

President's Letter

Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia



Louisiana Convention

We had a great convention in Lafayette, Louisiana, in March. The Louisiana Chapter with Denise Lanclos as convention chair put on a great event. Conventions are wonderful times to visit different areas and see not only plants and gardens, but historic and interesting sites as well. Often the food is exciting and in Louisiana, food alone is worth the trip. The educational speakers and knowledgeable tour guides this time did not disappoint. One always returns from our conventions with a garden bag full of new information. Read all about the Lafayette convention in this issue.

The Real Reason

Yet, that is not the reason I love to go to these conventions. The most important reason is to see all of you. People are the real joy and pleasure of these get-togethers. We see many friends we have not seen for a good while. It never fails that here we will make new friends. On the tour buses, we often sit next to someone we just met and now have a new friend. We learn where they live, the plants they like, and what their horticultural interests are. Likely as not, we will have common interests. Many informal discussions take place at the conference hotel, where we share information. That's where the real education takes place. This is where I really learn. It is amazing the knowledge one can find within our group.

Georgia with Azaleas on My Mind

You don't want to miss our next convention. It is a joint convention with the American Rhododendron Society, hosted by the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA and the Azalea Chapter ARS. The 2023 Joint ARS/ASA Convention will be held April 19-23, 2023, at the Atlanta Marriott Perimeter Center Hotel. Atlanta is easy to get to, and the hotel north of the city is easy to get to by car and from the airport. It is adjacent to Atlanta's rapid transit, MARTA, and is convenient to all downtown attractions. Our convention attendees will receive free hotel parking and free shuttle service within the local area (including the MARTA station).

So Much To See and Do

Georgia is rich in native flora. Of the 17 named species of North American azaleas, 12 grow natively within the state. Many of the other elepidote and lepidote rhododendrons are also native to the state. We are not native snobs, though. Many non-native plant species thrive here. Our latitude is about the same as parts of Japan. The state hosts outstanding gardens and parks. Amazing tours and programs await you. In addition to the flora, Atlanta and Georgia culture and history offer much to see.

All This and Your Friends Too

So plan now on joining me next April to see your friends in Atlanta for flora, fun, and fellowship. Learn about the convention, Atlanta, our tours, and programs by visiting <https://www.azaleas.org/convention2023/>. More details are forthcoming on the 2023 convention web pages and in the Fall and Winter issues of *The Azalean*.

I always want to hear from you. You are the reason we exist. You can reach me at president@azaleas.org.

~ *Charlie*

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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Chapter presidents serve as ex-officio directors.

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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 Mrs. Denise R. Lanclos, 132 Oakview Blvd., Lafayette, LA 70503. or visit www.azaleas.org.