



The **Slipper Orchid Alliance Newsletter**

Volume 6, Number 1

Spring 2005

Merritt Huntington - A Personal Memoir

I had visited Kensington Orchids in Kensington, Maryland two times prior to meeting him and each time had purchased a vandaceous plant. On my third visit I carried my new Ascocenda to the sales counter and was greeted by a kind-eyed man, Merritt Huntington. He asked me if I knew how to grow the plant I was purchasing. My thoughts went straight to my success. One purchased two weeks ago, still alive and another just last week, still alive. After this purchase I would own four happy orchids. I replied to him, yes I know how to grow orchids. All the drive home I wondered who that fellow was at Kensington Orchids. Did he actually think I would kill my orchids?

I looked forward to my weekend visits to Kensington Orchids, and if Merritt Huntington was not busy with customers, he would sometimes walk with me through his greenhouses and tell me about the orchids and help me choose another plant. I was starting to realize that he did know something about orchids. Little did I know at that time just how much he knew.

He invited me to a day of orchid education held at Brookside Gardens in Maryland. He would be talking about Cattleyas, and others would be talking about other orchid genera. I accepted the invitation and showed up to hear Merritt Huntington tell the world about Cattleyas. When I

arrived I took my seat and he sat down next to me. When the announcer was done reciting all of Mr. Huntington's credentials, I was amazed. Among other things that didn't all sink into my brain at the time, I had heard past president of the American Orchid Society. Before he went to speak, he just gave me that pleasant smile of his.

Merritt encouraged me to attend and join an orchid society, which led to helping out at the AOS National Capital Judging Center at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC. I became a clerk and then a student judge for the American Orchid Society. While a clerk, I did a lot of listening and watching. I would watch Merritt Huntington speak about the orchids judged, and if it was something he felt strongly about, he would pour himself into that plant. His opinions and vast knowledge of orchids were his contributions. I wanted to be a judge like Merritt Huntington and pour myself into the orchids I felt strongly about. He was my hero.

During one of my first judging sessions as a student judge, I was asked to comment on an orchid which I really liked. It was quickly taken off the judging table, as the rest of the judges did not share my enthusiasm. Merritt Huntington looked me straight in the eyes and said good job, never go against anything you believe in. He taught me to hold my opinion highly, for it belonged to me.

After a change of career and moving from Maryland to North Carolina in 2000, I was very isolated from all my old orchid friends and stayed in touch by phone as much as I could. Mr. Huntington was on the call list. He was supportive of my decision to start an orchid business and was always uplifting. When I was lucky enough to attend a Washington, D.C. or Maryland area show, for judging or for selling orchids, I would always keep my eyes wide open to see if Mr. Huntington was present. At the National Capital Orchid Society show held in Washington, D.C., he was the Orchid Doctor. He proudly sat behind a table to answer questions about the orchids that were just purchased at the show. He wanted people to succeed with their new orchids. At the 2004 Maryland Orchid Society show held in Timonium, Maryland, he gave lectures to beginners on culture. During a break he came over to my sales table and

SOA Membership

If you receive a membership renewal form with your newsletter, your membership is up for renewal within the next three months. Please fill out the form and mail it to our membership secretary, Jean Metcalf, 2323 Edinboro Rd. GH#6, Erie, PA 16509. Questions about your membership? Jean can be contacted at orchidiva@yahoo.com.



Merritt and Linda at the 2003 National Capital Show

started talking about how he became involved in orchids. A group gathered, and we listened to him speak of early greenhouse life in New Jersey and how many Cattleyas were grown for the cut flower business; I became absorbed in his history. He spoke of blooming techniques for the 1000 or so identical Cattleya flowers so they would bloom at just the right time for Easter or any other high demand flower time. He was always willing to share his experiences, even if they were about shoveling coal into heating boilers. It was obvious that his passion for orchids was central to his life.

Merritt never blew his own horn, but when he spoke everyone listened.

My words could never explain what Merritt Huntington meant to me or the orchid world. He gave so much of himself to orchids and the orchid community. It did not stop with the list of accomplishments and honors; he kept contributing until his final days. He was a mentor and friend whom I will miss dearly.

Merritt, I will never go against anything I believe in.

*Linda Thorne
AOS Probationary Judge
SOA Treasurer*

It is with great sadness that we remember Merritt Huntington, who passed away on January 28, 2005. Merritt's entire life revolved around orchids. As much as his countless contributions and honors, he will be remembered for the many lives he enriched by sharing his vast knowledge, wise counsel and enthusiasm. And for slipper lovers, Kensington Orchids was a mecca, offering a wide variety of well-grown plants that included the Ratcliffe line of breeding, an important introduction to the U.S. orchid scene. He was truly a giant in the entire orchid world and will be sorely missed.

A Doctor's Hobby Shapes a Life with Orchids

It started in the spring of 1936, when a prominent doctor living in Middleton, Wisconsin asked a pair of teenage boys from a farm some miles away to lend a helping hand around his estate. The two boys were my father, Walter Acker, and his younger brother Paul, who were both living and working on my grandfather's farm. The doctor's chores consisted of mowing grass, painting, changing storm windows and trimming trees. But the most exciting chore of all was being able to work in and around the doctor's small greenhouse which was attached to his home. In this greenhouse was a small collection of orchids, a type of plant the boys had never seen.

At that time Dr. Clarence Schubert was a well known Ear, Nose and Throat specialist who practiced in Madison, Wisconsin. He and his family lived on a large piece of property on the northern shore of Lake Mendota. Everyone adored Dr. Schubert and referred to him as "Doc." Doc passed away when I was only 3 years old, but I know much about his incredible life from the tales told by my father, uncle, and many others. Considered by many to be a genius, Doc was also recognized for his wonderful disposition and his vast knowledge of medicine, plants and world travel. Given his resourcefulness, ability and knowledge it was just a matter of time before he would fall under the power of orchid fever. Prior to 1936 Doc had only dabbled in orchids as a hobby. But that was about to change, and change it did.

