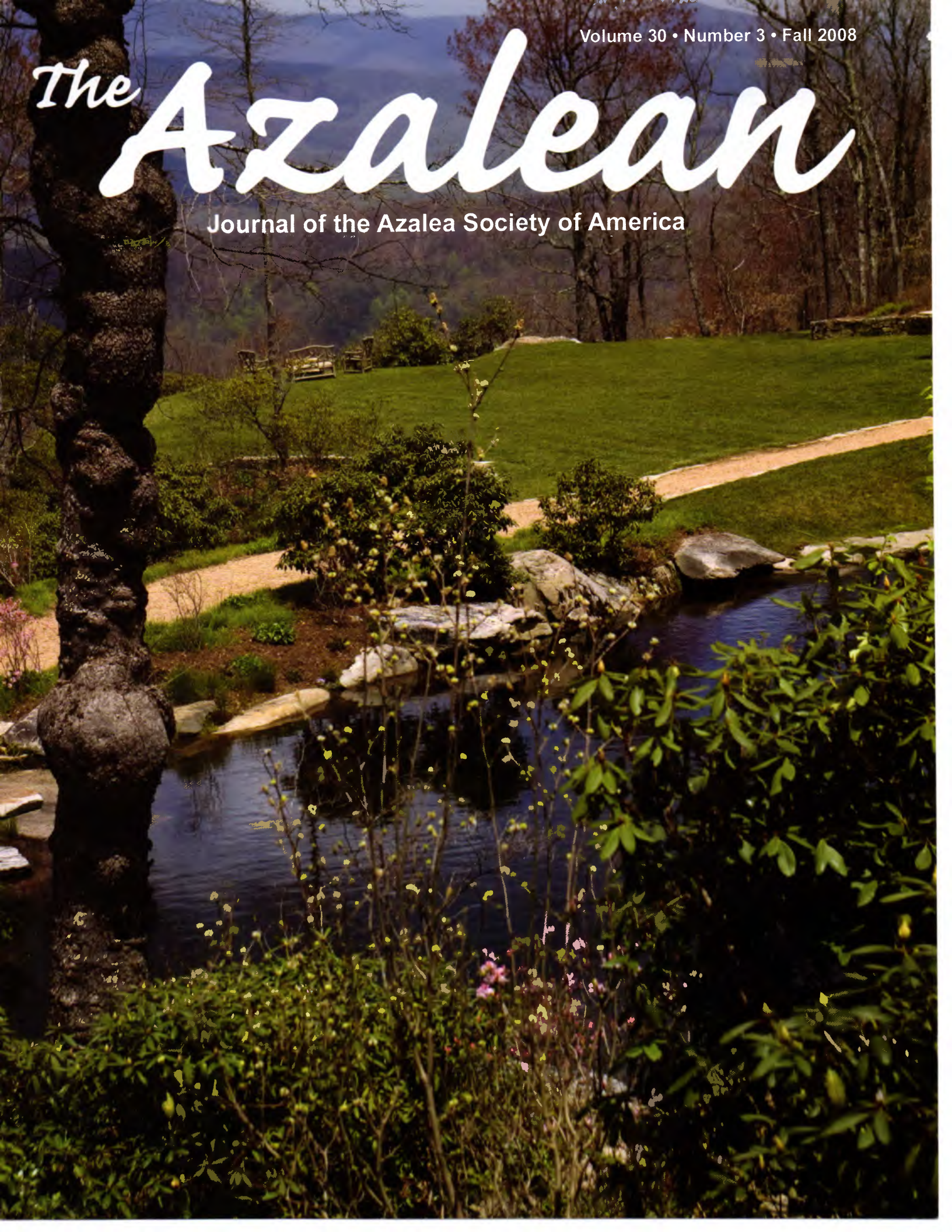


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The Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



President's Letter

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina



"I noticed a shortage of drooling towels." That simple declarative sentence, uttered during the national membership meeting, could well have broken up the show. Note, as you re-read her words, that they could have been taken in any number of ways. Ribald humor, direct criticism, or veiled compliments; the list goes on.

I visualized the late Harvey Herschel Korman offering his stack of starched, ironed linens saying: "Drooling towel, Sir? A towel for your chin, Madam?" But, I digress. As it was, a number of things combined to let it become one of the most profound, yet un-remarked statements of the convention.

My poor hearing, and the fact that money cannot buy hearing aids capable of overcoming crowd noise, resulted in the fact that I heard only a mumble from an important area, so I was spared the need to directly reply to the statement. I think I muttered something about "my tender age" and "not going there," which avoided any direct (and undoubtedly insufficient) reply. Fortunately, it got a laugh, and we passed on to other topics.

The speaker's family—husband, daughter, and son-in-law—were all sitting close enough to hear the remark. Most of the 140 some odd attendees were astounded that the reticent, retiring, kindly, giving, wonderful person would speak in front of the entire ASA membership represented at the meeting. Much less, that she would give us such a compelling remark. They all sat, mouths agape, as she repeated her statement, trying to get her point across.

It was the next morning, at breakfast, that I found out what she actually said. Fortune protects the innocent, because I was not given the opportunity during the meeting to mess up such a remarkable remark.

Frances Louer does not do things by accident, without thought, or on the fly. We were the beneficiaries. While parsing sentences is not one of my strong points, this one needs attention. In seven words, she declared the gardens were superb (although a tad early by all accounts), and the convention atmosphere was such that she was comfortable making such a risky statement in front of a large crowd.

Coming from Frances, that is praise enough. Those seven words expressed her feelings so well that some 140 odd people (a record attendance) became, for a few minutes, a small, close-knit group of friends, sharing a common experience. Thank you, Frances, for being there and sharing your thoughts with us.

Please understand that those precious moments do not proclaim a perfect convention by any means. We had room for improvement and will be working on the issues; many caused by the writer, personally. We will share our experiences with the hosts of the upcoming conventions in the surety that we will have even better gatherings in future years. It is this attitude that makes our Society such a strong entity with the knowledge and experience to weather the shortfall, and to plan for a better future.

I am looking forward to seeing even more of you at our next conventions.

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 which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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On the Cover

The Southern Highlands Reserve is a 130-acre property on Toxaway Mountain west of Brevard, North Carolina. It is dedicated to the cultivation, preservation, and display of plants native to the Southern Appalachian Highlands. It includes completely native areas and professionally designed display gardens, including beautiful stands of *R. vaseyi*.



Photo Carol Flowers

Discover, Discover, Discover...

Carol Flowers—Washington, D.C.

