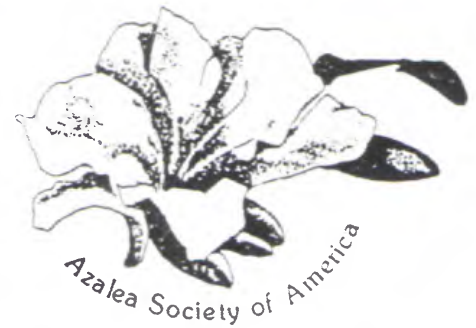


President's Letter

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina



Attending the Society convention in Nacogdoches, Texas, was an enlightening and rejuvenating experience for me. Each activity and garden led me toward a new sense of respect for all of the people and places involved.

As we walked through the gardens, the attendees and hosts displayed an accumulated knowledge that covered most of the plant kingdom in great detail. They shared this knowledge with all in such a willing way that no one needed feel embarrassed or inferior. It was a delight to follow along the garden paths and listen to these undisputed experts discuss the leading edge of topics like species identification, hybridization, and new plant material, not to mention their own newest baby plants.

The garden in Nacogdoches that is familiar, at least in name, to Society members — The Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden — found us standing in awe of the garden itself and the accomplishments wrought by Dr. David Creech, our own Barbara Stump and the staff from Stephen F. Austin State University. Maybe the fact that we saw more than 5,000 plants of many species in prime condition, beautifully landscaped, and artfully presented, colored our opinion just a little.

Our hosts in Nacogdoches and Tyler, Texas, gave us the warmest welcome I can remember at any of our conventions. I will always have a warm spot in my heart for the people in these towns.

I am pleased to tell you that the Society business conducted at the convention was all positive. It is an indication of the direction that the Society is headed.

First, we owe thanks to the Board members who have retired (temporarily) or moved to new positions. Joe Schild is no longer Past President and will spend more time on his (our) Azalea City Program. Buddy Lee is now Past President and chairs two major committees. Bob Stelloh released the purse-strings as Treasurer but is keeping the Webmaster title. The retiring directors are Joe Coleman and Mary Rutley. To all, our thanks for the hard work that they have so freely given to better our Society.

Second, our financial picture is sound for the first time in years. Granted it is a temporary improvement, but along with a large increase in membership, I feel that we are turning a corner toward a bright future. Due to a trial marketing strategy, we have brought a very large number of professional garden writers into our membership. I welcome you to our group and hope you enjoy the benefits and privileges of membership. We will also welcome your articles for *The Azalean* and sincerely hope that you will be with us for many years.

The increase in membership will make *The Azalean* more attractive to advertisers. More advertising will help provide more funds to improve the journal, which, in turn, will draw more members. That circle can continue for as long as we support it.

If we continue to put forth the effort, all of the things mentioned above will inevitably lead to a bigger, better and more enjoyable Society. As your new President, I am enthused about all of the possibilities in front of us.

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 2007-2008

President — John Brown
Vice President — Aaron Cook
Secretary — Carol Flowers
Treasurer — Dan Krabill
Immediate Past President — Robert "Buddy" Lee

Directors

Terms expire 2008	Terms expire 2009
Maartin van der Giessen	Vincent Ciolino
Ron Hooper	J Jackson
Tom Milner	Dave Nanney

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>
Northern Virginia (chartered May 1980) Eve Harrison, <i>Pres.</i>	Louisiana (chartered June 1981) Dr. Allen Owings, <i>Pres.</i>
Tri-State (chartered Oct. 1981) Larry Miller, <i>Pres.</i>	Texas Chapter (chartered May 1989) Bart Brechter, <i>Pres.</i>
Oconee Chapter (chartered Nov. 1991) Allison Fuqua, <i>Pres.</i>	Vaseyi Chapter (chartered June 2001) Doley Bell, <i>Pres.</i>
Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) John Migas, <i>Pres.</i>	Alabamense Chapter (chartered May 2005) Carlton LeMond, <i>Pres.</i>
Southern California (chartered March 2007) Jim Jaeger, <i>Pres.</i>	

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$25; life-membership for an individual is \$500. 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 (phone 301-934-3556) or visit www.azaleas.org.