With his uncanny ability to get things done Doc had procured the men, the means, and the matter to expand his small connected greenhouse and build his first free-standing greenhouse, boiler room and work area. The addition of the new growing space allowed Doc to greatly expand his orchid collection. It wasn't long before boxes of Paphiopedilums and other orchids were arriving from Keeling, a well known grower in England. As months passed, Doc's collection multiplied exponentially, and he now named his hobby "Dr. C. K. Schubert Orchids." The once small hobby had become a business, and there was no turning back. By now my father was gainfully employed full time with the tasks of caring for the orchids and keeping up the property around the estate. My uncle Paul, who was completing his last year of school, worked for Doc after school and on weekends. But once school was done, he too began full-time work for Doc. His business had grown so significantly that both Walter and Paul had become indispensable as caretakers of his plants, greenhouses and equipment.

In addition to importing orchids from all around the world, Doc had begun doing his own hybridizing. Being a doctor he was, of course, skilled with sterile technique and had the equipment and knowledge to do his own autoclaving, seed

Upcoming Events

AOS Members Meeting

April 20-24, 2005

The Slipper Orchid Alliance will be meeting at the AOS Members Meeting to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 20-24, 2005. We are sponsoring two speakers on Friday, April 22. According to the preliminary schedule, at 2:00 Karen Muir will talk about *Brachypetalums*, followed at 3:00 by Jerry Fischer on *Phragmepediums*. We will auction several very select plants during this time frame. All members are invited to attend an Open Board Meeting that same day at 4:15. Please join us; we welcome your input. We will also donate our dazzling glass *Cypripedium* trophy. For further information, contact Kent Peterson at Peterson75@comcast.net.

AOS Members Meeting

The SOA will be meeting at the AOS Members Meeting in Sonoma County, October 12-16, 2005, at the Doubletree Hotel Sonoma County in Rohnert Park, California. Nick Tannaci will discuss Trends in *Parvisepalum* Hybrids. We will also hold an Open Board Meeting and donate our trophy. For further information, contact Earl Rathbun at rathbun@sonic.net.

EUROPEAN ORCHID CONGRESS

Spring 2006, Padua, Italy

sowing and replating of flasks. With that came the need to erect yet another greenhouse in which all these new seedlings were to be raised. By this time it was the mid-1940's, and Doc's business of raising and selling orchids was rolling along at full steam. At this point many of his orchid plants were beginning to bloom profusely, and Doc started selling the cut orchid flowers to local flower shops in the Madison area. This part of the business became exceedingly more popular, which prompted yet another leap forward for the once small hobby grower.

It was a booming time for Dr. C. K. Schubert Orchids, and the need to expand was once again apparent. However, Doc's estate on the shore of Lake Mendota offered no more room for expansion. Once again Doc approached my grandfather's farm, this time not looking for helping hands but rather a large piece of property to purchase. My grandfather agreed to sell Doc a corner parcel of twenty acres, a piece that would allow Doc to expand his business to its

full potential. Plans were then drawn up for 45,000 square feet of glass greenhouses with a large boiler room, storage area, potting area and caretaker living quarters all attached. It would be a dream come true for Doc, who definitely had a passion for his orchids, and his passion was now mutually shared by my father and uncle.

Building on the new site started in 1948. As the first new greenhouse was completed plants were immediately moved in from the Lake Mendota site to fill the benches. In 1949 Doc changed the name of his business to Clarelens Orchids Inc, which was a mixture of his name Clarence and his wife's name Helen. Because my father had become one of Doc's "right hand men," Doc asked him to be caretaker of his new greenhouse complex and live in the newly built three-bedroom caretaker house, which was attached to the greenhouse complex. The building of greenhouses and transferring of plants and equipment from the Lake Mendota site continued through the 1950's. It was in 1959 that the last greenhouse was erected on the new site, the range was completed and I was born!

By 1961 Clarelens Orchids Inc was a thriving business dedicated primarily to the production of over 60,000 cut orchid flowers annually for the wholesale market. Doc was still actively practicing medicine along with overseeing his blossoming orchid business. He had new varieties of orchids constantly coming in from sources all around the world as well as from his own hybridizing program. He was famous for the development of *Cym. Delrosa*, *Dtps. Kenneth Schubert* and *Dtps. Red Coral* among many others. He was also recognized throughout the world for many other notable hybrid orchids.

Just as the business was in its prime, tragedy struck. In 1963, at the young age of 64, Doc passed away from throat cancer, a horrible disease that had, ironically, claimed the lives of many of his own patients. The following year my father and mother purchased the orchid business from the Schuberts' estate and turned it into Orchids by the Acker's Inc. By 1967, I was an active, albeit small helper of my parents' business, working by their sides after school, on weekends and during summer vacations. My interest in the mechanical aspect of the facility was my strong point at the time, and I would have to wait a while before my interest in plants caught up.

Carrying on in Doc's tradition, my father and mother continued to raise orchids for the cut flower market through the early 1970's. During that time the public started to show enough interest in orchid plants that it was decided to open the doors for retail plant sales. This would be a blessing in disguise because the demand for the cut orchid flowers was diminishing rapidly, and the business needed a new direction. Not only were retail plant sales doing unexpectedly well, but there was also a great demand for wholesaling our orchid plants to other growers in our area and even Canada. Both facets of the business did one thing: they cleared the benches

fast! There was now a need for a major revamping of plant production and procurement to keep up with our wholesale and retail plant sales. At this time I was active in the orchid plant production/growing aspect of the business and was experimenting with improved ways to produce orchids more rapidly and economically.

