



# GREATER LAS VEGAS ORCHID SOCIETY

SUNDAY, JULY 11TH, 2004 2 PM

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1, 2004\*\*\* 12:30 PM\*\*\*

THE JULY MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE USUAL PLACE, THE NEVADA GARDEN CLUB BUILDING AT WASHINGTON AND TWIN LAKES ON THE WESTERN EDGE OF LORENZI PARK. THE BUILDING WILL BE OPEN AT 1PM.

THE AUGUST MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE HOME OF ELDINE STEVENS IN MT. CHARLESTON AT 12:30.

**Carol Siegel, Newsletter Editor**

CAROL SIEGEL- PRESIDENT  
CLARICE DEAN -VICE-PRESIDENT  
EILEEN MCKYTON- SECRETARY  
DIANA SMITH- TREASURER

AND...

Dan Mumau, Michael Lawless - Membership Hospitality Chairmen  
Eileen McKyton and Dan Hawley- Welcome Desk  
Lillian Patterson- Photographer and Historian  
Dan Mumau and Tony Billitere- Raffle Chairmen  
Phyllis Bond, Leslie Doyle, Shelly North and Eileen McKyton- Special Events Chairmen  
Jeri Lee and Tony Billitere- Community Liaison  
Alex McKyton -Building Chairmen and Webmaster  
Tex Severance and Mike Levin- Show and Tell Gurus  
Tex and Gidget Severance- Judging Chairmen  
Scotty Nogaim- Election Chairman, Raffle Lady  
Steve Ninemire Library Chairman Clarice Dean, Assistant Librarian  
Clarice Dean- Trip Chairman  
John Haydukavitch-Video Chief  
Shelly North-Classy Club Apparel Chairlady

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July 11, 2004

Dr. Joseph Arditti, "The Little Known Uses of Orchids in Medicine, Food, Magic, And as Implements

August 1, 2004

Barbecue Mt. Charleston Eldine Stevens' house  
12:30 pm



- Sept 12, 2004 Mike Blitz, Exotic Orchids of Maui "What's Happening in the World of Cattleyas"
- October 3, 2004 Aaron Hicks, "The Orchid Seed Bank"
- November 7, 2004 "The Further Exploits of Bill Bergstrom In Mexico"
- December 5, 2004 Fifth International Food Fest and Holiday Party"
- January 9, 2005 Mike Glikbarg, Orchids of Los Osos, "Odontoglossum & Oncidinae" SECOND SUNDAY
- February 6, 2005 Alan Koch, Gold Country Orchids, "Orchid Growing For Dummies" (wrote the book)
- March 6, 2005 Jerry Fischer, owner Orchids Limited, "The Orchids of Borneo"
- April 3, 2005 Charles Rowden, "Orchid Photography"
- May 1, 2005 Dr. Joseph Arditti, subject to be announced
- June 5, 2005 Sue Fordyce, owner Fordyce Orchids "Sophronitis and Her Sisters"/"Orchid Sign Language"
- July 10, 2005 SECOND SUNDAY Sheldon Takahashi, owner Carmela's Orchids, "Cattleyas"
- August 7, 2005 Barbecue
- September 11, 2005 Virtual Greenhouse Tour
- November 6, 2005 The Adventures of Dennis D'Allesandro in Bolivia"
- December 4, 2005 Sixth Annual International Food Fest and Holiday Party

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Because of the short period of time between our July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Garden Center Building and our August 1<sup>st</sup> Barbecue at Eldine Steven's lovely home in COOL Mt. Charleston, this newsletter will be the only one you receive until AFTER the barbecue. Therefore, please note

that the barbecue in August starts at 12:30. There is a map at the end of the newsletter for getting to Eldene's house. Therefore, make sure you keep the map. There is also an article at the end of the newsletter that I have written, "Ten Kinds of Orchid Growers," that will be published in the ORCHID DIGEST.

Our July meeting will be the SECOND Sunday of July, July 11<sup>th</sup>, because of the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. We have the special privilege of having Dr. Joseph Arditti as our speaker on "Orchids in Medicine, Food, Magic, and As Implements." Dr. Arditti, a professor at UC Irvine, is world-famous because he has written, among many other things, THE definitive volume on Orchid Biology. I am anxious to see him to see if he has a normal-sized head. How could he possibly fit all that information in a regular head? I have been corresponding with him by e-mail, and he writes the most entertaining e-mail. Can't wait to hear him speak. He spoke in Costa Mesa in February to rave reviews. His subject should be fun, too. We thank Evan Acker Hyde, Zaida Cadenas, Bill Whaley, and Steve Ninemire for volunteering to bring food. Daniel Vong will be providing the raffle and sale plants.

