limited and "first come, first served". Be the first one on your block to have Rhododendron newspeciesum.

Wally reminded us that Carol Lundin, our Awards Chairman is accepting nominations for this year. Anne is still our Officers Chair. All current Officers have another year to serve of their 2-year term. Except for Tom Bailey and his seat on the WCARS Board. It's up for re-election or for replacement. Tom piped up "...I WILL CONTINUE" so there it is, making it very easy to re-elect him.

Keith dug a large box of cyclamen corms from Bob Grasing's garden, with the intent to plant them in the Bush Park Hillside Garden. Next Monday, January 13th, he along with Wally and Tom, will do the honors.

On to the evening's entertainment, this time a video of Lionel de Rothschild's huge garden in England, Exbury Garden. The video was one done in the mid 1980's and transferred to DVD but it was easy to see why Exbury is considered one of the great gardens of the world. The narrating was done by his son, Edmund de Rothschild and James Mason.

Exbury Garden is about 100 miles SW of London on the Hampshire Coast, which has a mild climate. It consists of 250 acres of land, 200 pathways, 27 wildflower species, and 1,000,000 of Lionel's favorite flower...the rhododendron, many of which are Lionel's hybrids and famous the world over.

Altogether it took 20 years to complete it, working from 1919 to 1939. Lionel died in 1942, but some of the rhodys he planted didn't bloom until 10 years after his death. It was a real "labor of love". Upon his death, his son Edmund, inherited Exbury. Originally, he had no real interest in the Garden. He'd fought in WWII and saw horrid destruction of people and places. Then he came

home to the beauty and serenity of Exbury and found it very difficult NOT to contrast what he'd seen in war and what he now saw in peace. But, of course, he came to reconcile the two or otherwise Exbury might have been left in ruins.

When Exbury was first started, the main house was already there. The property also included greenhouses which were originally built to house orchids. As the Garden kept growing, Lionel established a "base" to house the "army" of men clearing the grounds and getting it ready for planting as well as doing the planting itself. In addition to all the ground planting, a huge rock garden was built, and that alone took 2 years to complete.

Exbury soon became "home" to all the new species of rhodys being discovered by the plant hunters, amongst them being the awesome Frank Kingdon Ward. He and fellow explorers roamed through China and surrounding countries in their search for new plants. They were some of the first English persons to be seen by the "natives" of those countries. Rhody seeds were carefully harvested to bring home for new plants and for hybridizing. Lionel used crosses with these new species to create famous hybrids. Altogether, he made about 1000 "crosses".

Lionel loved to compete in flower shows and amassed a very large collection of trophies. But since he could only keep each trophy a year (unless he won it again, of course), he had each trophy cast in silver so he could keep a "spendy" copy.

In case anyone was wondering, the whole of Exbury Garden is watered by a 20 mile underground watering system. Pretty advanced for those days.

Exbury Garden was converted to a charitable trust, to avoid taxes and to serve the public. It is open to the public from March through June....the rhody bloom time, of course.

For "Exbury Garden 2020" be sure to sign up for the Anniversary Convention. Lionel's grandson, also named Lionel, will be speaking at Friday night's banquet.

The video came to an end and we all thanked Keith for bringing it and for a taste of grandson Lionel de Rothschild's upcoming talk at the ARS National Convention in Portland/Vancouver.

We adjourned and went back to chatting and chewing . No raffle because once again no one brought anything to raffle off...bummer.

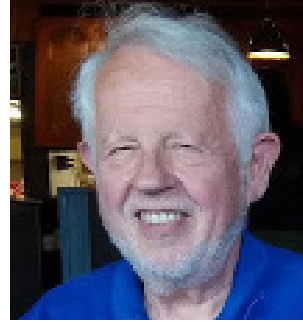
Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Crofts - Secretary - WCARS

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### **CHANGES TO THE FEBRUARY MEETING:**

**The February Meeting will take place on Monday February 17, not Wednesday, February 12. Those wishing to eat together will meet at the RAM Pub at 5:00pm, with the meeting following at 7:00pm at the home of Kathy and Wally Reed.**

## **February Program and Speaker:**



Robert (Bob) Zimmermann fell in love with rhododendrons over fifty years ago. He began propagating them on his kitchen stove and now grows species rhododendrons from seed in his greenhouse at Chimacum Woods on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Some 300 species populate the collection in

his garden, providing a reliable source of seed for the plants he makes available to gardeners in both the US and Canada.

