

July 2009

Volume 72, Issue 7



ORCHID SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA



Speaker this Month: **Harold Koopowitz**



July 20

Meeting Details:

- Plant Sales 6:30pm
- Skill Session 7:00pm
- Meeting Start 7:30pm

Agenda :

- Announcements
- Member Participation Raffle
- Show and Tell
- Refreshments
- Speaker
- Raffle Table

Dr. Koopowitz grew up in South Africa where he attended university majoring in both botany and zoology. He then completed a doctorate at UCLA in California in 1968. A professor at the University of California at Irvine since graduating, he was also the Director of the UCI Arboretum for twenty years. He recently retired as a Professor of Biology in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UCI, where he did research on conservation and ecology.

He is well known for his work on slipper orchids, both species and hybrids and is author of several books and a large number of research papers. His most recent books include “*Orchids and their Conservation*”, “*Clivias*” and now “*Tropical Slipper Orchids*” for Timber Press. Dr. Koopowitz is Editor Emeritus of the *Or-*

chid Digest. He also writes fiction.

He is also very interested in other plants such as the gesneriad, *Streptocarpus*, as well as bulbs and has an international reputation as a breeder of miniature daffodils. For many years he was a partner in Paphanatics unLimited with Norito Hasegawa.

Dr. Koopowitz is a member of the Species Survival Committee for Orchids for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. He is on the board of Orchid Conservation International and is scientific advisor to the Orchid Conservation Alliance. In addition, he is a member of the International Orchid Commission.

At our July meeting, he will be talking on “The development of the new miniature paphiopedilum hybrids”.

Our photos are a kind of Koopowitz family album. On the extreme left is paph. Harold Koopowitz, at center left is paph. Lynleigh Koopowitz and at center right is paph. Michael Koopowitz.



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Speaker's Dinner

Old Place Seafood Teahouse
391 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA
(510) 286-9888
Time: 5:00 PM
RSVP to Fred Shull

Skill Session

Ray Gleason will be conducting the culture/skill session.

Raffle Table

The raffle table will be supplied by Boomer's Orchid Ark

President's Message - July 2009

July is usually the hottest month each year around the northern hemisphere. Wherever you go, life is blooming and birthing. So are insects and other critters. We all know that the last week of June was an earth scorcher to be followed by more summer heat. So tempting are cold drinks and cold deserts.

I just found out that July is "National Ice Cream Month". Now you know. Which reminds me of the upcoming OSC Auction and Ice Cream Social this September. Whew!!! I am so glad cold delights will help me during a heat wave. We do know that what is best is " W A T E R ". For humans, for living things, and especially for orchids.

The majority of orchids can tolerate moderate temperature fluctuations if below the 90 degree range. Certainly not above. A heat condition between 75 and 85 degrees is generally acceptable. If you are not able to bring plants indoors, then shade, water, and air movement will help. Just remember that many orchids rely on heat and cold changes as part of their life cycle. But healthy growth will be inhibited if grown in extreme climate (hot or cold) for too long and also too often. Misting/spraying your plants in the morning or early afternoon will give much needed humidity to counter the effects of hot, dry air. Providing a fan for good air flow around your orchids also is helpful to minimize over heating. However, avoid spraying your plants in the evening since non-evaporated water can lead to rot and disease. Another method to provide humidity is placing plants in a shallow dish full of pebbles. Pour water into the dish, without the bottom of the plant pot touching the water. Capillary action combined with evaporation equals humid conditions. Protect your plants from nature's extreme weather conditions. If you are uncomfortable, there's a good chance so are your orchids.

Thanks to Fred Shull, Ricky Wong, Mimi Rose, and the Boomers (Terry and Margaret) for help with our display booth for the Garden Center's 50th Anniversary. We were able to meet and have informative conversations with members of other societies which meet in the Garden Center (from Women's Clubs, Bonsai plants, Iris plants to rock sculpture).

In the past several months OSC has welcomed new members. If any one of us sees a new person, old members or new member should introduce ourselves. Strike up a conversation to hopefully find out what questions the other member has about orchids. We've all been there, not knowing anyone at the OSC meetings. Of course we gravitate towards our orchid buddies. Let us all welcome our new members...extend a hand of friendship and orchid knowledge !!!!!!!

