

# Houston Happenings

The Houston Orchid Society's Monthly Newsletter

## JANUARY 6, 2004 MEETING

Meeting Time: 7:30 P.M.  
Plant Table: Setup 7:00 P.M.  
Place: Hermann Garden Center

Speaker: Nina Rach  
Program: Stanhopeas and Related Genera  
Plant Sale: Setup at 7:00 P.M.



Our own Nina Rach is a native New Yorker. She started growing orchids around age 10 and joined the North Jersey OS. Her orchid growing took a hiatus during college (Cornell University College of Engineering, Ithaca, NY), but started up again during graduate school at Duke University (Durham, NC), where she was an active member of the Triangle OS. During graduate school she spent 7 months living in Malawi and Tanzania, east Africa, spawning a love of African orchid species. Her fascination with Stanhopeas started only 15 years ago, when she bought a basket of Stanhopea wardii at one of the Triangle OS auctions.

While in Durham, Nina entered the AOS student judge program and drove from Durham to Atlanta every month. She remained

affiliated with the Atlanta judging center (then called the Southern Regional JC) while living and working in New Orleans as a petroleum geophysicist with Amoco.

Since moving to Houston in late 1989, she's been a member of the Houston OS, the Houston Judging Center, and involved with SWROGA activities. She attended the 13th WOC in New Zealand (1990) and the 14th WOC in Scotland (1993). She became an Accredited AOS Judge in 1994; started the HOS website in 1996 (<http://houstonorchidsociety.org>), and the Houston Judging Center website shortly thereafter (<http://hjc.houstonorchidsociety.org>).

In 1997, Nina put The Stanhopea Pages website on line (<http://houstonorchidsociety.org/Stanhopea>). In 1998, she became HOS president, graduated from law school, and was admitted to the Texas Bar. In 1999, she attended the 16th WOC in Vancouver and was an invited panelist in the computer session led by Dr. Rudolf Jenny, a reliable authority on the genus Stanhopea.

Nina has written articles for Orchids magazine, the SWROGA newsletter, and various orchid society newsletters. Her orchids grow in a 16x24 steel-frame greenhouse covered with twin-wall polycarbonate, and a smaller wood-frame shade house.

The January program will be about Stanhopeas and related genera. We'll look at the historical origins of the genus, examine the flower structure, look at a variety of species, including the small group of "primitive" stanhopeas, see a few award slides, and discuss culture all along the way. The final third of the presentation deals with related genera, and we'll look at a few intergeneric hybrids made with stanhopeas.

*Pam Vinson*

## CHANGES TO 'THE HAPPENINGS'

**BY NOW YOU'RE ALL WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FRONT PAGES IN COLOR.**

HOS's Board of Directors voted in December to limit color in the *Happenings* to the Internet edition, available on-line at [www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org). There you can enjoy the entire issue in blazing color.

While the 2003 issues were fun to look at, they were also very expensive to print. Furthermore, Kinko's, the printer, declined to renew the pricing offered last year, so the 2004 mail editions will be all Black and White.

*Editor*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The year 2003 will soon be a recent memory, with many wonderful and challenging changes in our lives. All too soon the pain of winter heating bills and lost orchid plant tags will give way to the glories of a spring flower extravaganza -- to fuel once again the obsessive nature of our chosen hobby.

For me, this tenure as president is quite a milestone. Just 29 years ago, I first served as president of this large and varied organization. Having been encouraged to join the society during a visit to the greenhouses of Bob and Davye Betts, I ended up joining the fun and festivities of organized orchid growing and within four years was its president. Since that time, one wife, 3 kids, and 2 grandkids later, I am very proud to be back at the helm for a what I expect to be a fast and intense year, working diligently to involve as many of you as I possibly can—involvement is its own reward for the insanity of orchid addiction.