Our August 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will be at the lovely home of Eldine Stevens in cool Mt. Charleston at 12:30, an hour-and-a-half earlier than usual. The club will be providing the meat, chicken and fish and drinks for the barbecue, prepared by the expert professional team of Dan Mumau and Mike Lawless, owners of A Catered Affair. Each person is asked to bring a dish as usual for 10-12 people, a dessert, salad, casserole, appetizer or the like. This is a purely social event, and we always have a great time. Come and shmooze. A MAP IS INCLUDED AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER. SAVE IT.

In June, we were lucky enough to have Glen Decker, owner of Piping Rock Orchids, as our speaker. Thanks to Roberta Schechter, Gail Harris,

June Cravenn, and Dan and Marsha Hawley for providing the fabulous lasagnas and cheesecakes for the meeting. Clarice Dean presented our Species of the Month, *Phragmipedium pearcei*. This lithophyte grows on large boulders in small rivers in Ecuador and Peru. The sepals and petals are green with red-brown veins. The petals are twisted and the lip is yellow-green with red brown marking. The leaves look rather grass-like, and the inflorescence is about 12 inches. Glen sold many lovely slipper orchids, the *P pearcei* among them. We were pleased to have our esteemed member and owner of Paphanatics, Norito Hasegawa, at our meeting selling some of his glorious paphs (what else?) We thank Mike Levin for hosting Glen Decker so graciously and for selling some of his own plants. We made a \$180 profit on the raffle thanks to Glen's plants, the donated hotel orchids brought in by Tony Billitere, Dan Mumau and Mike Lawless, and the potting material donated by Carol Siegel. Shelly North will place the order for our club apparel which she so beautifully designed.

A special thank you to Alex McKyton who helped me so much with the setup and breakdown of the meeting. Come early and help, too.

Glen Decker's entertaining and informative talk contained much wisdom of phragmipedium culture. Just as a reminder:

1. Phrags can flourish in a variety of light conditions, from those for phals to those for cattleyas. The more light you have, the more water and humidity you should provide.
2. Keep phrags very wet. You can water them daily and have them sit in good quality (low mineral, no fertilizer) water.
3. Phrags have very few pests. Spray those you rarely get with Neem oil or Sun Spray oil, one Tbsp. per gallon. Neem is particularly effective for fungus.

4. You can repot phrags at any time. The mix isn't that important although Glen prefers bark-perlite-charcoal mixes and doesn't like coconut chips himself.
5. You can bury an old growth if the new growth is growing higher up. The new growth won't get roots unless you have it touch the soil.
6. The best time to pot is in spring.
7. Winter blossoms when it is cooler are larger and more colorful.
8. Parentage of a hybrid tells you what the plant likes.
9. Sargentianum adds redness. Schlimii is hard to keep in a hot climate. Longifolium adds ease of growth and heat resistance. Caudatum makes a large plant. Sorcerer's Apprentice, a hybrid, blooms year-round. Eric Young makes large plants that are easy to grow.
10. Want to buy from Glen? Look up [www.pipingrockorchids.com](http://www.pipingrockorchids.com).

On June 19th, Diana Smith, Carol Siegel, Leslie Shipp, Wanda (her student), Clarice Dean and botanist Jody Frasier met to collect *Spiranthes infernalis* at Ash Meadows Wildlife Refuge as part of an AOS spiranthes phylogeny study (a DNA study). I have enclosed an article on last year's orchid count at Ash Meadows that was published in the NATIVE ORCHID CONFERENCE JOURNAL in January of 2004, for those of you who are new to the club.

You can also come with some of us on July 10<sup>th</sup> to explore for the lost orchid, *Spiranthes diluvialis*, in Panaca with orchid expert Jim Coyner who is kindly coming down from Salt Lake City to help us. This native Nevada orchid has not been seen since 1936, and we want to know if it is still around! Call me at 254-4168 if you would like to come.

See you at the July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Garden Club Building at 2 and at Eldine's house at 12:30 on August 1.

