



# The Informer

Newsletter of the Greater Omaha Orchid Society

PO Box 241871 Omaha, NE 68124

greateromahaorchidsociety.org

January 2014

## OFFICERS

President:

Eric Stoiber  
(402) 206-4554

Vice President:

Jim Pyrzynski  
(402) 734-4112

Secretary:

Anne Marie Smith

Treasurer:

Aaron Bugjo

Board Members:

Jacque Lewzader  
402-573-2217

Linda Schroeder  
(402) 990-5501

Ron Fechner  
(402) 618-4268

Past President:

Roberta Ginavan  
(712) 487-3085

Newsletter Editor:

Jim Pyrzynski

Articles may be mailed to Jim at  
2107 Alberta Ave., Bellevue, NE  
68005 or emailed to:

jpyrzynski@cox.net

Submission deadline for the  
**February** Informer: February  
3, 2014

## **Omaha Orchid Society Mem- bership Information**

### **Annual Dues:**

Single: \$15.00

Family: \$20.00

Annual dues are paid to the treasurer  
by January 1 of each year and are  
delinquent the day after the Febru-  
ary meeting. Dues for new members  
joining after July 31st are one-half  
the annual rate.

Dues should be made payable to  
G. O. O. S. and may be mailed to  
the G. O. O. S. post office box: G.  
O. O. S., PO Box 241871, Omaha,  
NE 68124.

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## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS MEETINGS**

### **NOTE THE LOCATION CHANGES FOR EACH MEETING BELOW:**

#### **January 8, 2014**

Douglas/Sarpy County  
Extension Office,  
8015 W. Center Road  
7:00 PM Grower's Group  
discussion (all welcome)  
7:30 Program: Night at the  
movies: "Black Orchid"  
Refreshments: Ron Fechner

#### **January 22, 2014**

Papillion Library  
6:45 PM Papillion Library  
Board meeting

February 12, 2014  
Douglas/Sarpy County  
Extension Office,  
8015 W. Center Road  
7:00 PM Grower's Group  
discussion (all welcome)  
7:30 Program: Display  
challenge  
Refreshments: Betty Szopo

## **EVENTS**

### **January 24 – 26, 2014**

St. Cecilia Cathedral Flo-  
wer Festival  
701 N. 40th St. Omaha, NE

### **February 1 – 2, 2014**

Orchid Growers Guild  
"Orchid Quest 2014"  
Alliant Energy, 1919  
Alliant Energy Center Way,  
Madison, WI; Contact:  
Judy Stevenson, 608-231-  
3163, judy\_stevenson@  
sbcglobal.net

### **February 6 – 9, 2014**

Orchid Society of Kansas  
City annual orchid show.

### **March 1 – 2, 2014**

Northeastern Wisconsin  
Orchid Society Show  
Holiday Inn Neenah  
Riverwalk, 123 East  
Wisconsin Ave., Neenah, WI.  
Contact: Milton Wittmann,  
920-788-7413, orrwitt@aol.  
com

### **March 29 – 30, 2014**

Greater Omaha Orchid  
Society 27th Annual Orchid  
Show & Sale. Lauritzen  
Gardens, 100 Bancroft St.,  
Omaha, NE  
Contact: Jim Pyrzynski, 402-  
734-4112, jpyrzynski@cox.  
net

### **April 29 – May 4, 2014**

2014 Spring AOS Members  
Meeting and Show  
Doubletree by Hilton,  
7800 Normandale Blvd,  
Minneapolis MN, Sponsored  
by the Orchid Society of  
Minnesota, Contact; Kim  
Livingston, 952-831-8135,  
thelivingstons@comcast.net

## **MOVIE**

### **WEDNESDAY NIGHT**

A Night at the Movies –  
that's the program for this  
month. We will view the  
movie "The Black Orchid"  
which was originally to be  
shown back during the Sep-  
tember meeting (but wasn't  
due to time constraints).  
No, it's not the 1950s mov-  
ie with Sophia Loren and  
Anthony Quinn. Actually  
the full title is "The Judge,  
The Hunter, The Thief, and  
the Black Orchid" and it  
has interviews with a vari-  
ety of well-known orchid  
people.

