



Dear TOS Members,

Feb 2024 – Well, on Feb 2 our furry, groundhog friend ‘Punxsutawney Phil’ did not see its shadow, thus predicting it would be an early spring. The hellebores and daffodils flowering in my yard, and the early native flowers appearing along the trails I walk, certainly seem to be endorsing this whimsical prediction. And, flowering phalaenopsis orchids with their terrific colors and arching inflorescences are really throwing their weight behind it!

Your Society has been bustling this past month.....read on.

Business-related Matters from Feb 19 TOS Board Meeting

1. The Registered Agent for TOS has been updated with the NC Department of State, an updating that was long overdue.
2. A motion was made and passed (Jan Board meeting) that TOS will pay 0.50 per mile (one car only) for volunteers setting up and/or taking down Away Shows. In addition, for the Far-Away Shows (i.e. Asheville, NC and Columbia, SC) TOS will pay lodging of up to \$100/person for up to two persons who prefer to stay in separate rooms rather than share a room.
3. Sidney Cox, our Treasurer, has prepared a preliminary working budget for 2024 of \$20,000 which is much in line with last year’s budget.
4. Membership Report (Carole Saravitz, TOS Membership Chairperson):

Total Paid-up Members = 108+18 partners

Previous Paid-up Members = 40+6 partners

New Members since 2023 Show = 68+12 partners:

Sept '23 = 50+11 partners

Oct '23 = 1

Nov '23 = 1

Dec '23 = 1

Jan '24 = 2

Feb '24 = 13+1 partner

Not paid yet for this year = 52+11 partners

Not paid for 2 years = 25+2 partners

5. The Board approved purchase (approx. \$150) of a Speaker/Microphone system for use at outdoor events and where the acoustics of indoor facilities are poor. The equipment is now available for use.

In Reflection: Jan 29 TOS meeting at JCRA

At the end of January, several TOS Members met at JCRA to hear expert advice from TOS Members Ralph Belk (TOS Show Co-chair) and Sarah Patterson (AOS Judge) on setting up an orchid display for an Away Show. Just 10-20 orchids can create a stunning display; in fact, certainly no more than 20 orchids should be considered for a single 2.5'w x 6' or 8'l tabletop display. Grouping similar colors together and creating transitional flow from one distinct color group to another is more aesthetically pleasing than just placing a random mix of different colors on



the table. Sufficient space between plants is also important so that each plant can be displayed optimally without crowding from neighboring plants. Next came advice about creating height within the display. Creating decreasing height from one side of the display to the other, or say from the center (particularly for round table displays) to the sides is a desirable design element too. This

can be achieved by using the plastic transportation crates and upside-down large clay pots as stands on which to place plants. TOS Member and AOS judge, Harry Gallis, MD, tells an amusing story - though probably not amusing at the time - of how he used cardboard boxes to create height in one of the first displays he put together many years ago. All was looking great until a good-intentioned someone decided the orchids should be watered to tide them over the weekend; the height within the display gradually became less and less as the cardboard boxes absorbed water and collapsed under the weight of the orchids!

A general rule that works is large plants at the back and small at the front. Avoid positioning large specimen plants high in the display; they display much better at base level. Green foliage plants such as ferns (e.g. asparagus fern) may be used selectively to fill a few spaces around some orchids, adding depth to the display and creating a natural look. Companion plants in flower are an absolute no-no! Any large feature used in the display for visual interest (e.g. garden statue or bird bath) should blend in unobtrusively with the orchids and not become the main focal point because the orchids themselves need to be the main attraction. Garden gnomes, which have appeared in past orchid displays, tend to get mixed reviews; folks either love them or hate them!

The orchid pots and crates in the display should be wrapped in black cloths to form a uniform backdrop, against which the orchids really stand out. The host society of the Away Show provides the black cloth for the display table which typically drapes close to the floor, making the underneath of the table an ideal place to store the transportation items that will be used by the TOS pickup party. TOS owns backdrop stands with black drapes and it is worth taking one of these along just in case the setting behind the display table is visually unattractive; the backdrop stands fit together very easily.

Each orchid needs to be named correctly and the labels clearly legible. Remember to leave enough space on the label for a small round sticker which will bear the plant's show registration number – I didn't do this the first time I made plant labels and it caused me a headache in that I had to find a work

around at the end of setup. If there is any doubt about the name of an orchid, Sarah or Ralph will gladly provide the correct names if they are sent the list of show plants 1-2 days in advance.



