

# Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter

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## Contact Us

[http://ci\\_orchid\\_society.tripod.com](http://ci_orchid_society.tripod.com)

Central Illinois Orchid Society Newsletter is published irregularly. Subscription is through membership in the Society.

Membership is \$10/person with \$5 for each additional family member. Checks payable to CIOS should be sent to Jerry Steerman, 507 N. Coler, Urbana, IL 61801.

## CIOS Officers for 2007

Mitzi Williams, President & News Letter Editor

Jerry Steerman, Treasurer

Nancy Steerman, Secretary

## What Makes a Good Society:

I was surprised to find out that our society has been in existence since the late 1950's. Nancy Steerman, Secretary, is currently reviewing all the minutes and records of the society, and summarizing them for presentation in November. "Back in those days", Nancy says, "we had to dress up to come to the meeting." The new society must have been very active as it held a show that first year! The same dedication and enthusiasm is still with our society now as it was in its early years, but the small membership count is a concern. The easy access to the web and its vast information resources make it possible for anyone to get orchid growing tips, and even have conversations with other growers without ever actually meeting them. So what can a society like ours do to maintain a healthy membership? I think it boils down to the benefits as most potential members would ask: "what can I get by becoming a member?" The top-most benefit I see is the person to person contact and sharing of orchid growing information that speaks directly to the specific local conditions, but that may not be enough for others. What kind of benefit do you wish our society provide? Please let me hear from you.

Increasing the society's visibility to the community may be a way to attract new members. I listed some of the objectives to reach this goal below. Some of these are already in place, i.e., we place an announcement of our meeting in the News Gazette under Events; Our meeting time and place is guaranteed by the Urbana Public Library; We have a newsletter; We agreed to host a show again next January. So it seems we are half way there, but the rest of the items still need our attention. No doubt the members can also think of additional things to do, so please don't hesitate to mention them.

1. Send meeting announcement regularly;
2. Keep consistent meeting time and location;
3. Publish newsletters;
4. Hold shows and sales;
5. Distribute society flyers to area nurseries and businesses;
6. Participate in community activities (such as the fund drive at WILL);
7. Do direct and indirect fund raising (repotting; orchid adoption).

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## Welcome:

Welcome to our new members:  
Shelley Kelshimer and Mark Pennington, Paris, IL

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## Orchid of the month: 1



This mini Cattleya hybrid, grown by Janet Jackson, is a cross between *C. loddigesii* 'Martinelli' and *Sc. Beufort* 'Hartford's Elmwood' AM/AOS. She bought it as a seedling in 2004 at the Missouri Orchid Society's Fall Sale held at the Missouri Botanical Garden. She repotted it into a clear plastic pot with Schultz orchid media in the Spring 2005, and was rewarded with this beautiful flower this winter for her care and patience. She grows all her orchids under lights in her basement in Winter, and sends them outside to a shade house in the Spring until Fall.

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## Notes, tips, Q & A:

- **How to clean clay pots:**

Soak them overnight in a solution of one gallon of water, 1 cup of vinegar, and 1 c of bleach. Scrub them with a steel wool pad. Rubber gloves are recommended for handling the vinegar/bleach soaked pots.

- **How to get your plants show-ready:**

"Choose a blooming plant that is in its prime. Take this plant to the orchid beauty parlor. Examine the whole plant, not just the beautiful flowers. Look for bugs such a mealy bugs or ants. Check for scale. If any of these conditions exist, spray your plant with the proper solutions. Your plant and the Show Chair will be most grateful. Remove all old and yellow leaves, take a soft toothbrush and warm soapy water and clean your pseudobulbs. Next get out the cotton balls and a small saucer of milk and polish your leaves. If necessary, stake your flowers and get a name label (your name and address) and place it on the side of your pot." By Laurie S. Hart. (Excerpt of an article by Laurie S. Hart in a recent issue of Port St. Lucie Orchid Society newsletter.)

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## Next meeting:

The next CIOS meeting will be at 6:30 pm on March 20, 2007 at the Urbana Free Library Conference Room. Don McClure will share his experience with miniature orchids, and Mitzi Williams will talk about herbarium orchid specimens and plant pressing. Bring your plants for show and tell.

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## Orchid of the Month: 2



Will anyone believe this *Ludisia discolor* is almost 2 ft. wide and the flower stalks 1 ft. tall? This was a small plant in 1999 when the grower, Beth Wohlgemuth of Natural History Survey Library obtained it. Against all orchid potting conventions, Beth repotted it in regular potting soil mix and gave a yearly sprinkle of Osmocote. She puts it outdoors during summer. Beth said it bloomed every year but not as well as this winter, which Beth attributes to its location by the large north facing window.

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## Book Report:

Orchid fever: a horticultural tale of love, lust, and lunacy. By Eric Hansen ISBN 0-679-45141-2. New York: Random House, 2000.

The word 'lunacy' in the title of this book caught my attention, and indeed I found myself deep inside the minds of people all sharing the common fever of orchids. The author tells stories of various individuals involved in orchids—jungle men of Borneo who serve as guides to orchid searching trips, puzzled by the fact that a simple jungle flower with no food or medicinal value was worth a million times their wages; The story of raids and incarcerations caused by growing and selling legally obtained orchids that became suddenly illegal; Assaults on customs officials by an enraged scientist transporting decades old herbarium specimens now illegal to obtain; Established botanical gardens and research institutes with dark secrets of past orchid acquisition; etc.

(cont. on p.4)

The CITES rules which intend to protect endangered species but cannot protect them from destruction in their native habitat; etc. It is a very fascinating book, humorous and deadly serious at the same time. It makes the reader want to check the CITES list against his/her collection of orchids, especially the species. This book tells that orchid growing is a very complicated hobby. Reading this book makes me feel I grew up a bit as an orchid enthusiast.

Mitzi Williams

CITES=Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. For more information, visit the following and other related sites.

<http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.shtml>

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## Events in the area:

- 4/14-4/15 Central Indiana Orchid Society Show. Garfield Park Conservatory, 2505 Conservatory Dr., Indianapolis, IN.
- 4/27-29, '07 Illinois Orchid Society Spring Show in conjunction with the spring Mid-America Orchid Congress, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois. About 30 vendors including 2 from Peru and Ecuador will be participating. In addition to the show and general sale, the event offers demonstrations, lectures, corsage making and sales, raffles, and sales of supplies. The featured speaker, Alfredo Manrique from Peru is from one of two nurseries in Peru authorized to grow and sell *Phrag. kovachii*, "the most talked about species" that was discovered in the last 50 years.

The show will be open to the public from 10:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday (28 and 29). For details, visit [www.midamericanorchids.org/](http://www.midamericanorchids.org/).

- The 19<sup>th</sup> World Orchid Congress, held every 3 years, will be in Fort Lauderdale, FL on January 23-28, 2008. The last time the Congress was on U.S. soil was in Miami in 1984. 250,000 attendees are expected. Registration for attendees and exhibitors is now available. For details, see [www.29WOC.com](http://www.29WOC.com).

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## Editor's note:

I added a book report this month as a new, but occasional column. If you have read or come across recent orchid related books, please send your report. There are many help books out there for orchid growing, but some are better than others. Members, especially those who are starting in orchids, may appreciate knowing which book(s) to buy for years of use.