

# President's Letter

Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

## Come to the Joint Convention

I want to encourage everyone to come to Georgia for the Joint 2023 ARS/ASA Convention, 19-23 April 2023. The convention committee chose the theme “Georgia with Azaleas on My Mind.” “Georgia on My Mind” is the state song of Georgia. It is called an iconic song sung by an iconic artist, Ray Charles. Ray Charles was a Georgian, born in Albany, Georgia. Many are familiar with this song. We add to this the fact that Georgia is a great ericaceous state. We have mostly acidic soils and ample rainfall. *Rhododendron maximum* is prominent in our mountains. *R. catawbiense* can be found in high and low elevation forms. *R. minus* can be found from the top of the state to the bottom.

Our native deciduous rhododendrons thrive here as well. Of the currently declared 17 species of native azaleas in North America, Georgia claims 12, more than any other state. They are found in all the five geographic areas of the state: Appalachian Plateau, Valley and Ridge, Blue Ridge, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain. Some of the best examples of flame azaleas can be found in the wild in the North Georgia mountain and foothills, down as far as the Atlanta area. Martha Prince, who grew up in the mountains of North Georgia, but later lived in New York, once noted that she had “randomly picked many sprays in the wild worthy of ‘Best Species in Show’ anywhere.”

Non-native, evergreen azaleas can be found everywhere in the state. Once considered a tender, hothouse plant, in the mid-1800s a spent Southern Indian Hybrid was thrown out in the yard by someone in South Carolina or Georgia, and the plant found itself a home in the climate of the Southeast. We now realize that the latitude of Japan and Georgia are about the same.

The convention committee is planning a time for you to be with your plant friends, talk shop, tour gardens, and enjoy interesting banquet programs and seminars. Atlanta and Georgia have many other things to see and do. Atlanta is one of the easiest places to get to. There is a saying: You may be going to heaven, you may be going to hell, but you are going to change planes in Atlanta.

Register now and get your hotel reservations. More information inside this issue on pages 76-80. See you there.

~ 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).

### Officers

**President** — Charles R. Andrews III

**Vice President** — Tom Johnson

**Secretary** — Denise Lanclos

**Treasurer** — Paul Beck

**Immediate Past President** — Rick Bauer

### Directors

#### Terms expire 2023

Dale Berrong

Michael Bamford

Dr. John Simmons

#### Terms expire 2024

Frank Russenberger

Shane Harris

Allen Owings

Chapter presidents serve as ex-officio directors.

### Chapters

#### Ben Morrison

(chartered May 1980)

Budne Reinke, Pres.

#### Northern Virginia

(chartered May 1980)

Barbara Kirkwood, Pres.

#### Louisiana

(chartered June 1981)

Allen Owings, Pres.

#### Texas Forest Country

(chartered 2018)

Betty Horne, 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)

Wilson Taylor, Pres.

#### Central Carolinas

(chartered Oct. 2013)

Kevin McCorkle, Pres.

#### Arkansas

(chartered 2018)

Ronnie Palmer, 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 Mrs. Denise R. Lanclos, 132 Oakview Blvd., Lafayette, LA 70503. or visit [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org).