The photo to the left shows TOS' display at the Virginia Orchid Society's 2024 show in Richmond on Feb 23-25. This striking display was arranged by Ralph Belk and Sunny Allen and it won 2nd place for best display from a visiting society, bagging a \$150 check for TOS! Many thanks both for a super job from all of us on the Board.

2 persons if they are unable to share). Please do consider volunteering for these fun events because TOS NEEDS YOU TO GET INVOLVED!

In Reflection: Feb 12 TOS meeting at JCRA

There was an excellent turnout of 63 attendees for Linda Thorne's presentation on dendrobiums. Linda's overview highlighted some great dendrobiums, and before and after the presentation she sold some great dendrobiums! The many species of this large genus are mostly epiphytic* and are distributed throughout various countries of the SSE Asia-S Pacific region, including China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. This vast region extends north and south of the equator for considerable distances so it includes very different climates - semi-desert to humid rainforest - which result in different cultural requirements within the genus depending upon species. Linda stated that she is able to grow a broad range of dendrobiums successfully in her greenhouses which are maintained year-round at a minimum temperature of about 64°F. But she encouraged attendees to research the dendrobium species (or background species of a hybrid) to determine its native growing conditions rather than trying to second-guess what the optimum growing conditions might be for the plant (this excellent advice is applicable to all orchids). The point being, some dendrobiums will grow well in cultivation without the need of a seasonal temperature/water difference, whilst others need such a difference to be simulated in cultivation if the plants are really going to thrive and flower.



*See end of Members' Feature where I've included a splendid example of an orchid growing epiphytically in cultivation

The broad diversity of the genus has prompted taxonomists to divide the genus into several main sections: Callista, Dendrobium, Dendrocoryne, Formosae, Latouria, Phalaenantha and Spatulata. Linda described representative plants from these sections, a few of which I will highlight as they were particularly noteworthy specimen orchids. One being the spectacular *Den. spectabile* 'U-Haul Special'



AM/AOS (section: Latouria), the plant shown above in the two photographs from AOS OrchidPro. It was grown by our very own Kelly Nipp (immediate past TOS President) and Steven McAllister. The origin of the unusual, rather amusing cultivar name lies in the fact the specimen was so large they had to use a U-Haul van to transport it to the judging center! To me, I find a strange beauty in the contorted, almost pain racked-looking flowers of this orchid. Besides the award of Merit for the plant, Kelly and Steven received a CCM/AOS (Certificate of Cultural Merit), and deservedly so too.



Another eye-popper was *Den. nobile* (section: Dendrobium), a splendid example of which was on the Members' show table at the meeting (central plant in photo to left). This specimen was also grown by Kelly Nipp and Steven McAllister. Kelly told me she stops direct watering about the time that the terminal leaves have developed at the tips of the new canes (about the end of Sept) and then she just mists very sparsely every 7-10 days. And, she keeps it outside until nighttime temperature drops to about 35°F.

Dendrobium kingianum (section: Dendrocoryne) is worth a particular mention here too because I know that several TOS Members grow this Australian species. What one usually hears about this orchid goes something like this, "Yes, I grow *Den. kingianum*, but it never flowers for me!" Or, if in England, ".....bloody thing never flowers for me!" I have *Den. kingianum* in my collection and could relate very well to what I've just paraphrased. But then I listened carefully to Wade Hollenbach of Wade's Orchids (a past speaker) state that this species MUST experience a period a cold temperature in the

Fall to initiate flowering. The longer and colder (just above freezing), the better! Linda mentioned the same, but perhaps not as emphatically as Wade did. So, I tried it a couple of years ago for my two plants, very much with the attitude of FLOWER or DIE – both plants flowered the following February I'm pleased to report (alba form in photo to right after making its decision between the two options!) As mentioned by other growers before, a nighttime-daytime temperature differential of several or more degrees is definitely beneficial for triggering flowering in many orchids, though *Den. kingianum* may be close to the extreme end of the cold spectrum in its needs.



Check out cultural notes from an expert *Den. kingianum* grower, the late Dr Wilford Nepture, <https://www.massorchid.org/Resources/Documents/DenkingianumCultureNotes.pdf>

Should any one wish to delve deeper into the classification of the *Dendrobium* genus I recommend, <https://speciesorchidsocietywa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-Genus-Dendrobium.pdf>

In Reflection: TOS Orchid Growers' Day on Sunday, February 25



We had a full house at this event. Lots of great information was shared by Linda Thorne of Seagrove Orchids and TOS expert growers, Steven McAllister and Harry Gallis, MD. Participants received a free phalaenopsis (or two, or three!) to take away and put to practice



what they had learned. Once again Linda Thorne brought a mix of super orchids from different genera for those wishing to further feed their addictions! I extend a huge Thank You to our Secretary, Cyndi Lauderdale for organizing this event and to all TOS Members who made it happen, and of course to Steve Taras for graciously allowing us to use his Watered Garden Florist facility to host the event, and for the phalaenopsis plants he donated. Without Steve's generous support, the event would not have happened!

