

June 18 Message to Members

Chapter Members,

My monthly email is a little late this month since **Susan** and I just got back from a month in Germany and Finland. While we saw many things, the highlight of the trip was our attendance at the **American Rhododendron Society (ARS) Convention** in Bremen, Germany and a follow on trip to Finland to visit gardens in that country. The Bremen Convention was outstanding. We had a large number of **Azalea Society of America (ASA)** members attending, including members from the **Northern Virginia Chapter**. Besides **Susan** and me, we were accompanied by



Bremen Rathaus (City Hall)

Dave and **Leslie Nanney**, **Dave Banks**, **Richard** and **Ginny Mohr**, **Don Hyatt** (who was the banquet keynote speaker), **Laura Grant** and **Robert Remik**, **Larry Miller** and **Ann (ARS President)** and **Bill Mangels**. We saw some fantastic gardens and nurseries, met wonderful representatives from the 18 countries in attendance and enjoyed what seemed to be an unlimited amount of delicious German food and drink. I have included some additional information and pictures at the end of this email and will be writing a more detailed article for a future issue of **The Azalean**.

Ayr Garden Club Plant Sale 12 May-

This was the first time the chapter participated in this sale and it was extremely successful. We sold 76 plants for a total of \$1,025.00, beating the sales for the each of the first three Green Spring sales (2013, 2014, 2015). We hope to participate again next year. Thanks go to **Paul** and **Carolyn Beck** and **Fred Newlan** for conducting the sale.

Green Spring Garden (GSG) Plant Sale 19 May -

Due to the extremely wet weather we were having in May as well as the bad forecast for the weekend of the GSG sale, we did not participate in the sale this year. The result is that we have a large number of plants available for sale. These may be viewed at www.nv-asa/sale. If you would like to purchase any of these plants, please contact **Carolyn Beck** at carolyn.f.beck@gmail.com or phone 703-860-5676.

White's Nursery Open House 20 May -

Chapter members **Mike** and **Debbie White** held their annual spring open house on 20 May. It is always enjoyable to visit their nursery and see the beautiful plants they have available for sale at reasonable prices. This year, Associate Member **Fred Newlan** had a membership table at the open house. The **Ben Morrison Chapter** was selling half year memberships for the **ASA Ben Morrison Chapter** and associate memberships in the **Northern Virginia Chapter**. New members received a plant upon joining. This resulted in 11 new members for the ASA. Our thanks go to **Fred** and the **Ben Morrison Chapter** for this very successful initiative. We'd like to welcome the following new associate members -

Cecile Benigni, Brookeville, MD
Nettie Bernady, Hedgesville, WV
Patricia Busche, Gaithersburg, MD

Niels Cordes, Baltimore, MD
Bonnie Kramer, Brookeville, MD
Emilie Larson, Vienna, VA
Ute O'Neal, Potomac, MD
Bill and Linda Pinkham, Carrollton, VA (we visited their garden as part of the 2016 Williamsburg convention)
Michael Rhoads, Barnesville, MD
John Rohde, Towson, MD
Debra Wertheimer, Baltimore, MD

We hope to get the opportunity to welcome them in person at a future chapter event.

Smoky Mountain Hikes 10 to 19 June -

Each year **Don Hyatt** and **George McLellan** put together a series of hikes in the **Smoky Mountains** to view native azaleas and rhododendron. I have participated in portions of this program for the last several years and can tell you that you will view some beautiful native azaleas and rhododendron in addition to experiencing some breathtaking mountain vistas. In addition, you will be accompanied by some of the best azalea and rhododendron experts in the society.



Calendulaceum on Roan Mountain

This year's hikes are scheduled from 10 to 19 June. These hikes are open to all society members. You may participate in any or all of the hikes. I have attached more information, including points of contact and lodging suggestions, to the email forwarding this message. I have also attached Associate Member (and ASA Vice President) **Charlie Andrews'** article on last year's hikes which appeared in the Spring 18 issue of **The Azalean**. This year's schedule for the hikes is built around the **Graham County Azalea Festival** detailed below.

