

**David Sauer** ("The New Kurumes") has been an avid collector of azaleas and rhododendrons for 40 years, along with his career as a fine arts teacher of painting and photography at Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Steve Brainerd** ("Designing with Native Azaleas") was a Navy fighter Top Gun pilot and has been a landscape designer for the past 10 years. He is currently working as Parks Development Superintendent for the city of McKinney, Texas, and is studying for a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. Steve is a past president of the Azalea Society of America.

### Saturday Keynote Speaker

**Don Hyatt** ("The Best of the Best: In Search of Native Azaleas") has been an avid hybridizer of azaleas and rhododendrons for over 30 years, with a particular interest in deciduous azaleas, and has been teaching mathemat-

ics and computer science for 32 years. His exceptional web pages at <http://www.tjhsst.edu/~dhyatt/gardencenter.html> demonstrate his ability to combine his work and avocation. Don is a former district director of the ARS, and is now a director of the ASA and the president of the Potomac Valley ARS chapter.

As our keynote speaker, Don recounts his frequent hikes in the mountains in North Carolina and Tennessee to search for the finest forms of our native azaleas. Enjoy the magnificent views along the Appalachian Trail near Roan Mountain as he documents exceptional forms of *R. calendulaceum*. Stroll through the hybrid swarm of native azaleas on Gregory Bald as he tries to identify the "best of the best" in one of the greatest flower shows on earth. Through slides and commentary, Don will share his appreciation for the rich botanical diversity in these and other treasure spots in the southern Appalachians.

### Other Convention Features

**Plants**, lots of them, will be on sale. We will have sizes ranging from rooted cuttings to specimen plants, and we will have many varieties of deciduous and evergreen azaleas from which to choose. Most will be available at fixed low prices, with others at a live auction and several silent auctions. We even have a number of rooted cuttings and a few specimen plants of the newly discovered *R. eastmanii* for you to buy!

**Quilt.** We have commissioned a truly magnificent quilted wall hanging, entitled "Delectable Mountain Azaleas." It features *R. vaseyi* and other native azaleas worked into the very old and well known (at least to quilters) Delectable Mountains quilt design. It is being designed and created for us by Teresa Reilly, a renowned quilter, the author of *Five Seasons of Quilts*, and a teacher and lecturer on quilting. When the winning raffle ticket is drawn Saturday evening, one lucky attendee will be going home with an heirloom.

## In Memory

Peter Girard, Jr., died March 12, 2001, in Geneva, Ohio, from complications of a cerebral hemorrhage. Learning the nursery business from his father who started Girard Nurseries in 1946, Peter and his wife Caroline, daughter Roberta, son-in-law Jeff Forinash, and grandsons Peter and Joshua have built a wholesale, retail, and mail order nursery that specializes in both evergreen and deciduous azaleas, rhododendrons, conifers, and other companion and water garden plants. The nursery, with 15 acres of display area that Peter said included "no more than two of any single plant," was featured on HGTV October 24, 1999. More than just selling plants, Girard loved growing new varieties, up to 40,000

plants and grafted trees. In keeping with the motto, "A home is not a home until it's planted," Girard placed picnic tables, a gazebo, and benches throughout the nursery to encourage people to spend time with the plants, enjoy the displays, and take notes on what they might want to try.

Peter Girard, Sr. began breeding work on azalea and rhododendron hybrids in the 1940s. Well known for their hardiness and bright colors, the nursery offers over 40 cultivars. When he died, Peter Girard, Jr. was working on a number of new introductions: pink *Rhododendron* 'Girard Little Michelle' is now available; light salmon R. 'Girard Caitlin' and pink-salmon R. 'Girard Constance' are soon to be released. A deep pink rhododen-

dron, 'Girard Brandon', which has a huge truss and big flowers will be introduced in a few years.

Girard developed a passion for conifers, carrying over 2,500 cultivars at the nursery, and became very active in the American Conifer Society. He introduced a number of new cultivars, including *Juniperus x media* 'Girard Saybrook Gold', a patented juniper that remains bright gold year-round and the very dwarf, very white *Picea glauca* 'Girard Monstrosa' – Girard's Dwarf Monstrosa White Spruce.

The third and fourth generations are continuing the work of the nursery, which is a long-time advertiser in **THE AZALEAN**.