

# Overtures

A Communication Instrument for Society Members and other Interested Parties

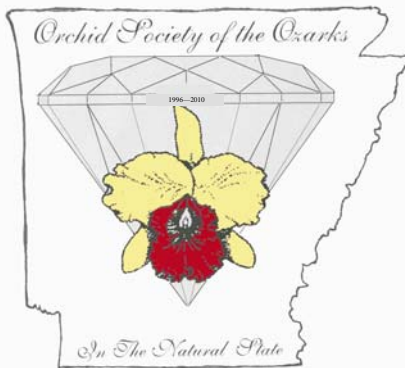
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Volume XV Issue 9

October 2010

## A Trip to Chicagoland ,,,,,,..... Steve & Cathy Marak



*Stimulating interest in Orchids and their culture as a nonprofit, educational organization...*

### Special Points of Note

- Chicagoland
- My Favorite Phal Species
- Notes from the Program Chair
- July Meeting Highlights
- Suzanne's Musings
- Back Porch

The Orchid Society of the Ozarks meets the 4th Sunday of each month. Annual dues: \$10.00 for individual and \$15.00 for joint membership.

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After missing the last couple of years, Cathy and I headed off to the 2010 Chicagoland Orchid Festival the fourth weekend in September. Every year several Chicago area orchid vendors open their greenhouses and invite other vendors, from across the US and some international, to bring plants and set up on their premises. There are lots of great orchids available, including some that don't make it into the catalogs, and it literally brings in busloads of people.

Things kicked off on Friday morning, so we drove up Thursday. Fortunately I don't mind driving late into the night because we didn't realize that every highway in the state of Illinois was under construction and their definition of "interstate speed" was 45 mph.

We happened to stay near Oak Hill Gardens, so that was our first stop. Most OSOers know OHG both from Greg Butler's frequent appearances at shows in our area and through the mail



order catalog. Andy's Orchids, J&L, Michel Orchid Nursery, Plantio de Orquídea from Venezuela, and Orquídeas del Valle from Colombia were guest vendors at Oak Hill, so as a registered species nut my bank

account was in serious jeopardy right from the outset.

Among the unexpected finds were *Ascocentrum ampullaceum*, well out of my comfort range - I've avoided the Vanda group as not really compatible with my growing conditions. But I couldn't resist this one, and fortunately it doesn't seem to get too large. It does sound like it's going to need every photon of light I can give it, though - Internet articles use phrases like "avid sun-bather", "grows on bare rocks facing south", and "resistant to even direct tropical sun". (What's the flower like, you ask? Who cares - look at that foliage! It may be only modest by *Oeveoclades* or jewel orchid standards, but you just don't see that kind of thing in the monopodial orchids!)



The *Ascocentrum* was not the only thing we bought, of course, and then it was off to Windsong, where Cathy

## A Trip to Chicagoland continued .....



found some Paphs she had been wanting (and I confess I bought a non-orchid), and then the Long Drive down the west side of Chicago to Natt's Orchids. There was the



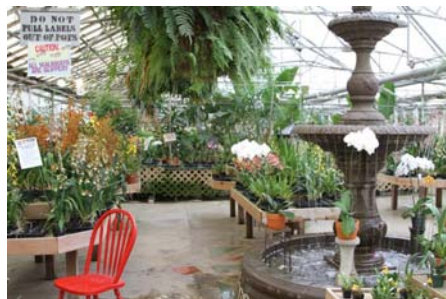
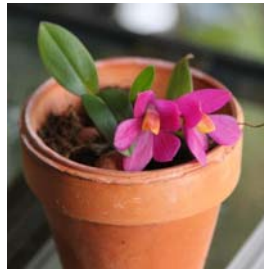
most amazing tray of large, lush *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, grown perfectly and all in flower. I know growers out on the west coast where it's cool and moist can grow this species almost without trying and probably wouldn't have been impressed, but for those of us from the Midwest, it was enough to knock your socks off, and then back on again.