Discover, discover, and discover—it's what we all do when we become really interested in something. Every year I look forward to the ASA convention. Since the meetings take place in various parts of the country, I have gotten to know areas of the United States that I would never have visited if not for the conventions. I also get to discover more and more about azaleas.

This year my husband and I took off for Asheville, North Carolina. It was a part of the country that I had always wanted to see. Although my parents never made the move from New York, I now know why they gave serious consideration to living their retirement years there. The area offers so much that the New York City metropolitan area cannot—space, clear air, a great climate for gardening, and breath-taking mountain scenery.

Like my parents, Henry Skinner, Augie Kehr, and Chauncey Beadle—the “greats” honored at this year's convention—loved this area. Unlike my parents, Henry Skinner and Augie Kehr actually did retire in North Carolina. Working for the famous landscape architect Frederick Olmsted, Chauncey Beadle came to the area on a temporary duty assignment, lasting more than 60 years. There was obviously something in this part of the world that he discovered. The discovery caused him to stay for a lifetime.

From reading some of the life stories of Beadle, Skinner, and Kehr, it is obvious they loved their work. Beadle and some of his colleagues were named the “Azalea Hunters.” In developing the gardens at Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate, they searched the United States, collecting native azaleas to use as nursery stock plants. Eventually the Biltmore Azalea Garden had more than 1,000 varieties.

In 1951, while working at the Morris Arboretum in Pennsylvania, Henry Skinner made a 25,000-mile road trip

▼ Azaleas at the Biltmore Estate.



▲ Bill Costello enjoying Augie Kehr's magnolias.

through the eastern and southeastern United States in search of native azaleas. He sent 8,000 herbarium specimens and 500 live azalea plants back to the arboretum. Based on this story, it is easy to understand why azalea collections were expanded at the National Arboretum after Skinner became one of the arboretum's early directors.

Augie Kehr was known as a gentle, kind man. After retiring as a Staff Scientist for the USDA Agriculture Research Service, he and his wife built a retirement home in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Wanting to discover new and varied plants, he worked for the next 22 years developing more and more beautiful azaleas, rhododendrons, and magnolias. He registered nine new azaleas, 12 rhododendrons, and 31 magnolias. It was a lot of achievement and discovery for a “retired” gentleman.

Three of the convention's Thursday night speakers told wonderful stories about the “greats” of the past. Bill Alexander talked about the contributions Chauncey Beadle made in the development of the Biltmore Estate. Barbara Bullock has access to a lot of information about Henry Skinner and used it in her well researched speech. Having been introduced to Augie Kehr by a neighbor, Dr. Dan Veazey spoke about the personal life of the great plantsman. Listening to each of the speakers, you could feel the enthusiasm and excitement each of the “greats” had working in the field of horticulture.

Because of his work at the Biltmore Estate, Bill Alexander had knowledge of a lot of good stories about Chauncey D. Beadle. Starting in 1890, Beadle worked with both Vanderbilt and Olmsted. He worked to find and grow the types of plants that would eventually create the outdoor scenes seen today at the Biltmore Estate.

I listened intently as Bill spoke Thursday night. As a



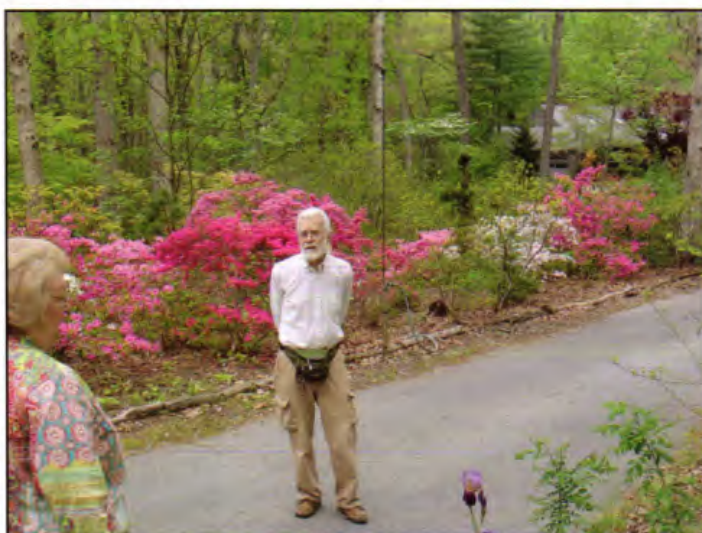
▲ Bill Alexander addresses convention attendees.

▼ Ed Collins greeting convention attendees.



▲ Biltmore Horticulturist ready to answer questions.

▼ Bob Stelloh welcomes convention attendees to their garden.



small child, and without knowing the names of Olmsted, Vanderbilt, or Beadle, I had enjoyed the landscape scenes these people worked to design and make reality. I loved walking in Central Park, the gardens of the Long Island Vanderbilt Estate museums and Planting Fields, and the old Long Island estate of William R. Coe. All of these great gardens have a similar feel, including the Biltmore Estate. All give you a sense of openness and space—the way nature itself designs landscapes.

Listening to Bill I realized that these great mature gardens don't just happen. People like Chauncey Beadle worked hard to collect plants in the wild, grow them, and plant them. My generation owes Mr. Beadle and his counterparts a lot. Because of them we have these gardens to discover and enjoy. Thanks Mr. Beadle, and thank you Bill Alexander for telling his story.

Like Bill Alexander, **Barbara Bullock** had access to a lot of stories about Henry Skinner. She has been curator of the azalea collection at the National Arboretum since 1990. She loves her job. From her speech, you could tell she had enjoyed going through much of the recorded information about

Skinner and his work. Because of her speech, we discovered a lot about the plant legacy Skinner left to our nation.

Because of his azalea collecting expeditions, Skinner came to know a lot about the plants. His knowledge and enthusiasm was passed on to other workers at the arboretum as these younger horticulturalists worked to establish the extensive azalea gardens that exist there today.

What I have always liked about people associated with the plant world is their willingness to share knowledge about plants and the plants they grow. **Dr. Dan Veazey**, our third speaker, knew Augie Kehr personally. From Dan we heard personal stories of Augie's kind-



▲ Barbara Bullock



▲ Dr. Dan Veazey

ness, and how both professionally and personally he did everything he could to expand our knowledge of the plant world. Because of Augie's hybridizing efforts, new and more beautiful forms of azaleas and magnolias came into being. Because of Augie's associations with so many others, his knowledge has been shared with younger generations. Plant research foundations exist or are in the process of being created. New and even more beautiful types of azaleas are being developed.

Our world continues to change—along with the practical knowledge

bases we develop to do things like grow plants. Plantmen also develop academic theoretical bodies of knowledge that keeps

our plants healthy and knowledge that expands the variety of plants that can grow in different types of environments. Our last Thursday speaker, **Jeff Jones**, explained what the academic world is discovering about plants through genetic plant research and the resulting updates to theoretical plant knowledge.