Walter James

A note from our librarian, Ricky Wong

The library is looking to expand our collection of books and magazines. If you have any orchid related books or magazines that you do not need or want, a donation would be greatly appreciated.

Also, if you have any long standing loans from the library, please bring them back at our next meeting.

Thank you.

Orchid Society of California Contacts

Name	Position	Phone	E-mail Address
Walter James	President	510-825-5102	waljam1946@yahoo.com
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Terry Boomer	Past President	510-523-5694	mabcp@alamedanet.net

Highlights from the June Board Meeting

OSC Board Meeting on Thursday, June 18, 2009 at Walter's home.

Meeting called to order at 7:20pm

Attendance: Walter James, Susan Lo, Fred Shull, Kay Greison, Terry Boomer, Mimi Rose, Ricky Wong.

Minutes taken by: Ricky Wong.

Library check outs are due at the next months meeting. If books are not returned when due, the member will be called and reminded to return books prior to next meeting.. If books are not returned by the 2nd meeting, the delinquent member's name will be announced at the meeting and name printed in the upcoming newsletter. Library privileges will be suspended for habitual offenders.

November Show & Sale (NSS) will be November 7-8, 2009. Walter is the Chairman. Themes for the November Sale will be voted upon at an upcoming meeting. Bring your suggestions. Vendor fees for the NSS will be \$350, instead of \$400. Fred will re-do and update the schedules for awards and trophies.

Members, especially Board Members should be more friendly to new members and visitors at the meetings. Introduce yourself in person and to everyone when using the microphone.

Twitter/Facebook. Fred talked with Connie. Connie is willing to start our page on Facebook, but not willing to update it. Connie mentioned a cost for a large number of pictures. Walter will contact the Los Angeles person for advice,

Larry Jenkins past away recently. OSC to donate \$25 in their name to ODC (Orchid Digest). Motioned by Terry, second by Fred. Passed unanimously.

September auction. In advance of the auction, we would like to have a list of plants for auction in newsletter in order to create interest in the auction. Please plan for the auction and set aside a division or two for the auction. Ice cream provided by board, picked up by Walter. Maybe a sherbet for lactose intolerant members. \$500 for Terry to purchase plants for auction. Motioned by Mimi, Second by Walter, passed unanimously.

Next meeting on Tuesday, July 28, 2009 at Susan Lo's home. Dinner at 6:30pm, meeting at 7pm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm.

From our last general meeting:

To the member who ended up with an unmarked Sobralia in the last raffle, your plant is S.(mirabilis x fimbriata) and I know this because a careless member stuffed the nametag into a plant that I won (not the same cross either). Please, hold the plant in one hand when you pull out a tag to read it so you don't inadvertently put it into a different pot. We have enough Nonames in the world already.

Thanks in advance,

Musia Stagg

2009 SPEAKER CALENDAR

MONTH	SPEAKER	TOPIC	RAFFLE TABLE	CULTURE SESSION
July 2009	Harold Koopowitz	Slipper Orchids	Boomer's Orchid Ark	Ray Gleason
August 2009	Theresa Hill (HillsviewGardens)	Masdevallias	coming soon	coming soon
September 2009	n/a	Ice Cream Social/ Plant Auction	n/a	n/a

May Meeting Photos



Our panel of Cymbidium growers provided much valuable information.



← Looks like some roses for our past president, Tanya Phillips. We will miss you when you become an Oregonian.



Some MDS volunteers are seen investigating the "thank you" plant table.



June Meeting Photos



Our guest speaker, Bruce Rogers, gave us a very informative talk on Sobralias.



Maynard Michel presented AOS awards to two member's plants.



Looks like we had quite the Show and Tell table at this meeting. Too bad your editor missed this meeting (not to mention the snack table).



Where Cymbidiums May Lead You!

In this newsletter, we are including a portion of an interview article written by Kay Greisen of our own Musia Stagg. Musia Stagg, a local artist and avid orchid grower. The final portion of the article will appear in next month's newsletter.