I'm sure you guys know *D. cuthbertsonii*, but if you don't, it's a very cute miniature, foliage reaching no more than 3-3.5 cm (1.5 in) high, with flowers that are huge compared to the size of the plant – easily 2.5 cm (1 in) long, in various shades of red, orange, pink, etc. It's famous for holding the flowers as long as 10 months in good condition. Unfortunately, it's equally famous for being difficult to grow. It is reputed to want cool tem-



peratures, bright light, and high humidity all at the same time, with the medium staying moist but not wet.

There was also a tray of various color forms of *Dendrobium laevifolium*, which I'd call "*Dendrobium* not as *cuthbertsonii*?" – also small, though not as small as *D. cuthbertsonii*, also cute, though not as cute, flowers also large for the size of the plant, though not as much so, also long-lasting, though not as long-lasting, but – fortunately – also not as hard to grow. There were also some uncommon jewel orchids, and several plants followed us home ....



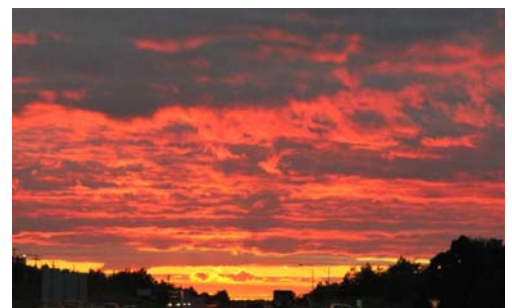
Chicago is so large that's all there was time for on Friday, so we made a plan for Saturday: head over to Orchids by Hausermann (which is a ways east of the other three sites), then, after giving the Chicago lunch crowd time to move on, make our way east toward downtown, to Hot Doug's, a famous hot-dog place that has appeared on Food Network. One of the people I work with had instructed us to go try their French fries fried in duck fat, which are supposed to be heavenly.

It was a good plan, but as they say, no plan survives its execution. We didn't realize that it would take over

an hour to get from Hausermann's to Hot Doug's, or that one of the last Cubs games of the season was that Saturday afternoon, or that there were what looked like hundreds of people willing to stand in line outside Hot Doug's hoping to get to the window before they closed at 4:30 pm. So we didn't get duck fat French fries.

Fortunately, we'd taken our time at Hausermann's – really, there was no choice, because they have literally acres of greenhouses - and once again we left no vendor unshopped. I think we bought something from every one. We blame Olin for the *Sobralia* – he brought one to a meeting a few months ago. It was lovely, and he kept talking about how easy it was to grow, so when we saw one at Ecuagenera, we gave in to temptation. (It would be simpler, really, to count the times we didn't give in to temptation.) It's a different species than Olin's, with a lovely purple flower, if the Internet photos are accurate.

After a quick stop at Wal-Mart to buy a humidity chamber (i.e., plastic tub) for the plants on their journey home, it was back to the hotel to recover and admire the spoils. At least the road construction in Illinois meant that we had plenty of time Sunday to figure out where we were going to put them all as we rode .... uh, drove .... off into the sunset.



## Notes from your Program Chair ..... Sarah Waddoups

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**October 24, 2010: Designer Cattleyas, Tom Larkin:** Our own resident expert was recently invited to speak to several societies in Texas on his cutting-edge cattleya breeding. In October we'll get to enjoy this presentation too! For the last several years Tom has been hybridizing for Designer cattleyas—substantially smaller plants with large, fragrant flowers. Many of us are lucky enough to have already snatched up some of these catts.

**November 14, 2010: Anuway Hydroponics: Jesse and Trinity Wimmer** of a local hydroponics store will discuss organic and hydroponic fertilizers as well as growing techniques. They will also have a selection of their products which can be used on orchids available for purchase. *Please note the date change due to the Thanksgiving holiday.*

**December TBA, 2010:** Annual Election of Officers and Awards Banquet. We will decide the date at the October meeting.

### January 23, 2010: Creating an Orchid Exhibit:

No matter the size of your orchid collection, anyone can create a beautiful orchid exhibit. At this meeting we'll discuss preparing your plants for show, creating and exhibit and also give demonstrations of exhibit arrangement. As you will soon discover, there is a reason you will want to create an exhibit of your own in the very near future.

## 'Designer Cattleyas' ..... Tom Larkin

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A Powerpoint presentation by Tom Larkin entitled "Designer Cattleyas".

