

President's Letter

Rick Bauer—Yorktown, Virginia



I wanted to start this message with more good news for the society. We have just added a new chapter, the Texas Forest Country Chapter in Jasper, Texas. Jasper has been a hotbed of activity this year with 16 new members joining the society and the designation of Jasper as an Azalea City. The city of Jasper has been an enthusiastic supporter of azaleas and the new chapter. They have provided an area for the chapter to meet and have also gained state funding for a city beautification project including azaleas. Congratulations to the new chapter members and their president, Robert Thau. Robert is known as "Mr. Azalea" in the Jasper area and has worked with city officials, the Chamber of Commerce, and Master Gardeners to promote azaleas and the ASA in Jasper.

The events in Jasper capped off a very successful year for the society. In April we had a very successful convention in Little Rock, Arkansas. This was the first time the society had met in the state of Arkansas. It would not have been possible without the assistance of Janet Carson and the Arkansas Master Gardeners as well as the small cadre of ASA members we had living in the state. Allen Owings and the Louisiana Chapter stepped to the plate for the second year in a row to take part in the planning and execution of the convention and to provide financial support. We also tried something new in conducting an Azaleas 101 seminar for the first time. It was an excellent opportunity to showcase azaleas to an audience of Master Gardeners. It also increased the membership rolls of the society, since each attendee received a half year membership in the society. As a result of this increased presence in the state, we were able to establish a new chapter, the Arkansas Chapter, with Ronnie Palmer as the first president.

In June we designated Robbinsville, NC, as an Azalea City and participated in their first annual Native Azalea Festival. A number of society members participated in the festivities and we thank the residents of Robbinsville and Graham County for their hospitality and their support in promoting native azaleas.

I have been pleased with the growth in the Legacy Project. We continue to add hybrid groups and there are ongoing efforts to propagate these azaleas and get them out to the general public. There are also efforts at the chapter level to work with public gardens to introduce or enhance their collections of Legacy azaleas.

I'm excited about the upcoming convention in Charleston. We were there several years ago and saw some outstanding gardens, though we were a little early for peak blooms. I'm hoping to see some spectacular azaleas and hear interesting speakers....plus, Charleston is a wonderful city to visit. I hope to see many of you at the convention.

Hopefully we will continue the momentum we've started this year. We have produced a manual with good ideas for having successful chapters. We hope that members at the local level will incorporate some of these ideas to gain and retain members. We are always looking for other ideas that we can share across the society. Besides the enjoyment of azaleas, one of my main reasons for being in the society is the people. I have enjoyed socializing with our society members this year and look forward to 2019.

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 2017-2019

President — Rick Bauer

Vice President — Charles R. Andrews, III

Secretary — Leslie Nanney

Treasurer — Paul Beck

Immediate Past President — J Jackson

Directors

Terms expire 2019

Jim Campbell

Kevin McCorkle

Sally Perkins

Terms expire 2020

Fred Anderson

Robert Thau

Andy Whipple

Chapter presidents serve as ex-officio directors.

Chapters

Ben Morrison

(chartered May 1980)

Budne Reinke, *Pres.*

Northern Virginia

(chartered May 1980)

Lars Larson, *Pres.*

Louisiana

(chartered June 1981)

Allen Owings, *Pres.*

Tri-State

(chartered Oct. 1981)

Beverly Knight, *Pres.*

Texas

(chartered May 1989)

David Creech, *Pres.*

Vaseyi

(chartered June 2001)

J Jackson, *Pres.*

Lake Michigan

(chartered May 2003)

John Migas, *Pres.*

Alabamense

(chartered May 2005)

Amanda Wilkins, *Pres.*

Rev. John Drayton

(chartered May 2010)

Tom Johnson, *Pres.*

Central Carolinas

(chartered October 2013)

Kevin McCorkle, *Pres.*

Arkansas

(chartered 2018)

Ronnie Palmer, *Pres.*

Texas Forest Country

(chartered 2018)

Robert Thau, *Pres.*

At-Large Contact

Robert Thau

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$30; life-membership for one or two persons at the same address is \$600. Members receive *The Azalean* and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society. For information and a membership application, write to Leslie Nanney, Secretary, 8646 Tuttle Road, Springfield, VA 22152 or visit www.azaleas.org.