

President's Letter

Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

It is strange to be writing for the Fall 2021 issue with temperature in the upper 80s here in Georgia. I can say we had a very good year bloom-wise. We like to emphasize year-round interest in our garden, not just the spring burst. At this moment in August, plumleaf azaleas, hammocksweet azaleas, and re-blooming evergreens have joined with *Hydrangea paniculata* to brighten our garden. From my office window I can look out and see hummingbirds gathering over Autumn Embers® in full bloom.

I hope our chapters are staying active whether virtual or in person. Zoom meetings have disadvantages and advantages. It is hard to replace the fellowship of face-to-face meetings, but we are finding many non-local members (even from overseas) have been attending these Zoom meetings. It becomes much easier to get a speaker for a Zoom meeting, since travel is not required. Another benefit is that the program can be recorded for later viewing. Chapters should consider sharing their meetings via Zoom even when face-to-face meetings resume.

From anecdotal evidence, interest in azaleas seems to be high. People seem to have rediscovered our native azaleas and realize that there are many new evergreen hybrids to choose from. Mardi and I were at a luncheon recently with some of her college classmates and their spouses. Of course, I mentioned azaleas. By the end of the gathering, four couples wanted to be notified of the spring plant sale. Plant sales are an excellent opportunity to find new members. Your goal should not be simply to raise money. Offer a significant discount to members, including customers who join at the plant sale. Then get those new members excited about azaleas and involved in your chapter.



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

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Chapter presidents serve as ex-officio directors.

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(chartered May 1980)

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(chartered 2018)

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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.