In the future, this knowledge may be used to produce greater varieties of healthier and better looking plants. Since a lot of scientific terminology is not part of my vocabulary, I didn't understand everything he said. But, what I did understand was that the technical discoveries the academic folks are making will make new rules for us to follow in hybridizing. New azalea hybrids will not have to be developed using hit and miss procedures. By using the knowledge of people like Jeff Jones, hybridizers will develop new azaleas more easily. Discoveries, discoveries, discoveries!

From Friday night's speakers we gained more information about the changing world of azaleas. We learned about production methods for growing native azaleas from seed; unique



▲ Jeff Jones



▲ Gene Stano and Bill Costello at the Haywood Community Garden entrance.

▼ Frances and Phil Louer.



▼ Will Ferrel and Dr. Tom Ranney enjoying the blooms.





Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

▲ The plant sale was a tremendous success.

▼ Attendees were given a seedling from 'Dixie Gold' (*R. colemanii*).



Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

▼ A group hikes to see the native azalea collection at The North Carolina Arboretum.



Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

hybridizing methods being developed at a suburban home; and the vast number of varieties of Glenn Dale azaleas growing in a society member's small, half-acre yard.

During the past 10 years, **J Jackson** and company have become experts in growing native azaleas from seed. They are refining their production



Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

▲ J Jackson

methods. During his speech, J spoke about the special growing methods they have developed. In some cases, the plants can be distributed to the trade in two years or less.

The native azaleas I bought at the plant sale were beautiful bushy healthy plants. I like the fact that so much effort is being put into growing more and more native azaleas. Hopefully nature will be able to take care of their water requirements, and we will still have beautiful azaleas in our gardens without watering.

Joe Klimavicz told us about his own methods of hybridizing. He lives in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Like so many people



Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

▲ Joe Klimavicz

in this one-industry town, his day job involves spending long hours working on government-related technology. But his evenings are filled with a different technical pursuit—azalea hybridization.

During his talk, he explained that his lab is a garage and backyard. He selects promising plants and grows row after row of cuttings in his garage. Out of these small plants come promising candidates to continue growing outside.



Photo Carol Flowers

▲ Convention attendees visited Doley Bell's garden.

Joe can plant outdoors. Much of the prep involves digging up and throwing away less promising azaleas in his yard. Because the yard is limited in size—about one-third of an acre—space is at a premium. I wish I were one of Joe's neighbors. After seeing the pictures of the plants in his yard, I would love to be the recipient of some of his cast offs.

The plant knowledge Joe gains is used in university laboratories. More and more discoveries about azaleas are being made because so many people are working together and sharing what they are learning.

The final speaker on Friday night was **Dan Krabill**. He also lives in a Washington, D.C., suburb and pursues growing azaleas as a hobby. His particular interest is collecting, growing, and photographing Glenn Dale azaleas.

Ben Morrison, the first director of the U.S. National Arboretum, and his staff did much of the hybridizing work that led to the creation of these varieties. Since I also live in the D.C. area, I have enjoyed many trips to the arboretum, enjoying the masses of color these azaleas create when in bloom.

I loved seeing the photographs Dan showed. Somehow all I had ever noticed before were the masses of color these



Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

▲ Dan Krabill



Photo John Brown

▲ Dr. Joe Coleman

plants can produce, not the beauty of each individual flower. Dan gave away CDs with pictures he has taken of Glenn Dale flowers.

I will be taking cuttings from the plants in Dan's yard. Many of the varieties are not sold in nurseries. My hope is to grow the plants in my own yard and start a small azalea



▲ Jeff Jones

garden at my church. Hopefully, the beautiful plants will not die, and future generations can continue to discover their beauty.

Dr. Joe Coleman, our keynote speaker at the Saturday night banquet, didn't do a lot of talking. His photos pretty much said it all. Like Joe, my husband has always been in favor of growing azaleas. Every new azalea planted in the yard has resulted in less and less grass to be mowed.

Joe and his wife, Donna, have gone to lots and lots of conventions. They have collected, grown and shared thousands of azaleas and rhododendrons. The photos were beautiful. Words did not have to be used.

Because of all the convention speeches, participants learned more about azaleas. I am sure each of the speakers discovered a lot by preparing for their talks and listening to other presenters. By researching the lives of plantsmen Chauncey Beadle, Henry Skinner, and Augie Kehr, our speakers learned the stories of these "greats" and passed them on to those attending the convention.

Dan Krabill made us aware of the many beautiful Glenn Dale azaleas developed in the past. Jeff Jones explained the genetic research underway in the plant world. People like Joe Klimavicz and J Jackson are able to use this knowledge in their hybridizing and plant production programs. Joe Coleman's pictures summed it all up—azaleas are truly beautiful plants with flowers that have a very regal quality.

The 2008 ASA convention speakers contributed much to the success of the meeting. New discoveries about this genus of plants continue to be made by all of us attending the banquet. Academic researchers, historians, plant collectors, hybridizers, and nurserymen forge ahead. We continue to want to have these plants in our gardens. We continue to discover more and more about them.

Before retiring, Carol Flowers managed a computer help desk for the U.S. Census Bureau. Her interest in azaleas came from her many childhood visits to the Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, New York. She has been a member of the Azalea Society of America for 25 years.

Letters to the Editor

Where to find azalea cultivars?

I am writing to ask for help in finding specific cultivars of azaleas. In the 1940's and 50's Miss Hogg purchased popular azaleas such as 'Sweetheart Supreme', 'Lavender Beauty', 'Hinodegiri', 'Christmas Cheer', 'Coral Bells', and 'Hexe'. These azaleas are becoming impossible to find in the Texas/Louisiana nursery industry.

I need these azaleas to maintain the historic gardens of Bayou Bend. Do you know where I can find them? Please e-mail any information to me at bbrechter@mfah.org.

Bart Brechter
Houston, Texas

Complimenting article on soils

Have just received your summer edition and read the comprehensive article on various soils. I commend your publishing it; I compliment the author, and express my appreciation to George Klump for his work in seeing to its publication.

Never have I read a more succinct, fact-filled, and authoritative treatment on the growing mixes appropriate for azaleas and for bonsai in general.

Bob Callaham
Orinda, California

Correction to article appearing in last issue

Thanks for the extra copies of *The Azalean* with the article in it. Unfortunately, I have to add a correction which, according to my original copy, seems to have been a slip in transcribing it to the magazine.

