



The

Arizona Orchidist

Published monthly by
The Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc.
Founding Editor- Clarence S. Lindsten
1966
Volume 45
September 2009 Number 9

NEXT OSA MEETING

The next regular society meeting
will be **Monday, September 7, 2009**
at **7:00 P.M.**

Meetings are held at the
Training Center
at the

Arizona State Veteran Home
4141 N. 3rd St., Phoenix.

OSA meetings are open to all
plant enthusiasts

Refreshments will be provided.

Beverages by

Lou Ann Remeikis

Snacks by

Diane Norman and Bob MacLeod

Refreshment Coordinators:

Barbara Parnell (480) 948-0714

Mary Gannon (623) 878-4173

Carol Erwin (602) 996-1696

Board Meeting

September 27th

preceded by a

show planning meeting

at noon at the home

of Barbara and Harry Parnell

Grower on Call

Wilella Stimmell

wilellas@att.net

September Program

WELCOME DR. GLENN C. LEHR

NEW WORLD ORCHIDS

Dr. Lehr lives with his wife Maria in Manchester, Michigan, a small farming community west of Ann Arbor.

As a Captain, he spent 10 years in the USAF, and enrolled in the University of Michigan's Dental School in 1968. To pay for his education, he worked his farm in Manchester, MI. He retired in 1992 and started growing orchids as a hobby. He is one of the founding members of the Ann Arbor Orchid Society, and served on its Board and as its President for several years.

He started a commercial orchid nursery in 1997, New World Orchids, with emphasis on the orchids of Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica. He had a home in Costa Rica for 12 years, getting to know the various orchids and growers there. He had a greenhouse in Banos, Ecuador, until Mount Tungurahua erupted!

He has sold at orchid shows and given talks to orchid societies throughout the US, Canada, England and Japan. He has been a vendor and judge at the Grand Prix International Orchid Festival in Tokyo, Japan for eleven years, and the World Orchid Festival in Japan for nine years.

After attending a few of these shows, he decided to try to bring some of the Japanese orchids to the US, as most were compact, fragrant, and highly desirable. Except for the most common varieties, many of the native Japanese orchids were unobtainable outside of Japan. New World Orchids now has more than two hundred varieties of *Neofinetia falcata*, fifty varieties of *Dendrobium moniliforme* as well as several forms of *Sedirea japonica*, *Sophranitis* species and others.

Please join us as Dr Lehr speaks on Orchid Shows in Japan, Japanese Orchids, with a tour of the people, cities and culture of Japan.

Dr. Lehr will be bringing plants to sell.

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Julie Rathbun

On Sunday, July 26th, 7 other OSA members, in addition to me, made our annual trip to the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System greenhouse. Thanks to JOE BACIK, FRANK BOPP, BARBARA and HARRY PARNELL, LOU ANN and GARY REMEIKIS, and WILELLA STIMMELL for taking time out from their busy lives to spend the day with the NAVAHCS veterans and staff. Our caravan consisted of three vehicles: mine, Lou Ann's, and Barbara's. Thanks to the drivers!!

The weather was perfect – sunny and cool. This is the first time that we took lunch with us from home rather than purchasing it in Prescott. By purchasing sandwich trays at a supermarket in Phoenix, we saved more than 50% of the cost of last year's lunch! All of us are personally finding creative ways to economize, so we decided that OSA's Board could purchase lunch for a less expensive price if we checked local prices. Barbara Parnell baked cookies which were delicious and were eaten almost instantly after we arrived at the greenhouse! Thanks, Barbara! Several of us provided the beverages for lunch, and Wilella Stimmell donated 3 cakes for dessert.

We were glad to see Betty Stephens at our gathering. She's back working at NAVAHCS. And we enjoyed chatting with Ann Marie Love, the Domiciliary staff member who wants to use the greenhouse for patient therapy.

Joe Bacik took photos which he included in a Google Earth map of our trip. If anyone would like to see highlights of the trip, contact Joe by e-mail.

Our August 3rd speaker was Dale Hazel, co-owner of Mother's Imperial Blend plant food. All of us received sample packets of the organic food, and several members bought larger bags. An open bag was passed around the room, and although the plant food contains steer manure, the bagged product smelled only like dirt. (I had used Mother's Imperial Blend on my Paphs and Phrags for about 6 weeks prior to the meeting, and my plants seem to like the food.) Each member received two hand-out sheets which Dale had prepared for us, and he also left one copy of 4 laboratory reports which indicate a detailed analysis of the plant food. If anyone would like a copy of the analysis, contact Willie by e-mail. There's no point in her wasting paper and ink if nobody wants a copy of the lab reports.

Dale's business partner, John Hutton, bought quite a few raffle tickets, and he took home at least 6 plants. He had never grown an orchid, so we gave him culture sheets and wished him good luck!

Our Sept. 7th speaker will be Dr. Glen Lehr from the Detroit area. He will speak about Japanese orchids, and he will bring plants for sale. He is the only seller (outside of Japan) of some of the Japanese orchids that he will bring for us.

