

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.

Five New Members—A New Way

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina

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.

Brookside Gardens Chapter Help

Bob Stelloh — Hendersonville, North Carolina

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!