Musia Stagg, as Interviewed by Kay S. Greisen

KG: I'd always thought orchids had to grow indoors or in greenhouses. I'm really curious. How did you get started growing orchids outdoors?

MS: Many, many years ago, I was at an orchid society meeting, and a man was talking about Cymbidium companions: orchids that weren't Cymbidiums but would grow under the same conditions. And, at that point, I started finding such outdoor-growing orchids and learning what kind of parentage to look for in plants. That way I'd have a good idea of whether or not something would grow outdoors. Over the years, I've discovered that my favorite orchids are the ones that are very colorful—fragrant is a major plus. And they have to bloom for at least three, four, or six weeks—or even more. It's really down to 'the most bang for the buck.'

KG: Did you learn by trial-and-error? Or at the meetings?

MS: Some of it was trial-and-error, some by questioning vendors, some from looking into the cultural conditions for species. Except for seasonal differences due to latitude, the micro-climate out in my backyard is like that in Papua New Guinea (PNG). At night, it's very cool in PNG—down to almost cold—and the humidity is about 98%. During the daytime up in the mountains of PNG, all the mists and clouds burn off and it gets very bright, very dry, and quite hot. Because I'm near the San Francisco Bay, we also get 98% humidity here virtually every night. And daytimes here are usually dry, bright, and warm. So, you can see the climatic similarities between PNG and my property in Oakland, California. *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii* grows up in the mountains of PNG, and I have a whole bunch of them. They were born for my conditions here in Oakland and have become kind of like the 'pets' of the shade-house. And then I've ended up with . . .

KG: What do you mean by 'pet'?

MS: Well, it's like your favorite puppy or something like that.

KG: Are those the ones that are tiny little plants with tubular flowers?

MS: Yeah, they have colorful flowers like a little trumpet. And they make a lot of them. Each flower can last for six months or more!

KG: Wow. Yeah, I remember seeing them when you first showed me your shade-house, and I thought they were cute.

MS: I've learned that once you discover what works, you buy more of those plants. For instance, almost any Cattleya cross that's been hybridized with *Laelia anceps* will grow outdoors here in Oakland. You find out where the weather conditions or the climate conditions are similar to what you've got at home, and then you look for plants from those places for growing outdoors. And, in a way, I've gotten a lot of plants I might not have gotten otherwise, and they've really done quite well for me. A lot of them are oddball species, strange hybrids, vintage hybrids, or different clones of the same plant.

KG: What year was it when you first got interested in outdoor orchids?

MS: Well, I really first started collecting fairly seriously around '93-'94—after we bought our house. I got more into it because I had the room; I knew I wasn't going to have to move the plants again; I was also showing orchids in Oakland and San Francisco and—of course when you're going to the show—you bring plenty of it home with you! (laughter) I was also experimenting so I would get a lot of plants just because I thought they might work. Some of them worked great and some of them didn't. The ones that languished, I either gave away or sold. The ones that died, well it's obvious—they were buried with honors in the trashcan. (chuckle) Mostly, my collection really grew after I built a shade-house in my new sun-filled yard.

KG: So, when you say your collection grew, how many plants did you start with? 10? 50?

Where Cymbidiums Might Take You (continued)

MS: I had maybe 50—mostly Cymbidiums. And now I've got about 250 Cymbidiums and at least 600 other orchids that grow outdoors. There's a few of them that I need to bring indoors if the temperature often goes below 40°F at night. One Winter, it stayed very gloomy, rainy, and cold for almost two weeks straight and didn't get a whole lot better after that. It was a very gloomy month and I had a lot of trouble with rot.

KG: Are most of your orchids in the shade-house? Do you have any out in the open?

MS: Yes, in the shade-house. There aren't that many out in the open, and those are under trees or shrubs. Even with the shade-cloth in place, there's a lot of light here. The shade-house faces South and the wall behind it is corrugated metal—it's aluminum. So it reflects light and, in Winter, the daytime temperatures will go up high enough to warm things up. That seems to be the trick. A lot of orchids will take a nightly 'dip' down to 32°F. I have a lot of plants that actually have gone successfully down to 27°F, but that's only a dip. You know, it may be 27°F for an hour maximum and then it starts coming back up. So, that's a big difference from somewhere that's 27°F all night. That's too cold. Winter's the rainy season here, so I cover the roof of the shade-house with 6mil clear plastic because too much rain will kill most orchids.

