The chapter held its annual Christmas Party and a business meeting on December 5, 2004. They also discussed planning for chapter programs and projects for 2005. A committee has been set up of Bob and Rosa McWhorter, Harold Belcher, and the chapter officers Carol Segree, Carol Flowers, Dale Flowers, and Dave Holmes. Several ideas are being considered:

- Organizing a trip to Gregory Bald Mountain, with Don Hyatt, and Bill and Gabrielle Scott helping to coordinate the effort;
- Scheduling a trip to Hillwood Gardens in the fall;
- Arranging tours of private home gardens in the spring; and

The chapter is also sponsoring a digital photo contest, for digital images to be taken in 2005 of azaleas as they naturally occur. Images can be submitted in three categories: I) close-up of azalea flower or truss, II) scenery with one or more azaleas in the landscape, III) Critters-azalea(s) with animals, birds, or insects. No pictures can include any people. Contact the contest coordinators: Bob McWhorter (410-923-6408; mcwho@comcast.net) or Harold Belcher (301-773-3006; harold.belcher2@usdoj.gov). Submit photo entries to both Bob and Harold as attachments to e-mail. Suggested minimum resolution to print a 5" x 7" digital photo is 800 x 571 pixels, and the minimum for an 8" x 10" photo is 1024 x 819 pixels. Larger files are permitted.

The April 3 meeting featured Joe Klimavicz from the Northern Virginia Chapter, who presented “Developing New Azalea Hybrids.” Joe has been hybridizing azaleas as a hobby since the late 1980s, assisted by his daughters in recent years, and had many new azaleas to show.

Azalea Research Foundation—It’s Still Growing
by Bob Steloh, ASA Treasurer

The Azalea Research Foundation proposed by Dr. August Kehr shortly before he died and now being considered by your board of directors, just grew by $1025 for a new total of $3225. This growth is due to a $1000 gift by Freda Barry in memory of her late husband Robert, and a $25 gift in his memory from Mary M. Wise.

The purpose of the Azalea Research Foundation is to fund research into azalea problems and other azalea-related topics. To make it a reality, we need a few people to evaluate research proposals and a few other people to attract and invest the money. And it will take a lot more money, since the foundation will be set up to use only the earnings from the investments to fund the research. Please contact Bob Steloh or Buddy Lee if you can help; these are easy yet very important jobs.