It was in the late 1970's that we implemented an avid hybridizing program as well as methods of obtaining near-blooming size plants that were not currently in our production regime. Both avenues of procuring plants proved fruitful as new hybrids and varieties of orchid plants once again filled the benches at a pace that kept up with sales. This tempo kept up through the late 1980's, without doubt the best period for any commercial orchid grower to be in the business. Orchid species as well as new and old hybrids were in high demand, and growers all over the country were selling plants as fast or faster than production could produce them.

The orchid plant heyday continued, and my father had made a great name as well as a good living for himself, my mother and my four siblings. He was now in his early 70's and ready to let the next generation take their turn with the passion that had been started by Doc. In November of 1990 the business was sold to my sister, Nancy, and her husband, Stan. My father and mother continued working part-time and enjoyed their remaining free time together. With the change in ownership came new thought, and the business took on a new life.

As orchid plant popularity continued to grow in our area the need for retail sales became more important. It was decided to discontinue many of the wholesale accounts to better serve our retail customers. The focus on retail necessitated a facelift for the business, both inside and out. Some major fixing, cleaning and improving were done to the fifty-year-old facility to make it more inviting for the public to visit. There was also a need to diversify our product line outside of just offering orchid plants.

With Stan's expertise in annuals, perennials and the garden center business in general, and Nancy's floral design background, the business followed new avenues that complemented the existing orchid sales. Orchids by the Ackers also added blooming holiday plants like Poinsettias, Easter Lilies, Cyclamen and Azaleas. With this expanded product line came a whole new group of customers, many of whom had never seen an orchid plant before. As a result, sales of orchid plants went up dramatically, and the need to obtain new varieties to offer our customers was once again necessary.

Throughout the 1990's the business grew in many directions, and it still continues to do so to the present day. We added new greenhouses and employees, extended business hours and continue to add variety to our product line to better serve our customers. Since new ownership we have been recognized by receiving numerous AOS awards, including two FCC's. My uncle Paul, now 82 years young,

still comes in five days a week to work with watering, repotting and various other tasks. A truly amazing man! My father passed away in February, 2002, and is dearly missed by us all. My mother, who lives in her house on the property, is active at age 84 and walks my Rottweiler every afternoon. Nancy and Stan have built a house on the property as well, and I reside in the caretaker's house connected to the greenhouse complex where my parents once lived. We are all driven by our individual commitment to bring excellence to every aspect of the business. All because someone had a passion for orchid plants in 1936!

Chuck Acker

Orchids by the Ackers

What makes Bulldog Paphiopedilum Hybrids Different?

A few weeks ago the questions "What makes Bulldog Paphs different than regular Paphs? Are there genetic differences between the Bulldogs and other Paphs?" were asked on the AOS Forum. I have been known to kill time on a slow day at the office by answering the occasional question on the Forum, so I launched into this one. I offer here an expanded version of the response I wrote.

Bulldog Paph hybrids are also known as Standard or Complex Paphs. They are called Standard because prior to the mid-1970's they were the most widely available type of Paph hybrid. The Complex Paph name comes from the fact that most are many generations removed from their species origins. Some crosses are more than 40 generations from their first species crosses. They are essentially linebred from just a handful of species. Historically they originated in the later part of the 19th century and early half of the 20th century. Most assume that the main species in their background is Paph. insigne, and this species certainly does make a major contribution. When you take into account that Cribb and other recent taxonomists now lump into Paph. villosum many varieties that at one time or another the RHS Hybrid Registrar used to consider valid species for registration purposes, the species Paph. villosum dominates modern Bulldog hybrids. Some of the varieties of villosum are boxallii, affine, dilectum, measuresianum, atratum, and annamense. They were all at one time or another recognized by the RHS for registration purposes. Taking this into account, when you do a "Wildcatt" search on a Bulldog, you will see that villosum and its varieties dominate. One could almost say Bulldog Paphs are essentially polyploid linebred Paph. villosum.

There are no definite genetic differences that separate the Bulldog or Complex Paphs from other Paphs. They will interbreed with virtually any Paph species you want. The chromosome counts in the Bulldogs are believed to be all over the place. It is assumed they are polyploid, with all of

the possible higher polyploidy numbers occurring and a very high percentage of aneuploids. Very little work has been done actually counting chromosomes in these hybrids; most guesses about chromosome numbers have been made from observing breeding behavior rather than actual counts. The frequent low yield of seed from particular clones is typical of aneuploidy. The plant that produces a great deal of viable seed is assumed to have an even complement of chromosomes. Most will assume 4N, but the plant geneticists in the crowd know that there is quite a variety of chromosomal configurations that will allow a plant to breed. It is far easier to do a few test crosses to see if a select plant is capable of breeding than it is to accurately count chromosomes.

Look is the key that defines this group. All are bred to have a single flower of large size, currently at least 10 cm natural spread for whites and over 14 cm for the better forms in the other colors. They also should have a round shape, broad dorsal, wide petals, and a broad fan synsepal that all overlap to form a circular or oval profile. Any windows or notches in this profile are considered major flaws. The nearly round profile gives visual mass to the flower, so that a flower that is only 12 cm in natural spread appears huge, because the large surface area creates visual mass. Many other Paph hybrids have larger natural spreads, but few have the visual mass of the Bulldogs. For example, Paph. Maudiae-type hybrids may have similar natural spreads, but because their petals are narrow and the dorsal sepal is only 8 or 9 cm in diameter, they simply do not look as large next to a Bulldog. The substance is thick, almost like rubber. It is the dominant villosum and insigne contributions to their look that make them an identifiable group. The waxy, almost varnished gloss that most of these hybrids have is from Paph villosum. Other species that have made contributions include spicerianum, druryi, charlesworthii, fairrieanum, exul and also the brachypetalum group - bellatulum, niveum and godefroyae. If you search through the records, almost all of the single-flowered and brachypetalum Paph species show up somewhere in the ancestry of one or another hybrid in today's Standard hybrid group.



Paph. Treevill Brocade 'FS'
(Paph. Tree of Galaxy x Paph. Greenstele)
An example of the spotted type.

