

# Chapter News

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## Oconee Chapter

Frank Bryan, Newsletter Editor

The June newsletter was a thorough description of the fine private gardens that chapter members opened to the public for a tour in May. The gardens of **Dr. Joe** and **Donna Coleman**, **Michael Vuocolo**, **Ruth** and **Frank Bryan** were listed on the tour. A fourth garden, that of **Joan Adcock**, was, according to Bryan, one of the best-kept secrets of the Oconee Chapter.

The **Coleman** garden was on tour for both ASA conventions that were held in the Atlanta area and was described in the Winter 2002 issue of *The Azalean*. A few notes from Joe about his garden since then: "The newest area of the garden is the Huang azalea-Dept rhododendron-deciduous Northern Lights series area that extends down the river bank. This promises to add a lot of color and extend the bloom period. Goals for 2006—eliminate my garden pests, poison ivy and *Smilax* among them. Work on my grafting technique. Analysis: Some things are worthwhile...others are not and should be eliminated! The curse of the collector, you want them all and will never achieve that goal. So, get it over with, and begin selecting the best, and remove those that don't measure up! Not easy when your favorites change every year! Spectacular this year...the MacDonald azaleas and natives 'Keowee Sunset', 'Millie Mac', late *R. speciosum* 'Orange Sherbet'."

**Vuocolo's** garden was on tour for the joint ARS/ASA convention in 2002. This 15-acre 22-year-old garden continues to evolve as he adds new shrubs, trees, and flowers. A unique feature is the two-story metal tower that provides a birds-eye view of the variations in textures, forms, heights, and colors in his garden. His azalea collections include over 2,000 varieties of evergreen azaleas and 250 deciduous varieties, plus rhododendrons and camellias.

The **Bryans'** 5-acre property is located in an area where tall pines dominate the terrain. Their collections include approximately 3,000 azaleas, with more than 500 species and cultivars representing 55 evergreen hybrid groups. Ten percent are deciduous azaleas, including 65 different species or hybrid cultivars. *Rhododendron alabamense*, *R. arborescens*, *R. atlanticum*, *R. austrinum*, *R. canescens*, and hybrid deciduous azaleas provide seasonal fragrance. The native azaleas bloom from late March to September, with skips due to the bloom-time characteristics of the various species. There are approximately 50 groupings that contain 10 or more of the same evergreen cultivar throughout the yard. These provide accents of

white, pink, purple, and red in specific areas or garden rooms. Bloom time for the evergreens begins in February (unless there are late frosts), peaks the second to third week in April, and continues into May and June with the Robin Hill hybrids and Satsuki. The Encores bloom again from September until frost.

According to Frank, **Joan Adcock's** garden contains probably the largest collection of native azaleas in a private garden in the country. There are 5,000-6,000 native azaleas, primarily *R. flammeum* (Oconee azalea) at this site. There is also a separate area for *R. prunifolium* (Plumleaf azalea), which bloom later in the season. The majority of these were obtained by digging—with permission—on properties within a 50-mile radius. The Oconee azaleas bloom in many tints and shades of orange, yellow, red, salmon, apricot, peach, and pink, and some appear lavender from a distance.

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## Tri-State Chapter

Larry Miller, President

During the April 28-29 weekend Indianapolis Azalea Garden Tour, we were honored to host the Great Lakes Chapter of the ASA and the Midwest Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. In addition, **Buddy Lee**, national ASA president, drove up from Louisiana.

After Saturday's tour of the Historic Preservation Area, the Sievers Garden at Sunrise Park, and Holly Hills, we had a successful silent auction, a buffet, and fine Power Point presentations by **Paul Bouseman** and **Buddy Lee** at Oak Meadow. We were lucky with our itinerary to miss the scattered showers. Sunday we toured gardens at the **Sievers** residence, **Ken** and **Jeanne Brown's**, the Zoo and Botanic Garden and Azalea Path, and **Steve** and **Beverly Knight's** residence and nursery near Hazelton.

Thanks to **Tim Dodd** for conducting the historic downtown tour and contributing to the auction, along with the **Browns**, **Greg Wedding**, **Becky** and **Steve Nellis**, and **Paul Bouseman**. Thanks to **Arlene Sievers** for making a long trip to be on hand. And thanks to **Steve Schroeder** for being so generous with his time and knowledge. He was clearly held in awe by most of the attendees, fans of the legendary Schroeder hybrids.

The weekend was a success. It seemed to be such a success that we have been asked to host a national ASA convention soon. I very much want to do it.

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## *Vaseyi Chapter*

*John Brown, Secretary*

At the May 28th meeting at the Bullington Horticultural Learning Center, member **Aaron Cook** presented a tour of the 2005 and 2006 ASA conventions in digital format. We were able to get a glimpse of most of the gardens and stopping points along the way. The 2005 convention was held in Holland, Michigan, just at the end of the town's

annual Tulip Festival. The recent Rockville, Maryland, convention gave us access to private and public gardens near our nation's capital. Aaron's skill with a camera brought us close to the essence of the gardens, nurseries, people, and plants in both conventions. **Bill Pinkerton** sent 'Clara Haler' plants for each attendee.

The topic of the June 18 meeting was "Cutting Exchange and Propagation," and horticulturist Aaron Cook led the roundtable discussion and demonstrations.

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## *Five New Members—A New Way*

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina

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A member of our Society heard President Buddy Lee saying that we are an aging Society. He also heard the discussions—heard every year—that all plant groups have declining memberships; most are declining while we are hanging even. Running around in the back of his head were comments about "the same people are at every meeting." He listened as treasurer Bob Stelloh said over and over, "Our problem is not dollars, it is membership. Increasing membership solves money problems."

The final blow came when someone described the various conditions of the people eligible to join our group. "The very young have time but little money; the middle aged group have some money but are tied up in careers; the older folks have both time and money and come to meetings; and, every year our average age is almost one year older."

He came up with a simple solution to all of the problems listed above. By approaching a faculty member at a local community college and offering—to selected students—a gift membership to the Society (\$20), he is bringing five young people into the Society for \$100 for a year.

This member of our group wishes to remain anonymous, but issues this challenge: Skip a night on the town, or however you spend extra money, go to your local college and solicit five young, bright, energetic, interested students and bring them into your Chapter. See just how good it makes you feel and compare that to a fleeting night on the town.

Since this idea was floated at the Rockville Convention, at least one other member has already given student memberships to the Society. In more ways than one, we are younger with each gift.

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## *Brookside Gardens Chapter Help*

Bob Stelloh — Hendersonville, North Carolina

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Brookside Gardens Chapter helped us all, tremendously, by co-hosting the recent convention in Rockville, Maryland, with a number of chapters of the American Rhododendron Society. Congratulations for an excellently planned and executed convention!

The chapter then outdid themselves by making a \$5000 unrestricted donation to ASA. The amount is impressive, and the lack of restrictions means the board of directors

can decide how best to use the money. For example, they could vote to pay the operating expense shortfall we expect to have this year and to help pay for printing our new color membership brochure.

Many thanks, Brookside Gardens Chapter, for your excellent work and your generous gift, and for setting such an excellent example of what an Azalea Society of America chapter can do!