

President's Letter

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina



The wrapper of this issue of *The Azalean* contains an important document—the ballot for officer elections and the Best Article award. It presents an opportunity to trot out my soapbox and tell you about the advantages of participating in the activities of **your** Society.

First, I ask you to participate by filling out and returning the ballot. Granted, most recipients of the Best Article award return the money to the Society, but it is an honor to receive the award and far too few members participate in voting.

Second, consider participating more fully in the activities of the Society. I promise you will receive more than you give. Don't limit your thinking to the "baking cookies mentality"; there are many, many ways to participate. Serving in a Chapter office, joining a committee, writing an article for *The Azalean*, posting pictures of your favorite azalea on our web site, hosting a convention, bringing a plant to a meeting as a door prize, and recruiting a neighbor as a member are just a few of the ways you can improve the Society. There are no small jobs, and all contributions are helpful and appreciated. It takes a good many bricks to build a wall, and every brick is important in holding up that wall.

Finally, I challenge you to suggest ideas to improve the way we operate and to make our society more available to a larger audience. ASA membership has increased in the past year, but it has not reached its full potential. Our Society will continue to grow and prosper if we put forth the effort to make it happen. Join us, give a little, and get a lot.

Some of you are not surprised to find another copy of the ASA membership roster included with this issue. A computer error omitted one half of the names that should have been listed in the roster mailed with the Fall issue. Rather than live with the mistake, the Board opted to reprint and redistribute the roster. If you were one of the members who were not included in the original publication, please do not feel slighted. The computer also eliminated half of the names of members who contributed to the Society at elevated levels. Certainly, those members are to be recognized for their contributions as well.

The printed roster represents a considerable recurring cost to the Society, and as such, the validity of continuing to print and distribute it is being debated. Comments on the usefulness of a printed roster, along with the several thousand dollars per year it costs, make it a worthwhile topic. The Board of Directors is discussing the issue and welcomes comments from the membership. Please contact your Chapter President or other Board member to express your opinion.

Vaseyi Chapter members are diligently preparing for the 2008 ASA Convention in Asheville, North Carolina. La Niña is not on board with our planning, but we are working with the tools available to make it a great convention.

Thinking back to the last several conventions, the Vaseyi Chapter has quite a task to match the previous meetings in Nacogdoches, Rockville, Holland, Bowie, Chattanooga, etc. Each of the gatherings made an excellent and unique contribution to the Society and will be remembered fondly.

The western North Carolina locals are planning memorable events for your enlightenment. As a Society member suggested to me years ago, "You should come to an ASA Convention to meet the movers and shakers of the Society." He left out the part about sharing gardens, information, plants, and camaraderie. Or maybe that was understood. It is certainly evident to those who are privileged to attend.

In closing, I want to encourage you sign up early if you plan to join one of the tours to Pilot Mountain or the Southern Highlands Reserve. Tour size is limited and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Early registration also eases the planning burden on the hosts and registrars of the convention.

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**

Maarten 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, *Pres.*

Ben Morrison

(chartered May 1980)
Harold Belcher, *Pres.*

Northern Virginia

(chartered May 1980)
Eve Harrison, *Pres.*

Louisiana

(chartered June 1981)
Dr. Allen Owings, *Pres.*

Tri-State

(chartered Oct. 1981)
Larry Miller, *Pres.*

Texas

(chartered May 1989)
Bart Brechter, *Pres.*

Oconee

(chartered Nov. 1991)
Allison Fuqua, *Pres.*

Vaseyi

(chartered June 2001)
Doley Bell, *Pres.*

Lake Michigan

(chartered May 2003)
John Migas, *Pres.*

Alabamense

(chartered May 2005)
Carlton LeMond, *Pres.*

Southern California

(chartered March 2007)
Jim Jaeger, *Pres.*

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.