Bob has traveled with botanists, five times to China, once to Tibet, once to Japan, and, most recently in the fall of 2017, a 13 day trip to the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh in NE India. He will share his experiences from that trip – and as he says "trips are only 1/3 botanical. They are also 1/3 cultural, 1/3 political and 1/3 spiritual. All are included in the presentation. Then there is the killing and eating the tackin - also included (at no extra charge)." Bob first joined the ARS as a member of the Portland Chapter in 1973 and is a past president of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden.

**Personal note from Keith White:** Bob was my tent mate in Tibet in 1997 and again in Sichuan in 2009. After the first encounter we became good friends and have seen each other often. I was immediately impressed with Bob in his ability to climb big rhododendron trees to gather seed. And with his willingness to fight his way through dense and sometimes stickered undergrowth to Both Bob and his wife, Beth Orling, are ordained Lutheran ministers. They were childhood sweethearts but went their separate ways, remarkably having independently arrived at their chosen professions. After the vicissitudes of life had left them both single in middle age, they got together again. Besides pastoring churches, Bob has been a hospital chaplain and for the past several years before he retired, a registered individual and family counselor. Bob and Beth Both work hard at and manage their nursery on 30 lovely acres in Port Ludlow, Washington. Bob and Beth jointly married Mary Ellen and me on October 18, 2016.

**Plants from Bob:** If you check out Bob Zimmermann's nursery website: [www.chimacumwoods.com](http://www.chimacumwoods.com), you can see what plants have been available. Just click on the plant name for more information. Bob's plants are very well grown and bigger than the usual specimens from

most nurseries. If you find a plant you would like, contact Bob with your wish list through the website or his email at: [robtrhododendron@gmail.com](mailto:robtrhododendron@gmail.com) for availability and pricing. Bob will make delivery at the February meeting. Also, Bob and Beth will be filling their van with a nice selection of their favorites (some seldom seen) and bringing them to our meeting. Since Salem is the first stop on their Oregon tour, our chapter members will have first choice.

**It's so pleasant** to have some color to dispel the dreariness of winter weather, even if it is viewed in the rain.



R rirei (subsection Argyrophylla) in our garden started blooming, as usual, in mid January. Always first to bloom, time varies depending on how cold the winter.

## 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](http://www.rhodies.org).

Ginny Mapes has been doing some great work on our FaceBook group. We have about 80 members and seem to be adding one or two a day. It would be great if we can encourage some of them to join in the fun either at the work day or staffing open days.

Thank You,  
Anne Gross & Dick Cavender

### American Rhododendron Society

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

20/20  
VISION



ARS75.org

Looking forward, reflecting back

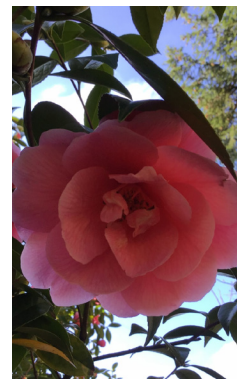
Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020



## ARS Spring International Convention Update

- Registrations have now surpassed **200**.
- Plant sale vendors are now listed at the website.
- The Post-Tour is **SOLD OUT**, with a wait-list being taken for a second bus. The current tally on all tours is available on the registration page.
- Room availability at the Heathman Lodge is already getting tight, so please reserve a.s.a.p.
- The Winter edition of JARS is out with a full convention insert and printed registration form; otherwise online registration and print options are available at the convention website.

Thanks again for the support.  
Steve McCormick



A few of the Spring Beauties at the Smith Garden from our "WCARS Road Trip" on March 30, 2019. As you can see, your assistance at the Spring Work Day makes for a beautiful display.

# Volunteers Do Not Necessarily Have the Time; They Have the



I am amazed at how quickly the open garden season is approaching for Smith Garden. We have only a couple of meetings before our first open weekend on April 4 & 5. So this is the time of the year that I start begging for volunteers to work at the Smith Garden on open garden days, selling plants and/or taking admissions. 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. There is Greer's Guide for back up. We are open to the public only 14 days out of 365. Please help me out and volunteer.

We only need 2 people a day minimum 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 maybe you could talk them into joining the Rhododendron Society. Bring a sack lunch if you like, munch cookies (yours) and enjoy the day. The garden is gorgeous in the spring.