In the past 50 years Cattleya alliance plants have been on the back burner taking a back seat to the more floriferous Phals, dendrobiums and oncidini-iae. As popularity of orchids has swelled in recent years it appears to be bringing the "Queen" along with the trend. New hybrid registrations for Cattleya alliance with the RHS have run in the 450—500 per year range for the past 50 years. The last several years have seen this trend change and registrations now near 1000 per year. Is this a resurgence? Too soon to tell, but the Cattleya offers many features the other popular orchids don't. Among these are two predominant characteristics. 'Fragrance' and 'Color'. Cattleya fragrance is like none other and colors come in all hues.

Hybridizers have been busy working on other characteristics such as 'bloom frequency', 'temperature toler-

ance' and 'plant size'.



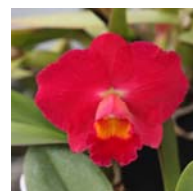
When Cattleyas will bloom 2-3 times per year, sport a knock out fragrance, bloom under most normal household conditions, feature a rainbow of colors, and of a plant size that compliments any décor (not overwhelm it), then "The Pot Plant Cattleya's time has come".

To this end, hybridizers have been busy trying to compete with the Phals, Cymbidiums and dendrobiums for a share of the Pot plant market. In recent years we have seen a plethora of 'compact cattleyas' gracing the

benches of the local mass marketers and the public seems to be responding. Still somewhat absent from most of these compact cattleyas is the 'classic' cattleya flower size and shape—that classic beauty that graced my lady's shoulder/bosom decades ago.

Tom will attempt to take you on a journey of where hybridizers have been and where they are trying to go to achieve this end. While the number of commercial firms engaged in hybridizing is dwindling, the number of registrations show it is still happening in even greater numbers than ever before.

Whippoorwill Orchids, now back to hobby growing, is doing what it likes to do best and that is hybridizing.



# My Phavorite Phalaenopsis Species ..... Sarah Waddoups

## Two Sweet Phalaenopsis Species

Sarah Waddoups

Pretty flowers with a sweet fragrance that are easy to grow and which bloom in the summer through autumn. . . . Do I have your attention? Are you already getting out your pen to add to your wish list? Well, jot down phalaenopsis violacea and phalaenopsis bellina. These are two phalaenopsis species that belong in every phal lover's collection.

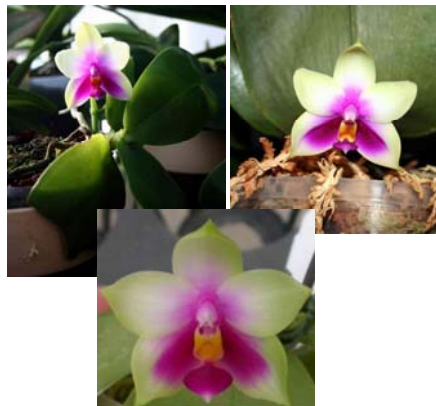
Until recently, phalaenopsis bellina was considered a sub-variety of phalaenopsis violacea—specifically it was called phal. violacea var. Borneo. And they are closely related “sister” species. (A species, of course, is a naturally occurring orchid as opposed to a hybrid which is generally “man-made” by cross-pollination, though there are some natural hybrids which occur by cross-pollination.) In the 1990s, Eric Christensen separated bellina as a separate species from violacea because of the flower coloration, petal structure and the difference in fragrance of the two species. In addition, violaceas are native to Indonesia and Sumatra, while bellinas are native to Malaysia (the Malay Peninsula) and East Malaysia (Sarawak).

### Phalaenopsis bellina:



Bellinas are readily identifiable by their firm white flower, with greenish

tips and a flush of fuchsia around the column. Some flowers are more yellow or green than white, and the intensity and amount of the purple/pink center also varies. But your nose might identify a bellina before your eyes can. They smell wonderful – especially in the morning. I would compare it to Fruit Loops or Fruity Pebbles cereal.



