

President's Letter

Robert (Buddy) Lee — Independence, Louisiana

Another long, hot, and dry summer is finally coming to an end. The cooler temperatures and lower humidity make it a great time to catch up with all your garden activities. That "touch of fall in the air" feeling surely invigorates me to get outside. I like to tidy up my azalea beds by getting out those last pesky weeds and re-mulching some needy areas. The fall is also a great time for planting not only azaleas but also other ornamental shrubs. And remember that an azalea planted correctly and in the appropriate location will give you years of enjoyment.

The Azalea City Project has two new cities that are working on their certification. South Gate, California, and Houston, Texas, are both well on their way to becoming the next ASA Azalea Cities. Joe Schild and his committee have been working diligently with this project and making sure that only the appropriate and deserving cities receive the certification. If you know a city that is actively involved with azalea festivals or other azalea activities, please encourage them to contact Joe

Schild for more information on how to become an Azalea City. Applications can also be reviewed on our Web site, www.azaleas.org and then click on "Azalea City." Azalea City certification is a great project for our *Society* and it is a great certification for a city.

As you may have noticed, this Fall 2006 issue of *The Azalean* is serving as the 2007 convention issue instead of the usual winter issue. Barbara Stump and her committee for the 2007 national convention wanted to get the information out to the membership earlier this year because the convention is going to be held in late March, six to eight weeks earlier than our last three conventions. This will give each of us more time to decide to attend and make travel arrangements. So get those registration forms filled out and join us in Nacogdoches, Texas, on March 29-April 1. By all indications, it's going to be a fantastic convention.

Hope everyone is having a safe, happy, and productive fall.

Robert (Buddy) Lee



On the Cover

'Ann Lee McPhail' ('Chikyu-no-haru' x 'Surprise') is a Harris hybrid evergreen azalea that shows the brilliant dark banding around the outer edges of the petals and large flower size (4") that are so prized in Satsuki azaleas and the mid-season bloom and shrub habit of the Glenn Dale. The shrubs will get 44" high by 33" wide in 10 years. James Harris, of

Lawrenceville, Georgia, began his breeding work in 1970, developing large-flowered late-to mid-season varieties. They are hardy in Zones 7a to 9b.

This plant is one of nearly 200 cultivars donated to the SFA Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden by Maarten van der Giessen, of Van der Giessen Nursery, in Semmes, Alabama, from 1999 through 2003. When Maarten heard that the Arboretum in Nacogdoches, Texas, was developing its eight-acre azalea garden, he knew this would be a great place to house an additional germplasm repository of unusual cultivars. This is also one example of his interest in increasing use of Satsuki and their progeny in the trade and in home landscapes. (Photo by Barbara Stump)

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*).

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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).