The board will provide ap-  
propriate treats for a movie  
occasion (and ruin you're  
new year's diet resolution).  
So come to the meeting, sit  
back and enjoy the movie.

### **RENEWAL TIME**

It's that time. Time to re-  
new your membership in  
the Greater Omaha Orchid  
Society. Memberships ex-  
pire the day after the Febru-  
ary meeting (February 14,  
2014). With your member-  
ship we are able to bring in  
guest speakers from across  
the USA. You get to use our  
extensive library. Use the  
renewal form on page 6 of  
this newsletter. Thanks for  
being a member.

### **FEBRUARY - A CHALLENGE**

February's meeting will be  
a challenge – for you. We  
will form two teams. The  
teams will compete to see  
who can come up with the

best orchid display. For info on displays, see the article on page 2.

## AOS POINT SCALE FOR JUDGING EXHIBITS

### BLOOMIN' ORCHIDS NEEDED FOR KC SHOW

The Orchid Society of Greater Kansas City (OS-GKC) will have its show February 6 – 9 2014. OS-GKC has been a faithful participant in our shows for many years and it is only appropriate that we reciprocate by having a display at their show. Aaron Bugjo and Eric Stoiber will travel to KC and setup the GOOS display – but they need plants for the display – YOUR plants. Who knows, your plant may win an award? But it only can if you have it at the KC show. Our show at Lauritzen Gardens is a month and a half later and your blooming orchids will not be the same then.

The KC show is before our February meeting, so Aaron and Eric will make arrangements for getting your plants on the days prior to the show (Feb. 6). Anybody providing plants for the show should provide a list of the plants (owners name on the list, name of each plant) and mark the pot of the plant (a piece of masking tape with your name works well). Some other pointers, look your plant over, remove any old flower stems, etc. clean the leaves (don't use plant shine, milk or a milk/water mixture does a good job), staking the flowers should help to keep it in good shape during transport and help in presentation. For some hints, see: <http://www.orchidworks.com/showguide/grooming/groomed.htm>.

The American Orchid Society Handbook on Judging and Exhibition provides the following point scale for judging Groups of Plants or Cut Flowers Arranged for Effect. This point scale is similar to ones used by horticultural organizations throughout the world and is used for scoring exhibits for show trophies and ribbons.

General Arrangement (Design)*	35 pts
Quality of Flowers	35pts
Variety	20pts
Labeling	10pts
T O T A L	100pts

\* which includes Balance, Contrast, Dominance, Proportion, Scale & Rhythm

These four areas separately and see how they relate to planning an orchid exhibit. Starting from the bottom up...

**LABELING** Any AOS judged orchid show requires that all orchids be accurately and legibly labeled. A full ten points of the score is allotted for labeling. There is no excuse for not getting the full ten points. If you are putting in an exhibit for a society where the plants come from many sources be sure you know the name before accepting a plant for consideration. Bring reference books or a laptop for spell checking. Typically, labels are done on poster board cut into strips then the individual labels are cut as they are done. A piece of floral wire with a "u" bent into it is taped to the back of the label. This light gauge wire can be inserted into a pot or bent to hang from a branch of foliage. For many years black poster board with a gold pen was popular. I have used a stone-gray and black calligraphy marker with good success. Greens, especially olive, are also popular. Just be sure that the labels are discreet and do not draw attention from the orchids themselves. They should be big enough to read but no bigger. I have seen exhibits with bright green labels that looked atrocious. Making sure that the person doing the labeling has good penmanship and is familiar with orchid names will make the job go much smoother. Having a list of all the orchids being considered for the exhibit is also helpful.

**VARIETY** Variety, which accounts for 20 points, may sometimes be difficult for the hobbyist to control. If you are on a committee that is putting in a society exhibit you only have the plants the members provide to work with. If you are a hobbyist putting in your own exhibit you only have your own plants to work with. It is important to know what plants you will have a few days before you actually begin putting in the exhibit. This will give you ample opportunity to solicit additional plants in any areas that are deficient. Variety in an orchid exhibit can be many things: variety of color within a genus (such as many different colored Phals.), variety of flower sizes within a single genus, even variety of colors within a single species. The glossary of the Handbook on Judging and Exhibition defines "variety" as "Both as numbers of different genera and variety within one or a few genera". Unusual species can add interest to any group of plants. Obviously, judges find evaluating exhibits with a great variety of genera to be easier than evaluating those with variety of other types.

