



# Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Fall Newsletter: September 2016

## Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar

- **September 25, 2016** – Chapter Picnic, Cabin John Regional Park
- **October 29, 2016** – PVC Banquet and Speaker, Normandie Farm

## Some Regional Activities of Note

- **September 9-11, 2016** – MAC Fall Meeting, Pipestem, WV
- **September 17, 2016** – NV-ASA Auction, Kirkwood, Prysby. Church
- **September 29, 2016 – Oct. 2** – ARS Western Regional, Newport, OR
- **October 15, 2016** – Mason-Dixon Ch. Banquet, Westminster, MD

## Chapter Officers

**President:** Dan Neckel  
vaneckel@verizon.net  
**Vice President:** Ginny Mohr  
rngmohr@msn.com  
**Treasurer:** Phyllis Rittman  
prittman@erols.com

## Chapter Picnic!

**When: Sunday, September 25, 2016**

**1:00 - 5:00 PM**

**Where: Cabin John Regional Park**

**Bethesda, MD**

**Picnic Shelter K**

We have changed the venue for our Chapter Picnic to Cabin John Regional Park this year. It has a nice picnic shelter with charcoal grill, and there is no entry fee!

We will be in **Shelter K**. As before, the chapter will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, buns, and condiments. We ask people to please bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share. We will have a short business meeting to elect officers that afternoon. We will also have a plant exchange, so bring an extra plant or two to trade.

The location of the park is convenient but there are two entries. If you follow the address that is frequently listed, 7400 Tuckerman Lane, Rockville, MD, you have to wind through the park to find our shelter. The entry off of Westlake Drive is very close to Shelter K. We provide directions below but if you want to use GPS, try entering **10690 Westlake Drive, Bethesda, MD**. It will get you near to the park entry point. The park is very close to Westfield Montgomery Mall, too.

### Directions from the South:

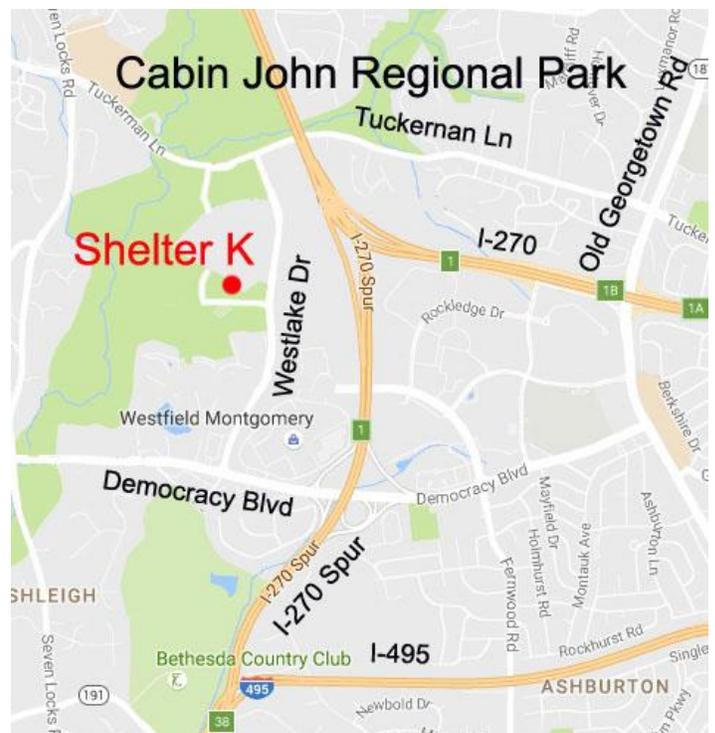
1. Take I-494 to the I-270 Spur
2. In 0.9 miles, Take Exit #1 onto Democracy Boulevard West (keep left on the exit ramp)
3. In 0.5 miles, turn Right on Westlake Drive
4. In about 0.5 miles, turn Left into the Park.