Much love and keep cool, Carol 254-4168 [growlove@cox.net](mailto:growlove@cox.net)

## Ten Types of Orchid Growers

By Carol Siegel

It is a well-documented fact that orchid growers are smarter, nicer, cuter and more interesting than everybody else. However, although our hobby makes us all poor, we are not all the same. We are easily divided into recognizable types, each as different from the other as a cattleya from a masdevallia.

### THE INNOCENT

Clutching his Home Depot orchids, the new member radiates enthusiasm and optimism. He proudly owns three orchids although he doesn't know what they are since the tags just say "Plant." His orchids look better than yours because he just bought them. Armed with the knowledge that orchids are just like any other houseplant, he enthusiastically waters them every day, leaves them in the dark, and repots in soil. It starts innocently enough, this new fascination with orchids. Walking into Home Depot, he can't resist the \$15 orchid in glorious bloom. He is just going to buy one. Now he dreams at night about orchids. Experienced growers know that orchids contain some unknown opiate and that one orchid is never enough, but the new member hasn't figured out why he now spends all his time visiting a hardware store. He enters his first orchid meeting like the devoted entering a church, starry-eyed at the plants in bloom and salivating over the plants for sale. Orchid clubs love the new member. Though clueless, he radiates the infatuation and thrill of the early orchid addiction- and he will buy anything in bloom...anything...even if it doesn't have a tag.

### THE DECORATOR

This member really wants an orchid for her kitchen table, one for her nightstand, and maybe one in the entry. She doesn't actually want to grow orchids. She wants orchids that are always in bloom, full of flowers, bug-free, and low maintenance, plastic flowers with real petals

and a great smell. Favoring designer clothes, this attractive member really loves anything beautiful and will spend big bucks to buy large, pretty plants with gorgeous flowers. She wants it all. She wants the orchids but she doesn't want the work. Like the self-walking dog or the diaper-free baby, the care-free orchid is an urban myth. At one meeting, she comments to a friend, "But they only bloom for three months a year...What am I supposed to do with it the other nine months?" Orchid clubs love the decorator. She is a wonderful source of donated plants for the raffle.

### THE BREEDER

Recognized by the fact that she never goes anywhere without her toothpick, the breeder will brashly approach you with an offer to be your pod parent. Smelling of clorox, she collects baby food jars and agar like others collect stamps. She is genuinely interested in your caudicles. Invited into your greenhouse, she eyes your cattleya and then slowly says, "Nice pollinia..." She adores having thousands of the same little tiny plants and is more patient than most mortals as the years pass into a decade before her creations bloom. Although she will never admit it, crossing orchids makes her feel like God. She is eternally optimistic that the next cross will be bigger, thicker, taller, more award-worthy... Her goal in life is to produce a black orchid with five-foot petals. Orchid clubs love the breeder. She has thousands of the same plant and will sell her less stellar efforts real cheap.

### THE SHOW-OFF

Truth be known, there is a little of the show-off in every orchid grower, but the show-off just has a terminal case of the Look-At-Me-And-How-Good-I-Am. The sure tip-off that you are dealing with a show-off is that he never has any problems with his plants. None of his plants die. He always asks, "Scale? What is scale?" and has never had any of his buds blast. He lies a lot. Like the fisherman's big one that got away, the

one he has at home is much bigger than the one he brought to the show. Every conversation is peppered with Latin. *Bulbophyllum grandiflora* and *Angraecum sesquipedale* end every sentence, and he pronounces them all correctly. No matter what the question, he has the answer, and he always know a better way to do anything than you do. He calls Ned Nash and Robert Fuchs "Ned" and "Bobby," and he always tell you he had some judging chairman staying at his house last week. He has the newest potting material and calls his growing area "The Conservatory." Orchid clubs love the show-off. He is usually the president.

### THE INDIANA JONES

Most of us get to know the Indiana Jones of the orchid world because, after surviving yellow fever and malaria in the jungles of South America, they all become speakers at orchid meetings. None of their clothes match, and they always wear shorts and Texas. Be careful about shaking hands with them since they may still be infected with some incurable jungle rot. They have fabulous slides of native orchid huts and snakes, and their adventures always cause a shiver of delicious envy to go through the group. They know the most interesting people, most of whom exist on the edges of polite society, and they go places and do things that the rest of us only dream of. They always show at least one slide of an orchid that sells for \$5000 on the black market that they DID NOT take back with them because they are good people not like the other thieves and non-environmentally-conscious explorers. Orchid societies love the Indiana Jones. They bring the jungle to us in air-conditioned comfort.