**QUALITY OF FLOWERS** This pretty much speaks for itself. An exhibit with high quality flowers will almost always score higher than one that may excel in other areas. Keep in mind that this is an exhibit at an ORCHID SHOW, orchids must predominate. The exhibit with healthy, well-flowered plants will always catch the judges' eyes. Do not use diseased or otherwise unhealthy orchids. Do not use flowers that are past their prime or not fully opened. Do not, under any circumstances, use any artificial plant material. Do not manipulate flowers in any way (other than staking) to improve their appearance. Choose the highest quality hybrids and best species clones that you can possibly find. Flower quality counts for 35 points.

**GENERAL ARRANGEMENT** This may be the hardest area for the average person to grasp...this is the "artistic" part. It accounts for a full 35 points of the total score. Let's look at the components of "General Arrangement" one by one. As you will see, they all interact with each other. Keep in mind that we are discussing the whole exhibit, not just the flowers. BALANCE refers to the visual weight of one side of an exhibit compared to



the visual weight of the other side. An easy way to evaluate the balance of your exhibit is by squinting your eyes and comparing the visual weight of the left side to that of the right side. The heavier side will appear as a more dominant blob than the less heavy side. A small grouping of light-colored flowers can have the same visual weight as a large grouping of dark-colored flowers. A balanced design is satisfying to look at so try to keep your exhibit visually balanced. **CONTRAST** is the difference between various elements in an exhibit. This could be a grouping of pink flowers against a dark foliage background or a small yellow spray *Oncidium* grouped with some large yellow *Cattleyas*. Contrasting elements can be different sizes, colors or forms. Contrast adds interest and texture to an exhibit. It is a good idea however, to use contrast sparingly. Indiscriminate contrasting elements can create a confused appearance that is uneasy to look at. Judges particularly frown upon color contrast (see color flow (next month)). **DOMINANCE** refers to the attention getting qualities of certain elements against the other elements of a design. Dominance can be a result of size, form or color. A few orange *Cattleya* hybrids would be a dominant element in an exhibit of mostly pink and white *Phalaenopsis*. It is easy to unintentionally make our props the dominant element in our effort to make a statement. Keep in mind that we are doing an orchid exhibit...orchids must predominate. **PROPORTION** refers to the relationship between elements of a design; a group of dark *Vanda* flowers may be twice as big as the group of lavender *Cattleyas*, the *Vanda* flowers may be half as bright, they may have equal balance. Proportion lends coherence and serves to tie all the elements of a design together. **SCALE** is the specific proportion of size relationships of different elements. **RHYTHM** is the lifeblood of a design. Without rhythm an exhibit is static and lifeless. Rhythm is created by the use of the above components in various combinations to create movement within a design. Repetition of color or form, gradual change in form, size or color and diagonal or serpentine lines are all used to create rhythm in an exhibit. A frequently used device is a pathway to lead the eye into the exhibit and create rhythm and movement.

To the novice exhibitor these principals of design may seem ethereal and difficult to grasp. There are no yardsticks with which to measure balance or contrast. Let's stand back and look at the exhibit as a whole and try to see what our overall objective is. A successful orchid exhibit should be pleasing to look at providing a variety of flowers that may contrast with each other yet are grouped so they work well together. Any props should reflect the show theme yet not dominate the orchids. This exhibit would have rhythm so that the eye would follow the different elements throughout the design. All elements would be balanced and in proportion so that no one thing was dominant. If you squint your eyes and one element is perceived as jarring then it should be removed, subdued or balanced with a similar element. If, as you plan your orchid exhibit, you lack ideas then look to nature. The natural world has a harmony that can always provide inspiration.

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*to be continued next month*

## NEBRASKA NATIVE ORCHID REDISCOVERY



The January/February issue of *NebraskaLand* features another native orchid, the small yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*). The orchid is very rare in Nebraska, occupying only some woodlands along the Missouri River. The article discusses how a plant was spotted in Indian Cave State Park by someone unfamiliar with it and a subsequent survey of a small area of the Park to determine how many more may reside in the area. The lady's slipper had not been seen in the park for a number of years and it was feared that it may have been extirpated.