On page 34, the right hand or inner column the first real paragraph begins "There were some peat-perlite blends. . . ." About the fourth sentence into that paragraph, the sentence as printed begins "Moreover, ester-based agents..." This sentence is nonsense, if one reads it as it is in the magazine.

An ester is essentially an organic salt. The sentence should read "Moreover, ether-based agents provide early [but low residual] wetting, but the ester-based agents provide less initial wetting [but better residual effects]."

Ether is an organic solvent, albeit a dangerous one in terms of its inflammability in its pure form. But used in other chemical combinations it has other properties.

The sentence perhaps ought to be corrected in the next issue, since the sentence makes no sense as it stands! Would you be so kind as to make that correction in the next issue?

George Klump
La Crescenta, California

Society Honors Distinguished Members

John Brown—Cleveland, South Carolina

The Azalea Society of America has an awards program and during the years has presented awards to our outstanding members who have made major contributions of time and energy to improve the Society. During the Society's national meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, on May 3, Awards Committee Chairman Robert "Buddy" Lee presented some well deserved awards for service to Society members.

The first Distinguished Service Award went to **Ed Collins** with the following inscription:

You were a prime mover in the formation of the Vaseyi Chapter; chaired the 2001 and 2008 National Conventions; served as Chapter President for three terms, keeping the Chapter active and growing. You have given your time and energies by presenting programs about azaleas to many public groups.

Edward W. Collins, we greatly appreciate you and we thank you.

The second Distinguished Service Award was a dual award presented to **Dr. Joe and Donna Coleman**. The inscription read:

For over thirty years you have given your time and energy by developing and giving presentations, serving at the local and national level of our Society, presiding over flower shows, and opening your wonderful azalea garden to all. Your love for azaleas and sharing of your knowledge has truly advanced our Society and has furthered the appreciation of azaleas to many people.

Dr. Joe H. & Donna Coleman, we greatly appreciate you and we thank you.

Thus concluded the presentation by the Awards Committee Chair. It was not, however, the end of the Awards Presentation.

Past President **Robert "Buddy" Lee** was chided for a serious omission in the awards listings and Tri-State Chapter President, **Larry Miller** was asked to fill in the missing award recipient. The Exceptional Service Award was presented to **Robert "Buddy" Lee** with the following inscription:

In recognition of your dedication over many years and your talent and enthusiastic promotion of the Azalea Society of America.

The Society has many hardworking and selfless members who have contributed much to the success of the Society over the years. We have recognized a few of these people for their efforts and need to recognize many more. One of the perks of hosting a national convention is the hosting chapter's ability to select award recipients who would not normally be able to travel to distant conventions.



▲ Robert "Buddy" Lee presents Distinguished Service Awards to Ed Collins and Dr. Joe and Donna Coleman.

▼ John Brown presents the Exceptional Service Award to Robert "Buddy" Lee.



Society News

Membership Renewals Due

Dan Krabill, ASA Treasurer

It is almost time for most of us to renew our memberships in the Azalea Society of America. The year your membership expires appears on the top line of the address label for this issue of *The Azalean*. If the year 2008 appears on that line, your membership expires at the end of this year.

Dues notices are mailed in early November. If we get your check before then (or an e-mail saying you're sending it), you may take a \$1 "early bird" discount off the amount of the check. That's our thanks for not having to spend the time and money to mail you a dues notice. Or, if you know you are not going to renew, please let us know by letter or e-mail, so we will not have to mail you a dues notice.

First, review the information on your address label and make any needed corrections. Also, if your telephone number or e-mail address has changed, please provide us with the correct information.

Then, circle an amount in the table below to show the number of years and the type of membership you would like. The table includes a \$1 discount for each year paid in advance, up to \$5 per year. Those years are paid in full even if the dues are increased later. For example, to renew for four years as a Regular Member, circle \$94 in the table.

Years	Regular	Contributing	Supporting	Endowment
1	\$25	\$50	\$100	\$200
2	\$49	\$99	\$199	\$399
3	\$72	\$147	\$297	\$597
4	\$94	\$194	\$394	\$794
5	\$115	\$240	\$490	\$990
6	\$135	\$285	\$585	\$1185

Subtracting \$1 for your "early bird" discount?

[] Yes [] No

Or, consider joining for life, for the one-time payment of \$500 or five consecutive annual payments of \$100 each. Sorry, this is not available for organizations or overseas members.

Finally, write your check or money order in US dollars for the total amount, payable to the "Azalea Society of America." Mail it along with a copy of this page to:

Dan Krabill, ASA Treasurer
6009 Copely Lane
McLean, VA 22101-2507
E-mail address: dkrabill@gmail.com

Alternatively, you may pay your dues with a credit card online through Paypal (<http://www.paypal.com>). Send your

dues payment to: PayTheASA@aol.com. You can open a PayPal account in minutes (and if it asks, please mention PayTheASA@aol.com as the person who referred you). Then describe your changes, your membership type, and the number of years you are renewing for in the comments section.

Azaleas Gifted to North Carolina Arboretum

Alison Arnold, The North Carolina Arboretum

Following the Azalea Society of America's 2008 national convention and annual meeting held in Asheville, North Carolina, in May, The North Carolina Arboretum was presented with three azalea species to be added to its National Native Azalea Repository bringing the collection to 16 total representative azaleas native to the U.S.

The event was hosted by the Society's Vaseyi Chapter from Hendersonville, North Carolina. Former Vaseyi Chapter President **Ed Collins**, Treasurer **Bob Stelloh**, and ASA National President **John Brown** presented the Arboretum's Director of Horticulture Alison Arnold with the gift. Arnold was pleased to receive the gift, saying "We are very excited to accept these plants and are grateful for the support the members of the Vaseyi Chapter continues to give the North Carolina Arboretum."