The color palette is great, ranging from clear lemon-yellows and greens to white to browns, oranges and mahogany reds; some are smooth red-purple. Spots are one of the things that Bulldogs do well. Heavy black spots on a sugar-white dorsal are very desirable. The spot patterns come from the gratixianum, boxallii, insigne and bellatulum ancestors in these hybrids. The latest spotted hybrids now have evenly distributed spotting in the petals, complementing the spotting in the dorsal. A few even have spots on the synsepal. Current awards for spotted hybrids start at 13 cm natural spread; the higher recent awards are at or over 13.5 cm. Paph. Marty Starke (Mimi Starke x Pacific Ocean) is a good example; the clone 'Hampshire' HCC/AOS had a natural spread of 13.8 horizontal by 13.3 vertical when exhibited by Arnie Klehm in 2002.

Tans and sunset colors are well represented by the antique clone Paph. Hellas 'Westonbirt' FCC/RHS-AM/AOS, which still shows well today some fifty years later. Paph Peachie 'Cerrittos' HCC/AOS, a cross with Hellas as a parent, is currently in bloom in my collection, and it looks like a rounder, fuller Hellas and has a very respectable 14.5 cm spread on a 2-growth plant. I really want to see what it can do as a 4- or 6-growth plant.



Paph. Dottie McDowell (Paph. Freckles x Paph. Green Mystery) Breeding for whites in Bull dogs.

Owner: Arnie Klehm

Clear greens and yellows of enormous size and full, round form are one of the breeding lines that a great deal of effort has gone into recently. The best in this group attain 15 cm or more in natural spread with full oval profiles. They are beautiful in their own right, but the reason for the push for improving these hybrids is that they can contribute a tremendous improvement in size when used to create white complex hybrids. The success of the crosses White Knight (Skip Bartlett x Green Mystery) and White Queen (Skip Bartlett x Via Virgenes) are not due solely to the great Skip Bartlett. The careful pairing of Skip Bartlett with the green parent is the secret to the success of these crosses. Skip Bartlett is not an overly large flower, about 9.5 cm; it is the green parent that brought the size up so successfully in this latest generation of white hybrids. Before 1980 white complex Paphs were significantly smaller than other complex hybrids. The advances made recently have really closed the

gap between modern whites and other Bulldog Paphs.

The red Bulldog hybrids largely depended on Paph. villosum and its varieties affine and annamense, and also Paph. charlesworthii for the red pigments. Paph Startler 'Glace' AM/AOS, Orchilla 'Chilton' FCC/AOS and Winston Churchill 'Redoubtable' FCC/AOS come to mind when thinking of older representatives of this group. The newer reds that have been bred on the west coast and by the Japanese are a tremendous leap forward in rounding out shape and intensifying color.

I might also add that a new line of Bulldog crosses made with Maudiae-type vinicolors to get vivid red-purple is popular these days. The better ones retain the Bulldog traits



Paph. Sioux 'Robin' HCC/AOS
(Paph. Winston Churchill x Paph. Gigi)

and pick up the deep vinicolors.

As to growing Bulldog hybrids, they like bright shade, between Phalaenopsis bright and Cattleya bright. I do recommend a bit more light than indicated in some of the older literature. Good air movement will prevent sunburn and bleaching at higher light levels by keeping leaf temperatures down. The Bulldogs perform really well under lights, especially if you are using any of the higher output, high-tech lights that allow you to grow a taller plant without the plant touching the bulbs. I use HP Sodium for my mature plants, and ordinary 40 watt fluorescent tubes for seedlings. Any nice moist mix that retains water yet breathes well will work. Never dry them out completely. They do very well in a bark mix, also well in a CHC (coconut husk chip) mix. You must repot every year (18 months at the outside) to keep the mix fresh and retain a healthy root system. You can add a little oyster shell or horticultural lime to the mix, but don't overdo it since Paph. villosum prefers a mildly acidic mix. If you know Paph. insigne or bellatulum is a recent parent to your complex hybrid, add more oyster shell or lime. If not, you can skip it. Intermediate temperatures and humidity are best. Fertilize your Paphs regularly. I use the Michigan State University formulation, at about ½ teaspoon per gallon. I use it year round, feeding continuously

with every watering. This is delivering about 125 ppm nitrogen for a total of about 750 ppm total dissolved solids added to my 200 ppm water. This seems to be working quite well. I switched to the MSU formulation about 18 months ago and have since received a very nice overall improvement in the appearance of my plants. I do not use any high phosphorous "Bloosom Booster" formulations. I stopped using them ten years ago. In my conditions the high phosphorous fertilizers actually seem harmful to my plants. I feel the old advice about giving a high phosphorous feeding in the fall was based on gardening practices from the pre-WW II era, practices that are not at all appropriate for indoor growing in the USA. There have been a couple of excellent articles in *Orchids* and *Orchid Digest* discussing MSU fertilizer.

It is important to give your Paphs time to grow. Don't divide a Bulldog down to single growths if you want to see good flowers. There is a huge difference between the quality of bloom on a 1-growth plant and a 4-growth plant. The flower on the multi-growth plant will be so much better you won't believe it is the same plant. Plan on growing a plant for five years or more to see the best of its blooming. A well-grown, 4-growth Bulldog Paph should have enough roots to fill a 1-gallon nursery can. When grown to this size the flowers are unbelievable.

