

Dr. Charles McComb, the Colonial Virginia Chapter of the Holly Society of America, and the Newly Named Charles McComb Scholarship for Nature Camp Students.

March 28, 2015, CVC meeting talk by Sandra F. McDonald, Ph.D.

If it weren't for Charles McComb there would be no Colonial Virginia Chapter of HSA. Charles' passing on January 1, 2015, was a reminder to the board that Charles should be honored. At its January 11, 2015, meeting the CVC board named our ongoing scholarship for a Nature Camp student in memory of Dr. Charles McComb. The board has been giving some support to Nature Camp students for at least 10 years, but we did not have a specific name for the project.

Nature Camp is a private, nonprofit, residential, coed summer camp specializing in nature and environmental science education, and is one of the oldest of its kind in the country, dating back to 1942. It is for boys and girls in the 5th to 12th grades and is located in Vesuvius, Virginia.

I quote from the Nature Camp web site:

"Nestled in an isolated, idyllic valley by Big Mary's Creek in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Rockbridge County, Nature Camp is founded on the principle that no one can be expected to save the world who doesn't care about the world, and no one can be expected to care about the natural world who doesn't know about and understand it.

"We seek to foster an appreciation for and love of nature by inviting the campers to explore the world around them through hands-on, outdoor, experiential learning. In so doing we hope to inspire the young people of today to become environmentally responsible and conscientious citizens of tomorrow, to spark a lifelong love of learning, and to forge a deep and abiding connection with the natural world."

Now for a little history of Charles and Colonial Virginia Chapter (CVC):

Charles and Peggy McComb were members of the Holly Society of America, a nonprofit organization which has 8 chapters in the United States and one in the Republic of Korea and members in numerous foreign countries. The purpose of the Society is to stimulate interest, promote research, and collect and disseminate information about the genus *Ilex*. The society provides the medium for all people interested in hollies, including both novices and skilled growers, to communicate and exchange information through scientific studies, publications, lectures, meetings, visiting holly collections, and other educational endeavors. Some CVC members do belong to the National organization and receive its publications the *Holly Society Journal* and a newsletter, and can also attend their Annual Meetings.

At Charles McCombs' instigation 21 people attended an organizational meeting for a chapter on November 16, 1991, at the Williamsburg Regional Library. The original officers and trustees for the group were:

President	Charles McComb
VP	Dick Mahone
Sec-Treas.	Jane Laughlin
Board Members	David Lay
	Sandra McDonald
	Walter Przypek
	Frances Tayloe (she had been on the HSA board)

CVC had its first general meeting on March 21, 1992, at the Williamsburg Regional Library and its second general meeting on December 5, 1992, at Rappahanock Westminster-Canterbury in Irvington. Charles McComb had submitted a petition from CVC to the HSA at their June 1992 board meeting and we were accepted as a chapter.

In 1994 we had our by-laws approved at our December meeting. I (Sandra McDonald) started the newsletter in June 1994. In the early days when Charles was still feeling good, he gave me many leads on good articles for the newsletter through his connections to people in the nursery industry, universities, and other organization contacts and his own experience with holly.

In 1994 the officers and board were:

President	Frances Tayloe
VP	George McLellan
Secretary	Peggy McComb
Past Pres	Charles McComb
Directors:	David Lay
	Sandra McDonald
	Kenneth McDonald, Jr.
	Walter Przypek
	Sybil Przypek

Our chapter has met in many locations in the eastern part of Virginia. This meeting today is starting our 24th year. Locations include:

Williamsburg 8 Gloucester 7 VA Beach & Norfolk 4 Irvington area 4
Richmond 3 Gwynn's Island 2 & Oak Grove, Poquoson, Suffolk, Fredericksburg, Grafton,
Ashland, Yorktown, Chesapeake, Carrollton, Warsaw, Deltaville, Surry, Port Royal, Matthews,
Wicomoco Church.

We have had many speakers well known in our area, including nursery people Charlie Parkerson, Nelson Stuart, Leah Duncan, CB Kemper, John Lee Machin, Bill Kuhl, George McLellan, Ken McDonald, Bill Kidd, Linda & Bill Pinkham, Brent Heath, and others.

Colonial Williamsburg and William & Mary people include Dick Mahone, Stewart & Donna Ware, and Wesley Greene.

University, arboreta, USDA and extension people were: Pete Schultz, Bonnie Appleton, Dan Milbocker, Mike Andruczyk, Phil Johnson, Peggy Singlemann, Mark Hoh, Mike Pontti, Kunso Kim, Susan French, Jim Orband, Prof Chiu from China, and more.

Many others connected to the HSA and our plant world spoke to us. If it were not for Charles and the many friends he had throughout the area due to his kindness, interest, and spark, we would not have had our lives enriched by all these speakers and experiences.

Our McComb Award was presented first to Charles and Peggy McComb on Dec 2, 1995.

April 19, 1997: Sandra McDonald
November 7, 1998: George McLellen
February 4, 2000: Frances Tayloe
November 16, 2002: David Lay
October 22, 2005: Sybil Przypek
November 22, 2008: Mike Andruczyk
November 5, 2011: Charles (Sid) Sterling
November 2, 2015: Evelyn Parker

Charles McComb was truly the force and spark who started the Colonial Virginia Chapter of the Holly Society of America. We will miss him.