The survey covered only a few hundred acres of the park's 2,400 acres. The terrain contains steep slopes and fallen trees. There were bugs a plenty at that time of the year. The article makes no mention of snakes; the poisonous timber rattlesnake and the copperhead are both found in the region. Seventy-two yellow lady's-slippers were found growing in 13 colonies. They also found populations of a rare Turk's cap lily (*Lilium canadense*). The survey will be continued next spring/summer. The Game and Parks Commission has some management plans for the park which involve tree thinning and prescribed burns and they will track the resulting changes in the orchid's population. The orchid population increased in a similarly managed Iowa woodland.

LEFT: *Cypripedium parviflorum* in Nebraska woodland  
photo by Jim Pырzynski

# FROM THE AMERICAN ORCHID SOCIETY BEGINNER'S NEWSLETTER

## The Importance of Staking

Orchids growing in the wild don't have the benefit of a caretaker to primp and preen them. But their only purpose is to attract a pollinator, not please us humans. If we grow orchids to display in our homes or exhibit at shows and orchid society meetings, we want them to look their best. Our regimen of giving our orchids the best of care must include staking the flowers. Some beginners may not consider staking part of orchid growing, or may be too intimidated to try their hand at it. But the flowers are the reward we grow orchid plants for and we should help them present those flowers in their most glorious beauty. This is not to imply that all orchids must be staked, but there are some orchids and some cases where staking is of great benefit.

**Why Stake?** It is essential to stake an orchid inflorescence if the plant is being transported to a meeting or show. The movement of travel can easily damage flowers or even break an inflorescence. Many orchids will present their flowers in a more pleasing manner if the inflorescence is staked. Just today I was looking through the shadehouse and found a *Cattleya intermedia* inflorescence that had grown quite tall over Easter weekend. It was starting to bend and the weight of the four flowers was also making the pseudobulb bend as well. Had I left this spike to develop on its own the flowers would be nodding downward. That doesn't matter to a bee but it does to us who want to admire the flowers! Commercial phalaenopsis growers always stake inflorescences, starting early to create a beautifully shingled presentation of flowers. Most orchids with long multifloral inflorescences show better if staked. Both single-flowered and multifloral *Paphiopedilum* hybrids should be staked to allow the inflorescence to develop straight and stay that way. Many cattleyas, especially those with long flower spikes or heavy flowers benefit from staking. In short, any orchid may be improved by staking its inflorescence excepting some species and of course, orchids with pendant inflorescences.

**Materials** As the name suggests, staking involves a rigid stake and devices to fasten the orchid inflorescence to it. The stake can be galvanized metal wire of varying gauges or bamboo. Bamboo is rigid and will provide good support for a phalaenopsis inflorescence and can provide a decorative element. Galvanized wire will also offer good support and has the advantage that it can be bent. This is useful for orchids with pseudobulbs where the stake cannot be placed close enough to the spike. Some galvanized wire stakes are made to firmly clip on to the edge of a clay pot. These are useful with tall pseudobulbs when firm support is needed for the pseudobulb as well as the flower spike. Green or brown twist ties and plastic "dragonfly" clips are currently among the most popular fasteners. Both offer quick and secure support. Twist ties are sometimes covered with a piece of tied raffia for decoration. Floral tape can be used with galvanized wire to gently arch a heavy inflorescence. We like to use thin gauge electrical solder as a fastener. It is flexible enough to quickly wrap and secure an inflorescence and stake of any length, and it can be reused. The silver-gray color is discreet.

**Method** There are many ways to stake an inflorescence and there are not really any "wrong" or "right" techniques, although AOS judges do frown on plants with flowers that have been excessively manipulated into position. The most important rule of staking is to be careful! A developing inflorescence can seem amazingly plastic and bendable and then a moment later, be as brittle as glass and break in your fingers. It is almost impossible to correct poor flower presentation once the flowers are fully open, so starting early not only makes the job easier, it also minimizes the potential tragedy of a broken spike. Phalaenopsis inflorescences should be staked when they are 6-12" tall depending on the particular hybrid or species. For an arching, shingled inflorescence you want the first tie to be an inch or two below the first bud. Other multifloral orchids such as *oncidiums* and *cymbidiums* can also be staked once the spike is long enough to place a tie below the first bud. Do not cut the stake until the inflorescence is close to its maximum length so that additional support can be added as it develops. Cattleyas and similar orchids can be staked once the buds begin to twist from their upside down position.