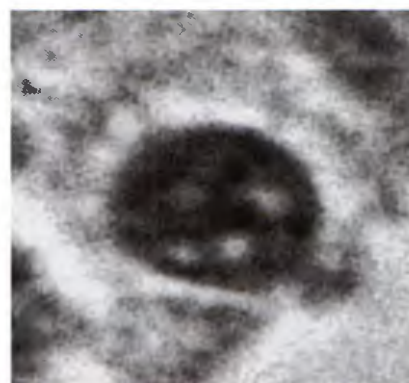
The conference, themed "Honor the Greats in Two Thousand Eight," focused on three people, Chauncey Beadle, Henry Skinner and Augie Kehr, who during their lifetime made many contributions to the plant world, among them

▼ ASA National President John Brown
presents a native azalea to Alison Arnold,
director of horticulture at The North Carolina Arboretum

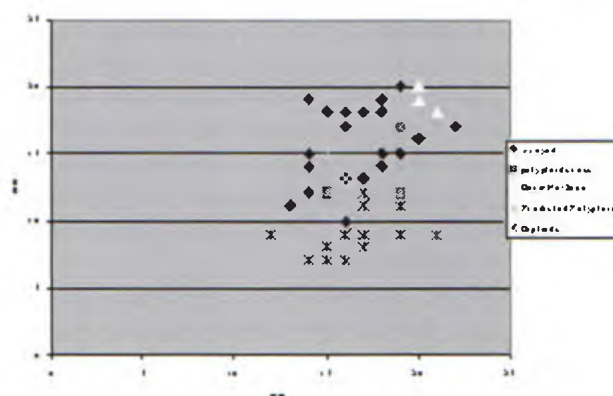


Photo Bob Stelloh

“Polyploidization of Evergreen Azaleas” High School Science Fair



Comparison of Stomata Sizes



▲ Caitlin at work at the microscope.

many azalea selections and hybrids. Their stories were told during the convention, and participants also visited gardens, enjoyed presentations, garden tours, and plant sales.

Arboretum Receives Society Gifts

John Brown, ASA President

The Society recently received a news release issued by The North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville, which demonstrates the relationship that should exist between the ASA and other horticultural groups (*reprinted on page 59*).

It begins with the fact that The North Carolina Arboretum Horticultural Director **Alison Arnold** is a participating member of the Vaseyi Chapter. The Chapter and the arboretum have worked together on several projects, including our planned financial support for a signage project in the National Native Azalea Repository. Both the Society and arboretum benefited from ASA convention tours in 2001 and 2008. It is the intention of the Vaseyi Chapter to maintain and develop this relationship in the coming years.

The plants donated to the arboretum were provided by Vaseyi Chapter members **Vivian Abney**, **Allen Cantrell**, and **Bob Stelloh**. Vivian owns and operates East Fork Nursery which specializes in azaleas, both evergreen and deciduous. Allen operates Fern Gully Nursery specializing in deciduous azaleas. Bob donated a layered *Rhododendron*

occidentale which may well be the best thriving example of the species on the East Coast. The mother plant was certainly a happy one when seen during the tour of the Stelloh garden during the last convention.

Research Foundation Study Group Formed

James Thornton, Study Group Chair

You can't blame Bob Stelloh if you're not aware of the drive to form an Azalea Society Research Foundation. He has kept the subject alive through "The Seed is Growing" updates in *The Azalean*. All the way back to the 2001 convention when the concept was first presented to the Board of Directors to this year when steps were finally taken to put something in motion.

If you read the President's Letter or the Society News in the last issue of *The Azalean*, you'll know that a motion was made and passed to appoint ours truly to chair a study group concerning the formation of an ASA Research Foundation. A study group of six people is now in place with members **Robert Adams**, **Hale Booth**, **John Brown**, **Robert Lee**, **John Migas**, and **Bob Stelloh**. The group's goal is to determine the feasibility of and develop a plan to institute an ASA foundation. One option is to establish a non-profit organization dedicated to the research, development and improvement of azalea culture.

When established, the foundation may provide funds

Where is Caitlin now?

Caitlin, the daughter of Joe and Brenda Klimavicz of the Northern Virginia Chapter, is still involved in scientific research. She recently completed background research on possible uses of nanotechnology in batteries for implantable devices.

She is a sophomore Bassoon Performance major with a full scholarship at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. She is also a pre-med student and plans to continue nanotechnology research.

for botanical and genetical research, including fertilization and pest and disease control (an endeavor in which we could all use some help).

Speaking of research, think back to Caitlin Klimavicz's article "Polyploidization of Evergreen Azaleas," in the Fall 2005 issue of *The Azalean*. At the time, Caitlin was a high school junior winning awards for azalea research. The point I want to make is this: There has to be a host of Caitlins—and institutions—who could promote such activities and who could use our help (see breakout above regarding Caitlin).

Foundation funding will come from all quarters—individual members, non-members, local chapters, corporations, and other foundations. We already have some seed money, but not enough to fund a project. Some of you might say: "Well, times are hard and people are trying to cut back." I beg to differ. Did you know Americans gave more than \$306 billion (yes, billions!) to charity in 2007. This was up one percent from 2006. Seventy-five percent was from individual donors at about \$100 a shot (not \$1,000s).

Think about it. A foundation like ours could—should—be on the receiving end of some of those donations. We have to start somewhere, and we have to start now.

Last words—"Charity begins at home." You'll soon have the opportunity!

New Members

Alabamese

Ken and Rita Powell
2602 Overlook Road
Blountsville, AL 35031

Ralf Bauer
Heinrich Heine Str. 8
77654 Offenburg.

Magnolia Plantation
3550 Ashley River Road
Charleston, SC 29414

Gerald Klingaman
1645 Applebury Dr.
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Sandra Justus
159 Sandy Oak Lane
Gaston, SC 29053

Wallace Alexander
472 Long Spires Rd
Gaston, SC 29053

Ben Morrison
Patricia & Bill Patterson
3422 Medina Lane
Bowie, MD 20715

Walter Ellis
3625 Jennifer St. NW
Washington, DC 20015

Hybridizers: Leave Your Legacy— A Report: Nothing

James Thornton—Conyers, Georgia

Editor's Note: The form is included on the following page.

I'll take that back. I received one response by the deadline. Before I say anything more, Galle was right—I was wrong! In his book, *Azaleas*, Galle said: "It took a lot of effort, often frustrating" to make his list.

At the time "Hybridizers: Leave your Legacy" was published (Vol. 30, No. 1, *The Azalean*), I didn't think it was going to be a problem. Everything was outlined, a form was provided, and we were going to put the information into a database to update Galle's list. It didn't help!

A funny thing about this project is that a few of us made a list of today's hybridizers who *should* respond. There were quite a few people on the list. We also made a list of those who *might* respond. Boy was I being overly optimistic!

I will say this: I received one response from someone very few of us knew and who was not on the list. Give him credit though—we know him now.

What was it? What happened? Why no responses? Was it the deadline? (*No one advised that information would be forthcoming.*) Was it too much work to fool with? Was the timing off for the season to ask for data? Was the data not readily available? Was the data being held too close to the vest? Was the data not being collected "my way"? Or was it plain old apathy?

Folks, a lot of work went into this project, not only on my part but others. And a lot of work remains if we can get your input.

What now? Well, the door remains open as long as I'm able and have the patience. After that, who knows, maybe someone else will come a long and take up the cause. But it's still your call to provide the data.

New deadline? How about the cut off date Pam has for the 2009 Spring issue of *The Azalean* (January 15, 2009). Just don't make us feel like Galle!

