

President's Letter

Aaron Cook — Valdese, North Carolina



What a year! It has been almost nonstop since this time last year. The year started with seed donations and orders flooding in. Almost daily through late November and early December, packages of seed arrived in my mailbox. The seed list was posted on the Web site by **Bob Stelloh** just after Christmas, and the first order arrived from ASA Past President **John Brown** shortly thereafter. During the next couple months, I kept busy filling orders. By April we had far exceeded sales for all previous years.

Just as the seed program began to wind down, I received the packages from ASA Secretary **Carol Flowers** in preparation for the Board meetings at the Annual Convention. The Northern Virginia Chapter put on a great convention with warm hospitality, peak gardens, and interesting speakers. The board meetings at the convention, and online since the convention, have been very productive, resulting in an active Research Foundation chaired by **Jim Thornton**. This is the culmination of many years of hard work, and fulfills a dream of two of our most illustrious members, **Mal Clark** and **Augie Kehr**. What better way is there to honor these past pillars of the Azalea Society?

I am also happy to report that we have conventions scheduled through 2012. In 2010, we will be in New Orleans, Louisiana; in 2011, we will meet in Evansville, Indiana; and in 2012, we'll be back in Asheville, North Carolina for a joint convention with the ARS.

The summer months were busy with members taking part in many azalea projects. There were workdays spent clearing balds of invading trees and shrubs, headed up by **Jim Brant** and his rowdy crew. Chapter activities, convention planning meetings, and plant propagation workdays have kept many ASA members busy and out of trouble. There were trips by various groups to observe native azaleas in the wild, and in between all these activities a little gardening probably took place. Yes, the members of the Azalea Society have been busy this year.

Never a group content to rest on its laurels, the Society is busy preparing for an even better 2010. When I think of our future I am reminded of a former President's letter where the importance of chapter activities was stated. It was said, and I agree, that chapters are where the rubber meets the road. I am blessed to belong to a very active chapter. It is filled with a group of fellow azaleaphiles who are committed to and passionate about the Azalea Society's goals. They are also a generous and compassionate group of friends, and a lot of fun to be around. My wish is that every member of the society could belong to a dynamic and active chapter.

In closing, I will leave you with three challenges and one promise for 2010:

Challenge # 1—If you are a member of a chapter, attend the chapter functions and become more involved. If you do not belong to a chapter, join one or start one in your area.

Challenge # 2—Lay aside *The Azalean* right now and send in your membership renewal to ASA Treasurer **Dan Krabill**, 6009 Copely Lane, McLean, VA 22101.

Challenge #3—Fill out the registration form for the 2010 Convention in New Orleans and send it in.

With the completion of these three simple tasks, we will be well on our way to the most successful year the ASA has ever had.

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*).

Officers for 2009-2010

President — Aaron Cook
Vice President — John Migas
Secretary — Carol Flowers
Treasurer — Dan Krabill
Immediate Past President —
John Brown

Directors

Terms expire 2010	Terms expire 2011
Hale Booth	Dr. Joe Coleman
Ron Hooper	Eugene Stano, Jr.
Maarten van der Giessen	Dave Nanney

Chapter presidents
serve as ex-officio directors.

Chapters

Brookside Gardens (chartered Aug. 1979) William C. Miller III, <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 (chartered May 1989) Bart Brechter, <i>Pres.</i>
Oconee (chartered Nov. 1991) Ed Mellon, <i>Pres.</i>	Vaseyi (chartered June 2001) April Sanborn, <i>Pres.</i>
Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) Phil Lanning, <i>Pres.</i>	Alabamense (chartered May 2005)
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 one or two persons at the same address 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.

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Oh the promise! I promise to support any chapter or group of people who desires to become a chapter in any way possible. We have people in the Society with the necessary expertise to help with plants, flower shows, speakers, programs, bylaws, and organizational structure.

On the lighter side, here is a test to determine if you are a diehard azaleaphile. Give yourself a point for each question you answer correctly. If you score between 10 and 12 you are one of us. Welcome to the family. If you scored a perfect 25 please seek professional help.

- Do you know the Latin names for all of the native azalea species in North America and can you recognize them as you cruise down the highway at 65 mph?
- Have you read Fred Galle's book, *Azaleas*, and can you quote pertinent passages for the benefit of other azaleaphiles?
- Are you a frequent contributor on the azalea Yahoo™ group?
- Have you ever made detailed genetic pedigree charts on the blank wall of your garage before making azalea crosses?
- Is at least one shelf of your fridge reserved for azalea seeds and pollen? Or do you have a separate fridge out in the garage for this purpose?
- Is at least one corner of your property covered by azaleas and companion plants in pots?
- Do you have a grow light for starting seeds in more than one room of your house? Or have you moved a car out of the garage to make room for a bank of grow lights?
- Have you ever gardened by flashlight or given non-bloom season label or foliage tours of your garden?
- Can you recall the names and descriptions of every azalea seedling you have ever grown, but sometimes forget the names of your children and their birthdays, or your wedding anniversary?
- Do you have a triple redundancy garden labeling system with GPS positioning and computer mapping?
- Have you ever bid against yourself in an azalea auction—more than once for the same plant?
- Do you talk to your azaleas (or vice versa) as you count and record the number of open blooms each day?
- Do you grow azalea seedlings in rows and call it landscaping?

- Have you ever gotten in line at 6:30 a.m. to get a good seat on a garden tour bus or volunteered to be the chase car for the tour bus?
- Do you have an azalea vanity license plate or azalea unique email address?
- Do you watch HGTV to the exclusion of all other TV channels?
- When *The Azalean* and your Marvel Comic book arrive on the same day, do you read *The Azalean* from cover to cover and then the comic book?
- Have you ever written different names on the front and back of an azalea label and then forgotten which is correct?
- Are your garden labels worth more than the plants they identify?
- Have you ever gotten up at 5 a.m. to drive to Asheville to meet another Society member for an eight-hour round trip drive to Tennessee to rescue plants from a Society member's garden?
- Is there a tree on your property that is missing bark due to root bound azaleas being repeatedly smashed into it?
- Have you ever sat in the parking lot of Ms. Margie's nursery and contemplated mailing your luggage back home to make room for more plants in the car?
- Do you routinely fly to much shorter destinations, but drive from North Carolina to Texas and Michigan so you can bring home more plants?
- Does your vocabulary include any of the following words: polyploidy, 2n, 4n, colchicine, oryzalin, or trifluralin?
- Do you have plants all over your property that bring a smile to your face when you think of the friends who gave them to you?

President's Letter Correction

In the Fall issue of *The Azalean*, I wrote about the organizing meeting of the Brookside Gardens Chapter held on December 9, 1977. I erroneously omitted two names of charter members attending the meeting: **Warren** and **Judy Groomes**. I apologize for the omission and inaccuracy of the information. Much of the information was given to me by other members, but I should have spent more time collecting information and following up. We are so fortunate to have some of our founding members still available to us.