### Directions from the East:

1. Take I-495 to I-270 North toward Frederick
2. In 1.3 miles, take Exit 1A, Old Georgetown Rd
3. In 0.4 miles, turn Left on Tuckerman Lane
4. In 1.3 miles, turn Left onto Westlake Drive
5. In about 0.5 miles, turn Right into the Park



Photo: Norman Beaudry



Map of Cabin John Regional Park Access

# The Future of the White Garden

## *We need your help to fight the Deer!*

On June 2, the Fairfax County Park Authority held a meeting about future plans for the John C. and Margaret K. White Gardens. Margaret had made arrangements to transfer her 13-acre property in Falls Church to the Park Authority. She died on January 6, 2010, a few months prior to her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday. It then became a park.

In 2012, Fairfax County passed a bond referendum allocating \$500,000 for planning and improvements to the property. They introduced their plans at the meeting and requested input. Some items discussed included:

- Preservation/Documentation of existing gardens
- Irrigation System Installation
- Repair of existing entrance to park
- Re-establishment of natural surface trails
- Meadow Restoration
- Invasive Species Management

Details about the county's plans are online:

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/white-park.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/white-park.htm)

Since there was no mention of deer control, I did raise the issue. My garden has been devastated by the deer in the past 3 years and we see more damage at the White Garden every season. Uncontrolled, deer could destroy the White Garden in just a few years.

Penny Gross, the County Supervisor from the Mason District, said that some neighbors complained about bow hunting so they discontinued the practice. At this point, there are no plans for deer control. Since many others at the meeting seemed to share my concern, Penny said that people should contact her this fall and make their wishes known. Now is the time!!

She explained that they use various methods for deer control in other parks. This fall, they will decide which parks will be protected and what methods will be used. Bow hunting is effective, but they can also set up an elevated stand with sharpshooters using night vision technology. She said that method was actually more humane than bow hunting since the kill is immediate. It is also safe since they shoot toward the ground. I want them to sit on my deck and practice!



**AFTER DEER: The Hyatt Garden in May of 2016**

Please consider contacting Penny Gross this fall to tell her how important deer control is for the White Garden. If the deer defoliate the large rhododendrons even once, they rarely come back. The more people who call for deer control, the better chance we have.

There are several options: write a letter, call her office, or send an email. Here is her contact info:

**Penelope A. "Penny" Gross**

**Mason District Supervisor**

**Mason District Governmental Center**

**6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003**

**Phone: 703-256-7717, TTY 711**

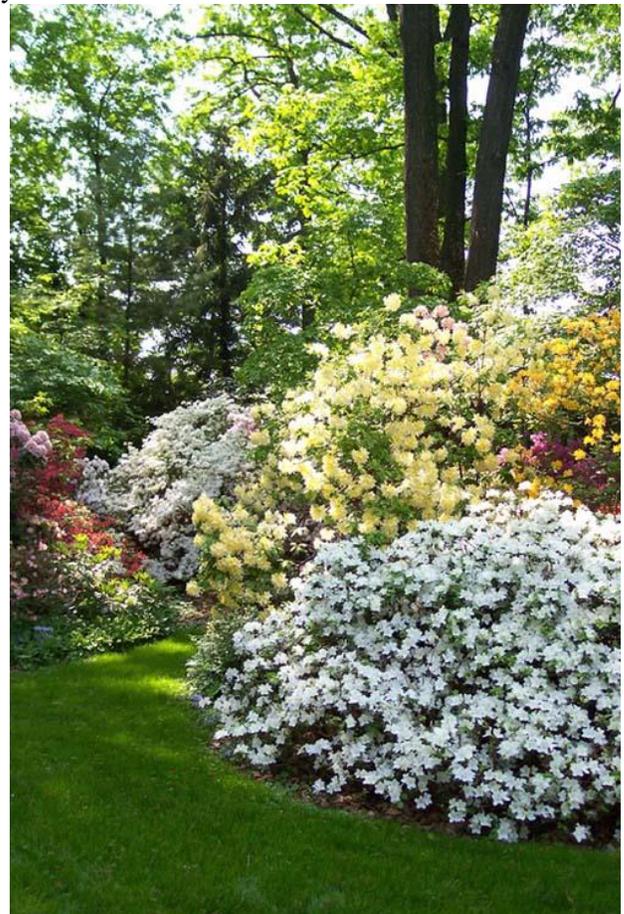
**Fax: 703-354-8419**

[mason@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mason@fairfaxcounty.gov)

## *The Reality of Deer Damage!*

The picture directly below is a vista in my garden taken prior to the 2009 ASA Convention tour. The picture to its left shows what that same planting looked like this spring. I did give Penny Gross copies of these images at the meeting when I warned of deer damage.

