

Society Officer Candidates

Charlie Andrews—President

Charles Andrews is a retired Georgia Tech engineer, whose lifelong hobby of trout fishing introduced him many years ago to native azaleas, often called wild honeysuckle, a subject about which he wants to learn everything possible. He writes and speaks on azalea topics as well as on genealogical and history subjects. Charlie is co-author of two history books, many articles, and is currently working on two books about native azaleas: one on historic illustrations from 1690 to the present and the other on the history and characteristics of our North American azaleas. He talks on various azalea topics and has written articles in *The Azalean* and the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society*. Charlie is the current president of the Azalea Society of America and serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of *The Azalean*. He is past president of the Azalea Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

With notebook, jeweler's loupe, and camera in hand, Charlie has roamed the woods in search of native azaleas for 40 years. He is fortunate to have had properties with many thousands of them, including amazing swarms of hybrids. His garden is filled with Ericaceae and other, mostly native, plants. Charlie believes the ASA has much to contribute to anyone interested in these beautiful and useful plants. As popular as they are, there is still much we do not know about the two basic groups, both called azaleas. These unique plants should not be lost as stepchildren hidden behind the wide skirt of the rhododendron genus. The ASA needs to be the place to go for azalea facts, culture, research, and spreading the love of gardening, and can contribute much more to its members and the public.

Tom Johnson—Vice President

Tom Johnson is a lifelong horticulturist whose penchant for sharing horticulture with his professional colleagues and friends has taken him to Europe and the Caribbean. As a youth, Tom oversaw the redesign of downtown Perry, Georgia. The landscaping project won for the city a prestigious national award. He was the first student in the state of Georgia to be elected to The Governor's Honors Program in Vocational Agriculture. In 1985, when President Jimmy Carter began building his presidential library in Atlanta, he enlisted Tom to help oversee the building of the gardens. That experience led to Tom being selected for the design team for the construction of the Evan Allen III Pavilion and the Cecil B. Day Chapel. During the develop-

ment of the Carter Center Gardens, Tom apprenticed for five years under world-renowned Japanese architect Kinsako Nakane. Tom is among a handful of Americans to have had this opportunity. After a decade at the Carter Presidential Center, Tom returned to Middle Georgia to be the national horticulturist with the American Camellia Society. For the next eight years, he managed the society's camellia collection at Masee Lane Gardens, the society's national headquarters. In that role, while at Masee Lane, Tom was approached by John Drayton Hastie, Jr., asking him to become Magnolia's executive director. At Magnolia, Tom's responsibilities included the restoration of America's oldest romantic-style garden.

Tom was responsible for the establishment of the Rev. Drayton Chapter of the society. During this period, he and his chapter sponsored two successful conventions in Charleston and Summerville, SC. Tom has also served as a director of the society and is currently society Vice-President. Tom has retired and moved back to Georgia where he is a grower for "Lazy K Nursery" formerly owned by his friend Ernest Koone.

Senora Simpson—Director

Senora Simpson has been a member of the Azalea Society of America since 1982, originally in the Brookside Gardens chapter and now in the Ben Morrison chapter and an associate member of the Northern Virginia Chapter. She has extensive experience in different areas of horticulture and is a current or past member of several horticultural societies including the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, Landscapes Critics Council, National Capital Area Federation of Garden Clubs (member for more than 50 years), and the Capital Hill Garden Club. She is one of a handful of members who live in the District of Columbia.

In her professional life, she was primarily in the health field with a focus on physical therapy. Additionally, she was an insurance health claims reviewer and expert witness in court cases involving physical therapy. She retired in 2021 as an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at Howard University.

Her background in various aspects of horticulture and her professional experiences will bring a new perspective to the Board of Directors.

Dale Berrong – Director

Dale Berrong has been interested in plants, propagation, and gardening for more than 20 years and joined the ASA following attendance of the joint ASA/ARS convention in Virginia in 2016. Dale is a past president of The Maple Society, North American Branch, and is a current member of the Azalea Chapter /ARS. He enjoys propagation and is in the process of building a large garden at his home in Danielsville, GA. After his retirement and the sale of his company in 2016, it has become his full-time job. During his career, Dale has served on the boards of for-profit corporations, not-for-profit corporations, and corporate pension plans. He would be honored to continue to serve the ASA.

John Simmons—Director

John Simmons is a member of the Vaseyi chapter. He has had an interest in azaleas since a next door neighbor taught him to root azalea cuttings during his medical school years from 1964-1968. John has explored many areas looking for wildflowers and has long been fascinated with the native azaleas. He is now the lead on a legacy garden featuring the work of George Beasley. In an effort to grow membership in the society, he is teaching a class on azaleas at a Life Long Learning program at Wofford College. John also teaches classes on meditation and mindfulness and enjoys gardens and gardening as venues for meditation.

Michael Bamford—Director

Michael Bamford and his wife Pim are members of the Northern Virginia Chapter; their interest in native azaleas started in the 1970s. They have been members of Atlanta's Azalea Chapter for almost a decade, where Mike has chaired the Plant Sale and Project Garden committees. Under Mike's tenure, the plant sale has seen remarkable growth in both sales and profits. As Committee Chair of Projects, Mike worked collaboratively with other organizations to promote native azaleas in public areas. Connecting the chapter's expertise in growing, planting, and selection with other organizations in Georgia has resulted in successful plantings along Atlanta's BeltLine and Pathways. The committee supported plantings at Lockerly Arboretum's Ernest Koone Azalea Garden and the continued preservation of rhododendrons at Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge. Mike is a retired engineer and professional from the toy industry.

Welcome New Members!

New At Large members include:

- Randall and Lucci Kelly, Roxbury, NY

The Central Carolinas Chapter welcomes:

- Ellen Bowen, Johns Island, SC
- Sue A. Gaeta, Johns Island, SC
- Edwin Phillips, Lexington, NC

The Northern Virginia Chapter welcomes:

- Jean Mauldin, Fernandina Beach, FL
- Keely Shaughnessy, Germantown, MD

The Rev. John Drayton Chapter welcomes:

- Jacqueline Crowley, Johns Island, SC
- John Ramsdell, Adams Run, SC

The Vaseyi Chapter welcomes:

- Carson A. Ellis, Asheville, NC



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