

# President's Letter

## Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

I am honored to be associated with an organization that promotes azaleas. It is my fortunate pleasure to follow Rick Bauer as president. Rick has all the characteristics of a good leader. He knows that we are a voluntary organization, not a business corporation or military organization. Here one must lead, not order others around.

Rick was an active society president with personality and charisma. He was full of ideas to help our organization succeed and grow. He brought the Northern Virginia Chapter's excellent Legacy Project to the whole ASA. He helped connect us with other organizations such as the Graham County/Robbinsville, NC Native Azalea Festival. Under his watch, we introduced an Azalea 101 workshop in cooperation with the Master Gardeners organization for the public. This brought in about 70 new members to ASA. As president, Rick introduced a new logo, an updated brochure, and two extremely useful (I would almost say essential) publications to assist our chapters, *Chapter Ideas for Success* and *Planning and Running a Convention*.

Rick took the many challenges to our organization brought on by the COVID pandemic in stride. It was impressive to see him up close as we faced the difficulties this pandemic caused our conventions and chapters' activities.

Rick has been active at the chapter level also. He has served as chapter vice president, newsletter editor, president, ASA director, and convention co-chair. He worked on the team that digitized *The Azalean*. He is the current president of the Northern Virginia Chapter. You see what I have to follow. Fortunately, Rick will still be close by.

During my term as president, you will hear several themes repeatedly.

First, the Azalea Society of America needs to be *the* place for azalea information and knowledge. We need to increase the quality and quantity of information available through our chapters and national organization. This involves chapter activities, our website, *The Azalean*, and our Azalea Research Fund. For example, the Legacy Project is a great start, yet, there are many other cultivars not necessarily in a Legacy Project that should be added to our plant database to make it more complete. More educational opportunities like Azalea 101 workshops should be organized. We need to encourage more quality articles for our journal, *The Azalean*. We will be working on opportunities like these.

Second is membership. We cannot succeed without members, and our numbers are in decline. Our chapter leaders need to actively make recruiting and retention a priority. I will assist where I can through our membership committee.

Third, we as an organization have to give our members value for their money. People join and pay dues. They do not have to. They can stop. We succeed by providing value. It is our job as chapter leaders to aggressively find ways to provide value to these people interested in azaleas. We need to discover what benefits them and make it available. It is not easy. We have different interests. We have different levels of expertise. Chapters have local and distant members. While each chapter plans its own activities and establishes its own capabilities, I want our national organization to help our chapters as much as possible in providing value.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president. I love azaleas, and azalea lovers are my wonderful friends.



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

**President** — Charles R. Andrews III

**Vice President** — Tom Johnson

**Secretary** — Donna Palmer

**Treasurer** — Paul Beck

**Immediate Past President** — Rick Bauer

### Directors

#### Terms expire 2022

Fred Anderson

Aaron Cook

Andy Whipple

#### Terms expire 2023

Dale Berrong

Michael Bamford

Dr. John Simmons

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](http://www.azaleas.org).