The deer population in McLean has exploded. They defoliated most of my azaleas and rhododendrons up to a height of 6 feet. Much damage is permanent and plants will not recover, but my garden would have been destroyed anyway when my house is sold and replaced by a McMansion. We can save the White Garden!



**BEFORE DEER: The Hyatt Garden in May of 2008**

## Remembering Donald H. Voss

November 6, 1922 – August 12, 2016

By Donald W. Hyatt

I had planned an article about our hiking trips in this issue but decided to postpone that so I could reflect on the life of Donald Hagen Voss. Don passed away on August 12 at the age of 93. He was more than just a good friend for over 40 years. He was a mentor, and an invaluable resource to me and many others. Don had a remarkable life.

The more I got to know Don, the more impressed I was with his intellect and depth of knowledge. It seemed to span all disciplines. Don had an air of authority but he did not try to intimidate. He never sought praise since the truly brilliant do not need such validation. I can still remember Don's humility as we presented him with the ARS Gold Medal in June of 2010 (photo below). The tribute on his plaque only hints at Don's lifetime of achievement and service:

*For decades you have been a recognized authority on flower color, taxonomy and nomenclatural issues in the genus Rhododendron. Through your selfless volunteer efforts and willingness to share your specialized knowledge, you have benefited botanists and horticulturalists worldwide, which will have an impact for years to come. You are a prolific author who has written for the ARS Journal and many other prestigious publications. Your meticulous attention to detail, keen intellect and analytical skills have been appreciated in many ways, as District Director, technical reviewer, curator of herbarium specimens and advisor for many plant registrations. For these and many other lasting contributions you have made to the Society's goals, the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to present the Gold Medal to Donald H Voss.*



A Life Member of the ARS and a highly respected leader, Don served as president of our chapter and he was president of the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA, too. He served simultaneously as our District IX Director and also a National Director for the ASA.



Don could instantly see the big picture but at the same time he noticed every detail and could pick up any inconsistencies. That skill made him a valuable reviewer for both the ARS Research and Editorial Committees where he served for decades. I think he proofread almost every article I wrote for the ARS.

Professionally, Don was an economist. He attended Princeton University, earning a BS in Public Affairs (1947) and MS in Economics (1949). He did interrupt his studies to serve in the U.S. Army during World War II. Don reached the rank of Captain by 1946, but then shifted to reserve status to continue his education. In 1970, he retired from the Army reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel.

After receiving his degrees, Don taught economics at Princeton until 1952. He then became an Associate Professor at Bucknell University until 1961. In 1952, Don married Betty (Elizabeth) Anne Gartrell who was an illustrator. They had one son, Donald Jr., in 1954.

Don's father-in-law was Robert Gartrell, the hybridizer of the Robin Hill Azaleas. Of course, Don's favorite Robin Hill was 'Betty Anne Voss'.



'Betty Anne Voss'

Photo: Donald H. Voss

In 1961, Don accepted a position with the Central Intelligence Agency and moved his family to Vienna, VA. He became an Economic Intelligence Officer for the CIA where he could apply his skills in data analysis in support of national security issues. Don was honored for his work at the CIA and had become a Division Director prior to his retirement in 1988.

Don was a prolific writer. He authored 37 articles in the *ARS Journal* and co-authored one other. He wrote profusely for the *Azalean* and other professional journals, too. Always the teacher, his articles typically had a strong educational component that might clarify some technical issue, such as why *R. cumberlandense* is no longer called *R. bakeri*. Don was a noted authority in colorimetry, taxonomy and botanical nomenclature. He made significant contributions in the field of standardization of color.