### THE SAINT

This orchid grower exists in a state of grace. She blooms *masdevallias* in the desert and *laelias* in the arctic circle. She wins lots of AOS awards because her *paphiopedilum* bloom with fifteen spikes while yours only puts out one spike every leap year. She built her greenhouse



herself from sticks she found in the street while helping on a girl scout clean-up and heats and cools it for only \$15 a year. She is the first one to offer you a division of her prize-winning plant and invites new members over to watch her repot her plants. She is happy to bring food to orchid club meetings and always vacuums. Orchid clubs love her. Who wouldn't? (Of course, there is the rumor she belongs to a cult that practices black magic, but maybe that is just jealousy...)

### THE VENDOR

Professional growers don't like to be called vendors. It sounds like the man with the accordion, the monkey and the tin cup, plying his wares in the street. Orchid growers like to think they are green activists spreading joy and beauty utilizing the most advanced techniques science has to offer. They are actually orchid hobbyists who ran out of space. They have to sell the stuff to make room to buy more. Most growers didn't mean to become growers. They just had to do it to support their habit. Many just became embarrassed by getting caught by their mate bringing another orchid into the house. The quick response, "Oh, I was thinking of starting a business," turned into the actual business. Of course, there is always the BLUE BLOOD orchid grower whose father gave them the business. These are the orchid dynasties that are always trying to live up to their father's legacy by becoming fiercely active in the AOS. Orchid clubs love the vendor. Vendors are to orchid growers what drug dealers are to junkies.

### THE NATIVE ORCHID NUT

The native orchid nut thinks it is a sin to actually *CAGE* orchids in a greenhouse and would never dream of actually *CAPTURING* an orchid and growing it outside the jungle. They will tell you that you don't need to own an elephant in order to love and protect elephants. In fact, you shouldn't own any at all. These are frequently college professors with many books and papers to their names, smarter and better-educated

that the rest of the mere mortals in the orchid world. They publish a lot and debate the morals of collecting seed in the wild. They go on their honeymoon to a rain forest in Venezuela where they trek through the mud with their beloved in search of the ultimate blue *Cattleya mossiae*. Instead of watching TV at night, they study the little maps of the states with dots on it indicating where the native orchids are found. Their idea of a good time is rediscovering *Spiranthes diluvialis* in Panaca in a hay field. They dream of going to heaven and having a native orchid named for them. They wonder if there are any undiscovered native orchids in heaven. Orchid clubs love the native orchid nut. They make members feel they are part of a conservation movement.

#### THE SPECIALIST

After collecting orchids for five years, your orchid area is stuffed with stuff that you won in the raffle when they were very small plants, and you didn't know better. They are so big now that you now call them, "Madame," and, like a first wife, you dream of trading them in for something that is more to your tastes these days. There is one special kind of orchid that grabs your heart and your mind. You want to have one of every color of *Cattleya intermedia* or the like, and you regard stuff you once cherished as "ordinary." You have become a specialist. Your e-mail address now proclaims your single-minded devotion and you become [Phragman@cox.net](mailto:Phragman@cox.net) or [Laeliagirl@aol.com](mailto:Laeliagirl@aol.com). Your first act of the day is to check websites that have your beloved genus or species, and they know you by your first name at those nurseries. You are the first one they call when a weird and exotic bulbophyllum arrives, and you actually fantasize about winning an AOS award with something in your collection. You now regard anything but species as too pathetic to collect. Orchid clubs love the specialist. They are usually the only ones that know what they are talking about.

## THE SPOUSE

Often neglected, impossible to ignore, the orchid spouse is often the unwilling grower of orchids. Although occasionally there are two enthusiasts in the home, usually one spouse is the addict, and the other is the Al Anon partner. The spouse begins to suspect that something is wrong when entries in the checkbook read only, "O," the code name for orchid. Orchids begin to enter the house through the garage or when the spouse is at the hairdresser or at golf. Special areas of the house are devoted only to orchids, and mold starts to grow on the walls of the house because of all the humidity. Vacations are planned around orchid shows and nurseries, and a broken spike means a day of depression. The orchid spouse is the unsung hero or heroine of the orchid grower's life. Sucked into helping with watering and shlepping, the spouse learns to take second place to the affair with orchids. Orchid clubs love the spouse. They bring the best cookies to the meetings.

No matter what kind of orchid grower you are, know that you belong to a select group of very special beings, those whose hearts belong to orchids.

