

President's Letter

Rick Bauer—Yorktown, Virginia

This has been a very unusual year for all of us. Normal activities have been disrupted and we have had to learn how to operate under a new set of rules. Some call this the “new normal.” I’m hoping that this is not a permanent situation; however, I suspect that going forward, we will have to behave differently than in the past.

The COVID-19 situation, and the requirements to maintain “social distancing” have resulted in many activities being canceled or done remotely via applications such as Zoom. The first major impact was in March when we canceled our annual convention in Houston, Texas. At that time, we were operating out of what we thought was an abundance of caution. It turns out our actions were more than prudent. Those who have failed to take the situation seriously are unfortunately finding out how serious the impact is.

While we all hope there will be a vaccine soon, we have to plan to operate under the existing situation for the foreseeable future. In that regard, the folks from the Central Carolinas Chapter are relooking at the way we operate our conventions in preparation for the Charlotte convention in 2021. We are still planning on a convention; however, there will likely be major changes to facilitate social distancing. More information will be available in the Winter 2020 issue.

Earlier this year I sent out a notice about a draft US Forest Service management plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests which was out for public comment. Don Hyatt did an excellent analysis of the plan, which is posted as “Essay on the Appalachians” at <http://www.arspvc.org/newsletter.html>. I forwarded this analysis with a cover letter to the US Forest Service, expressing our concerns with the proposed plan. I know that others in our society (and other groups) also submitted comments. It is really heartening to see the members of the public involved in the development of policy. We will continue to monitor the situation and will keep you apprised of the outcome.

Work continues on developing Legacy Gardens. The Spring 2020 issue of *The Azalean* had an update on the efforts ongoing with the Legacy Project, including the development of Legacy Gardens. Since that article was written, Jenkins Arboretum has expressed an interest in developing a Holly Springs Legacy Garden. This effort is being supported by the Northern Virginia Chapter. I encourage other chapters to sponsor Legacy Gardens.

Finally, we have been updating some of our existing artifacts. We recently updated the society advertising trifold and are in the process of printing new ones. Thanks go to Charlie Andrews and Carol Segree in effecting this change. Thanks to Charlie and to Allen Owings for their work on updating our letterhead logo (below). Our thanks also go to the Louisiana Chapter for funding this update.



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*).

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Terms expire 2021

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Terms expire 2022

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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.