I worked with Don over the years on a number of projects. One motivation was that it gave us an excuse to regularly meet for lunch. An early project was a website about the Robin Hill Azaleas. Don had already finished registering all of his father-in-law's hybrids and had written a number of articles about the Robin Hills. The website would be a source for online documentation and included many more images, detailed descriptions, and hybridizer notes.

More recently, Don and I worked on a PowerPoint program about Rhododendron Registration. He provided the technical expertise and I did the programming and tried to gather photographs to help illustrate the concepts. There were sections about appropriate name selection, the registration process, botanical terms, and how to use the various color charts to evaluate a color accurately. That program is available through the ARS Store. ([www.arsstore.org](http://www.arsstore.org))

Don was a selfless person and a frequent volunteer. His record at the U.S. National Arboretum will not likely ever be matched. For 29 years, he volunteered several days a week at the Herbarium. He was honored many times for most volunteer service and probably exceeded 8000 hours over the years.

In one of his early Herbarium projects on the Glenn Dale Azaleas, he collated extensive floral and foliage specimens, literature descriptions, and photographs.

A tertiary author for another major USNA project, Don directed the final editing and publication of a 330-page document titled, *A Catalog of Cultivated Woody Plants of the Southeastern United States* (Collection No. 7). He even wrote a database to assist with analysis since the study involved more than 14,000 herbarium specimens, field notes, and photographs.



**Don Voss at the Arboretum** Photo: Barbara Bullock

Naturally, Don checked every rhododendron in the Herbarium to make sure that the thousands of specimens were properly described with any name changes up to date. He also rechecked approximately 4000 entries in the Arboretum's Type Specimen and Horticultural Standards Collections. That study involved extensive literature searches. Don even ran the Herbarium for more than a year when the Collections Manager position was vacant.

Don was a private person and did live alone. He had no immediate family since his wife passed away in 1969 and his son died in 2008. His friends in the horticulture world had become his family.

Don would have been 94 on November 6. In recent years, he had become a bit shaky and used a cane, but he never lost his independence and was mentally sharp to the end. He continued to drive himself to the Arboretum through congested rush hour traffic two days week to continue his work at the Herbarium.

On Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, an incident that Don would refer to as "stupid mistake" led to his demise. While doing laundry in his basement, he reached for something and fell. He was unable to get up and had no way to contact anyone. It wasn't until Wednesday that he was discovered by his cleaning lady.

Don was weak, dehydrated, and bruised from failed attempts to get upright. They took him to Fairfax Hospital for a stay to stabilize him, and later moved him to a nursing facility. We thought he was on the mend, but sadly, Don developed aspiration pneumonia and that took his life in just a few days.

I visited Don a number of times while he was in the hospital. I shared photographs from recent mountain hikes and images of unusual native azaleas or rhododendrons we had seen. A few days before he got pneumonia, Karel Bernady and I stopped by to see

him. It would be my final visit. I brought images of all the variations of *R. minus* we have seen in the wild. Don was very interested in that species and had written two articles about it for the ARS Journal in 2014.

The dwarf purple *R. minus* var. “smokianum” fascinated Don. It covers the top of Mount LeConte but has a very small footprint in the wild. Don warned that it may be unique enough to be a separate species, but he said it was very important for us to formally describe that plant.

Then Don changed the subject. He thanked us for our friendship over so many years. He also wanted to say how important our field work in documenting native plants has been. Of course, we shared our mutual admiration of Don. It reminded me of some talks I had with my late mother the week before she passed. Yes, Don was saying goodbye.

Many people in our chapter asked about Don’s final arrangements. As one could probably predict, he asked that there be no funeral or memorial service. He just wanted to be cremated and buried with his wife and son.

Don’s passing made me realize how important it is to tell people how much they mean to you while they are living rather than wait for the eulogy. That is why I am so grateful I had those final moments with Don. He was an exceptional man and we will miss him, but he has left us a wonderful legacy. Thank you, Don!

**In the Next Issue: Mountain Hikes in 2016**

After the convention this year, some of us took off for a June trip to Roan Mountain (pictured below) and other places to admire the rhododendrons and native azaleas in bloom. We were greeted by some of the best bloom we have ever seen and glorious weather.