In their natural habitat, Phalaenopsis bellina are epiphytes—meaning they grow attached to the branches or trunks of trees. In their native Malaysia and Sarawak, bellinas live in “forest swampland” full of crocodiles, snakes and leeches. Local legend says that the more leeches in the water below where the violaceas are found, the more vibrant the violaceas’ color. I have a number of bellinas and grow some mounted on cork bark and others potted. The key is to mimic their natural habitat and keep water away from the crown of the plant. Water in the crown frequently causes crown rot and once the rot has set in, the plant most likely won’t survive. The mounted plants do this naturally – the water simply runs down the leaves. For my potted plants, I have potted the plant itself in an appropriate-sized pot for the

root mass, and then tipped that pot at a 45 degree angle by setting it in a slightly larger pot and using either packing peanuts or rocks to support the tilted pot. This also encourages the leaves to gracefully hang.



Flowers are produced sequentially – meaning that one or two flowers will be open at any given time, but when those flowers drop off, additional flowers will form. The spikes are generally shorter than the leaves are long, with the flowers sometimes “hiding” under the leaves. When this happens, I use a packing peanut or bamboo stick to gently lever the spike out from under the leaves for better flower presentation. (Do this before buds form on the spike.)

Many of the plants available in the United States are the descendents of plants collected by Michael Ooi, a Malaysian orchidist with 35 years of collecting, growing, hybridizing of bellinas. Sadly, at an International Phalaenopsis Alliance meeting in 2007, Mr. Ooi reported that the natural habitat for bellinas has been destroyed almost completely by development and deforestation.

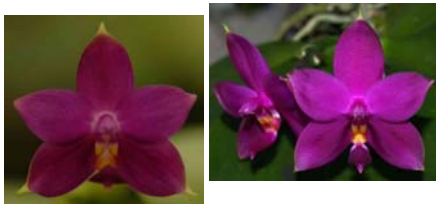
Bellinas do quite well in a windowsill or greenhouse environment. In my experience, young bellinas grow fairly slowly, by comparison to hybrids, but once established they grow steadily. Like most phals, the media should be kept moist, but not soggy. On average, I water my potted bellinas once a week and mist my

## My Phavorite Phalaenopsis Species (cont'd) .....

mounted plants daily. Of course, in the winter I reduce watering the potted plants substantially—once every 10 days to 2 weeks depending upon temperature and light levels. In the summer, especially with 100+ temperatures outside, I water the potted plants every three days and spraying the mounted plants twice a day. Despite this summer's heat, most of my bellinas have been in bloom for more than two months now, with new buds forming.

### Phal. violacea:

Violaceas look fairly similar to bellinas in flower shape, leaves and plant size, but the flowers tend to be a solid color with white or greenish tips to the petals. In the wild, violaceas are primarily varying shades of magenta.



There are also solid white flowers, violacea var. alba,



and violet-blue flowers, violacea var. coerulea.



There has been substantial line-breeding of violaceas which has resulted in more intense colors and rounder flowers than are found in nature. Most recently, there has been a surge in line-breeding for blue violaceas. As you can see from the pictures, I am particularly fond of these blue violaceas.

Violaceas are native to Indonesia and Sumatra, and their native habitats are very similar to bellinas' habitat. Violaceas also grow epiphytically. I grow my violaceas primarily potted in a bark mix that includes charcoal, perlite and chopped sphagnum moss. Although they are potted, each plant is tipped or angled in its pot. Essentially the leaves hang over the side of the pot. I am considering mounting some of them next spring. I have grown my violaceas potted in the bark mix largely because most of my violaceas came from the Nortons' breeding, and they grow them in bark. So far, I haven't experimented with alternatives because the bark has worked. I do grow my newly deflasked seedlings in sphagnum, however. Violaceas would probably do quite well growing in straight sphagnum moss or mounted, but as I said, I haven't wanted to change something that works.

Like the bellinas, the violaceas are pleasantly fragrant. I would describe it as spicier than the bellinas—still fruity in smell, but with a bit of spice. Violaceas are also sequential bloomers, and as a result, they can be in bloom for months at a time.

For both species, I fertilize every time I water – with a monthly watering without fertilizer to flush out the salts. My violaceas and bel-

linas grow in bright, but indirect sunlight. For me, that means they are on the north side of a shelf or rack on the southside of my greenhouse, shaded by larger plants. The only direct sunlight they receive is early morning light. I grow newly deflasked seedlings in the same conditions as hybrid seedlings—in sphagnum moss under fluorescent lights.