You can tell I like the Bulldog Paphs; I am an unapologetic fan of them. Unfortunately, they are not as popular as they used to be. There are several reasons for this. One is simply fashion; with the flood of great species imported in the 70's and 80's, the complex Bulldogs went by the wayside. A second reason they went out of style is that they become fairly large plants. They take up too much room for the windowsill or under lights orchid grower. A third problem is that divisions of select and awarded complexes are quite expensive. It always seems if you want one you can't find it, and if you have a division to sell, nobody seems to want that particular clone. A fourth reason for their current out-of-favor status is that when you buy seedlings, you really do have to bloom each seedling several times and get it up to the multi-growth plant in a 1-gallon nursery can to see its true potential. This takes quite a few years, and if you are screening a group of seedlings to get the "good one" they take up a lot of room. For some of the crosses you have to bloom many seedlings from a cross to find "that good one." This is especially true if you are looking for spots or a good standard red. For this reason, it is sometimes cost effective to just shake loose with the change required to pick up a division of a proven plant. The satisfaction of raising out a batch of seedlings and finding that unique plant that is better than the rest has its own rewards. I am doing this myself with several crosses.

In spite of this short litany of challenges, I really feel that the Bulldog Paph hybrids have a place in every collection. These hybrids represent 150 years of dedicated hybridizing.

These are heirloom plants; the good ones are passed on from generation to generation. They are well worth the effort and commitment. When you see a Bulldog at your next meeting or show, take a good look and appreciate the art and skill and generations of selection that went into creating these masterpieces. Who would have ever thought that a *Paph. villosum* could be blown up into such a work of art? Think of the Bulldogs as abstract art using applied plant genetics. They are marvelous creations. Enjoy them!

Leo Schordje
P.O. Box 73, Zion IL 60099
www.schordje.com



Lynn Wellenstein (left) helps Terry with her wish list..

My first visit to Antec Labs in Candor, New York, was in the summer of 2003. After a few wrong turns, we finally found the greenhouses in the middle of beautiful farmland. The first greenhouse is 24ft. x 100ft. When I opened the door and looked in, the first thought that came to me was

A Visit with the Wellensteins

Turn on your computer, bring up the Internet and type in www.ladyslipper.com. You have just accessed the web-site for Antec Labs, which is owned and operated by Bob and Lynn Wellenstein. There you will find a wealth of knowledge and expertise offered free to the public. Any question that you may have about slipper culture, nomenclature or hybridizing can be found on their site. You will also find thousands of beautiful pictures, many of them awarded clones of the Wellensteins. Be sure you visit their web-store also. It's a slipper lover's candy shop full of tempting species and hybrids of Paphs and Phrags.

Lynn started out with two orchids she brought home and carefully placed on the windowsill above a register. Needless to say they didn't last long. Lynn did not give up though and soon had some plants that actually survived. Bob talked her into purchasing a bargain group of 100 Paph seedlings that eventually grew and bloomed. Lynn started growing in a window greenhouse 3ft.x 3ft., then graduated to shelving in front of a sliding glass door. When that could not hold all of their plants they moved the plants to the basement under lights. As the awards started coming they were encouraged to put up greenhouses, and the rest, as they say, is history. What started out as a hobby grew into a business that sells to many customers all over the world. Bob gives Lynn the credit for their many awarded clones and all of the hybridizing work that creates these beauties. Lynn, however, says Bob is the expert with his degree in virology and knowledge of chemicals, the importance of water quality and what works best for the many types of slippers that they grow. Together they have built a business that offers over 100,000 slipper orchids to all the slipper enthusiasts of the world.



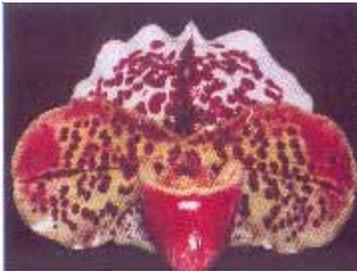
A slipper lover's heaven! One of Antec's greenhouses.

"I've found Orchid Heaven." Try to picture hundreds and hundreds of beautiful blooming Paphs and Phrags on table after table practically as far as the eye can see. The second greenhouse measures 30ft. x 150ft. and contains the compots, seedlings and semi-mature plants. It's so long that I did not see Lynn, who was working at the far end. I have yet to get through all of the plants in both greenhouses even during two visits, but that just means I have a good reason to keep going back. The amount of time and effort needed to produce so many plants is an indication of the dedication displayed daily at Antec Labs.

Bob and Lynn Wellenstein have contributed much to the orchid world. Whether it's sharing their knowledge and expertise through their web-site, articles and talks to orchid groups or their fervent support of and contribution to slipper orchid conservation, the Wellensteins themselves deserve an FCC among slipper orchid growers.

Terry Latour

New Trends in Complex Paphiopedilum Breeding



Paph. (Spotglen x Thatchmo)
'Jazzercise'



Paph. Amanda x Flashdance



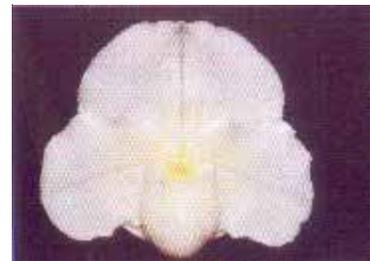
Paph. Carmen Coll 'Pink Pepper'
(Amandahill x White Knight)



Paph. Emerald Moon
(William Sanders x Emerald Crown)



Paph. Kay Rinaman 'Lucky Pick'
B/CSA
(Yerba Buena x Diversion)



Paph. Silver Knight 'Star of Congo'
(Tata Marie x White Knight)

Due to space limitations in the last issue, we were unable to include some of the newer hybrids which Norito Hasegawa wrote about in his article. We have included some of them in this issue so that our readers can appreciate this new direction of breeding in the complexes.

Corrections to Directory

Please make the following corrections/additions to your membership directory:

Jean Metcalf, 2323 Edinboro Rd., Erie, PA 16509

Charles Wilkins email: cwilkins@compassgroup.net

Joe Dixler email: JMD@dixler.net (not .com)

Terry Latour (not LaTour)

White Oak Orchids, Inc. Scott and Gwen Dallas, Pacifica, CA 94404, Business phone 650-355-8786, email: service@whiteoakorchids.com

Norris Powell

We note with sorrow the passing of Norris Powell, founder and driving force of the Paphiopedilum Guild and owner of The Orchid House, well-known for its outstanding slipper orchid collection. Norris passed away peacefully in his sleep on February 4, after a short battle with pneumonia. He was a young 97 years old.