In July, George McLellan and I joined others for a trip to the Mount Mitchell area to see *R. maximum* and check on the “Red Max.” Then we headed south to join a larger group at Providence Canyon, GA, and Callaway Gardens to admire the *R. prunifolium*.



*R. calendulaceum* on Roan Mountain

**Dues Are Due!**

With this issue of your newsletter, we are also sending your 2016 renewal notice and an envelope. Please return your payment to our Treasurer, Phyllis Rittman and make checks payable to:

**Potomac Valley Chapter ARS**

Membership categories:

Category	Cost
<b>Regular</b> - (one or two people in the same household)	<b>\$40</b>
<b>Commercial / Corporate</b>	<b>\$90</b>
<b>Sustaining</b>	<b>\$75</b>
<b>Sponsoring</b>	<b>\$150</b>
<b>Student</b> – (under age 25) Access to online Journal only	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Life Member – Single</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>Life Member – Family</b>	<b>\$1500</b>
<b>Associate</b> – must already belong to another ARS Chapter	<b>\$10</b>

Mail renewals to our treasurer:

**Phyllis T. Rittman, Treasurer**  
**prittman@erols.com**

**More Sad News: Harry Dewey**

We recently learned that another one of our Life Members in the ARS has passed away. Harry Dewey died in February of this year. He was active in many plant societies but we haven’t seen him in recent years as he was incapacitated by a stroke. Harry was a leader in applying digital technologies to the plant world.

**Azalea Sale and Auction: NV-ASA**

**Date:** Saturday, September 17, 1:00 – 4:00 PM

**Location:** Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

8336 Carleigh Parkway, Springfield, VA 22152

Our friends in the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA are having their annual sale and auction of rare and unusual azalea varieties. The Daylily Society will have some plants for sale, too. For more information, contact Carolyn Beck at 703-860-5676.



# Potomac Valley Chapter ARS – 2016 Fall Banquet “Rhododendrons Are Like Chrysanthemums”

by Richard Murcott

**When: Saturday, October 29, 2016 12:00 Noon - 4:00 PM**

**Where: Normandie Farm Restaurant  
10710 Falls Road, Potomac, MD 20854**

**Price: \$45.00 per person**

**Registration Deadline:  
10/24/ 2016**

**Menu Choice: Chicken Piccata, Grilled Salmon, or Vegetarian**

We are returning to Normandie Farm for our banquet this year. It is a rustic French restaurant in Potomac, MD, and entrée choices include Chicken Piccata, Grilled Atlantic Salmon, or a Vegetarian Platter. The dinner includes all the amenities as well as their famous hot golden popovers and homemade cheesecake with strawberries and chocolate drizzle. For more about Normandie Farm, check out their website: [www.popovers.com](http://www.popovers.com)

## **Our Speaker: Dick Murcott**

This year our speaker will be Dick Murcott from Long Island, NY. Dick has been a noted hybridizer for probably 50 years or more, and his garden was featured at the 1978 ARS Convention and also at the 2009 ARS Convention. One of the most entertaining speakers in the ARS, Dick is very witty, extremely knowledgeable, and incredibly enthusiastic. He has a rare oratory gift that few can match so expect to be completely captivated as he weaves a masterful presentation about rhododendrons.

*Please fill out and return the form below to our Treasurer, Phyllis Rittman with payment to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS  
Phyllis Rittman: [prittman@erols.com](mailto:prittman@erols.com)*



## **PVC Fall 2016 Banquet Registration Form “Rhododendrons Are Like Chrysanthemums” Saturday October 29, 2016**

**Registration Deadline  
Monday, October 24, 2016  
Mail to: Phyllis Rittman,**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print the name of each attendee below, and circle the entrée choice  
(**Chicken:** Chicken Piccata or **Fish:** Grilled Salmon or **Veg:** Vegetarian)

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Fish Veg
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Fish Veg
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Fish Veg
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken Fish Veg

No. of attendees \_\_\_\_\_ x \$45.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_ Total Make checks to: **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS**

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter  
Donald W. Hyatt, Editor  
[Don@donaldhyatt.com](mailto:Don@donaldhyatt.com)