KG: Do you staple the plastic in place?

MS: I staple it. I run nylon cord string over the plastic where I'm stapling. So that in Spring when I want to remove the staples, all I have to do is pull the string. It also keeps the plastic from ripping free from the staples. I made the top of the shade-house 6 feet across by 25 feet long—because that was the size of the shade-cloth. I used scrap wood that was here, including some really long pieces of 2x4. I cleaned them up and put some sort of deck preservative on it—a relatively expensive deck preservative.

KG: And how did the plastic not fill with water when it rained?

MS: Because the shade-house roof is angled.

KG: Ahhhh. That is very good to know!

MS: As a matter of fact, when I first moved the shade-house from a different location to its current spot, there wasn't enough of an angle. It rained really, really hard one day and—about 11 o'clock at night—the shade-house broke in half! My husband Michael heard the crack of wood and then we spent hours in the middle of the night bringing plants into the garage. I had to take a knife to cut through the shade cloth and the plastic; there was at least a bathtub full of water that had collected up there! It was a night to remember.

KG: Oh, God! It sounds like a night to forget! (chuckle)

MS: Luckily, those days were early in my collecting madness, or we'd still be moving plants. We were drenched!

KG: So, if you have orchids outdoors and it rains and then there's a sudden cold snap, do you just bring everything indoors?

MS: Yup, or you lose it. The biggest thing with orchids—Cymbidiums included—is that their root structure absorbs water into the roots' spongy coating (the velamin). This is really important in a lot of ways. A Cymbidium that is dry—where the roots are dry—will probably withstand a 10–15°F colder temperature than if it had been watered. If wet, the roots will freeze and rot.

KG: Right. Because the water will bust open the cells.

MS: Right. But if the roots of an orchid are dry, they can withstand more cold.

KG: So do you not water the whole Winter?

MS: Oh, no. You have to water—just less often and try to get the timing right . . . I do have a few *Laelia speciosa*, which come from eastern Mexico where it doesn't rain during Winter. And I water those plants only after I see root growth. In this area, I'd start probably in late April and then stop completely in October. And then I don't water them all Winter. I've heard people say, "Well, if you just have to water them, what you can do is mist them on holidays, like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day . . ."

KG: (laughter)

Where Cymbidiums Might Take You (continued)

MS: But I don't even do that because we get the humidity at night. I hang them way up high where they stay nice and bright and dry until Spring.

KG: What about air circulation?

MS: I always have at least one fan on, including a big fan that's actually like a swamp cooler. It's got water in it and blows out a cooling bit of humidity. That runs in the daytime on a timer. If it's too hot you need to increase humidity as well as air movement; if it's too cold and humid, you need more air movement or you get rot.

KG: There are many different micro-climates in the San Francisco Bay Area. Are some more conducive to growing some plants or less conducive to others?

MS: Oh, yeah. People who want to grow outdoors need to get a maximum-minimum thermometer, and should plot their area before investing a lot of money in plants. The range will tell you which plants you can grow and which ones you can't.

KG: Ahhh. And, did you do that as an experiment?

MS: Yes, but in my case it was more of a work-in-progress.

KG: Do you find that fun? It sounds like solving a mystery or working a puzzle.

MS: Well, it is. It's a kind of big green crossword puzzle.

KG: It sounds more challenging than having a greenhouse and then just sticking plants into it.

MS: Well, it is more challenging and it also takes a lot more work because nothing's automated in the shade-house. One really cold week, I took a small electric heater with a fan in it and heated one end of the shade-house; it kept the temperature above 30°F at that end. And, boy, we had some electric bill! On the other hand, I get to spend lots of time outdoors in Summer—hose-in-hand.

KG: What about using parentage for identifying cool-growers?

MS: I've got a plant where one parent is a huge Blc with a big round, fancy, highly colored flower; the other parent is a little, tiny thing—it's one of the Sophronitis species—so the hybrid plant is maybe five inches tall. It's a mini minicat. The flowers on it are about three inches across and they look just like the Blc parent. If you saw a photograph of it, you'd think, "Oh that thing's gotta be eight inches across!"

