

President's Letter

Joseph E. Schild, Jr. — Hixson, Tennessee

For those of us with large plantings of azaleas, rhododendrons, and other shrubs and trees of choice, it has been a difficult time with the very hot and dry summer just past. In some cases, not even my irrigation system could keep up with the thirsty plants. Nevertheless, there was a measure of good to come out of the summer, and that was finding a few people thirsty for information on azaleas and how to care for them. That is turning lemons into lemonade, and we were able to make a few folks into gardening friends and then into ASA members.

With my term as your president coming to an end at the convention in May, I have been looking in the rearview mirror for some perspective on what we all have accomplished together. Did you know we signed up more new members via the Web site than ever before? Did you know that we have almost met the membership numbers for 2001, even though it was a tough year for all of us? Did you know that the chapter donations to the general expense fund have put us on a solid budget footing? Did you know that if we do not continue to grow new members, we may be forced into considering a dues increase? Oops, that last one was a negative, but we as members can control how much we grow by joining the Society, forming chapters, and getting seriously active in the process.

I must also state that it has been a real pleasure to serve you and work with the board of directors. They have performed with professionalism and in the best interest of the Society.

In review of other items, I note that the Web site has a few areas of concern with some pages still under construction. Bob Stelloh needs input from the members and anyone willing to assist him will be most welcome, so give him a call or e-mail him.

As you browse through the winter issue of *The Azalean*, I hope you take note of the wonderful gardens and the slate of great speakers for our 2003 Convention and national meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This is the 25th anniversary celebration of the ASA. Something special is planned for this great event. The plant sale is going to be different, with not only azaleas available, but also a great selection of wildflowers and ferns that are great companions to our azaleas.

Consideration of bus ride time was foremost in the scheduling of the tours, so there will be short trips and refreshing stops at the gardens. It will be a relaxing time for friends to gather and perhaps make new ones.

I hope to see you all in Chattanooga and keep up the great work of the Society. I also wish you a great Christmas season.

Best regards to all and Happy New Year.

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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Brookside Gardens (chartered Aug. 1979) Dr. Charles Evans, Pres.	Ben Morrison (chartered May 1980) Bob McWhorter, Pres.
Northern Virginia (chartered May 1980) Barry Sperling, Pres.	Louisiana (chartered June 1981) Dr. John Thornton, Pres.
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Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount 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 the Membership Committee, Azalea Society of America, 1000 Moody Bridge Road, Cleveland, SC 29635.

Corrections

In the Fall 2002 issue, the wonderful photograph on page 57 of Martha Derthick's restoration of the Clouds' garden in Charlottesville, Virginia, was incorrectly attributed to her. Actually, her neighbor H. W. Childress was the photographer. Our thanks to both for contributing to *The Azalean*.