Northern Virginia Chapter
Frances Louer, Newsletter Editor
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The July 11 meeting at the home of Bob and Eve Harrison introduced members to their "little part of Heaven that West Virginia is so famous for." Don Hyatt told the group that when they host the ASA convention, that the focus will be on local azalea hybridizers, and that he hoped members will be able to propagate plants for the event. President Barry Sperling also asked members to look for records on the early years of the ASA to send to the Society's archives project. Then the group had fun "selecting cuttings for future landscaping fantasies" and toured the Harrisons' lovely garden.

The chapter's annual plant auction was held August 29 at the home of Dave and Leslie Nanney in West Springfield, Virginia. Members were invited to bring both plants to auction and new friends to introduce to the ASA. The August issue of the Azalea Clipper contained an interesting article by chapter president Barry Sperling in which he recounted how difficult it is to choose "his favorite azalea." After saying he liked Harris's 'Coronado' as the best red he knows, Glenn Dale 'Prudence' for growing well for him and covering itself with flowers, and the bi-colors 'Martha Hitchcock' (Glenn Dale) and 'Ashley Ruth' (from Bob Stewart), he set out his criteria for what it takes to be the best:

1. Looks good in the landscape as a focal point plant,
2. Grows vigorously enough to be a "foundation plant" in a few years (i.e., a plant with real substance, not necessarily planted around the foundation),
3. Is floriferous, covering itself densely,
4. Has a flower and truss that look good on close inspection,
5. Has a flower that is bi-color (or tricolor), with the darker color a strong one, such as a good red or purple,
6. Is a low-maintenance plant,
7. Appeals so much to non-azaleaphiles that they say, "Where can I get one?", and
8. Causes azaleaphiles to say, "That looks good! Why don't I get one?"

The newsletter also announced that Mich and Bill Steele were closing their nursery. Jim Fry, president of the New York Chapter of the ARS has purchased all of their liners (1000 varieties of azaleas and close to 300 varieties of lepidotes). He will carry on where the Steeles left off.

September 26th, chapter vice-president Dan Krabill presented images from his CD of Glenn Dale azaleas as mentioned in the article in The Azalean [26(3): 28-31]. He provided the narrative for the 350-plus Glenn Dale images, and members were able to ask questions.

Ben Morrison Chapter
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Carol Flowers — dfowers@bellatlantic.net

October 1, 2004, chapter members attended the special ceremonies recognizing the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Ben Morrison Garden at the US National Arboretum. (See article by Bob McWhorter on page 79.) The October 31 meeting was held at the home of Dave and Eileen Holm, at which time members drew numbers to decide which lucky home would "grow on" the rooted cuttings from the US National Arboretum that the chapter is growing for the 2006 national convention. Members then brainstormed ideas for meetings for 2005.

At the November 19th meeting at the home of Bob and Rose McWhorter, president Carol Segree led a discussion of what future chapter activities should be. She also suggested it would be helpful if a few standing committees could be responsible for planning the meetings and special events, as this would increase member participation and add some diversity to the meetings. The annual holiday celebration was held at the home of Dale and Carol Flowers on December 5, 2004.

Oconee Chapter
Frank Bryan, Newsletter Editor
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The July newsletter reported on the 2004 convention and the ASA archives project, and contained a very detailed listing of all the hybrid groups of evergreen azaleas, including many that have been developed since Galle's 1987 encyclopedic book.

The August 15 meeting covered three topics: 1) Allison Fuqua's new procedures for rooting cuttings, including soil and hormone, 2) Jim Thornton's slides of tropical plants and other sights from his recent trip to Southeast Asia, and 3) discussion of what constitutes members' favorite azaleas. The newsletter asked members to review the following list of "proven performers" that the Azalea Chapter of the ARS published in 2000:

- 'Beth Bullard'
- 'Boldface'
- 'Conversation Piece'
- 'Corsage'
- 'Elsie Lee'
- 'George Lindley Taber'
- 'Glacier'
- 'White Rosebud'
- 'Koromo-shikibu'
- 'Marian Lee'
- 'Midnight Flare'
- 'Gumo White Sport'

Similar listings were submitted by

The November 14 meeting speaker was Mike Francis, owner of Greenhouse Nursery and Maple Farm in Decatur, Georgia. His slide presentation was “Japanese Maples from A to Z,” and included varieties well adapted to the northern Georgia area.

The November 2004 newsletter included a long technical article by Frank Bryan on “Nutrients for Plant Growth, Survival, and Health.” [To be published in a forth-coming issue of The Azalean, Ed.]

Chapters Organizing and Reorganizing

The Alabamense Chapter has 35 members and will receive its official charter at the national convention in May 2005. Carlton LeMond, president and other members are busy speaking to garden clubs and holding seminars. Contact Carlton at cllemond@direcway.com (or 205-665-9089) for more details.

Some members of the Dallas Chapter met in Nacogdoches, Texas, November 6 and decided to work toward reorganizing the Texas members into a Texas chapter, with a focus on East Texas activities. Revised By-Laws will be presented to the ASA board of directors at the national convention. Contact Barbara Stump (bsstump@sbcglobal.net or 936-462-7195) for more details.

New Members

The following members joined the Society as of December 20, 2004.

At Large
Robert Z. Callahan
26 St Stephens Drive
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925-254-0624

William Shulleeta & Virginia Kilgour
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Alabamense Chapter
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Ben Morrison Chapter
Luella Ferguson
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Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Brookside Gardens Chapter
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Dallas Chapter
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Lake Michigan Chapter
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Vaseyi Chapter
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Larry M. Mucci
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Fairview, NC  28730
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Official ASA Address

Remember the official Society mailing address is:

Azalea Society of America
c/o John Brown, ASA Secretary
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Cleveland, SC 29635-9789