

President's Letter

Rick Bauer—Yorktown, Virginia

This will be my last President's Message for *The Azalean*. After four years, I am coming to the end of my second term. I have enjoyed meeting and working with a large number of our members. I think that we continue to do a good job in promoting azaleas and I hope to continue working towards that goal. I thank all of the members who served in elected positions at the society or chapter level and all others who have made and continue to make contributions to the society. I will miss those friends and dedicated members who are no longer with us, but who will continue to live on in our memories.

I've been especially pleased to see all of the Legacy Project initiatives ongoing throughout the society. Many chapters are propagating Legacy varieties and introducing them to the general public through plant sales. While others are working with public gardens and arboreta to establish Legacy Gardens. This is an excellent way to promote and perpetuate the legacy of some of the beautiful azalea varieties found naturally in the wild by collectors or produced by hybridizers, many of whom are members of the society. I'm also pleased that there are chapters within the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) which are also promoting azalea Legacy Gardens.

Unfortunately, COVID threw a monkey wrench into society activities during the last year of my presidency. It hit us by surprise in March of 2020 when cases sprung up overnight at Rice University in the area of the planned Houston Convention. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the health and welfare of our members, we reluctantly made the decision to cancel the convention. This was a disappointment for all of us given all the work that the planning committee had done for the convention. The Charlotte planning committee reworked their concept for the 2021 convention to comply with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), however, they had no control over their two main garden venues cancelling out given the continued COVID situation.

Many of our chapters continued to conduct chapter activities, albeit differently than in the past. Some have gotten used to meeting virtually via Zoom or other electronic means. Some are considering continuing to use electronic means to reach geographically dispersed members once live meetings recommence. We will attempt our first society wide Zoom event with the 2021 Virtual Convention in May. I see that as possibly being a component of future conventions.

I'm looking forward to things getting much better later in 2021. With more of the population being vaccinated and with continued adherence to CDC guidelines, I think that we will be able to get back to somewhat normal operations. I'm especially looking forward to getting back together with friends who I haven't seen for a couple of years. I've seen photos of some of the venues in Lafayette, LA, and I think we'll have a great convention there in 2022.

I will continue to be active in the society. I'm concurrently serving as president of the Northern Virginia Chapter and am a member of the planning group for the 2023 joint ASA/ARS Convention in Georgia sponsored by the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA and the Azalea Chapter of the ARS. I look forward to continuing to work with my friends and fellow members of the society. I hope to see you soon.



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 *Tsu tsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

Officers

President — Rick Bauer
Vice President — Charles R. Andrews III
Secretary — Donna Palmer
Treasurer — Paul Beck
Immediate Past President — J Jackson

Directors

Terms expire 2021	Terms expire 2022
Dale Berrong	Fred Anderson
Jim Campbell	—
John Simmons	Andy Whipple

Chapter presidents serve as ex-officio directors.

Chapters

Ben Morrison (chartered May 1980) Budne Reinke, Pres.	Northern Virginia (chartered May 1980) Rick Bauer, Pres.
Louisiana (chartered June 1981) Allen Owings, Pres.	Tri-State (chartered October 1981) Beverly Knight, Pres.
Texas (chartered May 1989) David Creech, Pres.	Vaseyi (chartered June 2001) Aaron Cook, Pres.
Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) John Migas, Pres.	Alabamense (chartered May 2005) John Torbert, Pres.
Rev. John Drayton (chartered May 2010) John Donato, Pres.	Central Carolinas (chartered Oct. 2013) Kevin McCorkle, Pres.
Arkansas (chartered 2018) Ronnie Palmer, Pres.	Texas Forest Country (chartered 2018) Betty Horne, Pres.

At-Large Contact

Rick Bauer

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 Donna Palmer, Secretary, 1106 S. Evans Road South White Hall, AR 71602-9430 or visit www.azaleas.org.