Phals are often called “beginner” orchids, and consequently many orchidists feel that they “advance” beyond phals at a certain point. Phals are considered easy growers because they like the same conditions you do— thus making them ideal windowsill plants. These phal species are a wonderfully fragrant and beautiful way to diversify your phal collection, and when all those hybrids go out of bloom in June or July, the bellinas and violaceas will beautifully keep you in flowers straight through Autumn. Happy growing.

### Sources for detailed information regarding phal species:

- Eric A. Christenson, *Phalaenopsis: A Monograph*, Timber Press 2001. A copy of this book is available in the OSO library. This book focuses on the taxonomy as well as the habitat for every known phal species.
- Orchid Digest, Vol. 66 (4) (Oct. Nov. Dec. 2002). A copy of this issue of Orchid Digest is also available in the OSO Library. This issue was specifically focused on all phalaenopsis species.

## My Phavorite Phalaenopsis Species (cont'd) .....

Cultural information is given by various sections of the genus.

- Mary Noble, *You Can Grow Phalaenopsis Orchids*, 2d ed. 1994.

A copy of this book is available in the OSO Library. This book contains basic cultural information for phal species and hybrids.

### Good sources for bellina and violacea plants:

- Big Leaf Orchids, Peter Lin, [www.bigleaforchids.com](http://www.bigleaforchids.com) 817-400-3930 – Peter Lin imports both bellinas and violaceas as well as various primary hybrids made with each from Taiwan and has his own breeding program as well. Website is frequently updated.
- Orchidview, H.P. & Katherine Norton, 843-761-2463, [www.orchidview.com](http://www.orchidview.com) -- The

Nortons originated the blue violaceas in the U.S. and have a great selection of bellinas and violaceas generally. They offer seedlings to mature plants. Website lists some plants available, call for more selections.

- Oak Hill Gardens, 847-400-3930, [www.oakhillgardens.com](http://www.oakhillgardens.com) – seedlings of both bellina and violacea are available. Extensive species available on website.

Norman's Orchids, [www.orchids.com](http://www.orchids.com) – both species available. Many phal species and hybrids are listed on website.

Photo Credits: I am both embarrassed (because it shows the level of my obsession) and pleased (because as you have probably guessed I like bellinas and violaceas) that nearly all of these photos are of my own plants. A few, however, are not; so, credit where

credit is due. Thank you to Peter Lin for the use of violacea var. alba and magenta violacea, to Tony Bender for the magenta violacea, and to Suzanne Hobbs for the second violacea var. alba. All photos were used with permission.



P. bellina 'Orchidviews Magenta Storm'



P. violacea 'Gulfstream' x self

### AOS Corner

By Lynn Fuller

The Affiliated Society Committee will have its semiannual breakfast on Friday morning, October 29, 2010 during the AOS Fall Members Meeting being held in conjunction with the **Sixth Annual Merritt Huntington Memorial Symposium in Virginia Beach, October 27 – 31, 2010**. World-class speakers include Philippe Lecoufle of Orchidees Vacherot & Lecoufle, Norman Fang of Norman's Orchids, John Salventi of Parkside Orchid Nursery; Glen Decker of Piping Rock Orchids, Jason Fischer of Orchids Limited, Olaf Gruss from Grassau, Germany, Alan Koch of Gold Country Orchids and Carlos Fighetti from Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

The symposium will also feature approximately twenty excellent vendors (including most of the speakers) plus several interesting tours showcasing the maritime flavor of the area. For more information and to register, visit [www.mhsymposium.org](http://www.mhsymposium.org). Hope you will join us.

We appreciate the effort many of you have already put toward the distribution of the AOS Cares! Survey in your newsletters, on your web sites and at your meetings. The results so far have been fascinating and helpful for future planning.. For those societies that have not yet had the opportunity to take advantage of this important outreach, please do so soon. This feedback will be invaluable in guiding the AOS to better serve orchidists everywhere.