## AN UNLIKELY PLACE TO FIND AN ORCHID TREASURE by Carol Siegel

It was an unlikely place to find an orchid—or an orchid club for that matter. Hot and dry, just nine miles from Death Valley Junction, the ground was so thickly covered with salt that it looked like winter snow. Fed by a vast network of underground springs, the ground bounced like foam rubber when we walked on it. On June 25, 2003, seven hardy club conservation enthusiasts braved the intense summer heat to participate in the experience of a lifetime, the orchid count of *Spiranthes infernalis* at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. (Mike Lawless, Dan Mumau, Liz Leone, John Haydukavitch, Carol Siegel, Diana Smith, and Steve Ninemire). *Spiranthes infernalis* is found there and nowhere else in the world. We got up at dawn and drove 90 miles to make sure that the population of 10,000 endemic orchids was safe. Invasive weeds, like the Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), a noxious perennial herb, probably introduced in hay from Eurasia, now covers over 500 acres where there were none in 1990. The fear is that the introduced weeds will squeeze out the rare and exotic orchid.

The 22,000 acres of Meadows are protected as a national wildlife refuge because they contain a greater concentration of unique species than any other location in the United States—13 threatened and endangered species and at least 24 plants and animals found nowhere else in the world- including our orchid. It is one of the few natural desert oases in the Southwest providing habitat for 220 species of migratory birds.

We entered through an unpaved road, dusty and deserted looking. In the distance, Crystal Reservoir, one of 40 springs, sparkled in the shimmering heat of the morning, a blue lake in the crusty earth. We met Gina Glenn of the Fish and Wildlife Service, a charming young lady who led the count. With her were several people from Kew Gardens in England, collecting seed from the unique meadow plants as part of their conservation effort. We walked a half-mile raised boardwalk following a narrow stream filled with Baltic rush, Lizard's Tail and reeds in the midst of the arid terrain. Unexpectedly, the boardwalk ended in a pool of clear, blue-green water, Crystal Spring, with a sand floor and bright green algae. The 85 degree water, flowing at 3000 gallons a minute, was part of a vast underground water system with 30 springs seeping "fossil" water believed to

have entered the water system underground thousands of years ago. At one time, the whole area was an interconnected series of lakes and springs, but the receding glaciers at the end of the ice age left Ash Meadows an isolated oasis in the middle of the desert. Swimming in the water were tiny pupfish, one of four endangered species of fish in the refuge. As we turned around to go back, we saw our first look at our orchid, sticking up like birthday candles in the ground.

*Spiranthes infernalis*, also called the Ash Meadow's Ladies' -Tresses, was considered *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* until 1989. *Spiranthes* come from two Greek words meaning "coil" and "flowers" for the coiled or spiraled flower spikes of this genus. Because of the supposed resemblance of the spirals to some hair styles, spiranthes are commonly called "ladies'-tresses." *Spiranthes infernalis*, Ash Meadows ladies'-tresses, was named in 1989 by Charles J. Sheviak and is endemic to the alkaline, moist soils of Ash Meadows, meaning it is ONLY found there, making it very special. It is similar to other spiranthes with many small, white, spiraling orchid flowers. In 1990, populations world-wide were estimated at between 730-1160 individuals. Until last year, global counts for species were around 1400 individuals. Surveys last year estimated 10,000 individuals and this year, happily, the survey we took part in found 13,500 plants. Our little orchid is doing okay!

We were given a map and told to each take a 10 feet swath and walk the length and breadth of the area, recording orchids as we went. The morning was spent cutting a path through mesquite and ash groves and saltbush and creosote, the spiky branches crunching as we pushed our way through the brush. Crushed and crunched ourselves, we stopped for lunch, and then Gina took us to another spot, more open and accessible, looking much like the tall grasses of the African savanna. Wending our way along the small meandering stream, we excitedly found our spiranthes, 14 inches tall, slender and spiraled, little birthday candles. We, who live in the shadow of the architectural wonder that is Las Vegas, with its glitz and its glamour, were thrilled to see this little survivor, beating all odds by making it in this strange and exotic environment. Thrilled, too, we were, to have made this effort to save our very special native orchid.

### **Bibliography**

- 1.Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. US Fish and Wildlife Service, handout.
- 2.Nevada National Parks and Tourist Guide- Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge([http://www.americansouthwest.net/nevada/ash\\_meadows/wildlife\\_refuge.html](http://www.americansouthwest.net/nevada/ash_meadows/wildlife_refuge.html))