Graham County Azalea Festival 15-16 June -

Many of our members have participated in the **Hooper Bald** restoration project over the past several years. The nearest town to **Hooper Bald** is Robbinsville, NC in Graham County. The county will be holding their **First Annual Azalea Festival** on 15-16 June. I will be presenting Robbinsville with the **Azalea City** designation as well as recognizing individual participants for their contributions with the **ASA Distinguished Service Award**. A highlight of the festival will be trips up to **Hooper Bald**. If you want to see some spectacular native azaleas, come join us. I have attached a flyer to the email forwarding this message giving more information.

Ben Morrison Chapter Cutting Exchange 30 June -

The **Ben Morrison Chapter** is extending an invitation to **Northern Virginia Chapter** members to attend their cutting exchange and plant auction on 30 June. Below is the text from their invitation.

Everyone is invited to the **Ben Morrison Chapter** yearly cutting exchange and plant auction on June 30th. Also on that same date, you are invited to **Gerry & Faith Bange's** garden.

The cutting exchange will be at the home of **Carol Segree**, 1806 Huntcreek Run, Gambrills, MD 21035, starting at Noon. This meeting will be a "pot luck" luncheon, cutting exchange, plant auction and lots of good conversation. **Please let Budne know if you are coming and if you have any questions.** We will also have a demonstration by Barry Sperling on how to root azalea cuttings.

On the way to this meeting, many ASA members will stop off about 10:30 AM (or any time after 9:00 AM) to visit the garden of **Gerry & Faith Bange**, 3508 Foxhall Drive, Davidsonville, MD 21035. **Gerry** and **Faith** are fantastic gardeners that are ASA members but specialize in daylilies.

Budne's contact information:
budne@aol.com, 301-946-4815 home, 301-943-4357 cell

Farewell and Thanks -

Unfortunately we have to bid farewell to **Barbara** and **John Kirkwood**. They are heading down under for at least two years in Canberra, Australia.

Barb has done a wonderful job as our chapter president for the last two years..often ably assisted by **John**. I also want to personally thank **Barb** for her contributions on the **ASA Board of Directors**. It was a pleasure working with her. We wish them both safe travels and a wonderful time down under and look forward to their return to the area.

Vice President **Lars Larson** will fill the remainder of **Barb's** term as president.

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Below is the schedule for 2018. As always, events will be added (and rarely deleted) throughout the year:

Date	Event	Organization	Location
June 10-19	Smoky Mountain Hikes	ASA/ARS	Various – see event flyer
June 14-16	Graham County 2018 Azalea Festival	Graham County, NC	Robbinsville, NC
June 30 12-4pm	Cutting Exchange	Ben Morrison - ASA	Home of Carol Segree , 1806 Huntcreek Run, Gambrills, MD 21035
July 15 1-5pm	Cutting Exchange	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Sep 15	Auction/Sale	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Oct 20	Executive Committee	NV-ASA	TBD

	Meeting		
Oct 21 1-5 pm	Fall Meeting w Speaker	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Dec 9	Holiday Social	NV-ASA	Beck's Home

Other Activities/Notes –

Miscellaneous –

Photos for *The Azalea Clipper*/Facebook – Barry is looking for pictures of your garden to share with other members on our chapter **Facebook** page and in the *Clipper*. Now is the time to show off a little. Send your pictures to **Barry** at bsperling@cox.net.

We are also always looking for articles for *The Azalea Clipper*. They don't have to be long and can be on any azalea related subject (e.g., gardens (public or private), hybridizers, companion plants etc.). Pictures are also always appreciated. Please consider writing an article. Contact **Barry** if you have any questions bsperling@cox.net or 703-765-7062. *Clipper* articles can also be the basis for later submissions to *The Azalean* (see below).

The Azalean – The editors of *The Azalean* depend on member submissions of articles of interest to the general **ASA** membership. If you have an article to share, send it to them at theazalean@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged and should be at least 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi.

Speakers – We continue to strive to provide speakers on topics of interest to our members. If you have heard, or are otherwise aware of, speakers who might be of interest to our chapter, please contact **Lars Larson** at lars.larson@cox.net or (703) 277-3441.

