

President's Letter Mission Control to ASA— All Systems Ready for Lift-Off

Robert (Buddy) Lee — Independence, Louisiana

TEN, NINE, EIGHT...

The countdown is on for our Society to enter into a new phase of media awareness. Starting with the Fall 2006 edition of *The Azalean*, an additional 500-plus gift members will be added to our journal's mail out list. These new members will include garden writers, publishers, and other people actively involved in horticultural activities. My hopes are that these people will find interesting topics printed in our journal, contact the authors and the editor for permission to rewrite and expand those topics, then get their articles printed in mega-media magazines. Hopefully this will bring new and far-reaching interest to our Society. Big dreams, you bet! Let's make it a reality. You can help by getting your article on your favorite azalea topic to our editor ASAP.

SEVEN, SIX, FIVE...

While you are reaching for your seat belt and preparing for lift-off, let me tell you about some of the exciting things going on with our Society. How about that convention in Rockville, Maryland? I must have taken over 400 pictures. Many thanks to Don Hyatt, Bill Miller, Charlie Evans, and all their numerous helpers for a fantastic convention. And it will not be long until our next convention in Nacogdoches, Texas. I recently visited with Barbara Stump and Dr. Dave Creech over in Nacogdoches and they are "biting at their bits" to make this upcoming convention the best ever. I think we should all wear cowboy boots and hats to the business meeting just to get into the Texas spirit. Make sure that you don't miss this convention. You'll just love Nacogdoches. See the Fall 2006 edition of *The Azalean* for all the details and registration information.

FOUR, THREE...

Flying always makes me a little nervous, so if you don't mind, I will sing my never-ending melody of great ASA top hits: such as, the new Seed Exchange Program being spearheaded by Aaron Cook, the Azalea City of America Project, our informative Web site, our very active online azalea dis-

cussion group, the ASA archives at NC State, and all the great activities happening at the local chapters, just to name a few. But wait a minute, am I singing to the choir? Let's see, yeah, maybe, probably so. If we want our Society to keep expanding, we will need to reach out to a greater audience and "sing" about the great attributes of azaleas and the benefits of belonging to the Azalea Society of America.

TWO, ONE, IGNITION...

It may be a little late to turn back now, but just in case we might want to ditch this flight we better check the manual for directions. A quick glance at the goals of our Society written in the by-laws gives me reassurance that we are on the right track. I don't have time to even paraphrase the goals; however, I encourage members to review our entire by-laws so they will have a better understanding of our Society. Any changes to the by-laws have to be approved by the general membership at the yearly national convention. Members are always welcome and encouraged to attend the board meetings and become active in any of our activities.

**MISSION CONTROL, WE HAVE
LIFT-OFF!!**

Gravity sure is a hard thing to overcome. Accelerating a Society to great heights takes a lot of energy and planning. Not accepting the status quo and embracing change can be an extremely hard barrier to overcome. However, with everyone working together, exchanging opinions, having fun, and sharing in fellowship with each other, this Society can overcome any turbulence in fulfilling this mission.

You are now free to move around the world and spread the good news about azaleas and of the ASA.

Hope everyone is having a wonderful summer. And, here's a special welcome to all our new members. We are so excited that you are members of our Society.

Sincerely,
Robert (Buddy) Lee

Azalea Society of America

The Azalea Society of America, organized December 9, 1977 and incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an educational and scientific non-profit association devoted to the culture, propagation and appreciation of azaleas Subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

Officers for 2006-2007

President — Robert Lee
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Secretary — Carol Flowers
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Immediate Past President —
Joseph E. Schild, Jr.

Directors

Terms Expire in 2006

Bob Hobbs
Ron Hooper
Tom Milner

Terms Expire in 2007

Joe Coleman
Aaron Cook
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Chapter presidents serve as
ex-officio directors

Chapters

Brookside Gardens (chartered Aug. 1979) Dr. Charles Evans, <i>Pres.</i>	Ben Morrison (chartered May 1980) Harold Belcher, <i>Pres.</i>
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Oconee Chapter (chartered Nov. 1991) Allison Fuqua, <i>Pres.</i>	Vaseyi Chapter (chartered June 2001) Ed Collins, <i>Pres.</i>
Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) John Migas, <i>Pres.</i>	Alabamense Chapter (chartered May 2005) Carlton LeMond, <i>Pres.</i>

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$25.00; life-membership for an individual is \$500.00. Members receive *The Azalean* and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society including those of the chapter with which the member affiliates. For information and a membership application, write to the Membership Committee, Azalea Society of America, 7195 Henson Landing Road, Welcome, MD 20693 (800-446-0428/301-934-3556).