

President's Letter

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina



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 which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

Officers for 2007-2008

President — John Brown
Vice President — Aaron Cook
Secretary — Carol Flowers
Treasurer — Dan Krabill
Immediate Past President —
Robert "Buddy" Lee

Directors

Terms expire 2008 **Terms expire 2009**
Maarten van der Giessen Vincent Ciolino
Ron Hooper J Jackson
Tom Milner Dave Nanney

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) Eve Harrison, <i>Pres.</i>	Louisiana (chartered June 1981) Dr. Allen Owings, <i>Pres.</i>
Tri-State (chartered Oct. 1981) Larry Miller, <i>Pres.</i>	Texas (chartered May 1989) Bart Brechter, <i>Pres.</i>
Oconee (chartered Nov. 1991) Ed Mellon, <i>Pres.</i>	Vaseyi (chartered June 2001) April Sanborn, <i>Pres.</i>
Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) John Migas, <i>Pres.</i>	Alabamense (chartered May 2005)

Southern California

(chartered March 2007)
Jim Jaeger, *Pres.*

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$25; life-membership for one or two persons at the same address is \$500. 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 Carol Flowers, Secretary, 700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011, Washington, DC 20037 or visit www.azaleas.org.

Recently, I was asked to write an award recommendation for another group involving a member of our Society. The stipulation was it be brief and list the things the person did, not what offices he held. After I got past being honored that I was asked, I started thinking about the things this person did and how much our Society has benefited from his membership. As a result, the subject for this issue's letter jumped out at me.

Most successful organizations have at least one member with the interest and drive to devote time and effort toward improving the organization. Fortunately, we have several. The problem comes when they develop burnout from a lack of support. It is much easier to run a long race if others are in a pack around you.

I encourage you to join the pack, enjoy the shared feelings of the group, and have the sense of accomplishment from watching our Society improve. It really doesn't take much effort or thought to make a difference. Little things count when it comes to helping our chapters. Helping just a little is easy to do and soon becomes a habit. Chapter presidents are the same people who, just a few years ago, were bringing refreshments to a meeting or helping load plants at a chapter plant sale.

If you really want a strong sense of accomplishment, bring a friend or two to a chapter meeting and get them to join. Our at-large members need to know that geographical proximity is not a requirement for chapter membership. The Vaseyi Chapter, located in the Carolinas, has active members in New England and the West Coast. Both were actively involved in producing the 2008 convention.

At-large members are not charged additional dues for joining a chapter because the membership is included in national dues. Your first opportunity to join a chapter comes when you renew your ASA membership. A little effort in support of either a local chapter or on the national level is multiplied by all of the members involved.

For example, a generic speaker was scheduled for the September Vaseyi Chapter meeting. However, scheduling conflicts left us with no speaker, resulting in a round table discussion on "Gardening Without Water." A good turnout at the meeting forced us to add table after table to the "round table," turning it into an oblong table.

To set the scene, the City of Hendersonville, North Carolina, has outlawed irrigation other than a handheld hose sprinkler. Hand watering takes a while in most of our members' gardens, so we discussed ways of keeping plants alive without breaking water restrictions. Deep secrets were revealed, giving everyone a sense of belonging.

You can directly improve the financial picture of the Society by renewing your membership when you receive your dues notice. This saves the cost of additional mailings and is appreciated by the folks who put the mailings together.

Another pleasurable way to help yourself and the Society is to join in on the fun of attending a convention. A record-setting 147 people attended the last convention in Asheville, North Carolina. The planning committee for the upcoming convention is also experienced in putting on a great show. They are on track to provide one of the best conventions yet, and need your support. Join the pack and enjoy the shared feelings. Now is the time to make plans to attend.