His daughter, Patti James, said that it was his deepest wish that the Paphiopedilum Guild continue in its present form and at its present location, Morro Bay, California. She fully intends to comply with his wishes, and Marilyn Levy has agreed to assist her with future plans and programs. The Paph Guild has been instrumental for many years in spreading knowledge about the slipper orchids and creating a network of slipper lovers. It was also the inspiration for the establishment of the Paphiopedilum Forum in Washington, D.C. We are pleased to know that it will continue its important mission.

Book Review

Paphiopedilum Growers Manual

Lance A. Birk has produced a stunning book for slipper lovers. Each Paphiopedilum species is illustrated, usually with at least two examples. It is jam-packed with a variety of important, helpful information in addition to detailed cultural instruction, which explains how to provide for the plants' needs and particularly WHY. Best of all, his explanations of basic orchid culture apply to all orchids.

Mr. Birk's Preface discusses problems in taxonomy and nomenclature and explains his process of using new tools and methods to determine the names he includes, ones that he says are more commonly accepted and in common use.

Part I, Species in Cultivation gives every species one or two pages, grouped by section. The photos are magnificent, and in most cases Mr. Birk uses more than one picture to show variation within a species. There is detailed information about each species, including description of the plant, cultural requirements, habitat, climate and additional helpful comments. Many habitats are also illustrated. Fortunately this section is concluded by an alphabetical index, as the author follows Phillip Cribb's Key (in a somewhat looser manner from "*The Genus Paphiopedilum*" 2nd ed.) and the species are not organized alphabetically even within each section.

In Part II, Basics of Culture Mr. Birk shares the extensive knowledge he has gained from his own experience in growing these plants. There is an excellent discussion of diseases, insects and pests. In answering the question, when and how to water, he gives his opinion that most Paphs should be treated as epiphytes, not as conventional wisdom often holds, as terrestrials, with plenty of water balanced by constant air circulation and high humidity. It is important to know habitat conditions. Fertilizer, water quality and how to create the correct balance between air movement and light are also discussed.

Dividing and repotting plants are explained and illustrated. After going through various types of media, he gives his own favorite mix. Seedling care is not neglected. Explanations of how to grow plants in the home and in a greenhouse end this section.

Part III, Related Interests includes diverse subjects. The process of hybridization, pollination and seed sowing is covered. Mr. Birk extols the advantages of joining orchid societies. He even gets into photography, importing, and collecting in natural habitats. He concludes with a plea for intelligent conservation and his view of CITES, about which he says that as it is currently implemented, it "will almost guarantee that nearly all orchids in the wild will perish."

Mr. Birk's travels to study Paphs in their native habitats and his twenty-five years of first-hand experience in growing

the plants he collected give him a unique background to produce this valuable book, which will be a welcome addition to the library of newer growers as well as the more experienced.

The handsome hardbound book of 284 pages, with over 250 color illustrations, may be ordered from the author for \$65.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling (plus tax in California) at Lance A. Birk, PO Box 61842, Santa Barbara, CA 93160, USA. For more details, go to www.lancebirk.com.

Barbara Tisherman

A Checklist for the Newer Paphiopedilum Hobbyist

April - June

(Northern Hemisphere)

PLANT GROWTH AND BLOOMING CYCLE: Most standard complex hybrids have finished blooming, and the plants are forming new growths. By April the Parvisepalum flowering season is at its peak, followed by the multiflorals. Brachypetalums extend the season into summer months.

WATERING: Paphiopedilums have no pseudobulbs and therefore need regular watering at all seasons. This is particularly important while the plants are forming new growths. Check the mix with your finger – it should always feel slightly moist an inch below the surface. The plants dry out quickly during warm weather. Young seedlings and plants in small pots may need more frequent watering than the rest of your collection. Always water thoroughly, until the water runs freely out of the drainage holes in the pot. Thorough watering assures that the mix is moistened evenly and the residual salts are dissolved and washed out.

FEEDING: During active growth (May through August) the plants can use more fertilizer than at any other season. Increase the frequency of application rather than the amount of fertilizer, since higher concentrations can easily burn roots and retard growth. Always water the plants before fertilizing. Continue using a balanced, water-soluble formula for orchids, such as 20-10-20 or 20-20-20 (diluted to one-quarter strength of the manufacturer's recommendation and applied after every watering). Avoid high nitrogen formulas, or use them sparingly and only during the growing season.

LIGHT: By June the light intensity is at its peak, and the

temperature in your growing area can soar. If the leaves feel warm to the touch or show signs of yellowing and dehydration (despite regular watering), your plants may be getting too much light. Hang an extra sheet of shade cloth above the Paphs to keep them cooler. Optimum light levels for Paphiopedilums are 1000 to 2500 foot-candles (corresponding to 90% to 75% shading). Within these limits, the young seedlings and the soft-leaved Paphs (such as Maudiae-types) need the least light, while the hard-leaved multiflorals need the highest levels for good flower production.

TEMPERATURE, AIR MOVEMENT AND HUMIDITY: Day temperatures of 80°F (27°C) and night temperatures of 60°F (16°C) are ideal, but most Paphiopedilums tolerate brief exposures to greater extremes. On hot, dry days mist the surrounding area and the ground under the benches to increase humidity and to cool the air. Most Paphiopedilums prefer a cool, shady spot where they are protected from strong, drying winds. They should not be crowded or placed directly on the ground, since good air circulation is essential for plant health.