Dick Cavendar

Please contact Anne Gross at [agross@teleport.com](mailto:agross@teleport.com) or Dick Cavender at 503-625-6331 [red@redsrhodies.com](mailto:red@redsrhodies.com)

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## Bob Grasing's Cyclamen on the Hillside

Bob Grasing had a large collection of cyclamen in his yard before he passed away last year. Recently, his house has been sold by Thuy Chrestenson of Bear Creek Nursery and Knipe Realty. Keith White was able to dig up quite a number of cyclamen before the sale. On January 13, 2020, Keith, Tom Bailey and Wally Reed planted them at the south end of the Rhododendron Hillside in Salem's Bush's Pasture Park

This was not the first planting of cyclamen on the Rhody Hillside by WCARS volunteers. About 6 years ago, Eldo Murphy, our WCARS' former Treasurer and Board Member's lawn was over run by cyclamen. He dug up many, and surreptitiously planted them all over the Rhody Hillside. The ones you see just now are all his contribution. Wander the Rhody Hillside trails and see the wonder of all the cyclamens. Come next Fall, come see the new additions from Bob Grasing's "collection".

Wally Reed

## The Chop

While exploring the famous gardens of Southern England this spring with a group from the Scottish Rhododendron Society we developed the term to describe what was needed of some mature rhododendrons.

Along the shaded paths of these beautiful gardens there were frequent mature plants that on the path side were a shamble of bare sticks and trunks. Not a pretty site. Usually the opposite side of the plant, that exposed to sun, looked great.

What is a solution for this? One can remove shade from trees or other shrubs, etc in order to give the bare side more sun. One can do nothing, which is what had been done for many years. Or one can administer "The Chop", meaning a radical cutting back to bring the whole plant back into the light and down to "human proportions" in order to allow the plant to grow new leaves and stems and flowers from the remaining plant.

Of course there are rhododendrons that should be left "as is" because they are such fine specimens. Sometimes these fine specimens are impinged upon by plants of lesser value. In that case the lesser valued plant should be given "The Chop" pruning or "The Nuclear Chop" by cutting it down. Or it could be given the "Lateral Chop" which means moving the lesser plant. However, in moving a lesser valued larger rhody, there needs to be some chopping done to remove lower limbs that may impinge on digging and some other limbs given that the root structure will be damaged in the move and thus unable to support the former full above ground foliage for a few years. No "Chop" on a plant being moved risks losing the whole plant due to malnutrition and dehydration.

I have become a fan of "The Chop" over the past few years. What follows are some pics and descriptions from my garden.

Keith White



Shady side of big Naomi(s)



Old Naomi(s) sunny side. Grown together.



Hard to judge where new growth will emerge. Can cut back the stubs later.



New growth at base of previously chopped Faggeters Favorite. The bare branches can be trimmed back.



Topsvoort Pearl 3 years after the chop

# A Blast from the Past

When I took over as newsletter editor, Dick Lundin gave me several CD's filled with newsletters dating back to 2007. It's been fascinating to read about past programs and speakers, to look at beautiful pictures - some being descriptive of a flower or garden, some containing an educational story, some describing a fantastic trip, etc. And I also discovered that most of you were members back then and just as involved as many of you still are today. This Chapter definitely has a long history! So I thought it might be interesting to "replay" one of those articles periodically and I will call it "A Blast from the Past". I also discovered how fortunate this group has been to have Dick Lundin as the newsletter editor for so many years.....

This article written by Dave Eckerdt, was published in the February 2009 newsletter. I think it's hilarious and found myself laughing out loud while reading. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

## CHOSEN ONE

By Dave Eckerdt

I'm not sure how we consented to opening our lives to inspection by question. A letter arrived in the mail announcing that we had been "selected to participate in an important consumer research study". Later the same day a knock at the door brought us an affable administrator who hand delivered 110 pages of questions in small print along with a promise of a token financial reward upon the completion of our appointed task.

The survey seemed a bit daunting, but we got a break right from the start, 14 of the pages directly addressed television preferences. Pat and I don't own a TV, we keep trying to save up for one so we can watch the Gardening channel, but we seem to end up spending the money on plants instead.

Most of the survey's questions were quite direct and left little room for nuance. I imagine this a bit like being on the witness stand and having the prosecutor ask you if you have quit your drug habit, yes or no. The result is that we must now be defined within some database as having preferences for or bias against products and services that indeed do not correctly reflect our true circumstances. After all, of the 110 pages of questions only 1/8 of one page directly addressed gardening, hardly proportionate to the percentage of time, money, and effort gardening consumes for Pat and I. I am happy to have this opportunity to set the record straight about some of these actual questions.

"Buying American Products is important to me." We recently purchased *Stachyurus praecox* 'Magpie', an arching winter flowering shrub that while less vigorous than the species adds as a bonus a distinct creamy margin

to the flat green leaf. The epithet "praecox" means very early or premature and Magpie produces racemes of long lasting pale yellow flowers before the leaves emerge. The plant is native to Japan, but it was acquired from Gossler Farms Nursery, certainly an American family business. Obviously this is a gray area if we want to respond truthfully to the intent of the question. This question would be more appropriate if it were addressed to a member of the Native Plant Society.

