

Chapter News

Ben Morrison

Harold Belcher

The chapter held its annual Christmas Party on December 11 at the home and garden of **Bill** and **Gabrielle Scott**. Everyone enjoyed socializing, great food, and conversation.

During the business meeting, we talked about having tours of members' gardens, possible scheduling of work days for members to help one another preparing their gardens for the spring blooms, and scheduling a possible chapter work day in the Azalea Collection at the U.S. National Arboretum. It was also suggested that, in addition to our Annual Cutting Picnic, members have a plant exchange which could include plants other than azaleas.

Brookside Gardens

Chapter members recently voted to disband due to an inability to develop a complete slate of officers for 2012. Chapter members may continue their national ASA membership as "at large" members or they may join a nearby chapter, including the Ben Morrison or Northern Virginia chapters. Former Brookside Garden chapter members wishing to affiliate with a new chapter may e-mail Dan Krabill at dkrabill@gmail.com.

Lake Michigan

John Migas

The Lake Michigan chapter invites any and all gardeners interested to a weekend adventure along the shores of Lake Michigan, May 18 to 20.

Members of the Tri-state Chapter of the ASA, Great Rivers Chapter of the Holly Society, and ARS District 11 chapters, along with all others, will spend a three-day weekend touring gardens and enjoy evening speakers. A banquet is planned for Saturday evening.

Meeting registration is \$10 per person. Garden tours are an additional \$55 and banquet tickets are \$27 per person. For more information about the meeting, or to register, contact John Migas at 269-857-1505 or by e-mail at azaleajohn@yahoo.com.

The Haworth Inn & Conference Center, located on the campus of Hope College, is the host hotel. Overnight rates are \$95 for quad occupancy, including breakfast. Reservations may be made at www.haworthinn.com or by calling 1-800-903-9142. The hotel is offering a bus service if needed, along with passenger vans for up to 11 riders.

Northern Virginia

Barry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary

The Northern Virginia chapter started off the fall season with its annual auction at the Merrifield Garden Center, one of the fund raisers that support the newsletter and other activities. An enthusiastic crowd, egged on by super-auctioneer **Bob Harrison**, ensured the event was a success.

The end of October found the club at a meeting with an overflowing agenda, ably guided by President **Rick Bauer**. First **Barbara Bullock**, curator of Rhododendrons and Azaleas at the U.S. National Arboretum, gave an illustrated slide talk on the Glenn Dale azaleas and Ben Morrison's work developing them. Then **Marcus Jones**, curator of Woody Plants at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, spoke about their decision to develop a world-class show garden of Glenn Dales.

Dan Krabill, an acknowledged expert on the Glenn Dales who has almost all of them, finished up by leading a slide show of the best, arranged by bloom time and color. This allowed each of us to vote on our favorites in each category, the results being given to Mr. Jones to guide his acquisitions. Finally, while continuing to munch on the array of food provided, we chose in turn from the plant exchange and enriched our gardens once more.

The highlight of the winter was the Holiday Party hosted by **Jean** and **Lars Larson**. The food was more than ample, as always, and it was great to be able to chat at length with each other. The meeting inserted within the party re-elected the prior slate of officers: **Rick Bauer**, president; **Carolyn Beck**, vice president; **Paul Beck**, treasurer; and **Mary Hoioos**, secretary.

Also, due to successful sales in 2011 we were able to donate \$1,000 to the "Save the Azaleas" program of the Friends of the National Arboretum, \$1,000 to help fund an intern at the National Arboretum, and \$500 to the Friends of the White Garden, who are assisting the Margaret White horticultural estate that has been taken over by Fairfax County.

Due to the unfortunate disbanding of the Brookside Chapter, a number of those members have chosen to join our group and we're looking forward to seeing them at upcoming events, such as the March 25 luncheon/lecture on Satsuki by *The Azalean* author Ajit Thakur and the garden tours available at the end of April.

Rev. John Drayton

Gloria Jean Williams, Corresponding Secretary

Magnolia on the Ashley's Historian **Preston Cooley** spoke to our chapter about the history and uses in the garden of satsuki azaleas. There is evidence that this variety (satsuki azalea) was established at Magnolia Gardens prior to 1930s. Many of these cultivars continue to thrive.

At this writing, many of the azalea cuttings brought to Magnolia Plantation from the U.S. National Arboretum have rooted and are being potted.

