

Society News

Azalea Research Foundation News

J.O. Thornton

Prior to the annual convention, I advised the Board of Directors that I would be stepping down as Chairman of the Foundation. As some of you know, I was involved in the initial planning stage and at its approval. I was also appointed its first chairman. I readily accepted and appreciated the trust and confidence the Board gave me with this responsibility. I hope I fulfilled their expectations.

At the recent Board of Directors meeting, I recommended Hale Booth, presently a member of the ARF committee, be named the new chairman. He was approved.

Hale is a long-time member of the ASA and is a past director. He is president of his local ARS chapter. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Science of Planning. He served as Executive Director of a regional planning agency in Tennessee for 30 years before recently retiring. During his career, he helped build and manage a large economic development agency with diverse funding sources. Hale is past president of the Tennessee Gorge Trust and has considerable experience in helping groups prioritize needs and implement goals as well as develop financial strategies to meet those goals. Presently, he is Deputy Director of a non-profit organization in Chattanooga. With this background, you see why Hale is well qualified to lead the ARF.

As for me, I will remain on the ARF committee and will continue to support the goals and objectives of the ASA. I feel, as a member of this organization, it is an honor and privilege to serve in whatever capacity I can.

Appalachian Spring—ASA/ARS Convention Shaping Up May 4 to 7, 2012

Marilyn Haynes, Vaseyi ASA and
Southeastern ARS Chapters

Our special room rates at the beautiful Asheville Crowne Plaza Resort start at \$99 for two double beds or \$109 for one king bed, and go up from there. These rates are good for 5 days before and after the convention, so start planning your "Appalachian Spring" vacation now!

Make your reservation at their customized Web site at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/ARS2012> or call in for reservations to 888-233-9527, and mention ARS-ASA Convention.

The ARS and ASA Boards will meet on Friday, May 4, with a Welcome Reception and Mini-Trade Show in the afternoon/evening. Fabulous garden tours will be on Saturday and Sunday with a post convention tour on Monday. There is even a pre-convention tour. We're hoping to show our guests the spectacular native azaleas in bloom if the weather will only cooperate. The ARS Banquet will be on Saturday night and the ASA Banquet on Sunday night. Everyone will want

to go to both, of course, regardless of your membership status, because we all like to eat, right?

The 2012 Convention Web site will soon be available with all the convention details, including garden pictures and descriptions, speaker bios, etc., plus links to area attractions to entice our out of town guests to extend their vacation in this beautiful part of the world.

The gardens we are touring were magnificent this spring! A couple of gardens are open to the public, but most are private gardens owned by our members. Lunches on the tours will be delicious buffets, no box lunches that have to be eaten on a bus! There are no simultaneous tours, so everyone will be able to go on all the tours. A tasty hot buffet breakfast will be provided at the hotel before boarding the busses.

We will have five or six first rate speakers, some local, some from far away, on a variety of interesting topics, and maybe even a workshop or two.

The plant sale will be gigantic with probably more than 3,000 azaleas, rhododendrons and companion plants! Pictures of the plant blooms will soon be on the Web site.

Yes, there will be a judged flower show, so start thinking about how you'll transport those perfect trusses or sprays. There will also be a photo contest.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for companies who wish to meet and greet current and potential customers and get their name and logo on some of our printed materials. Contact Aaron Cook, acook@cccti.edu, or Marilyn Haynes, mphaynes@juno.com, if interested.



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