There are a couple of opportunities to view azaleas in the Smoky Mountains this month. I encourage you to seriously consider participating. I think you will find them very enjoyable.

Rick

Attachment – International Rhododendron Convention – Bremen Germany

American Rhododendron Society (ARS) 2018 Convention – Bremen, Germany

This year the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) held their annual convention in conjunction with the Deutsche Rhododendron Gesellschaft (DRG)(the German equivalent of the ARS) in Bremen, Germany. Those who attended the convention also had the opportunity to extend their trip with a series of pre-tours to the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and/or a post tour to Finland. There were 176 attendees from 18 countries.

The convention was held at the Swisshotel, Bremen, a modern hotel just steps from the old center city of Bremen. Most convention attendees arrived on Sunday, May 20. The ARS held their board meeting on Monday so many of us had free time on Sunday and Monday to explore the city of Bremen. It was also a holiday weekend so the town was full of tourists and locals. To top it off, we had beautiful sunny weather.

The official registration occurred Monday evening, followed by a reception and then an official welcome from the president of the DRG, Dr. Andre-Michael Schultz, ARS President Ann Mangels and ARS Vice President Ken Webb. The evening was capped off by a delicious dinner of German specialties.

Tuesday was a day of presentations. The theme of all of the presentations given at the convention was "From the wild...into our life: Finding Rhododendrons." The presentations this day focused on the origins of rhododendrons in the wild. A number of renowned individuals in the horticulture field gave us interesting presentations dealing with the different varieties of azaleas across the planet and stories about the discovery of these varieties. A large number of the species came from Asia and it seemed that all of the trips to collect the specimens involved roughing it and leeches. We can be thankful to those who have made these trips and returned with the plant material and some beautiful photos.

That evening we went to the Rathaus (city hall), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where we were welcomed by Senator Dr. Joachim Lohse, Senator for the Environment, Construction and Transport of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. The welcome was in a beautiful hall which dated back to the 1400's. After the welcome, we had a wonderful buffet dinner in the Ratskeller restaurant in the basement of city hall.



Meeting Room of the City Hall



Dinner in the Ratskeller

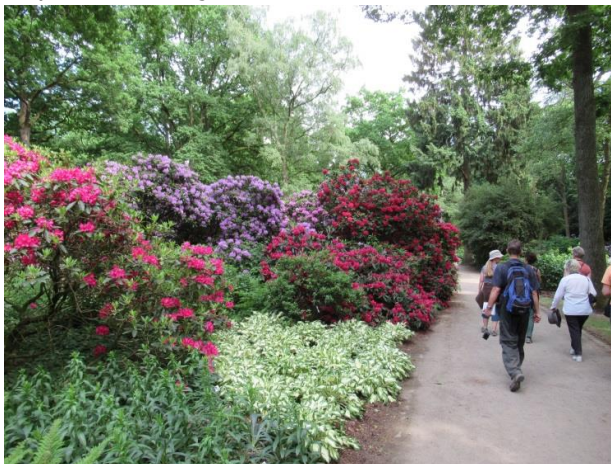
Wednesday we hit the road heading towards Ammerland, the rhododendron growing area of Germany. We visited the Van der Berk nursery first. They raise their plants in the ground rather than in pots and the plants they sell are mainly to landscapers so they are much larger than those found in garden shops. They attempted to load a number of us on a device to lift us up into the air for a better view of the rhododendron fields, however once we were up in the air, the device malfunctioned (I guess we exceeded the maximum weight limit). They eventually



Dave Nanney offering to catch me if I jump

which mainly serves garden shops. We had a tour of the garden by Sabine zu Jeddelloh and then they had a train (on wheels) take us for a tour of the nursery operation.

