



The Mid-American

Newsletter of the Mid-America Orchid Congress

January 2009

<http://www.midamericanorchids.org/>

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CONGRESS MEETS IN COLUMBUS, OH MARCH 27-29, 2009

Show Name: Fifty-Fifty: Spring 2009
Mid-America Orchid Congress

Dates: March 27-29, 2009

Host: Central Ohio Orchid Society

Theme: Celebrating Golden Anniversaries of
the Central Ohio Orchid Society
and the Mid-America Orchid
Congress

Speakers: Cassio van den Berg - Recent
Developments in Cattleya Group
Taxonomy

Paul Storm - The Weird, Wild,
Wiggly, and Wonderful
World of Laelia
(Schomburgkias),
Myrmecophilias, and Their
Hybrids

Norris Williams – Molecular
Systematics in Oncidiinae:
Chaos or Stability?

Howard Bronstein - The New AQ
- Present and Future

Mark Sullivan - Originator and
administrator of the Orchid
Conservation Coalition.

Speaking on the
organization's focus points: 1%
for Orchid Conservation, Living
Orchid Collection (ex-situ
conservation), and the Habitat
Loss Chronicling project.

Vendors: Plants will be offered for sale by
vendors from both the United States and
abroad.

Venue: Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel,
1375 North Cassady Avenue, Columbus, OH
43219 Phone: 614-475-7551
1-800-491-5717

Congress rate: \$109 per night for 2 people, 2
double beds

Contact for additional information:
springmaoc2009@earthlink.net

Web site: www.maoc.coosinfo.info

Schedule of Activities

March 25-27, 2009 (Wednesday-Friday)
Accepting shipments of sales plants
delivered to hotel (MUST be pre-
arranged with Show Chair Tom
Franczak – tfranczak@earthlink.net)
Emailed plant registrations strongly
urged

March 27 (Friday)
12NOON-9:00PM Setup, walk-in plant
registration
5:00PM-7:00PM MAOC Executive
Meeting
9:00PM-11:00PM Preview Party

March 28 (Saturday)

6:30 AM Judges and clerks breakfast
8:00 AM Ribbon judging followed by
AOS judging
10:00AM-5:00PM Show Hours and
Plant Sales
12NOON-1:00PM Judges Luncheon
1:30PM Speaker: Cassio van den Berg
2:30PM Speaker: Paul Storm
3:30PM Speaker: Norris Williams
5:00PM -5:30 MAOC Auction Preview
5:30PM-7:30PM MAOC Auction
7:30PM-11:00PM Dinner/dance (cash
bar), auction may continue if needed

March 29 (Sunday)

7:00AM-8:30AM Affiliated Societies
Breakfast; Topic: Selecting Programs
10:00AM-5:00PM Show Hours and
Plant Sales
9:00AM-11:00AM MAOC Business
Meeting
11:00AM-12NOON Judges Forum
12:30PM Speaker: Howard Bronstein
1:30PM Speaker: Mark Sullivan
5:00PM Teardown

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's a party! And you are invited.

Actually, there are two parties. No wait, three. They are birthday parties of sorts. The Mid-America Orchid Congress will be 50 years old this year and we will celebrate this event in Columbus, Ohio this spring, together with the Central Ohio Orchid Society. And then we will celebrate again in fall, together with the Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee. And there is more: our hosts, the Central Ohio Orchid Society celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2009 as well. They call it fifty-fifty. I'd say a century of orchids, together!

As you read elsewhere in this newsletter, the MAOC was originally started in order to foster closer relationships among orchid societies of Mid-America by meetings devoted to the knowledge and appreciation of orchids. And so it still is today. So what should you expect?

Lots of flowers, of course, and then orchid-growing friends. Please make plans to join us and participate in this special event; add your flowers to the Show, and join in the friendship of orchid growing. The COOS has lined up a program with something interesting for everyone.

Many events during the MAOC have become tradition and each one is fun – we really should quit calling things “auction” and “business meeting”, because these words imply a too serious, if not boring, nature that simply has no place in the MAOC. Occasionally, we want to try something new – this year we will try to be extra helpful to novice growers so they, too, may be bitten by the orchid-bug. We won't tell them that they'll want one of each soon. As much as we appreciate our long-time members (some have been around from the very beginning!), we also want new members to keep the MAOC viable.