REPOTTING AND PEST CONTROL: Paphiopedilums benefit from yearly repotting before the mix starts to decompose. The plants may be potted at any season, but late spring is best, before the start of new growth. Most fine, open orchid mixes are suitable for Paphs. One popular mix consists of 8 parts fine seedling bark (1/8 to 1/4 inch size) and 2 parts perlite #3. Slip the plant out of the pot and carefully remove all old mix and dead roots. Take care not to disturb live roots any more than necessary. This is important, because Paphs do not readily regrow roots on old growths. Do not be eager to divide the plant, since large specimens produce more flowers. Leave at least two to five growths per division when dividing. Select a clean pot with ample drainage holes. Use the smallest size needed to accommodate the roots, allowing just enough room for one or two new growths. Place the plant in the pot and support it with one hand while pouring the fresh mix around the roots. Cover the rhizomes with no more than 1/4 to 1/2 (6 to 12 millimeters) of mix. Pot Paphs loosely: tap the side of the pot to compact the mix and press down gently with your fingers. Make sure that the plant is held firmly in the mix. Plants that have lost their roots need to be immobilized by staking, or by looping and twisting a plastic wire around the rhizome, leaving 4-6" long ends to act as "artificial roots." Place newly potted plants in a slightly shadier location than usual. Water regularly, but not do fertilize for at least 3 to 4 weeks.

During hot weather, mealy bug and spider mite populations can explode overnight. Spider mites are microscopic, but their damage is easily detected: irregular, pitted, rust-colored areas, especially on the underside of the leaves. Treat with a pesticide recommended for spider mites, since these pests are resistant to most general purpose insecticides.

HIGHLIGHTS:

This is the season for maintenance: **REPOT YOUR PLANTS NOW** to take full advantage of the summer growing season. Attend a Paph potting demonstration at your local orchid society. **CHECK AND SERVICE YOUR COOLING SYSTEM** before the onset of hot weather. Watch your light level, and **ADD EXTRA SHADING** if needed to keep your plants cool in summer.

Helen Congleton

November 2004

The British Paphiopedilum Society Meeting

A delightful meeting was held at the Marwell Hotel at the Marwell Zoological Gardens (fantastic zoo), which is about twelve to fifteen miles from Winchester, England, this past November 20th and 21st. The speakers were excellent and included Paul Phillips of Ratcliffe Orchids, Frank Smith of Krull-Smith Orchids and Allan Burdiss, a private grower.

Getting to the meeting isn't that hard or expensive, and I recommend that if you would like to see a different part of the world and learn some things from the British perspective about Paphs and Phrags you should attend their fall meeting. Below I outline how I did it.

The display tables were filled with excellent plants that were very well grown. The British Paph Society members are really becoming superb growers of these plants, as some large specimens of Paph. venustum, Phrag. longifolium and many, many others were displayed. The Paph. venustum was a superb clone and was easily of high AM or even FCC quality. So many good plants were on display that it is hard now to remember them all.

Paul gave a talk titled "The One That Got Away," illustrated by magnificent Paphs from many (and not so many) years ago that would still draw interest on the show table. The moral of the story is keep at least two of every valuable plant, as things do happen and plants often are lost for one reason or another. I was amazed at how good some of the Paphs were and still are from earlier days at Ratcliffe Orchids.

Frank Smith gave two talks, one on his Paphiopedilum collection and one on displaying your plants to the best advantage for AOS judging. Frank's first talk had slides of some of the best and largest leucochilums, lowii and rothschildianum I have ever seen. There is a reason that Frank has won over 275 AOS awards in the last year. Watch for his leucochilums, and when they are offered by his company (Krull-Smith Orchids) snap them up. Frank has spent a great deal of time, money and effort developing his collection and is very much like me in one respect. He, like me, really likes to keep the super plants to grow on and breed

with. Frank's Satchell Page cross (wardii x Vintner's Treasure) has produced some outstanding plants. His talk on displaying plants for judging was really insightful as he shared his secrets on grooming and displaying plants in flower. I learned what judges really look for when judging plants, and it is surprising what the judge wants to see as compared with what your perception is of what he or she may want to see.

Allan Burdis gave a talk titled "My 10 Favorite Slippers." His fine slides of Paphs and Phrags in his collection displayed many well-grown plants with good flower production. His Paph. stonoi is one of the best I have seen. His slides of cutaways showing flower structure on the inside and out were really a new way of seeing Paphs and Phrags and how wonderfully complex their flower structures are. Paph. venustum is incredibly beautiful on the inside of the pouch.

After the meeting on Sunday afternoon, Ratcliffe Orchids invited all the participants to an open house with refreshments.

Here is how I went. First I flew to Gatwick and arrived about 8:03 am. I cleared customs and went down to the lowest level, where I caught the National bus service to Heathrow and there transferred to another bus that brought me to Winchester by 11:30 AM. Winchester was the old Roman capital of England. I spent Wednesday and Thursday nights in Winchester (there are many hotels and bed and breakfasts available) and did a lot of sightseeing at such wonderful places as the Winchester Cathedral, where I took a 2 ½ hour tour and later went to the even-song service (highly recommended). The town is easy to explore on foot and has great shopping and good restaurants. Holiday decorations were nice and different from U.S. decorations. The Military museums are fascinating, and the Great Hall (where King Arthur's round table is displayed) brings you back to times and legends of long ago. This is a very historic town, with many residences and shops dating back to the 1300's. The Itchen river is at the edge of town, and there is a beautiful walkway to take a stroll on if you are so inclined. One can easily hire a taxi to get to the Marwell Hotel or even take the bus, which is regular and cheap.

Sunday afternoon after the meeting and visit at the Ratcliffe nursery, I headed back to London and stayed at a very affordable B & B (35 pounds) near Victoria Station. I walked to Westminster Cathedral and enjoyed exploring its architecture. Westminster Palace is across the street, and the London Eye Ferris Wheel is just across the Thames. I spent Monday visiting Hampton Court Palace where King Henry the Eighth and other famous kings and queens lived. Tuesday I went back home. If you would like more info on how to make this trip economically, contact me at orchids@orchidweb.com.

