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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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James O. Thornton

Conyers, GA

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Folks, it's getting to be that time of year when we start our membership renewal process, and we need to think of how we can improve our numbers.

Bill Bode (our VP and Membership Recruitment Chairman) and I have been talking about ways to do this, and we'd like to share these thoughts with you. Please note they are in no particular order or priority.

First at the national level:

- officers and directors should take the lead in setting an example on membership recruiting activities
- set membership goals each year
- provide promotional material
- provide a certificate of membership to our commercial members
- provide one free ad to the new commercial member
- advertise in a national magazine prior to each new year
- request each chapter to have a membership chairman
- provide program material for use by chapters
- provide **THE AZALEAN** to colleges and libraries
- develop membership drives on a national level
- target propagators and growers at the corporate level and pursue horticultural schools, public gardens and arboreta
- develop a Marketing Manager position.

Now, let's talk at the local chapter level. Chapters could do some of these things:

- create membership committee/ chair
- make membership an item at every meeting
- maintain and distribute applications at all meetings
- provide applications to local garden centers, nurseries, colleges, county extension offices, etc.
- conduct at least one flower show each year
- provide news releases about meetings to local papers
- develop a chapter news letter
- follow up on prospective new members and non-renewals
- have an annual plant sale
- give new members a gift azalea plant
- develop a yearly calendar for publication in **THE AZALEAN**
- have annual cutting/propagation/swap meeting
- make plants available for sale at meetings
- promote chapter members for speaking engagements
- participate in craft shows and festivals
- promote **THE AZALEAN**—solicit articles

Friends, I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture. Just remember, this list is not at all encompassing. I'm sure that at your next chapter meeting you could come up with an even longer list of things to do. And look—you at-large members—I don't want you to feel left out! When you've read this and have given it some thought, make your own list of things you can do—and how about starting a new chapter? Think about it!

Like Jerry Springer says, "One final thought, now is the time for all good members to come to the aid of their society", the Azalea Society of America!

P.S. Please let me know if you have any comments.

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*On the Cover: McDonald Hybrid 'New Generation Red'  
Photographer: Sandra McDonald*

## Azalea Society of America

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 Subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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### OFFICERS FOR 1998-1999

President	James O. Thornton
Vice-President	William Bode
Secretary	Ruth Bryan
Treasurer	Robert Stelloh
Immediate Past-President	Stephen S. Brainerd

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### DIRECTORS

Terms Expire in 1999	Terms Expire in 2000
Gen. Bryghte Godbold	Robert Lee
Donald Hyatt	Maarten van der Giessen
Col. Murray Sheffield	Stephen Schroeder

Chapter presidents serve as ex-officio directors.

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### CHAPTERS

- Brookside Gardens** (chartered August 1979)  
Dianne Gregg, *President*
  - Richmond, Virginia** (chartered August 1979)  
Frank J. Digney, *President*
  - Ben Morrison** (chartered May 1980)  
Joe Miller, *President*
  - Northern Virginia** (chartered May 1980)  
Joe Klimavicz, *President*
  - Louisiana** (chartered June 1981)  
Vincent J. Ciolino, *President*
  - Tri-State** (chartered October 1981)  
Greg Wedding, *President*
  - Dallas Chapter** (chartered May 1989)  
Roby Odom, *President*
  - Oconee Chapter** (chartered November 1991)  
Mike McNeal, *President*
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Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual contribution of \$25.00; life membership for an individual is \$500.00. Members receive **THE AZALEAN** and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society including those of the chapter with which the member affiliates. For information and a membership application, write to the Membership Committee, Azalea Society of America, P. O. Box 34536, West Bethesda, MD 20827-0536.