Please remember that, though the MAOC is there FOR you, it also is operated BY you. The MAOC committees could use your help and there is something for everyone to do, irrespective of your interests, background and ability to commit time. A new committee will start working on the next version of the Show Schedule; we need to revive the Research and Education Committee; the Nomination Committee is looking for a few good members and last, but not least, the Orchidist-of-the-Year Committee needs some input. Please inquire if you have questions or the interest to contribute to the orchid community. No matter how you think about it, the MAOC needs YOU – please enjoy orchids with us!



Mark van der Woerd
President

THE CONGRESS'S BUSINESS

Dear Mid-America Friends:

The Mid-America Orchid Congress business meeting will be held on Sunday, March 29, 2009, at 9:00 a.m. Typical agenda items:

- Roll Call
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- President's Message
- Treasurer's Report
- Membership Report
- Reports from Committee Chairs
- Old Business
- New Business
- Announcements

As is customary, up to four Delegates per Affiliated Society may sign in as representatives to vote. **DELEGATES MUST SIGN THEIR ATTENDANCE SHEETS.** The sheets are arranged in alphabetical order, by Affiliated Society, on tables located in the meeting room. Only Delegates may vote as representatives and only signed-in Delegates will receive a personal copy of the Minutes. The Minutes are, of course, sent to each Affiliated Society as well.

We look forward to seeing you in Columbus!

HISTORY OF THE MID-AMERICA ORCHID CONGRESS

Eight orchid societies gathered together in Saint Louis at the first Mid-America Orchid Conference in October 1959 for the purpose of establishing the Mid-America Orchid Congress. The Conference and Show was sponsored by the Missouri Orchid Society. Guest advisors included Paul Brecht and Lester McDonald from California who shared information concerning the Western Orchid Congress, as well as Robert Gillespie of the Missouri Botanical Garden. At that time it was voted to form a MID-AMERICA ORCHID CONGRESS. Officers were elected, a Charter and Bylaws Committee was appointed, and an invitation from the Illinois Orchid Society and from Mayor Daley of Chicago for the newly formed

Congress to meet in Chicago in the Fall of 1960 was accepted.

The purpose of the Mid-America Orchid Congress was to effect closer relationships among orchid societies of Mid-America by meetings devoted to the knowledge and appreciation of orchids. Delegates of each society were to receive copies of the Charter and Bylaws for ratification and adoption within a period not to exceed 60 days. Members of the Congress would be those orchid societies represented at the October, 1959 business meeting which ratified the Constitution and those who paid the first year's dues by January 1, 1960. Subsequently, any other Society applying for membership and elected by a majority of delegates of member societies could join the Congress.

The eight founding societies of the Mid-America Orchid Congress (MAOC) were the Central Illinois Orchid Society, the Illinois Orchid Society, the Kentucky Orchid Society, the Land of Lincoln Orchid Society, the Michigan Orchid Society, the Missouri Orchid Society, the Orchid Society of Greater Kansas City, and the Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee. The New Orleans Orchid Society joined in the Spring of 1960. Two additional societies (the Central Ohio Orchid Society, and the Orchid Society of Greater Saint Louis) were accepted at the Chicago business meeting held October 8, 1960 in the morning.

Barbara Brown
David Brown
Abridged by Doris Asher

RECOLLECTIONS OF MAOC

The first Mid-America Orchid Congress and Show was held during 1959 in the fall at a bank with the meetings at the Holiday Inn near the airport in St. Louis. The Missouri Orchid Society was the host and display areas at the bank were prepared with light blue corrugated cardboard background. While being unthinkable in today's shows, the bright blue set off the white Cattleyas and green Paph. Maudiae very dramatically.

THE AFFILIATED SOCIETIES COMMITTEE – AT YOUR SERVICE

A very effective display by the host society included a model of the "Gateway to the West" arch, then in its planning stages. A horse and rider in noble gear represented the "St. Louis". Complemented by a few smaller varieties, Cattleyas dominated the most outstanding display with sheet moss covered areas.

I set up a small display representing the C. Hausermann Company including a large Cattleya Henrietta Japhet, Paph. Maudiae, and an Anthurium scherzerianum or two. The latter is also a no-no in today's orchid exhibits, but it was a start to live and learn. For me it was an unforgettable experience and the beginning of a lifetime relationship with the orchid people of Mid-America and the entire US.

Key local people involved were : Dr. Harald and Barbara Hecht, Arwyn Spies, Drs. David and Barbara Brown. From Kansas City were Henry and Lois Holmes. From the Chicago area Joe Smith worked closely with Dr. Hecht. Frank and Dorathy Kuper and I were there.