Our September board meeting will be held on September 27th at Barbara and Harry Parnell's home. A NOVEMBER SHOW PLANNING MEETING WILL PRECEDE THE BOARD MEETING. PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND AT LEAST THE SHOW PLANNING MEETING AT NOON!

See you on September 7!

Julie

AUGUST RAFFLE DONORS

**Bob MacLeod, Julie Rathbun, Wilella Stimmell,
and non-member Craig Pearson**

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT



DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

Let me tell you!

Coming very soon (November 7th & 8th to be exact) to the Arizona State Veteran's Home nearest you (actually at 3131 N 3rd Street, Phoenix) will be OSA's annual orchid show and sale. This year's theme is "Hats Off To Orchids".

We need YOU to help make this year's show a success! Please start setting aside props to help set our stage for the show. Do you have hats, headgear, BLOOMING orchids or time you can lend for the cause?

There will be another show planning meeting and every member is encouraged to attend. The next meeting will be hosted by Julie Rathbun on Sunday, August 30th, at noon. Barbara & Harry Parnell's home will be the location of the following meeting (Sunday, September 27th, at noon).. We would love to see as many of you attend as possible....and, of course, we're depending on YOU (OSA's Members) to make this year's show one of our best yet.

Call me anytime,

Lou Ann (602-803-6889)

The Arizona Orchidist is published monthly by the
Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc.
Direct Inquiries to our website at:

www.orchidsocietyaz.org

Or to any of the Board Officers or Trustees:

Board of Directors for 2009

President		(602) 843-0223
	Julie Rathbun	jandfent@aol.com
First Vice President		(480) 722-9328
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	Wilella Stimmell	willellas@worldnet.att.net
Librarian		(602) 803-6889
	Lou Ann Remeikis	remeikis@andiamo-tel.com
Editor		(505) 898-0975
	Keith Mead	kjkm@comcast.net
Trustees	Frank Bopp	(623) 937-0019
		fgbopp@cox.net
	Carol Erwin	(602) 996-1696
		nerwin2@cox.net
	Kimberly Levingston	(602) 843-6213
		kimberlydahle@yahoo.com
	Seelye Smith	(602) 404-1013
		sss3301@hotmail.com

The Orchid Society of Arizona, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (C) (3) organization dedicated to community service and the study of orchids. It is affiliated with the American Orchid Society, The Orchid Digest Corporation, the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. , and The Nature Conservancy.

ORCHIDS IN SHANGRI-LA

Stig Dahlstrom

In these gloomy days we all look for light in the financial and environmental tunnel that does not come from an approaching freight train. For Selby Gardens Orchid Identification Center, bright light radiates from the Himalayan region in Asia. As I recently returned from three wonderful weeks in Bhutan, my conviction is stronger than ever that we have a lot to learn and gain by studying other types of floristic diversities outside our traditional view, and to collaborate with people who have fresh ideas about new projects. The latest trip in May of 2009 included one week of extensive fieldwork in areas where no tourists are likely to visit without special invitation from the government. Together with staff from the herbarium at the National Biodiversity Center (NBC) in Thimphu, we went both north and south to see different habitats and study a plethora of fascinating plants, some familiar from cultivation and some completely unknown to me. Many orchids such as *Bulbophyllum*, *Coelogyne* and *Dendrobium* species were at the peak of flowering and offered breath-taking displays of nature's Finest. The concept of introducing horticultural desirable plants into cultivation, propagation and later legal export is something that Bhutanese authorities, on several levels, find more and more appealing. We discussed the establishment of smaller and specialized nurseries in areas with appropriate natural climate for selected "crops", such as *Cymbidium* cut-flowers etc. Bhutan has a poorly inventoried but yet immensely rich floristic diversity, and is only a couple of hours away by air from some of the worlds largest plant markets, particularly Bangkok.

Our visit in Bhutan also included a most joyous collaboration with the staff at the Royal Botanic Garden in Thimphu (also part of the NBC, and where the director, Dechen Lham just returned from a two month internship at Selby Gardens). The task at hand was to give the orchid collection a thorough face-lift. Several hundred of unidentified orchid plants were repotted, cleaned, and organized. We also built a completely new display of epiphytes, mostly orchids but also incorporated ferns, gesneriads and other interesting plants we found in their collection or brought from the wild. The staff at the garden was a true pleasure to work with and they quickly picked up on the skills needed for cleaning and repotting orchids. My travel partner Thomas Höjjer and myself gave various instructions in basic orchid growing, how to water, what to water and when, which is a most crucial aspect of any plant caring. We sent staff scurrying in various directions to find the necessary ingredients for a simple orchid compost; moss, bark and charcoal, and encouraged them to use smaller pots in general. We also gave tours for visiting students and dignitaries who were all very curious and intrigued by the new activities. At the end of our visit, everybody agreed that they now have an orchid collection to be proud of and worth showing people. It is just the beginning!