In April, the HOS will have its spring show and again in August we will sponsor our extraordinary workshop. These two events will offer ample opportunity for volunteers from all the diverse cultures of the orchid hobbyist membership. I welcome suggestions from each of you to help improve our mission. I have encouraged my fellow officers and staff to make some changes to our "business as usual" routine and to visibly seek to involve newcomers and other members in the active affairs of the society. We must prepare for the future growth of our organization with emphasis on member retention, and the encouragement and training of current members to carry the torch in the years to come.

I am asking each of you to be ready and available when called upon to serve. It is so easy, so enjoyable and so very rewarding. Be an integral part of one of the largest orchid societies in the United States. You might even want to volunteer for a job—Now that's different! Have a safe and orchid filled new year!

**Greg Scott**

## DECEMBER PLANT TABLE

There was no plant table program in December, due to the Holiday Social and Plant Auction. The Plant table will be operational for the January, 2004 meeting and will be managed by Fr. Ted Baenziger. Again, I'd like to thank everyone for their 2003 participation.

**Pam Vinson**

## AOS CORNER

### DONATE A LIVING LINK

Send a living link from our society to the AOS! Do any of our members have a large specimen plant that perhaps is taking up too much space that they might wish to donate to the AOS headquarter's greenhouses or botanical garden? The professional staff would give these plants a good home and even identify the donor society/ individual in appropriate signage. Please understand that they can only consider plants in good health, and genera or species that will be happy under South Florida conditions. The greenhouses maintain in the high 80s in Summer, and Winter night temperatures will not fall below 45F. The AOS - a nonprofit, charitable organization - would be most appreciative! Contact Armando Betancourt, Director of Orchid Collections, at 561-404-2052 or [betancourt@aos.org](mailto:betancourt@aos.org) to learn more about the garden and greenhouse needs or the AOS's accession policy. Thanks.

AOS 2004 calendars are in and will be available at the January meeting for only \$10. Purchase of these beautifully colored and illustrated calendars not only decorates your home or office walls, but supports the American Orchid Society's conservation efforts. Consider giving them as 'Stocking Stuffers' this holiday season.

**Karin Luhnau**

## JANUARY NEWCOMERS MEETING

The January Newcomers meeting will be at the home of Renee & Marvin Gerber, on January 18 at 2pm. Their address is 5003 South Braeswood, Houston, Texas 77096. Please do not park on S. Braeswood. Guests are welcome to park in the front or side driveways. The Gerbers are both past HOS presidents and AOS judges. Marvin has had the honor of being the President of AOS. They grow a wide assortment of orchids and hold many awards.

**John Van Domelen**

## PLANTS NEEDED FOR NEWCOMERS

The newcomers group needs plants to distribute at the Newcomers group meetings. I appreciate donations of free plants for this purpose. I can either collect them at the monthly general meeting or pick them up at your convenience. Email [john@tropicalbloom.com](mailto:john@tropicalbloom.com) to make arrangements.

Thank you!

**John Van Domelen**

## HOUSTON JUDGING CENTER

**Web site:** <http://hjc.houstonorchidsociety.org>

There were 11 plants presented for judging with no awards. There were 14 Accredited Judges, 3 Probationary Judges and 3 Student Judges present with a total attendance of 27.

The next regular judging will be held January 17, 2004 at the B. J. & Margaret Bradshaw Wellness Center, 7731 Southwest Freeway (Highway 59 South). It is requested that all plants be entered prior to 11:30 A. M. so that they may be properly researched for judging.

**Marg Putman**



Oops! This is the species winner from November plant table. Regrettably, the picture didn't make it into the December Happenings. It is a *Lycaste dowiana* owned by Jean Finalle. Congratulations, Jean.

## CLASSIFIEDS

Orchid paintings for sale! Impressionistic water colors painted by an artist in the Philippines. Several works are available in different sizes. Call John Jamerlan for details (832-275-4767). Or email me at [jejamer@alltel.net](mailto:jejamer@alltel.net) and I'll return email pics of them.