The Rod McLellan Company of South San Francisco was represented through its well liked and personable Lester McDonald. Lester showed an interest in the Miltoniopsis hybrids I had photographed at my former employer, the H. Wichmann firm in Celle-Germany. Mr. Wichmann had obtained the finest breeding plants available from the British growers who had brought the quality to perfection. His manager and key orchid grower, Arthur Elle, had created additional color variations in Miltonia Celle 'Wasserfall', Hannover, Hamburg etc. The Rod McLellan Company subsequently obtained some of the European hybrids and continued their breeding, growing and distribution. Its public relations and marketing were outstanding at a time when the market for orchid plants in large quantities did not exist. While the firm is now unknown to most private growers, anyone associated with the Mid-America Orchid Congress and any orchid society then, was familiar with it and with its representative, Lester McDonald, a sincere orchid enthusiast.

Hermann Pigors

The focus of the Affiliated Societies Committee is to assist local societies in the challenges of running a dynamic and effective society. At each meeting of the Congress, the Committee hosts a Sunday morning breakfast at which there is a discussion on some subject of current interest to societies. Recent topics include "Getting Society Members More Involved", "Trends in Local Orchid Shows", "How Societies Can Help Each Other" and "Compensating Speakers". "Selecting Programs" will be the topic at the Spring MAOC breakfast in Columbus, OH. Please sign up for the Breakfast on your Congress registration.

Arising from the discussion of the topic "How Societies Can Help Each Other" was the suggestion to collect the meeting days and times of member societies to facilitate sharing programs, fundraising activities, and other projects. A visitor to the Mid-America web site www.midamericanorchids.org can find that data in the Affiliated Societies Committee's section MEETING TIMES.

Subsequent to each meeting, the Committee compiles a report which they distribute to representatives of all member societies and post on the web site. This report summarizes the actions of the Congress which related to the operation of local societies. Examples of such actions include show schedule classifications, conservation grants, and practical suggestions arising from the Affiliated Societies Breakfast.

One role of the Committee is to publicize and encourage attendance at Mid-America meetings. Prior to each Congress, members of the Committee send letters to societies within reasonable driving distance of the Congress city to encourage attendance.

The Spring 2009 MAOC meeting, scheduled at the Columbus Ohio Airport Marriot Hotel on March 27-29, 2009, features speakers: Paul Storm- "Laelias, Myrmecophilas & Their

Hybrids; Dr. Cassio van den Berg – “Recent Taxonomic Developments in the Cattleya Group; Howard Bronstein – “The New Awards Quarterly: Present & Future; Norris Williams – “Molecular Systemics in Oncidinae” and Mark Sullivan – “The Orchid Conservation Coalition: A New Paradigm for Conservation.”

The Committee works closely with the Congress Treasurer to reach out to societies whose dues do not come in a timely fashion. In addition, the Committee approaches societies which are not yet members of the Mid-America Orchid Congress to encourage their participation. These efforts have resulted in several additional member societies joining the Congress.

A key service that the Committee provides is an information referral service – Committee members field a whole range of questions, some of which they can answer directly and some of which they refer on to others for answers.

Other items a web site visitor will find on the Affiliated Societies Committee section of the web site are newsletters from societies and a complete listing of member societies with links to their web sites.

The web site is currently being up-dated. We welcome corrections and additions to material already on the site and also suggestions for other material. Please contact President Mark van der Woerd (mjvdwoerd@netscape.net) with information to be included on the web site. Let us hear from you.

If the Mid-America Orchid Congress Affiliated Societies Committee can assist your society, please contact us:

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**GENDER REASSIGNMENT ON THE PRAIRIE
or
Sex Change in the Grass**

Most orchid growers know that most orchids have both the male and the female parts in the same flower. A few orchids, like the *Catasetums* for example, produce separate male and female flowers. However, did you know there are orchids whose flowers change sex as they mature? Of the twenty-three species of *Spiranthes* native to North America, sixteen grow in all or some parts of the Mid-America region. Most of these orchids grow in open grassy areas such as prairies, fields, stream banks and savannas. They are often called lady's tresses because the small, half-inch to one inch, tubular white flowers are arranged in a spiral around the flower spike and remind some people of braided hair. When these flowers first open they can only

function as males, but as they age they change shape so that they can only function as females.

To understand how the flowers change we must first learn a little bit about the sexual biology of orchids. One of the characteristics that make orchids different from other flowers is that they have the sexual parts gathered together in a single structure called the column. The anther, the male part with the pollen, is located at the tip of the column. The stigma, the female part that accepts the pollen, is located on the underside on the column immediately behind the anther. Many orchids, including lady's tresses, are pollinated by bees that crawl into the flowers, brushing against the anther of one flower and picking up pollen, then depositing it onto the stigma of the next flower.