Lest I forget! Let me introduce David Purdy to the list of hybridizers. David lives in Omaha, Nebraska, but formerly resided in Huntington (Long Island), New York, where he was hybridizing azaleas for 19 years. He primarily uses *poukhanense* and *kiusianum* in his crosses with the goal of producing azaleas of merit for the Omaha area. You can contact David at dandepurdy@cox.net.

You can still reach me at jimpatsy@comcast.net.

Jim Thornton is an occasional contributor to *The Azalean*. He is a co-founder and the first president of the Oconee Chapter. He has served as a director, vice president, and president of the Azalea Society of America. Jim presently is the membership and public relations chair of the Oconee Chapter.

Plant	<u>e</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>Jubilant</u>		<u>l,u</u>	<u>m</u>	<u>Mrs Carmichael</u>	x	<u>Willy</u>
	Type	Status	Name/number		Habit	Height	Seed parent		Pollen parent
Flower	<u>s</u>	<u>2"</u>	<u>m</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>near vivid purplish red (74A)</u>				
	Form	Width	Season	Zone	Color				

Plant 1 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent x Pollen parent

Flower Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant

(2)	Type	Status	Name/number	Habit	Height	Seed parent	x	Pollen parent
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Flower

Form	Width	Season	Zone	Color
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Plant _____ x _____
 ③ Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent
Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant

Type	Status	Name/number	Habit	Height	Seed parent	x	Pollen parent
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Flower

Form	Width	Season	Zone	Color
------	-------	--------	------	-------

Plant

Type	Status	Name/number	Habit	Height	Seed parent	x	Pollen parent
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Flower

Form	Width	Season	Zone	Color
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Plant									
Type	Status	Name/number	Habit	Height	Seed parent	x	Pollen parent		
6									
Flower									
Form	Width	Season	Zone	Color					

Plant	Type _____	Status _____	Name/number _____	Habit _____	Height _____	Seed parent _____ x _____	Pollen parent _____
(7) Flower	Form _____	Width _____	Season _____	Zone _____	Color _____		

Plant 8 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent ^x Pollen parent

Flower Form Width Season Zone Color

Color: use RHS Colour Chart numbers, and/or NBS-ISCC color names (NBS Spec. Pub. 440 or Galle *Azaleas* p. 43-44)

Chapter News

Ben Morrison

Harold Belcher, President

Chapter members recently toured the gardens at the residency of the British Embassy. **Jim Adams** was a wonderful host and tour guide. It was nice to see the changes that Jim has made in the gardens and hear his plans for the future. His talk was filled with horticultural and historical information as well as a few interesting anecdotal points.

In July, the Chapter hosted its annual picnic and cutting exchange at the home and garden of **Harold** and **Pat Belcher** in Cheverly, Maryland.

Lake Michigan

John Migas, President

The Lake Michigan Chapter held its annual plant sale on Mother's Day weekend at the Fernwood Gardens in Niles, Michigan. The spring blooms of beautiful azaleas had not yet arrived in southwestern Michigan, but the weekend was a big success. Plants were sold, new friends made, and the 50-degree temperature, along with a never-ending Sunday rain, forced participants to the coffee room for refreshments. Many thanks to Chapter members **Dan Kunst**, **Phil** and **Linda Lanning** and to Steve Bornell and the Fernwood staff.

Northern Virginia

Eve Harrison, President and Rick Bauer, Vice President

The Chapter held a fundraiser May 9 to 11, selling azaleas at the Blandy Arboretum. There were lots of plant and food vendors, and the event was well attended. It was the first time our Chapter participated in the Blandy event for many years. We enjoyed beautiful weather, and sales netted \$2,000. Special thanks to **Bob** and **Eve Harrison**, **Rosie Field**, **Jim Cotter**, **Lee McElvain**, **Dan Krabill**, **Dave Nanney**, **Carolyn Beck**, and **Bob Stewart**.

Chapter members who were fortunate enough to attend the ASA national convention in Asheville, North Carolina, came back inspired to put on an as good, if not better, convention next year. E-mails have fired back and forth with plans and ideas just brimming over.

In July, the Chapter hosted a cookout and cutting exchange at **Eve** and **Bob Harrison's** home near Luray, Virginia. **Larry Martin**, propagator extraordinaire, demonstrated how to take cuttings as well as how to "stick" some for rooting using plastic bags.

Oconee

Ruth Mellon, Secretary

The spring Chapter meeting was held at the Rockdale County Extension Office in Conyers, Georgia. **Frank Bryan** presented a two-part program on landscape design and native azaleas.

Chapter members **Gary Wade**, **Frank Bryan**, **Albert Penland**, **James Thornton**, **Kristine Braman** and **Jean Williams** were recently recognized for an article they authored and published in the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Bulletin 670, entitled "Selecting and Growing Azaleas." The article won the prestigious 2008 National Award for Publication of Outstanding Extension Bulletins. The publication is posted on the UGA Cooperative Extension Service website, www.caes.uga.edu/extension.

Texas

Bart Brechter, President

The Texas Chapter starts its second year in September. While still young, the chapter is setting tradition by having its December Weed and Feed again. The activity gives service to a public garden in Texas and volunteers are treated to a luncheon afterward.

Throughout the year new meeting ideas and different locations will be tried for added educational and fellowship opportunities. Also, greater efforts to publicize the Azalea Society this year will result in awareness and participation for the growth of the chapter. Here is hoping we all can have a great and growing year!

Vaseyi

John Brown, Secretary

During the recent Chapter meeting, President **Doley Bell** organized an envelope stuffing contest, resulting in the stuffing, stamping and sealing of 852 envelopes in 39 minutes. The envelopes were mailed to the Garden Writers Group who were given a one-year gift memberships in the Society last year. It gives them an opportunity to join the Society as full members.

During the business section of the meeting **Richard Becker** moved and **Leon Pace** seconded a motion to donate \$3,000 earned by hosting the 2009 National Convention to the ASA National coffers. Chapter Treasurer **Bob Stelloh** will send a check for that amount when the funds are available in our investment rotation.

John Brown moved to form a committee to study and recommend a format for a Vaseyi Chapter Awards Program. He will chair the committee made up of **April Sanborn** and **Richard Becker**. The committee will submit a report to the Chapter by the 2008 Annual Meeting. Please address any input to a committee member.

Ed Collins presented a brief slide show covering cuttings, borers, perlite, and other pertinent points. New members, **Leeann Shearhouse** and **Nancy Byrd**, received their new-member plants and participated in the round robin discussion on azalea propagation.