## A "Signature" Experiment by Doug Harris

About 16 months ago, while potting individual plants from a compost, a lack of aircone pots of appropriate size lead to an experiment. I had read Ray's article on his website, (First Ray Orchids) about his semi-hydroponic adaption of pots without holes in the bottom. My first attempt followed his approach by using recycled plastic bottles in which holes were cut about 1/2" above the bottom.

Since my family goes through different sizes and types of plastic bottles, a number of what was considered as appropriately sized bottles were used to pot up several phrags from a particular cross while others were placed in the 2" aircone pots. Using a tray lined with clear plastic to hold 1/2" of water in the bottom, the aircone pots were put in that tray. The semi-hydroponic potted phrags were placed in a tray without the plastic liner since they had their own water storage at the bottle's bottom 1/2".

Most phragmipediums seem to like their root area kept somewhat moist, or at least, never dried out. At the same time, phrags dislike strong solutions at their roots, or even a buildup of undissolved solids. So for 3 months or so, the aircone pots were periodically removed from the tray and the tray washed out to prevent a buildup of dissolved fertilizer in the liquid keeping the bottom of the aircone pots moist. The aircone pots were flushed with clear rainwater, replaced in the tray which was again filled up to the 1/2" level with water.

The bottle potted phragmipedium seedlings were flushed with clear rainwater at that point as well. All seemed to be growing well, with both pot types performing about the same, except the semi-hydro plants in the bottles seemed to be slightly larger than those in the aircone pots which sat in water in the tray. After 4 months, I began repotting the plants. Since all of the small seedlings had been roughly the same size coming from the composts, the differences in those plantlets in the aircone pots as compared to the bottle plantlets became apparent. The seedlings in the aircone pots had fewer and shorter roots than the bottle plants. The media in the aircone pots seemed to be constantly wet, much heavier than that in the bottles. The media in the bottles did not stick together as much, indicating that while that media had been moist all the time, it did not stay saturated with water.

The holes placed in the bottles set the water level at the same height as the lined tray, but allowed air to get back into the media from the bottom as well. The tray liquid level was covering the small holes at the bottom of the aircone pots and was preventing aeration of the root zone.

Further comparison of the various bottles, which had varying diameters, indicated that the thinner columns of the smaller bottles were much drier than the larger diameters. Where upon I deduced that the 3" diameter bottles didn't allow as much air to enter, even though the holes of all were about the same measured up from the bottom.

As I had also potted up more plants from a second compost a short time after the first group, I decided to check some differences in the two types of potting. Since some of the small plants have gone on to orchid heaven, those pots and bottles involved had been set aside and had completely dried out. I weighed several aircone pots, which still contained the dry media, then weighed just the media. Then aircone pots sitting in water were weighed after the pots had set out for a short time. Astounding results – the soaked media pots weighed roughly 2 to 2.5 times as much.

Using media removed from bottles, the weight of 1/2 cup portions was compared to the weight of media removed from the aircone pots. The bottled media was only 1.5 times the weight of the dry media on average. In both cases, the same media had been used in potting.

Checking media from various sized bottles and weighing 1/2 cups of each, the moisture content of the larger diameter bottles fell in between that of the aircone pots (heaviest) and the smaller bottles (lightest). I began to measure the plant sizes from each group as the plants were repotted. Roots of the smaller bottles were as long as the distance from the base of the fanned leaves to the bottom of the bottles, seeming to try to fill the entire media. Bottles of somewhat greater diameter also had roots down to the bottle bottoms, but roots in the center of the media, which didn't dry out tended to show less vigorous growth, and lacked robustness compared to the outer roots. Roots from aircone pots where holes were kept under water had atrophied root systems, with many tips showing signs of rot. Few if any reached down to the bottom of the pots.

Leaves of the semi-hydroponic plants showed much more development, with a number of leaves on each plant. Those of the aircone pots had fewer leaves per plant, while lacking leaf spread measured across the leaf tips.

