

President's Letter

Robert (Buddy) Lee — Independence, Louisiana

What a year it has been! Record hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and wildfires in the Western United States will surely be remembered for a long time. Terrorism, conflicts in the Middle East, and skyrocketing gas prices have only added to our anxiety. If you have not been personally touched by any of the events, I'm sure that you probably were overwhelmed by the media coverage of them. My hopes and prayers are that everyone who was seriously affected by these catastrophic events is doing well, recovering, and looking for a brighter tomorrow. Let's not let all these terrible things diminish all the great and wonderful events that have happened this past year. One memorable event that I remember is the national convention and meeting in Michigan this past May. What a great time everyone had at this convention. I'm sure there were many activities that local chapters have been involved in this past year that have been exciting and memorable as well. The chapters are where the "tire meets the road," and I encourage members to get involved and get excited about your chapter activities.

The 2006 national convention and membership meeting will be held in Rockville, Maryland, (Washington DC area) on May 12-15. This will be a joint meeting of the ASA and American Rhododendron Society. The garden tours, convention speakers, and all the many other details have been finalized, and the convention is all set to go. The convention overview, schedule, and registration are printed in this winter issue of *The Azalean*. From the information that I have reviewed and from the conversations I have had with the planning coordinators, I am totally convinced that we can expect nothing less than an absolutely wonderful experience at this convention. Register early so that you will not miss out on any of these wonderful scheduled programs and tours. These conventions are like a family reunion, so

come on over and be a part of our extended azalea family.

Our Society is going through some exciting times. Our Web site and on-line discussion is generating a lot of interest; our journal, *The Azalean*, is receiving great comments and praise; our archive project is proceeding in a timely manner; and the Azalea City of America project is gaining momentum. All of these projects and many others not mentioned have been set in motion to make our Society stronger and continue to provide services for our members and to create interest for potential members. These projects do not just happen on their own, but many hours of hard work go into the planning, implementation, and maintenance of them. It may be hard work, but it is very exciting and rewarding. Our Society has many areas where a member can volunteer and become involved. The *membership is the Society*, so let the board of directors know about your interest and concerns. And again, get involved; that's where it's at.

The brochure committee, Carol Segree, Bob Hobbs, and Bill McDavit, are nearing completion of our new ASA brochure. There has been a lot of intense work, discussion, and exchange of ideas in the evolution of this brochure. I'm looking forward to getting the finished product printed and distributed to our chapters. Our Society needs this new brochure as part of our overall strategy of getting information out about our Society and, we hope, recruiting new members. Thank you Carol, Bob, and Bill for all your time and effort on this project.

Hope that you have a wonderful 2006 and that you see many beautiful blooming azaleas along the way.

Best regards,
Robert (Buddy) Lee

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*).

Officers for 2005-2006

President — Robert Lee
Vice-President — William McDavit
Secretary — John Brown
Treasurer — Bob Stelloh
Immediate Past President —
Joseph E. Schild, Jr.

Directors

Terms Expire in 2006

Bob Hobbs
Ron Hooper
Tom Milner

Terms Expire in 2007

Joe Coleman
Aaron Cook
Mary Rutley

Chapter presidents serve as
ex-officio directors

Chapters

Brookside Gardens (chartered Aug. 1979) Dr. Charles Evans, <i>Pres.</i>	Ben Morrison (chartered May 1980) Harold Belcher, <i>Pres.</i>
Northern Virginia (chartered May 1980) Dan Krabill, <i>Pres.</i>	Louisiana (chartered June 1981) William Bode, <i>Pres.</i>
Tri-State (chartered Oct. 1981) Larry Miller, <i>Pres.</i>	Dallas Chapter (chartered May 1989)
Oconee Chapter (chartered Nov. 1991) Allison Fuqua, <i>Pres.</i>	Vaseyi Chapter (chartered June 2001) Ed Collins, <i>Pres.</i>
Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) John Migas, <i>Pres.</i>	Alabamense Chapter (chartered May 2005) Carlton LeMond, <i>Pres.</i>

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 to the Membership Committee, Azalea Society of America, 1000 Moody Bridge Road, Cleveland, SC 29635.