From a scientific view, I had my hands full trying to identify what they already had, but without any kind of information. The person who initiated the orchid collection was tragically hospitalized a couple of years ago and is no longer available for inquiries [He recently passed away leaving a young wife with several small children]. As plants begin to flower, however, we will try to document, identify and label them as well as we can. There are likely to be some nice surprises over time. As an example, no collections of the orchid genus *Sunipia* are officially recorded from Bhutan, and yet I found three species growing on the same branch in the corner of the orchid collection. We know that all plants are from Bhutan, but the tracks end there. We simply have to spend a lot of time in the lush forests for many years to come in order to get a better grip of what actually grows in that remote and beautiful country. In summary, only one leech was encountered, no serious injuries, great and fun people, and a fantastic nature, what can possibly beat that? It would all be perfect except for rice three times a day, loaded with chilies, a most potent and two-way burning sensation!

I would like to acknowledge Selby Gardens volunteer Pep Ruddiman, and the Orchid Society of Sarasota, who generously helped funding this trip.

Editors note: Stig Dahlstorm is an internationally known orchid curator, botanist and artist.

The Bhutanese arrive at Selby Gardens

On the other side of the world lies the Land of the Thunder Dragon, popularly referred to as the 'Last Shangri-La', or the Kingdom of Bhutan. This tiny country has never been occupied or colonized by foreign powers despite many attempts from aggressive neighbors, and several World Wars. It is a country known for its unique culture and traditions, benevolent governance and rich biodiversity.

From a history of isolation, Bhutan became a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy in 2008, when a new king was crowned and the first Prime Minister was elected. The population of 650,000 residents currently witness an unprecedented domestic peace, and are happy with the rapidly growing economy and various developments under their new governance.

The country is considered a World Hotspot for its rich biodiversity. Altitudes range from as low as 540 feet to as high as 24, 836 feet and is home of a wide variety of flora and fauna, many of which are considered endangered or extinct elsewhere. The country has a 72% forest cover, and a constitutional proclamation state that a 60% forest cover is to be maintained for all times to come. More than 26% of the land is declared as National Parks and Sanctuaries, while 9% is declared as Biological Corridors.

This is where **Dechen Lham**, Curator of the Royal Botanical Garden at Serbithang (RBGS), and currently an international intern student at Selby Gardens, is from. The Royal Botanical Garden is a part of the National Biodiversity Center (NBC), under the Ministry of Agriculture, and is the first in the country. It was established to commemorate the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. It was formally inaugurated by Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuk on 26th May 1999. The garden is 29 acres and has a staff of 27 people.

Dechen Lham's visit is part of a recently launched institutional collaboration between the NBC of Bhutan and Selby Gardens. This collaboration will focus on developing programs of orchid research, and the cultivation and propagation of native orchid species for sustainable usage. The orchid flora of Bhutan is rich in horticultural desirable species but also poorly explored. Botanical expeditions over the coming years will hopefully change this and provide a better understanding of how to utilize this fascinating natural resource without harming the natural populations.

While at Selby Gardens, Dechen will experience hands-on horticultural training, identify orchids and bromeliads, and work with various members of the staff in order to learn about the management of Selby Gardens. She expects to bring home many new ideas for projects to further develop and enhance the RBGS.

Editors Note: August 8, 2009 comments from Stig Dahlstrom

"Selby Gardens here in Sarasota would have been the perfect partner for the National Biodiversity Center and the Royal Botanic Garden in Thimphu, but due to recent unfortunate budget cuts, which eliminated both the intern program and the orchid research, Selby has pretty much shut themselves out of a lot of excitement. This does not mean that the project stops... We who are involved are very determined to move on and develop a most successful collaboration, focusing on orchid research but reaching out in many other directions as well, such as commercial horticulture enterprises, education, waste management, recycling and "green thinking" in general for the domestic food production. We are looking into the possibility of adding an old friend and horticulture teacher of mine from Sweden, Lars Åkerström, to the team. He plans to accompany me and Thomas Höjjer on our next trip to Bhutan (May 2010), to help lay a foundation for an official horticulture education there. The first in the country's history! One of the first challenges will be to change the attitude towards garden work. It's considered a "lowly" kind of work (believe it or not!), primarily because there is no money involved. If we can find a way to build a foundation, hopefully with the support from the Royal family, which has a long standing interest in horticulture, then we can help fund this project and help providing jobs and commercial opportunities after the graduation."

OSA September 2009 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 <i>LouAnn Remeikis</i> 	4	5 <i>Joe Bacik</i> <i>Dennis Olivas</i> 
6	7 OSA Meeting 7:00 PM	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 <i>Jeanette Socaciu</i> 
20	21	22	23	24	25 <i>Gary Remeikis</i> 	26
27 Board Meeting at Noon	28	29	30			



Orchid Society of Arizona

c/o Keith Mead

5425 Thomas Drive NE

Albuquerque, NM 87111

September 2009 Newsletter