A Special Story In and About a Special Place

John Brown—Cleveland, South Carolina

There is a tradition of storytelling in the mountains of the Carolinas that dates back to the days when Native Americans preserved their heritage by repeating the stories handed down from generation to generation. One such story is the tale of how the Cherokee Nation obtained fire. According to the legend, only the Thunders had fire until one day they sent lightning down and started a fire in a sycamore stump on an island in the river. The animals knew it was there, because they could see the smoke coming out at the top, but they could not get to it on account of the water, so they held a council to decide what to do.

Every animal that could fly or swim wanted to be the one to go after the fire. The White Raven offered to go. Because he was so large and strong they thought he could surely bring back the fire, so he was sent first. He flew high and far across the water and alighted on the sycamore tree, but while he was wondering what to do next, the heat scorched his feathers black and he was frightened and came back without the fire.

The Screech-Owl volunteered to go, and reached the place safely, but while he was looking down into the hollow tree stump a blast of hot air came up and nearly burned out his eyes. He managed to fly home as best he could, but it was a long time before he could see well, and his eyes are red to this day. Then the Hoot Owl and the Horned Owl went, but by the time they got to the hollow tree the fire was burning so fiercely that the smoke nearly blinded them, and the ashes carried up by the wind made white rings about their eyes. They had to come home without the fire, but they were never able to get rid of the white rings.

The birds decided that they would not be successful, so the White Racer Snake said he would go through the water and bring back some fire. He swam across to the island and crawled through the grass to the tree, and went in by a small hole at the bottom. The heat and smoke were too much for him, too, and after dodging about blindly over the hot ashes until he was almost on fire himself he managed by good luck to get out again at the same hole, but his body had been scorched black. He has ever since had the habit of darting and doubling on his track as if trying to escape from close quarters. He came back without fire, also.

Now they held another council, for still there was no fire, and the world was cold. The birds, snakes, and four footed animals all had some excuse for not going, because they were all afraid to venture near the burning sycamore. Finally, Water Spider Kanane'ski Amai'yehi said she would go. She was not the water spider that looks like a mosquito. Kanane'ski Amai'yehi is the large one, with black downy hair and red stripes on her body. She can run

on top of the water or dive to the bottom, so there would be no trouble getting over to the island. The Council of animals asked her, "How could she bring back the fire?"

"I'll manage that," said the Water Spider; so she spun a thread from her body and wove it into a tusti bowl, which she fastened on her back. Then she crossed over to the island and through the grass to where the fire was still burning. She put one little coal of fire into her bowl, and came back with it, and ever since we have had fire, and the Water Spider still keeps her tusti bowl.

There is a large soapstone rock (original weight on the order of seventeen tons) which was transformed by Joel Queen, a local Native American artist, into a representation of the story of the First Fire. It is prominently located near the main office building, on the roof garden at the Southern Highlands Reserve. The accompanying picture shows the water spider on the top of the rock above the working fireplace which represents the sycamore stump holding the First Fire. The other animals occupy a supporting role in the sculpture.

The sculpture, "First Fire," is an example of the attention to detail, authenticity, artistry, and being one with nature so essential to the mission of the Southern Highlands Reserve. It is a private, non-profit institution dedicated to the preservation, cultivation, and display of plants native to the Southern Appalachians. Open to academics and horticultural professionals, the 120-acre reserve is located at an elevation of 4,500 feet at the summit of Toxaway Mountain. A 20-acre Core Park of display gardens features the Azalea Walk (Gregory Bald azaleas), the Vaseyi Trail and Pond, the Wildflower Labyrinth (late summer meadow species), and the Woodland Glade. Of special interest is the newly completed roof garden.

Surrounding the Core Park is a 100-acre natural area with rock cliffs, waterfalls and seeps, and perhaps the world's largest natural stand of *R. vaseyi*. A well-maintained trail system featuring artistic originality in wood and iron traverses both woodlands and cliffs.

The Southern Highlands Reserve is a special place in every aspect of its existence. John Turner, Reserve executive director, explains that there are at least three different inputs to the design of the gardens that have been melded into a wonderfully pleasant place to spend time—either an afternoon or a career. The Reserve consulted with a landscape architect, and his input is seen in the more formal areas of the garden.

"Our landscape architect is Gary Smith, a renowned public garden designer who specializes in designs that educate and connect people to nature. Gary is mainly responsi-



Photo John Brown

▲ The sculpture, "First Fire," is an example of the attention to detail, authenticity, artistry, and being one with nature so essential to the mission of the Southern Highlands Reserve.

► A group of convention attendees prepare to tour the Southern Highlands Reserve.

ble for the Woodland Glade, the Wildflower Labyrinth and the Azalea Walk. Although the whole place is a collaboration. Gary also did Pierce's Woods at Longwood Gardens, the children's garden at Winterthur and the new master plan at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center," said Turner.

John supplied a less formal approach with casual views and walks. The local artisans and notably Equipment Engineer Jack Owen, who was tasked with placing the large stones, each contributed their own knowledge with emphasis on the rustic beauty of the area. The story about Jack is that on his first day, everyone wanted to supervise and give him detailed instructions. On the second day, everyone wanted to watch his work. For the rest of his time there, he was left to create on his own with only a general outline of where the project was headed.

Turner said, "I would describe him as an artist with native boulders with a master engineer's sense of how to handle large, heavy objects. The plaque we have prepared to put on one of the rocks in his memory simply says artist, engineer, friend."

The craftsmanship throughout the Reserve is evident at each turn. Walkways and bridges across streams are hand-



Photo John Brown

crafted in such detail as to be works of art at each bend in the trail. There is one stretch of wooden walkway that was observed to be "crooked as a snake." Shortly thereafter, the workman added a snake's head and tail to the section of walkway.

The exterior siding on buildings is made from yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) bark, a use of local materials dating back more than 100 years. The "shingles" give the building a sense of belonging unachievable with other materials and are said to last for generations.

This is the special place visited by the ASA Convention Tour group. A Sunday morning trip along the Blue Ridge escarpment brought the group to the Reserve in time to whet our appetites with a preview of the day's events. A catered lunch beyond the Vaseyi Walk and trout pond on the



▲ John Turner, executive director of the Southern Highlands Reserve, speaks to the tour group.



▲ Convention attendees exploring the glade.

manicured lawn with an overlook framing the major North Carolina mountain peaks energized the group into three teams of explorers.