When a *Spiranthes* flower first opens, the bottom of the floral tube is pressed against the bottom of the column so that the stigma is covered. When a bee visits the flower it can pick up the pollen from the anther but it cannot place any on the stigma. Thus, the flower is functionally male. As the flower ages, the tube shifts downward so that the anther becomes pressed against the top. Now the bee cannot contact the anther, but the stigma is open to receive pollen and the flower has become functionally female. The flowers at the bottom of the spike open first, so they are the oldest and have become female by the time the ones at the top open as males.

Like other flower characteristics, this sex change is an adaptation to the behavior of the pollinator. The bees that pollinate *Spiranthes* typically visit flowers at the bottom of a flower spike first and work their way up to the top in a spiral pattern. This explains why the flowers are arranged in a spiral as well as the sex change. When the bee first arrives at the plant, it may be carrying pollen from a previous plant. If so, it will pollinate the female flowers at the bottom of the flower spike. The last flowers the bee visits will be males, where it can pick up pollen to take to the next plant.

For lady's tresses, having transgendered flowers serves to prevent self-pollination and assure cross-pollination. Maybe we should call them "person's tresses".

Doug Martin



Spiranthes vernalis

AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY

AOS Corner

By Melba Butler, AOS Representative

Orchid Trivia: “A plant having only a few roots cannot utilize all the water in a large pot and the mix will quickly become anaerobic and soggy, producing a variety of attendant problems. A well-grown mature plant with several growths can be maintained and flowered in a 7.5 centimetre (3 inch) pot or even less. When in doubt underpot rather than overpot.” Ref.: “Novelty Slipper Orchids: Breeding and Cultivating Paphiopedilum Hybrids”, p 22, by Dr. Harold Koopowitz and Dr. Norito Hasegawa; Angus and Robertson Publishers, New Zealand in 1989.

AOS Show Hosted by the Houston Orchid Society

If you never attend and/or don't intend to attend orchid shows, workshops, meetings and events that are held in hotels or conference centers, you won't be interested in this piece.

Almost always, the hosting orchid society for an orchid show or meeting has contracted with a hotel or facility by blocking hotel rooms at a reduced room rate (hopefully, a bargain) for attendees. Blocking rooms by predicting the number of attendees is a gamble. Well, not a gamble like playing Blackjack or playing the slots, because in return for the reasonable room rates for attendees, the hotel agrees to “comp” the meeting room fees for the event – if the room commitment is fulfilled. To do so is taking a chance. The chair of the event tries to “estimate” the correct number of rooms to block -- not too many (you can't win if you go over) but “just enough” so everyone who wants to stay in the host hotel can have a room.

Oh, it can work out great for the hosting society but only if the room commitment is reached. If it is not reached, i.e., if not enough attendees stay at the host hotel to meet the commitment, the hosting society will be billed for the meeting rooms. Hotels are in business to make money and they don't make exceptions even if the commitment is short by one or two rooms.

When this happens, the hosting society may be left in debt...maybe owing money that they don't have in the bank.

If the rooms have all been reserved by the time you get around to making your reservation and there are “no rooms at the inn”, perhaps the chair will block more rooms or make a recommendation for a neighboring hotel to accommodate the attendees...to try to make it easier and convenient for their guests. If there is ever any question, contact the chair of the event.

Room commitments have been made at the Hilton Houston North (formerly the Wyndham Greenspoint) for the upcoming spring AOS Members meeting, to take place April 22-26, 2009 – show and sales will be **open to the public on April 24, 25 and 26**. HOS is pleased that in addition to hosting the AOS, the SouthWest Regional Orchid Growers Association, the International Phalaenopsis Alliance, Orchid Digest Corporation, Slipper Orchid Alliance and Odontoglossum Alliance will also be holding meetings. An orchid show and all events will take place at the Hilton at 12400 Greenspoint Drive, Houston, TX 77060. See Houston Orchid Society Web site: www.houstonorchidsociety.org and click on **2009 Show Information**. Link from there to the hotel Web site or call 281-875-2222 and mention the code: AOS09 (AOS and figures 09) to reserve rooms that have been blocked for the event at a special rate.

The hotel is beautiful, comfortable and convenient to Bush International Airport, with free parking and complimentary shuttle to and from the hotel. If you are flying or driving and arriving from north of Houston, the hotel is located to the north of downtown Houston. See for yourself! Go to: <http://www.hiltonhoustonhotel.com/> and click on the “Virtual Tour” on the right side of the front page.

