

# President's Letter

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina



Weather has been the topic of a lot of conversations this year. First, we in the south had unseasonably warm temperatures for three weeks. Then we had a sudden three night freeze in the lower 20s followed by a drought that is unabated as of this writing. The tales of lost plants, bark split, and die back, followed by hopes of recovery and warnings of more losses this winter, have tested our endurance as gardeners. As this article is being written, the news of serious destruction in Texas reminds us that our concerns are small in comparison. Most of us have experienced some recovery in our gardens. We can hope that the folks in Texas are able to recover some part of what they have lost.

It is now time to publish a new roster of members of the Society. You will note that the enclosed roster is about twice as big as the last roster published in 2005. The additional at-large members are all part of a group of professional garden writers chosen to receive membership in the Society to encourage articles about our favorite plant—the azalea. I recently had the opportunity to look at several magazines directed toward gardens and landscaping. There was not a single picture or article about azaleas included in any of the magazines. While we are welcoming the professional writers to our group, let us remember to share the knowledge that will hopefully become part of an interesting article.

Sharing is a by-word in our Society, and I had the chance to see sharing at its best during June. The Oconee Chapter held its annual cutting exchange meeting at the home of Dr. Joe and Donna Coleman. Joe invited members of the Vaseyi Chapter to join the exchange, and three Vaseyi members took him up on the opportunity. The Colemans' garden has been under development for about 27 years and has a stupendous amount of plant material available. Those who were lucky enough to visit their garden during the Atlanta Convention will remember the acres of tastefully displayed plants and miles of pine needle laden paths under a mixed overstory of hardwoods and slash pine.

About one dozen Oconee Chapter members and several guests from other organizations attended the exchange. Lawn chairs set up in the shade provided a place to rest, talk about all things azalean, eat a bite of lunch, and trade locations of plants in the garden. It was a time to renew acquaintances and make new friends. Joe is the kind of guy who so enjoys sharing that he will track you down in his garden to see if by chance you have missed a plant that he thinks you might want. The garden is large enough that only chance meetings occurred during our scavenging, but those opportunities were used to exchange pleasantries and locations of exceptional plants. Everyone came away with a sense of friendship and a boatload of cuttings.

The Vaseyi Chapter cutting exchange and propagation workshop meeting, held a week later, was another opportunity to share. A fair number of the same people attended both meetings and had chances to get even more cuttings from plants not readily available. The Vaseyi Chapter event is held indoors and members bring prepared cuttings to share on a lottery basis. The workshop conducted by President Doley Bell amounted to a roundtable discussion of the techniques used by all the members. The act of sharing one's time, plants, and knowledge is a wonderful glue that binds our members together and makes me very proud to be a part of the Society.

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

<b>Terms expire 2008</b>	<b>Terms expire 2009</b>
Maarten van der Giessen	Vincent Ciolino
Ron Hooper	J Jackson
Tom Milner	Dave Nanney

Chapter presidents  
serve as ex-officio directors.

## Chapters

<b>Brookside Gardens</b> (chartered Aug. 1979) Dr. Charles Evans, <i>Pres.</i>	<b>Ben Morrison</b> (chartered May 1980) Harold Belcher, <i>Pres.</i>
<b>Northern Virginia</b> (chartered May 1980) Eve Harrison, <i>Pres.</i>	<b>Louisiana</b> (chartered June 1981) Dr. Allen Owings, <i>Pres.</i>
<b>Tri-State</b> (chartered Oct. 1981) Larry Miller, <i>Pres.</i>	<b>Texas</b> (chartered May 1989) Bart Brechter, <i>Pres.</i>
<b>Oconee</b> (chartered Nov. 1991) Allison Fuqua, <i>Pres.</i>	<b>Vaseyi</b> (chartered June 2001) Doley Bell, <i>Pres.</i>
<b>Lake Michigan</b> (chartered May 2003) John Migas, <i>Pres.</i>	<b>Alabamense</b> (chartered May 2005) Carlton LeMond, <i>Pres.</i>
<b>Southern California</b> (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 Carol Flowers, Secretary, 700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011, Washington, DC 20037 or visit [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org).