Our chapter meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Carriage House at Magnolia Plantation. Visitors are welcome. Please join us.



▲ Aaron Cook was the recipient of the Augie Kehr Memorial Award presented by April Sanborn, president of the Vaseyi chapter.

Texas

Sherrie Randall, Secretary

The Texas chapter held its Fall meeting at Bayou Bend Gardens in Houston, Texas. Formerly the home of philanthropist Miss Ima Hogg, the home holds one of the nation's foremost collections of early American art and furnishings. She created a series of gracious and beautiful gardens that were intended to be outdoor rooms for living and entertaining, not just views to be admired from within the house. She is also credited with introducing azaleas to Houston. The River Oaks Garden Club and Bayou Bend's Curator of Gardens, **Bart Brechter**, also a fellow ASA Texas Chapter member, are guided by a master plan adopted to ensure that the gardens and surrounding woodlands continue into perpetuity as a historic site.

Highlights of our meeting included the election of officers for 2012: **Jo Ann Smith**, president; **Bart Brechter**, vice president; **Don Parsons**, treasurer; and **Sherrie Randall**, secretary.

Chapter members presented a check to **Barbara Stump** for the purchase of benches in the Stephen F. Austin State University Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden in memory of the chapter's former President **Mike Stump**.

Members also discussed projects in support of the 2015 ASA conference

Following the meeting, Brechter shared a slide show detailing the history of Bayou Bend Gardens and then gave an in depth tour of the gardens. Surprise of the day—he gave each member an azalea to take home as well as donating several cultivars to the SFA Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden.

Vaseyi

Suzanne W. Medd, Secretary

Cutting and propagation tips were shared during the chapter's June meeting. **Doley Bell** swears by his clear or semi-clear Tupperware boxes with holes in the bottom. Per-

lite, peat moss, or pine bark with pure sand is his favorite medium. When cuttings are rooted, open the lid slowly over time. He uses a powdered Rootone.

Ed Collins likes his homemade little enclosed greenhouse. He uses Styrofoam grape boxes with several holes drilled in the bottom, hoops are fashioned and with a clear sheet of plastic for a roof; it is perfect. He likes a finer perlite, so perhaps a screening would be helpful. The best times for rooting cuttings are May for deciduous azaleas, and July for evergreens azaleas. Ed did say he has been successful in September, which is a great suggestion for procrastinators. Another soil mix to try is one-third perlite, and two-thirds Nature's Helper®. The BIG question of the day: Is scraping the stem necessary? Probably not, as roots grow from the bottom, also the latest research supports not cutting the stems again.

Tradd Cotter was our speaker for September. His company, Mushroom Mountain in Liberty, South Carolina, is his home/science lab/school and center for study of mycology.

He explained the role of fungi in the garden. Fungi are a network of cells that communicate. Their stomachs are on the outside; they fruit (make mushrooms) when they need food. Tradd identified some mushrooms that members had brought for identification. He showed slides of how mushrooms grow in compost.

Mushrooms are very nutritious, (gourmet restaurants love to see him coming!) He showed how to drill and put spore plugs, which he sells, into holes. He uses deciduous tree logs. We learned how to use wood chips to grow mushrooms. His straw bale garden with two tomatoes, or four peppers, basil, cardinal climber, and mushrooms (all this growing in one bale) was amazing. But, we were awed by his biocide studies against fire ants. When Tradd is in the woods he always look for something new. One discovery has led to his current biocide experiments against fire ants. It is a horror movie come to life for fire ants, with great potential for gardens. For more information, visit his Web site at www.mushroommountain.com

John Brown led the October meeting. John's proposal is for our Vaseyi Chapter to develop a PowerPoint program. This will be invaluable to all members to create interest in native azaleas. This program-project will be called Native Azaleas 101. John feels that local organizations are interested in speakers and programs. Founding Vaseyi Chapter member, **Ed Collins**, has done programs about rhododendrons for years. With a quality PowerPoint presentation, other chapter members could meet demand and build interest in the community too. All members were enthusiastic and agreed this is a worthwhile project to pursue.

The annual seed exchange and covered dish dinner was held on November 13. Members and their guests shared delicious foods. The Augie Kehr Memorial Award was presented to **Aaron Cook** for his distinguished contribution to furthering the knowledge of, propagation, care and general appreciation of azaleas and in recognition of his outstanding participation in the activities of the Vaseyi Chapter.