After some rumination, I arbitrarily decided to move, as many phrags from the aircone pots to bottles as bottles became available. In addition, coming to a conclusion that to use larger bottle diameters, additional holes should be made above the bottom holes and the bottle top so more air was available. That should allow the centers to dry out some as well.

After the 16 months have passed, those phrags which were first placed in bottles and moved into bottles of larger diameter and height as needed for additional growth have surprisingly done quite well. Several had grown from seedlings with 2-3" leaf spread of the two primary leaves to near blooming size. A couple have started second, third or even fourth growths.

The ones first placed into aircone pots which had constantly wet media are still playing catch up, but a number are not too far behind. So when you spot a phrag, a paph, a catasetum or other orchid plant growing out of a recycled pop bottle or a creamer container, or even recycled giant economy sized nut jars and plastic milk bottles, that's my latest signature!

*Author's note: Nina Rach, while introducing plants in the September meeting of HOS, recognized the use of a Coffeemate creamer bottle as a recycled orchid pot, and there and then titled it as my signature. Now I'll have to cover the pots up with something to hide my identity.*

**Doug Harris**

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## TOUGH TIMES FOR A FELLOW ORCHID LOVER

**Weyman Bussey whom most of you know from his great presentations at our society and the wonderful species plants that he brings for sale has had a very hard time for the last few months. His son, Dustin Bussey, was in a terrible car accident and is presently in a coma. He spent two months in a hospital in San Antonio and recently has been transferred to a facility in Mission, Texas where the Busseys live. He has been given constant care by Weyman and Alba Luz and has shown some improvement and responsiveness due to their intervention. Needless to say Weyman has been unable to work these past few months and all the bills are horrendous. He would greatly appreciate any assistance that our society members can make in Dustin's behalf.**

**If you can donate please make checks out to Weyman Bussey and mail them to David Hunt, 322 Gershwin, Houston, Texas, 77079 and he will deposit them to Weyman's bank account.**

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## 2004 HOUSTON ORCHID SOCIETY ---- MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Wk# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Own a greenhouse? \_\_\_\_\_ What size? \_\_\_\_\_

Special talents or Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you growing orchids now, which genera? \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to receive your Newsletter by USPS please check yes \_\_\_\_\_ or no \_\_\_\_\_.

Note: In 2004, the USPS copy of Houston Happenings will be in black and white. Only the web version will be in color.

Membership Type: Individual Membership \$30.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership \$40.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Dues include a \$5 premium on years with shows. This year's show will be April 16, 17, and 18.

Other Names in Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Orchid Society Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to see or hear at HOS meetings?: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What types of volunteer/committee interests would you be willing to participate in?:

\_\_\_\_\_ Newcomers

\_\_\_\_\_ Fall Workshop

\_\_\_\_\_ Spring 2004 Show

\_\_\_\_\_ New member solicitation

\_\_\_\_\_ Food/Refreshments

\_\_\_\_\_ HOS Library

\_\_\_\_\_ Petals and Wings

\_\_\_\_\_ Plant table/Raffles

\_\_\_\_\_ AOS affairs

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Speaker

BRING THIS COMPLETED FORM TO A HOS MEETING at the HOUSTON GARDEN CENTER.

HOS MEETING IS EVERY FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:30 PM or mail to:

Mavis Klehm, Membership Secretary, 19203 Evendale Ct., Houston, TX 77094-3202

Note: Jan. meeting will be on Tues, Jan. 6, 2004 because of conflict with New Years Day.



Another oops! This is the December hybrid table winner. It is Den. Sina Red, brought by Xenia Hallaway

### **Newcomers (and Oldtimers, too) - Greenhouse Etiquette**

Below is a list of common courtesies and do's and don'ts to observe when visiting another's greenhouse. Add to this list any additional rules that the greenhouse owner may ask you to observe. Keep in mind that other Newcomer's groups may wish to return to visit in future years and it would be a shame to not be asked back due to the poor behavior of a few.