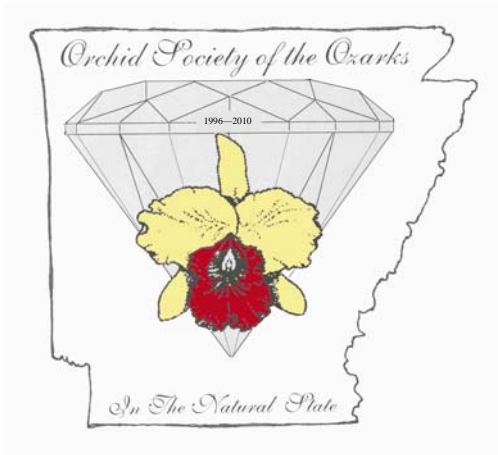
There are two attractive tri-fold printable AOS membership information brochures now available for use at your meetings, shows and other orchid events. These are well designed and include helpful cultural information for the most common genera and work well printed in either B & W or beautiful color. One has our popular Orchid Basics-FAQ's on the back; the other has Orchids in the Home on the reverse side. You can find them at [http://www.aosforum.org/pdf/Mem.Flier\\_3-fold.v1.pdf](http://www.aosforum.org/pdf/Mem.Flier_3-fold.v1.pdf) and [http://www.aosforum.org/pdf/Mem.Flier\\_3-fold.v2.pdf](http://www.aosforum.org/pdf/Mem.Flier_3-fold.v2.pdf), respectively.

# September 26 Meeting Highlights

September 26 at NTI was the site of the 14th annual OSO Auction. Just short of 50 orchid enthusiasts showed up to bid on the wide variety of orchid related items we had received from our generous donors.

Proceeds from the auction were \$2549 a great result from an afternoon of fun. Pictures by Shari Loftis (edited by Steve Marak).





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## Suzanne's Musings!

*Wasn't the Auction lots of Fun? OSO added \$2549 to its treasury as a result of this effort. Many donors are responsible for the wares we had to offer. Be sure that going forward you spend your orchid dollars with these generous benefactors.*

*See you Sunday!*

*Cheers, Suzanne*

## What's Ahead

### October 24 , 2010

NTI, 709 S. Old Missouri Rd.,  
Springdale AR. 1:30

Program: Tom Larkin 'Designer  
Cattleyas'

### November 14 , 2010

NTI, 709 S. Old Missouri Rd.,  
Springdale AR. 1:30

Program: Anuway Hydroponics ,  
Jesse & Trinity Wimmer

## About OSO...

*The Orchid Society of the Ozarks came into existence with the Organizational Meeting of April 28, 1996, in which ten local orchid growers met with the purpose of forming the group. Since then, the Northwest Arkansas based Society's membership has grown considerably and now consists of over 100 members.*

*The OSO meets on the 4th Sunday of each month. Annual dues are: \$10.00 for an individual membership, \$15.00 for a joint membership. For more information, please contact Membership Chairperson Suzanne Hobbs 479-236-0760 email shobbs@sellingnwa.com , or, visit our website at [www.oso-web.org](http://www.oso-web.org) and click the "Join" link.*

## Back Porch ..... History The first man-made Orchid hybrid.

1816:Dominy, John.—(1816 / 1891) Born at Gittisham, Devon; During 1834 after completing an apprenticeship in a private garden he entered the nursery of Messrs. Luscombe, Price & Co. at Exeter—to move a few months later to the nurseries of Messrs. Veitch also at Exeter where he stayed for seven years before becoming Head Gardener to a Mr. Magor at Redruth, Cornwall during 1841. After five years he transferred to the Chelsea Nursery of Messrs. Veitch where he remained until ill health forced him to retire during 1880. He died on 12/2/1891 and was interred at Exeter.

During 1854 a Mr. Harris suggested to Dominy the possibility of hybridizing. Dominy crossed Cattleya—guttata with Cattleya—loddegesii and a little later Calanthe—masuca with Calanthe furcata. Some time later the second cross he made flowered and thus became the first man-made orchid hybrid. On seeing this Dr. Lindley remarked “you will drive the botanist’s mad”. The hybrid was named Calanthe Domini after the hybridizer.

The cattleya cross Dominy made was also successful and became known as Cattleya hybrid.