I highly recommend attending this meeting as it is a lot of fun, and the hospitality of the group is wonderful.

Jerry Lee Fischer

SOA Trophy Winner



Phrag. Don Wimber

The Triad Orchid Society Show at Greensboro, North Carolina was a pleasant surprise for me because my Phragmipedium Don Wimber garnered several ribbons and the SOA trophy. The plant was sent to the show to add a needed color to the Triangle Orchid Society exhibit. I had no expectation that it would do so well with a single flower on one emerging spike. Since returning from the show, the spike has matured with three side branches and has had as many as five flowers open at once. It is still flowering almost three months after the show.

It was purchased as a small seedling from Oak Hill Gardens four years ago, and it was blooming for the second time at the show. It's growing in a 4½-inch pot and is due to be upgraded to a 6-inch one. I grow my Phrags in plastic pots in a mix that is 60% medium and 40% fine tree fern fiber. (I've tried several other mixes but this has done best for me.) They grow in an intermediate/warm greenhouse next to the Cattleyas. They're watered weekly in the winter and twice weekly in the summer and fertilized at least monthly. I grow about 50 Phrags, both species and hybrids, under these conditions but newly deflasked seedlings are grown under Paph light conditions for the first year or so.

This plant and about 4000 other species and hybrids of dozens of genera are on display in the private collection of The Orchid Trail Greenhouses. I grow several genera but tend to like Phrags, Paphs and Dendrobiums best. John Stanton, the owner, specializes in species and hybrid Cattleyas and species of other genera. The Orchid Trail Greenhouses is a retail orchid business catering both to the pot plant and hobbyist growers. We sell a variety of genera (both species and hybrids) and feature divisions of the "private collection" plants and seedlings of John's breeding program.

*Paul Feaver, grower
The Orchid Trail Greenhouses
Morrisville, NC 27560*

Supporting Members

In each issue of our newsletter we like to recognize and thank our supporting members. Each one of these businesses continues to support our efforts to have an outreach program for all slipper growers. If you are interested in becoming a supporting member, please contact Jean Metcalf at orchidiva@yahoo.com. We also hope that each of our members will support these businesses.

Antec Labs, Bob and Lynn Wellenstein
 B & B Orchids, Bob Ellis
 Barron's Greenhouse, Jack Barron
 Berkshire Orchids, Ann Levine
 Celebrate Orchids!, Barbara Noe
 Curved Air Orchids, Kevin Porter
 Fishing Creek Orchids, Stephen Male
 Flasks by Chuck Acker, Chuck Acker
 Fox Valley Orchids, Ltd., Tom Kalina
 Glendale Botanicals, Robert Gennari
 Gypsy Glen Orchids, Dennis D'Alessandro
 Hilo Orchid Farm, James Fang
 James L. Newsome, MD
 Ken's Orchid Studio, Ken Smiegowski
 Marriott Orchids, Hadley Cash
 McLellan Botanicals/Taisuco America
 New World Orchids, Glenn Lehr
 Orchid Inn, Ltd., Sam Tsui
 Orchidaceae, Mark Srull and Joan Bateman
 Orchidbabies, LLC, Earl and Phyllis Bailey
 Orchids in Our Tropics, Douglas Kennedy
 Orchids Limited, Jerry and Yoko Fischer
 Orchidview Orchids, HP Norton
 Paphanatics, unLimited, Norito Hasegawa
 Pinecrest Orchids, Leon Blumreich
 Piping Rock Orchids, Glen F. Decker
 R. K. Gems, Rod Knowles
 Ratcliffe Orchids, LLC, Paul and Mary Phillips
 Seagrove Orchids, LLC, Linda Thorne
 Slipper Orchid Study Group of Florida
 Tindara Orchids, Frank Coppolino
 Tonkin Orchids, Inc., Valerie Tonkin

Tyler Orchids and Tropicals, Russell M. Tyler, Ph. D.
 Whippoorwill Orchids, Tom and Barbara Larkin
 White Oak Orchids, Scott and Gwen Dallas
 Windy Hill Gardens, Marilyn and Brian LeDoux
 Woodstream Orchids, Bill and Lynn Evans-Goldner
 Zephyrus Orchids, John Doherty

SOA DIRECTORY

President: Barbara Tisherman, Pittsburgh, PA; (412) 683-0207; btisherman@aol.com

Vice President: Thomas Larkin, Rogers, AR; (501) 925-2228; wiprLark@cs.com

Secretary: Dr. Albert Svoboda, Santa Barbara, CA; (805) 969-4536; Asvoboda@earthlink.net

Treasurer: Linda Thorne, Seagrove, NC; (336) 879-6677, orchidlinda@rtmc.net.

Director: Jerry Fischer, Plymouth, MN; (763) 559-6425; orchids@orchidweb.com

Director: Richard Grundy, Santa Rosa, CA; (707) 570-2828; richardgrundy@att.net

Director: Alice Barrios, Gretna, LA; (504) 227-1127; orchidgal@cox.net

Webmaster: Rod Knowles, Brainerd, MN; (218) 829-4840; rkgems@brainerd.net

Newsletter Editor: Janette Harris, Westfield, NC; (336) 351-3945; jaharris@surry.net

Membership Secretary: Jean Metcalf, Erie, PA; (814) 366-3473; orchidiva@yahoo.com

Do you love Cymbidiums and Paphiopedilums?

The Cymbidium Society of America invites you to join

Membership includes six issues of the colorful CSA Journal magazine

Current annual dues: US\$30.00 (includes overseas surface postage) - add \$20.00 for overseas airmail

[VISA, MASTERCARD, JCB or checks in US funds only]

c/o Kenneth Jacobsen, Membership Secretary, 195 Exter Ave., San Carlos, CA 94070

E-mail: ackpj@yahoo.com