Upcoming: Mar 11 TOS meeting at JCRA

Steve Taras of Watered Garden Florist will be presenting, "Using Orchids in the Retail Floral Business." He will describe what materials work well in floral designs and I have a wee hunch that orchids might be mentioned! Watered Garden Florist was a major sponsor of our 2023 Fall for Orchids Show, for which we were most grateful.

Members' Feature



TOS Member Jeff Tucker had an exciting, busy February. He registered *Phragmipedium* Carolina First Light. It is a cross of *Phrag.* Jordan's Peach Tango x *Phrag. kovachii* 'Peruvian Dream', originated by C. Aker. Timing of its flowering with judging did not quite work out for Jeff, but knowing Jeff as I do, he will certainly be working on that!



As an aside note. The raspberry-colored, large-flowered *Phrag. kovachii* used as a parent in that cross is a relatively recently discovered (2001) slipper orchid species endemic to the Amazonas and San Martín regions of northern Peru. The first taxonomic descriptions of this new species in 2002, and its subsequent introductions to cultivation and trade make for a somewhat controversial tale, one peppered with competition to publish, blatant disregard of conservation of a species by avid collectors, illegal

international trade, governmental regulation, greed for profit, animosity, and much more! See <http://slipperorchids.info/phragdatasheets/kovachii/index.html>

Above *Phrag. kovachii* photo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Phragmipedium_kovachii

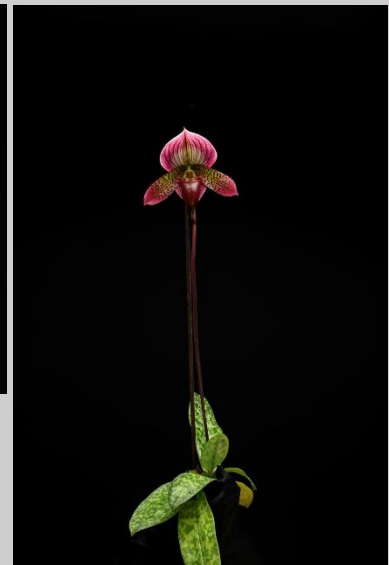
Well done, Jeff, we look forward to seeing an AOS award for your splendid *Phrag.* Carolina First Light in the not-too-distant future.



Jeff also received an AM/AOS award (82 points) for *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Loud Nine 'Carolina Red', a cross of *C. Orpetii* 'Hidden Treasure 4N' x *R/c. Rubescence* 'SVO' AM/AOS originated by Fred Clarke in 2012. Truly stunning flower color and form. Congratulations, Jeff!

TOS Board Trustee, Tyler Nace,

loaned his flowering *Paphiopedilum* Macabre Drama, a Maudiae-type hybrid for TOS' display in the Virginia Orchid Society's Feb show. It was selected for evaluation by the AOS judges and not surprisingly it received an AM/AOS award (80 pts). It's a cross of *Paph. Macabre Pops* x *Paph. Magically Wood*, originated by Lehua of Hawaii in 2021, and Tyler bestowed the fabulous cultivar name of 'Morgan's Onion Top' on this awarded plant. I see all round beautiful symmetry in flower form, its patterning, and its colors, and trust me I'm no judge - wonderful stuff. Congratulations, Tyler!



TOS Life Member Harry Gallis, MD received a HCC/AOS (77 points) award (Highly Commended Certificate) for *Dendrobium* QF akala 'Riverwood'

This is a cross of *Den. atrovioleaceum* x *Den. Roy Tokunaga* (genome comprises 75% *Den. atrovioleaceum* and 25% *Den. johnsoniae*, both spp belonging to the section Latouria), originated by Quintal Farms of Hawaii in 2021.

A great looking dendrobium Harry, one surely destined for future AOS awards!

A superb epiphytic specimen of *Zelenkoa onusta* (native to Ecuador, Panama, and Peru) thriving happily after being mounted on *Pachypodium lamerei*, which is native to Madagascar (aka Madagascar palm, though it's actually not a palm). Photographed at Riverwood Orchids Farm, Durham.



Remember to join Show 'n Tell ZOOM meetings at 7.30 pm on the last Thursday of every month. And, don't forget to be sending me your orchid photos and orchid stories for future newsletters. Have a great March!

Phil Brindle, TOS President

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