1. Do not handle the plants without asking the owner's permission. The last thing you or the owner wants to see happen is for their "prize" AM to hit the floor.
2. Under no circumstances should the tags in the pots be removed. Tags can be lost and a plant's identification can be lost. Roots and other plant parts can be damaged by careless handling. If you want to know more about a particular plant – ask the owner.
3. Leave purses and bulky clothes in your car. Greenhouses are often crowded and it is easy to knock plants off the bench.
4. No children unless invited by the owner – nuff said.
5. Please – smell as many blooms as you like, but do not touch them. A bloom's life can be shortened by the oils on your fingers.
6. No eating or smoking in the greenhouses. Many find smoke objectionable and food attracts vermin. Additionally, smokers potentially carry Tobacco Mosaic Virus on their hands and should not touch orchid plants without washing thoroughly first.

**John Van Domelen**

**Editor's Note:** John asked that this be printed for the Newcomers use, but I added the 'oldtimers' to the title, since greenhouse etiquette is a matter for everyone. It's just common courtesy.

**PLANT RAFFLE TICKETS FOR BOXTOPS**  
***WWW.boxtopsforeducation.com***

### **Reminder: Thank the Following for the January Refreshments Table**

Coordinator: Sarah Bentley and Linda Livesay  
 Punch/Drinks: Lee Rowell and Deana Roberts  
 Sheet Cake: Lee Rowell and Deana Roberts  
 Cookies: Lee Rowell and Deana Roberts  
 Snacks: Lee Rowell and Deana Roberts  
 Snacks: Lee Rowell and Deana Roberts

**Please sign up and volunteer for coming months.**

### **Houston Orchid Society**

#### **2004 Officers and Committee Chairs**

##### **Officers**

President	Greg Scott
1st Vice President	Pam Vinson
2nd Vice President	Ted Baenziger
Recording Sec.	Sandra Higham
Treasurer	Bill Bartlett
Membership	Mavis Klehm

##### **Chairs**

Guest Hospitality	Carol McDonald
Happenings Editor	Don Ghiz
Newcomers Group	John Van Domelen
Librarian	Deana Roberts
Petals and Wings	open
Plant Raffle	Dennis Tomjack
Spring Show Co-Chairs	Jay Balchan
	Don Ghiz
Refreshments Co-Chairs	Sarah Bentley
	Linda Livesay
Silent Auction	Emily Lam-Jones
2004 Workshop	Kelly Moseley
Webmistress	Nina Rach

##### **Directors**

Jim Butler	Julius Klehm
Melba Butler	Emily Lam Jones
Dolores Fields	Karin Luhnau
Joe Fields	Nina Rach
Marvin Gerber	Theresa Riggs
Don Ghiz	Sheila Skov
Denny Haase	Jerry Stephens
Renee Haase	Clark Whiteside

##### **Representation**

AOS Representative	Karin Luhnau
H.G.C.A.B. Representative	open
IPA Representative	Clark Whiteside
SWROGA Director	Mavis Klehm
SWROGA Director	Terry Palmer
Pluerothallid Alliance	C J Maciejewski
Encyclia Enthusiasts	Alice Barrios
ODC Representative	Doug Harris

Web-site: [www.houstonorchidsociety.org](http://www.houstonorchidsociety.org)

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*What's up with all the Dendrobium pictures?  
Well, there was no plant table in December and no awards by HJC (questionable Christmas spirit?).  
With space available, pictures of awarded dendrobiums fit the bill.*

**Editor**

1. *D. victoriae-reginae* 'Mountain Midnight', FCC/AOS 90 pts.
2. *D. cuthbertsonii* 'Sheila', FCC/AOS 90 pts.
3. *D. farmeri* 'Orchid Country', AM/AOS 85 pts. CCE/AOS 91 pts.
4. *D. moniliforme* 'Banriko', AM/AOS 80 pts.
5. *D. parishii* 'RF Orchids', CHM/AOS 82 pts.

