

Society News

Call for Photos of Azaleas in Nacogdoches

Barbara Stump

Stephen F. Austin State University now has a press, the SFASU Press, and one of its forthcoming books is *Azaleas of Nacogdoches*, to be edited by **Barbara Stump**, with an introduction by **Dr. David Creech**.

If you have images that you took when you came to the Nacogdoches ASA Convention in 2007 that you'd like to share for this publication, we'd love to have them. They must be taken somewhere in Nacogdoches County and must be high-resolution. We are particularly looking for landscape images of azaleas along the Nacogdoches Azalea Trail routes.

For more information, or to send digital images, please e-mail Barbara Stump at bstump@sfasu.edu. Or better yet, bring your images to the Evansville Convention in April!

National Membership Meeting Planned

The ASA will host its annual national membership meeting at 7 p.m., Saturday, April 30, 2011, at the Clarion Inn and Conference Center, 4101 US Highway 41 North, Evansville, Indiana.

Newly elected ASA officers will be installed during the meeting. (See page 83 of the Winter 2010 issue of *The Azalean* for the Nomination Committee report.) A ballot was included in the Winter 2010 issue of *The Azalean* and must be received by April 15, 2011.

Board of Directors Meetings Set

The ASA Board of Directors will meet from 2 to 4 p.m., Thursday, April 28, 2011, at the Clarion Inn and Conference Center, 4101 US Highway 41 North, Evansville, Indiana.

A second Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for 8 a.m., Sunday, May 1, providing an opportunity for newly elected officers to discuss new business.

Foundation Benefits from Matching Gifts

J.O. Thornton

Again, we want to keep you apprised and aware of the activities of the Azalea Research Foundation, including keeping you informed on ways to make a donation and become a part of this new ASA endeavor.

All of the last few issues of *The Azalean* included some kind of message about how you can contribute to the research fund, and well here's another method. But, wait—before I get ahead of myself, let me, for the sake of new members, reiterate the foundation's purpose.

It all started when the ASA was just some hare-brained idea of some azaleaphiles who thought the "Royalty of the Garden" should be among the much cherished plants of the horticultural world and become a "society" of its own! Thus, in 1977, the Azalea Society of America was incorporated as a

non-profit organization, devoted to the culture, propagation, and appreciation of the azalea. In part our objectives include the contribution to scientific advancement in this area of horticulture. But it wasn't until 2009 that the Azalea Research Foundation was officially created as a standing committee of the ASA.

You too can support the vision by making a contribution to the research fund. And here's another way to do it while making your money multiply! Many companies offer "Matching Gift" programs for both active and retired employees. Simply stated, it is a program that companies make available to employees who support viable non-profit organizations such as ours.

Options vary from company to company. Some companies will double your donation amount, and others even triple it! It's something to look into when you decide to contribute to this "lofty" cause.

For more information, go online and search for "matching gifts" and you will see lists of companies that have such programs. Or call your company's Human Resource department or payroll office and inquire about your employer's matching gift program. Once you determine they will participate, they will provide you with a form to complete. Fill out your portion of the form and send it to us—we'll do rest!

What better way to support the Azalea Research Foundation and to have a successful program that is a valuable asset to the ASA?

Last Notice for 2011 Dues

Dan Krabill

It is past time for renewal of your ASA membership for 2011. If you have not renewed, please send \$25 (\$40 for overseas members) to Dan Krabill, ASA Treasurer, 6009 Copely Lane, McLean VA 22101.

Voss Awarded ARS Gold Medal

Long-time ASA member Don Voss was recently honored by the American Rhododendron Society with the prestigious Gold Medal, the highest award bestowed by the society.

The award recognizes Don's many contributions to the society and to our understanding of the genus *Rhododendron*, which have earned him international recognition. The award was announced at the ARS annual meeting in Long Island, New York, last May. He received the medal in June at a meeting of the Potomac Valley Chapter of ARS. Don joins an impressive list of ARS Gold Medalists, including former U.S. National Arboretum director Henry Skinner, who received the award in 1965.