KG: Wow.

MS: But generally, in figuring out the parentage, it's like somebody was saying about racehorses, "If you get a really great racehorse, you don't necessarily breed to that racehorse; you breed, instead, to the parents that produced that great racehorse." It's the same thing for cool-growing orchids My friend Mimi gave me a division of *Lc Eximia 'Coerulea'* to try outdoors.

KG: It sounds like a skin condition!

MS: It does, doesn't it? (laughter) Don't put that in the essay. It's the product of cold-tolerant *L. purpurata* crossed with warm-growing *C. warneri*. And it has been doing just fine here; actually, it's in bloom now. It's one of those old-fashioned, charming 'blue' hybrids that everybody always says, "Oh, you can't grow those under 50°F at night." Well, I'm happy to tell you that's not true.

KG: Do you grow any Cattleyas?

MS: Cattleya species that do well for me outdoors are *C. loddigesii*, *C. intermedia*, *C. percivaliana*, *C. skinneri*, and my favorite Cattleya species, *C. guttata var. alba*. The latter has a wonderful waxy green flower with a white lip and a most pleasing fragrance. All of these are grown in bark and repotted only as new roots appear. *C. percivaliana* blooms in mid-Winter, but intense cold will destroy the inflorescence (but not the plant).

Upcoming Plant Auction Info

It's coming soon!

On Monday September 21 2009, your board will be serving **ice cream** and all of the **fixings** beginning at 7:00 P.M.

At 7:30, our annual **PLANT AUCTION** will begin.

Please Donate Plants.

If you have special plants you would like to donate to the society, we welcome them. Any number may be donated.

Consignment Plants.

We will also welcome plants from members, sharing in the proceeds. A maximum of 5 plants will be accepted.

Consignment plants can have a reserve (or a minimum bid). The Society will take 25% and the owner will receive a 75% check by mail after the auction. If you are sharing the proceeds with the Society, please print **SHARE** in large print, on your label. Please give it a code and a plant number. (For instance, Terry's first plant would be TB-1)

Purchased Plants.

The Society will be purchasing some special plants to help make the auction more fun and interesting.

ALL PLANTS (donated or consignment) should have the name of the plant, a picture or description of the flowers, and cultural tips on how to keep it alive and well. Your name, donate or share, should be on the tag along with your code and plant number. All plants should be healthy and disease free.

If you know the names of any of the plants you are bringing to the auction ahead of time, **please** let us know at the July or August meeting or you can e-mail Fred Shull by August 31, 2009. We would like to have as complete a list of auction plants in the September newsletter as is possible.

Our **CHECK-IN** stations will be ready to receive your plants beginning at 6:00 P.M. We hope to have all of the plants by 7:00 P.M. so we can start our auction promptly at 7:30 P.M.

OUR AUCTIONEERS will be the very knowledgeable Dennis Olivas and Jeff Trimble. It is sure to be a fast-paced and fun evening!

RAFFLE TABLE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We need raffle table volunteers for August, October and November meetings.

Please see MaryLou Smith to volunteer.

Orchid Society of California

The **Orchid Society of California** is dedicated to the culture, protection, and appreciation of orchids all over the world.

*P.O Box 10096
Oakland, CA 94610*



THE FIRST ORCHID SOCIETY WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI
Meeting Location:
Lakeside Park Garden Center
666 Bellevue Avenue
Oakland, CA
3rd Monday of Every Month, 7PM

Newsletter
Submissions:
oscnews.OrchidSocietyofCa@gmail.com
Submissions are due before First Monday of the Month

Each month, our members bring in refreshments to share based on your alphabetical last name.
As a thank you, the club will give you a free raffle ticket. Please leave your goodies in the small kitchen area with Dawn Muller.

It's your turn: **I-P**

July Raffle Table Volunteers:
Kay Greisen & Paula Shui
August Raffle Table Volunteers:
York Lee & ?

Upcoming sales & events :

July 10-12 9am-5pm, 29th Santa Barbara Orchid Estate International Orchid Faire, see www.sborchid.com