CALLING ALL SOCIETY TREASURERS!

Your Editor has received an inquiry from one of our member societies about good software for a society treasurer to maintain the society's financial data. If you will send me information on the financial software you use and how well it works for you, I will publish the information for all of us to benefit from.

Thank you.

Doris Asher
asherdoris@juno.com

HELPFUL INFORMATION FROM MAOC

Next up – for your calendar – October 30 – November 1, 2009

The Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee invites you to the Tennessee Capital Orchid Show and the Fall 2009 Meeting of the Mid-America Orchid Congress. More information: www.tnorchid.com or Steve Burger, Co-Chair (gandsgh@blomand.net) and Tom Harper, Co-Chair (harper_sro@bellsouth.net)

The year 2009 is the 50th anniversary of the Mid-America Orchid Congress

Show Schedule Committee still needs data on the number of entries in each class – send to Barbara Nuernberger, 27 Colony Dr., Oberlin, OH 44074 – can email to Doris Asher (asherdoris@juno.com)

Need Mid-America entry tags for registration of plants and exhibits at your Show?
Order from Tom Ott
22 Algonquin Lane
St. Louis MO 63119
(314) 961-3088
maryott@swbell.net

Send check made payable to MAOC in the amount of \$30.00 for 1000 tags; remember to enclose address to which to send them.

Mid-America Constitution & By-laws is available on the Mid-America website (www.midamericanorchids.org)

The 2009 edition of the Mid-America Show Schedule and the January 2009 edition of the supplemental material edited by Lowell Jacks are all available on the Mid-America website (www.midamericanorchids.org)

For advice or assistance in hosting a future Congress, contact Tim Brooks (timcbrooks@aol.com; 867 Edgewater Dr., Lexington, KY 40502 (859-268-4567))

March 27-29, 2009 Mid-America Orchid Congress; Central Ohio Orchid Society Show, Marriott Hotel, 1375 N. Cassady Ave., Columbus, OH 43219. Show Chair: Tom Franczak, 614-868-5636; tfranczak@earthlink.net

MID-AMERICA MEMBER SOCIETIES 2008

Alabama Orchid Society
Ann Arbor Orchid Society
Atlanta Orchid Society
Batavia Orchid Society
Blackhawk Orchid Society
Blue Grass Orchid Society
Central Indiana Orchid Society
Central Iowa Orchid Society
Central Kentucky Orchid Society
Central Missouri Orchid Society
Central Ohio Orchid Society
Central Ontario Orchid Society
Eastern Iowa Orchid Society

Grand Valley Orchid Society
Greater Akron Orchid Society
Greater Cincinnati Orchid Society
Greater Cleveland Orchid Society
Greater Lansing Orchid Society
Greater Omaha Orchid Society
Greater Pensacola Orchid Society
Greater Toledo Orchid Society

Heart of Dixie Orchid Society
Illinois Orchid Society
Illowa Orchid Society
Kentucky Orchid Society
Kingwood Orchid Society
Lincoln Orchid Society
London Orchid Society
Memphis Orchid Society
Miami Valley Orchid Society
Michiana Orchid Society
Michigan Orchid Society
Northeast Alabama Orchid Society
Northeastern Wisconsin Orchid Society
Northwestern Michigan Orchid Society
Orchid Growers Guild Inc. of Madison
Orchid Society of Greater Kansas City
Orchid Society of Greater St. Louis
Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee
Orchid Society of Minnesota
Orchid Society of the Royal Botanic Gardens
Peoria Orchid Society
Prairie State Orchid Society
Saginaw Valley Orchid Society
Smoky Mountain Orchid Society
South Metro Orchid Society
South Mississippi Orchid Society
Three Rivers Orchid Society
West Shore Orchid Society of Northern Ohio
Windsor Orchid Society
Wisconsin Orchid Society

Note: If your Society is not listed and you believe it is a member, please contact me. I will investigate! Doris Asher

Another note: Congress Treasurer Jan Yates plans to mail out dues notices for the 2009 membership year in the next couple of weeks. ([jyates11@earthlink.net](mailto: jyates11@earthlink.net)). Watch for that mailing.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

A hearty “thank you” to all of my authors in this issue: Barbara and David Brown, Hermann Pigors, Mark van der Woerd, Mary Beth Mansour, and Doug Martin.

I welcome your input – suggestions, corrections, and articles to be published are all welcome.

Contact me if I can help:

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