**Why Stake?** While staking is a matter of personal taste, there are certain orchids that usually need some help presenting their flowers. I personally feel that a lot of hardware on a flowering orchid plant detracts from the flowers' beauty so I try to keep staking to a minimum and as inconspicuous as I can make it. Staking is an important part of grooming your orchids so they present their beautiful flowers to their fullest potential.



LEFT: A properly staked inflorescence will produce a beautiful presentation of flowers!

Phalaenopsis Chicago Connection 'Plantation' AM/AOS  
grown by Diane Davis.

Photo: © G. Allikas

Here is additional information:

[www.orchidworks.com/showguide/grooming/groomed.htm](http://www.orchidworks.com/showguide/grooming/groomed.htm)

Greg Allikas  
April 2012

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Minutes of the December 11, 2013 meeting.

The meeting was the annual Holiday Party, held this year at Piccolo's Restaurant. Everyone who attended enjoyed the festivities.

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Greater Omaha Orchid Society Board Meeting  
December 18, 2013

The Greater Omaha Orchid Society Board met at the Papillion Public Library at 6:45 PM. In attendance were: Eric Stoiber, Aaron Bugjo, Roberta Ginavan, Jacque Lewzader, Ron Fechner, and Jim Pyrzyński.

Holiday Party. The consensus was that the party "went great."

St. Cecilia Flower Show. Preparations for the show were discussed. Ron, Eric, and Jim met with Brother William on December 5th. The location for the Society exhibit was reviewed. Jim took several photos. The location is behind the metal gate, past the first two alcoves which have something like an altar. The Society alcove has a large statue along the windows and a crèche display on the other side. Brother William also discussed the display and showed some of the pot and display material to be used. He mentioned that he thought live plants (as opposed to cut flowers) would be desirable. Rather than leaving material for viewers to pick up, we should have someone present, at least during the opening (Friday night) viewing.

Kansas City Orchid Show. Preparations for the show (Feb 6 – 9) was discussed. The plants will need to be picked up from members who have plants to display since the show is before the February meeting. Aaron and Eric will take the plants to the show and setup the display. Aaron will bring them back; Eric will return prior to the shows end. Jim



will contact the show chair for a show application and info.

Home and Garden Show. Jim discussed the show which is February 6 – 9 at the Century-Link Center. He received a phone call from Mike Mancuso requesting we participate. Jim explained that we had made a prior commitment to do the Kansas City orchid show and that our efforts at the recent Home and Garden Shows were not being very productive. After some discussion, Jim told Mancuso that all we support would be a minimally manned small booth with our material for distribution. Jim will go daily to ensure the informational items are there and at times meet with the attendees.

January meeting refreshments. The board will provide refreshments for the “night at the movies” January meeting. Board members signed up for what they will be responsible to bring.

Summer auction. The auction was briefly discussed. There was agreement that Bird’s Botanicals would be the source for the auction material.

Other. Jacque mentioned that the Paradigm Gardens’s email newsletters had information on monthly meeting meetings and classes that they held that might be of interest to members. Jim will get on the mailing list and email members as needed.

Ron mentioned that the Members of Orchid Friends (MOOF) newsletter had information that we might find interesting. Ron will forward Jim a copy.

Great Plains Judging Center donation. Aaron advised that the check with the donation made last June had not been cashed. Jim will contact Bryon (Judging Center Chair) to determine its status.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Pyrzynski, for Marie Anne Smith

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**GREATER OMAHA ORCHID SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM (2014)**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

SINGLE DUES - \$15.00 FAMILY DUES - \$20.00 STUDENT (18 YRS AND UNDER) - \$5.00

Make check payable to the Greater Omaha Orchid Society, and mail to:  
Greater Omaha Orchid Society, P. O. Box 241871, Omaha, NE 68124