Thursday started with a guided tour of the city of Bremen. While most of us had been to the city earlier in the week, the knowledgeable guides helped us in understanding the city's history and importance. At the end of the tour, we boarded busses to take us to the Bremen Rhododendron Garden. As its name implies, its major focus is rhododendron



Walking through the Bremen Rhododendron Garden

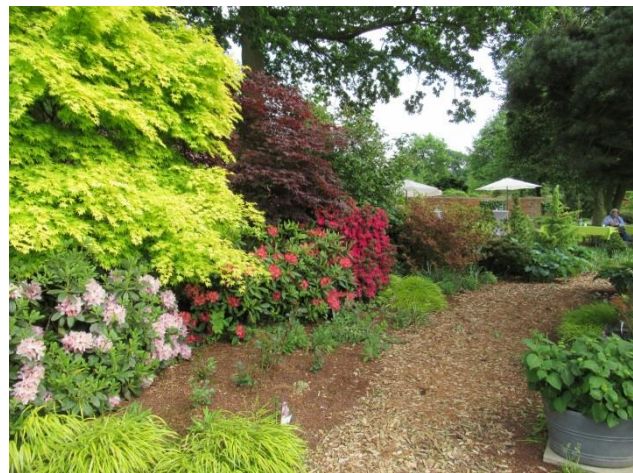
after dinner talk on "The Crazy World of Rhododendrons" given by Don Hyatt. It was informative and entertaining, as Don's presentations normally are. It also introduced "Bubba" the deer who destroyed his deer fence, to a whole new international audience.

Saturday we headed up to the Ammerland region again, stopping at the Shroeder Nursery in Wiefelstede first. Our visit started with a welcome by the Managing Director, Timo Schroeder, who explained that the nursery's focus was producing plants with a strong root

brought another piece of equipment over to rescue the 12 of us enjoying the view.

Our next stop was the Park Der Gaerten (Park of the Gardens) in Bad Zwischenahn. This is an extensive park with separate areas (gardens) with different themes and plants. They have an extensive area dedicated to rhododendron and azaleas.

We ended the day at the zu Jeddelloh home and nursery. Their beautiful home garden also serves as a display garden for their nursery,



zu Jeddelloh Garden

(and azaleas), though other companion plants are also on display. While the season was a little early this year due to unseasonably warm weather, there were plenty of plants at peak bloom. The garden is well laid out and the plants very well marked. The day was broken up into three tour periods where you could take three of the five tours offered. The day ended with another sumptuous meal in the Botanika.

Friday was another day of presentations. These focused on the second portion of the theme "into our life: Using Rhododendrons." The talks highlighted the use of rhododendrons in gardens. That evening was our gala banquet. Again, we were treated to delicious food and drink and an



Touring Schroeder's Nursery

structure. To do this, they take plants with the characteristics desired by the customer and graft them to hearty root stock, using "Cunningham's White." This enables them to provide hearty plants...even in varieties which normally do not have a robust root system. He also gave us a quick demonstration of their grafting process.

After the demonstration, we all loaded onto tractor pulled trailers for a hay ride through the nursery operation.

After a delicious lunch break of German sausage, pork steak and potatoes, served at the nursery, we headed off to the Bruns

Nursery in Bad Zwischenahn. We started by having a guided tour through their widespread nursery operation while remaining on our busses. The Bruns Nursery focuses on trees, topiaries and shrubs such as rhododendrons and azaleas.

After our overview, we got onto trailers again for a hay ride through the high end of their inventory. We saw a large number of very mature, high quality plants. These plants, used by landscapers for well heeled customers could sell for € 20,000 (\$24,000).



High End Topiary in Bruns Nursery

We then proceeded through their rhododendron park with over 1000 species of rhododendron and azaleas (the word "hobby" was used to describe the garden) which is open to the public. This was an extremely impressive garden by any standard. This ride ended at the park pavilion where they had set up a sumptuous banquet for us with more German food, beer and wine. To top it off, they had a German Oom-pah band. It was a wonderful

evening with beautiful weather, good friends and good food.



Final Dinner at the Bruns Nursery

The visit to Bruns Nursery was the last event in a memorable convention. The convention organizers, led by Dr. Hartwig Schepker, Director of the Bremen Rhododendron Park, his staff, volunteers from the various branches of the ARS and the nursery and garden owners could not have done a better job of planning and hosting this convention. They certainly set the bar extremely high and excelled in their Gastfreundschaft (hospitality). It truly was a once in a lifetime experience.

NOTE: A more extensive article on the convention will be in the Fall 18 issue of ***The Azalean***.