"Even if things look messy I know where everything is." This gave us a good laugh! As part of spring cleanup we decided to regain control of a rounded mass of *Aristolochia sempervirens*, a deciduous vine that is a host plant for swallowtail butterflies. Beneath the pile of silver foliage emerged a forgotten *Rhododendron hippophaeoides*, an open, spreading upright that was obviously itself a host for the clambering vine. *Hippophaeoides* grows to three feet in ten years and is one of the best and hardiest of the blue flowering rhodies, withstanding frost even while in flower. Welcome back, Hippo!

"I consider myself a thrill seeker." Of course, all gardeners are thrill seekers. Our pulse rates increase in anticipation each time we find a new catalog in the mailbox, each time we visit a nursery, and each time we step into a garden. We get little spurt of adrenalin that reinforces our self-awareness of how privileged we are to be dirt people.

"I tend to make impulse purchases." Yes, but not really. Pat and I recently visited Buchholz and Buchholz, a wholesale grower of woody wonders. We were well prepared before our visit with researched shopping list in hand. We are warned to avoid going to the grocery store when we are hungry because we will be prone to purchase unnecessary or even unhealthy items. But making an unanticipated plant purchase is not a whim like consuming a candy bar, the moment satisfying but the guilt lingering. It is rather like taking in a homeless cat. Even though the decision might be quickly made, we have over time developed an emotional predisposition for long-term commitments. So when I spotted *Torreya yunnanensis* 'Rock', an evergreen coniferous tree in the yew family, the immediate decision that I must have it, though I had never before heard of it, was indeed a reasonable action.

"How many days did you personally garden in the last 12 months?" This should significantly skew their bell curve. I am a gardener most every day. I doubt the writers of this question were gardeners themselves. The question has a statistical coldness the completely misses the sense of what gardening is all about. Calluses, dirty knees, and cracked fingernails may be byproducts of gardening, but so too are serenity, joy and wonder. Contemplation from a garden bench is as much a part of gardening as is planting and propagating. Our garden surrounds our home and is entwined with our lives. The pure enjoy-

ment I find within our garden dramatically reduces the number of days I might otherwise need to spend in therapy, and even as I wandered disheartened amongst the battered remains of this winter's ice storm, the garden exuded a calmness that said we are still here and we will heal together.

The survey had detailed questions on almost every conceivable consumable, but omitted any mention of birdseed, an item of significant expense for us. We take great pleasure in the number and diversity of birds visiting our garden. We stock oiled sunflower seed for the nuthatch and chickadees, thistle for the goldfinch, suet for the wrens and woodpeckers, nectar for the hummers, peanuts for the jays, cracked corn for the quail, doves, and other ground feeders. I don't know how the survey folks could have missed an area of this importance, but then their headquarters is in Ohio. I know the cardinal is the state bird of Ohio, but maybe it is like the state governor and there is only one of them.

Another area of survey neglect was expenditure for garden art. Art in the garden, like a good conifer, gives the garden as a whole a sense of continuity that helps offset the transitory blooms and deciduous foliage. Art is given prominence in our garden and greenbacks are spent both for purchase-and-place art as well as for the materials for Pat's own creations.

There were many questions about cars but nothing about garden tractors. Questions about a clothing budget failed to address our over allocation for garden gloves. I would guess that our use of Ben gay and Icy Hot is also greater than for most responders. Questions were posed about a potential predilection for romance novels but we were given no possibility of praising our favorite publisher, Timber Press. Similarly we were given the unnecessary opportunity to acknowledge readership of *The National Review* but no chance to claim *Pacific Horticulture*. We were asked if we were members of the NRA, the AAA, or the AARP, but nothing about membership in that thorny group, the Rose Society.

I think in future I would do best to keep my opinions to myself rather than attempting to explain them on a scale of 1 to 10 or with a #2 pencil mark carefully placed within the confines of a printed circle.

## 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

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## 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	<a href="http://arswillamette.com">arswillamette.com</a>
Eugene Chapter	<a href="http://eugene-chapter-ars.org">eugene-chapter-ars.org</a>
Portland Chapter	<a href="http://rhodies.org">rhodies.org</a>
Suislaw Chapter	No current website
Tualatin Valley	<a href="http://tualatinvalleyars.org">tualatinvalleyars.org</a>

All other web sites can be found on [rhododendron.org](http://rhododendron.org)

Under "chapters" under web sites

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## ARS BULLETINS are available online at:

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

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## WILLAMETTE CHAPTER OFFICERS

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