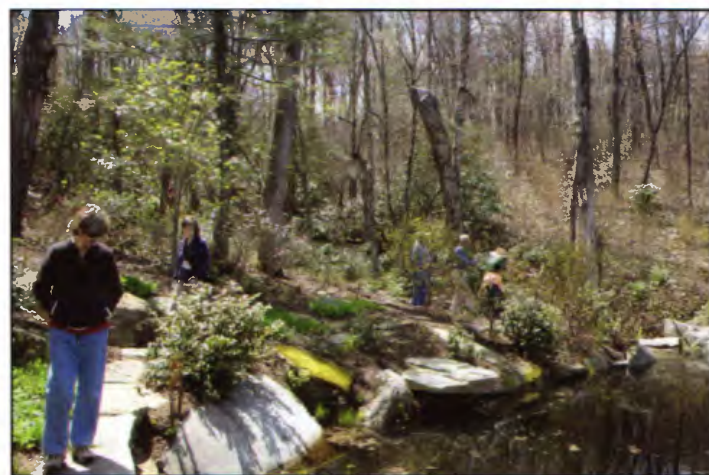
The largest—and youngest—group followed **Richard Bryson** up and down across the cliff faces to and beyond waterfalls and seeps. The outward view yielded a view of the Blue Ridge escarpment from Toxaway Lake to Lake Hartwell and beyond. Close up, the view included the underside of fallen rock as the trail crawled along the mountainside passing lichens, orchids, mosses, azaleas, kalmia, and innumerable groups of plants.

A fortunate few followed **Dick Bir** around the 20 acres of the Core Park picking tidbits of knowledge from his vast experience. Although The Reserve has been in existence for about six years, the hardscape would have you believe it had been there much longer. Plant size also fails to expose the age since the gardens have been woven into the natural landscape.

The third group hiked toward the peak of Toxaway Mountain into the *R. vaseyi* colony. These plants, located as expected on the north face of the mountain, stretch to heights of 15 feet and more under a sparse hardwood cover. When I asked how far along the trail the colony ran, the answer came back “All the way to the end of the mountain, several miles.”

The trail is deliberately underdeveloped to avoid any unnecessary encroachment on the area and plants. It is a one-lane trail, making passing difficult and group discussions nearly impossible. The group took the situation as a challenge and overcame the limitations by repeating stories back along the trail and leaning on tree branches to see forward and backward. We found the *vaseyi* in tight bud to slightly open, giving us a hint of the bloom set for the year (moderate).

Thus was the snapshot available to a small group (about 30) of the 2008 Convention tours. The Southern Highlands Reserve has just begun to open its wonders to a select few and the Society was privileged to be among the first. The Vaseyi Chapter members, who refrained from taking tour slots on the May 4 trip, were invited back on May 9, and were able to include guests from the Mountain Horticultural



▲ Walking by the trout pond.

▼ Lunch on the edge.



Research Extension Station in addition to extension agents from other areas. Every guest of the Reserve came away a richer person for the experience.

John Brown is currently serving as Society President and attempting to establish a new garden in an old forest.

Native Azaleas in the Midwest

John Migas—Saugatuck, Michigan

The only way native azaleas arrived in the Midwest was by United Parcel Service or Federal Express. The nearest nursery selling native azaleas is 400 miles away, so it's definitely not your ordinary "let's see what's at the nursery" kind of drive.

I was fortunate to purchase my first true native azaleas at a plant sale in 1998 hosted by the Midwest Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. I acquired eight of the saddest looking plants I've seen, but they were true natives.

My first encounter with a blooming native azalea occurred in the garden of Midwest Chapter Member Gene Paschall outside of Chicago, Illinois. It was early May 1997, and it was my first visit to his garden. At the time, I was new to the world of azalea enthusiasts, and I constantly asked "what's this and what's that."

We spent hours walking in a garden that would normally take 45 minutes to visit. I remember saying to myself "if this grows here, I know it could grow back home in Michigan."

Earlier that year, I attended the annual Azalea Society of America convention in Atlanta, Georgia. While there, I did not understand the hype about native azaleas. The next few conventions were held in Virginia, South Carolina, and Alabama. I do not remember many native azaleas. Then came 2001 in Asheville, North Carolina. The theme was native azaleas.

We did not hit the bloom at its peak but it was one heck of a time. On one of the bus tours into the mountains, I remember Don Hyatt jumping out of his seat and shouting: "Look on your right—a flame azalea." The bus driver suddenly pulled over, allowing our group to get out and take pictures. Then away we went.



▲ Gregory Bald seedlings received from Vivian Abney.

▼ *Rhododendron cumberlandense* seedling from Catoosa Wildlife Reserve received from Bill Pinkerton.



The next year, the convention was held in Atlanta, Georgia, and I had the opportunity to purchase several native azaleas. I bought them in pairs—two *Rhododendron atlanticum*, two *R. viscosum*, two *R. austrinum*, two *R. periclymenoides*, and so on. I felt like Noah. The only thing I didn't have was the Ark.

The plants were young, but true natives. I also purchased some large plants—crosses from **Earl Sommerville**. Every plant has survived in my garden.

At the 2003 convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee, there were plenty of native azaleas for everyone. I learned quickly that you have to be “quick on the draw” to get native azaleas. If you snooze, you lose. If you think that it will be there later, forget it. It will be gone. It's like feeding time at the zoo. Charge! Get out of the way or you will get run over. After all the chaos I still managed to purchase some plants for home.

The following year, **Bill Pinkerton** and I visited **Joe Schild's** home in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Before leaving we were fortunate to obtain a few of Joe's pure native azaleas and some of his crosses. I was really starting to collect some great plants, including Gregory Bald and Webb Mountain seedlings from **Vivian Abney** of Sevierville, Tennessee and *cumberlandense* seedlings from the Catoosa Wildlife Reserve on the Cumberland Plateau from **Bill Pinkerton** of Crossville, Tennessee.

In the spring of 2006, the plants started blooming. After all those years, it finally hit me. The beauty of the plants was awesome. Thanks to **Joe Schild**, I had to call and tell him about the plants. They were gorgeous, fragrant, and beautiful.

The Gregory Bald seedlings from **Vivian Abney** bloomed and no two were the same. **Bill Pinkerton's** *cumberlandense* seedling bloomed red and became a deeper shade of red each day. Seeing the plants bloom each day was a real treat.

If you haven't been bitten by the native azalea bug, you should attend



▲ Gregory Bald seedling received from Vivian Abney.

▼ *R. arborescens* x *R. cumberlandense* received from Joe Schild.



one of the ASA conventions and participate in one of the native azalea discussions, tours, or plant sales. Just remember to get out of the way when you hear someone yell “charge.”

John Migas lives in southwestern Michigan off the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan. A carpenter by trade since 1978, he operates a small nursery and landscape service in the Saugatuck-Douglas-Holland area. He is currently president of the Lake Michigan Chapter of the ASA and has just completed three terms as president of the Midwest Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.