A retired CIA branch chief, Don became interested in azaleas soon after serving in the army during World War II. His father-in-law, renowned azalea breeder Robert Gartrell,

had hybridized a group of evergreen azaleas known as Robin Hill azaleas. Before Gartrell's death, the Botanical Register had requested him to register the remainder of his Robin Hill selections (about half). Don evaluated the remaining plants, prepared registrations, and helped to introduce them into the nursery trade. He then organized Gartrell's records and papers, which are now housed in the archives at the University of Virginia.

Don has an impressive list of accomplishments. He has long been active with the ASA and ARS. For the ARS, Don served as a member of the Board of Directors and as President of the Potomac Valley Chapter, and he still serves on the Research Committee, reviewing grant proposals and ensuring that work funded by the society meets high standards for scientific accuracy. He has served for many years on the editorial review board for the ASA.

Contributions by Don Voss to the American Rhododendron Society (ARS), Azalea Society of America (ASA), and other azalea work that contributed toward his receipt of the Gold Medal include:

- Serving as a speaker at ARS meetings and as a judge at flower shows. In addition to the editorial board for the ASA, he served on the ARS Editorial Committee. He reviewed manuscripts for the publications of these societies, helping authors to correct errors and ambiguities in their manuscripts. Don served an important role in ensuring the accuracy and clarity of these publications. In addition, Don has published approximately 50 articles in horticultural journals.
- Becoming an internationally recognized authority on methods for describing flower color, a very important factor in describing plant cultivars accurately. While working to straighten out problems in the U.S. National Arboretum's Glenn Dale azaleas, Don had difficulties relating color descriptions made using the Ridgway Color Standards (used by Benjamin Morrison and other early horticulturists and now long out of print) to modern standards, especially the Royal Horticultural Society color chart. In the course of this study, Don worked with former National Arboretum geneticist Rob Griesbach and learned some molecular biology so he could understand how flower colors are produced and how they are inherited. Don's publications on the accurate description of flower color are now used by horticulturists throughout the world.
- Working with scientists and horticulturists with European organizations such as the Royal Horticultural Society and the Scottish Rhododendron Society in the U.K.—where he is highly respected—on cultivated plant nomenclature. Don's work has led to revisions to the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, and he was invited to serve on the editorial commission that produces the Code, a position he was unable to accept.

Don is also active with the U.S. National Arboretum, volunteering more than 6,500 hours since 1988. The list of his accomplishments during this period is impressive. It includes extensive research, writing, and editing projects, as well as a stint as herbarium manager.

Contributions by Don Voss during his work as a National Arboretum volunteer that contributed towards his receipt of the American Rhododendron Society's Gold Medal include:

- Playing a key role in the final editing and publication of National Arboretum Contribution Number 7, *A catalog of cultivated woody plants of the southeastern United States*, for which he worked closely with former arboretum scientist Fred Meyer and is credited as co-author.
- Checking all specimens of *Rhododendron* in the National Arboretum herbarium—several thousand specimens, including both wild and cultivated *Rhododendron* from all parts of the world—making sure that the identifications were correct and the names used were up-to-date.
- Thoroughly reviewing the botanical type and horticultural standard collections in the National Arboretum herbarium, which involved a re-evaluation of around 4,000 specimens and the checking of thousands of publications, including some very obscure literature. Don wrote a new database to allow this information to be captured initially, and he is now working to transfer this data to the main BG-Base database. In the course of this work, Don formally designated several hundred horticultural standards according to the new requirements set down in the latest version of the International Code for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants. Also included in this project was a re-evaluation of all current and historical specimens of Glenn Dale azaleas.
- Essentially running the National Arboretum herbarium for more than a year in the 1990s after the retirement of Peter Mazzeo and the death of Ted Dudley left the arboretum temporarily without a taxonomist. During this period, Don oversaw the operations of the herbarium, ensured that essential operations continued to be carried out, and took over supervision of other volunteers.

Call for Articles

Pam Fitch

The Azalean needs articles about azaleas, their care, and their use in the landscape. Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged.

Submit articles to: Pam Fitch, Editor, *The Azalean*, P.O. Box 632537, Nacogdoches, TX 75963 or e-mail theazalean@gmail.com.