

# The ORCHIDIAN

Newsletter of the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania – October 2023



## OSWP MONTHLY MEETING – open to members, guests and the general public

- **Location:** Spartan Community Center, 134 E. Elizabeth St., Pittsburgh, PA 15207
- **Sunday, Oct. 15th - Doors open at 12:45pm; Approximate times: Mini Class at 1pm – Speaker at 3pm**
- **Mini Class: Zander Morrison** - *In the month of October we celebrate the paranormal, kooky, and mysterious. Why not give a little props to our orchids as well! In Zander’s mini class “spooky orchids”, we will explore our frightening orchid friends!*
- **Speaker:** Eric Sauer of River Valley Orchids in Dayton (in person) – **NO MEMBER PLANT SALES 10/15.**

## EVENTS SCHEDULE – happenings in Western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas

- **Kentucky Orchid Society Show** is being held October 7 - 8, 2023 at the St. Mathews Episcopal Church, 330 N Hubbards Lane, Louisville, KY 40207. Judging is being held on October 7th, 2023 at 9:30 AM
- **Phipps Conservatory Fall Flower Show *Hometown Harvest*** Opens Oct.7. Visit the website for tickets <https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/calendar/detail/fall-flower-show>



## OSWP OFFICERS – leaderships council and board of directors

- **Co-Presidents:** Michelle and Dave Panasiuk
- **Co-First Vice Presidents:** Natalie Turicik and Carolyn Bolton
- **Second Vice President:** Zander Morrison; **Mentors:** Tim Choltco and Katie Schuller
- **Secretary:** Kathy Collins • **Treasurer:** Janet Greenberg
- **Directors:** Tim Choltco, Kathy Grajcar, Dave Motak. Chuck Oldenburg, Brian Powell

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## OUR GUEST: September Monthly Meeting Speaker



**October Speaker:** Eric Sauer of River Valley Orchids in Dayton (in person)

**Topic:** Maxillaria (Culture and Genera)

Eric has been growing orchids for over 30 years under the greenhouse name of River Valley Orchids and specializes in South American Species with a focus on Brassia, Maxillaria and Phragmipedium. He has spoken internationally and across the United States. Eric has had culture chapters published by Guido Braem in his book on Paphiopedilum and in his book on Phragmipedium. He also has a feature article on Maxillaria in Orchid Digest and several of his Maxillaria photos published in Eric Christenson's book on Maxillaria. Eric has received over 100 awards from the American Orchid Society and has three orchids named after him including two species from Ecuador. He is the current president of the Miami Valley Orchid Society and the president of the Mid America Orchid Congress. Eric's real job is as a registered landscape architect serving as the planning manager for Five Rivers MetroParks in Dayton, Ohio.



### COMMITTEE CHAIRS – Volunteer Leaders

**AOS/Culture Corner** - Nancy Kline

**Facebook** - Lance Cheuvront

**Garden Club/Library Liaison/Hospitality** - Carolyn Bolton

**Library** – Lori Beth Bloom

**Membership** Kathy Collins

**Mini-class** Zander Morrison, Tim Choltc & Katie Schuller

**Newsletter** Dave Panasiuk

**Orchid Gems** Norma Raiff & Pam Horter-Moore

**Pfun/P-OSI** Demetria Marsh

**Raffle** Natalie Turicik

**Show** Sheila Nathanson, Norma Raiff & Janet Greenberg

**Speaker** Carolyn Boltin and Natalie Turicik

**Website** Jinghua Ou

## ORCHID GEMS - Giovanni Giraldo

### *Introducing a remarkable OSWP asset: Giovanni Giraldo*

By Norma Raiff



One of the advantages of OSWP membership is that we constantly learn from each other. Informal discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and sharing experiences, frustrations and joys with others helps us to grow. It's a big reason why many join the society since it provides an interactive world of experience beyond Zoom and Facebook.

Giovanni Giraldo's official title is Phipps' "Orchid Display Horticulturist" and he's responsible for overseeing the nurturing of its internationally recognized orchid collection. These senior functions include management of both the Conservatory's public display rooms and the huge orchid collection that resides in the out-of-sight growing houses until specific plants are deemed ready for display.

And since there are about 3,000 orchids at Phipps, it's a huge job. Giovanni's roles include expanding the collection, making recommendations based on his assessment of specific plant features and ornamental

value, the goodness of fit between their blooming cycles and the Conservatory's rotating display needs, and filling gaps while also culling certain plants in the collection.

Giovanni is a recent newcomer to Pittsburgh. He moved to Wisconsin from his native Colombia in 2011 to pursue a Ph.D. in Botany at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He relocated to work at Phipps in 2022. His personal and professional careers have been marked by extensive academic and related work assignments. Colombia is the leading country for native orchids. It includes 274 genera and 4,270 species – 1,572 are endemic to the country. (Source: Bogotá's Botanical Garden rolls out the National Orchid Exhibition, September 23, 2022).



Giovanni's undergraduate experiences at the National University of Colombia also shaped his career choices. Although his grandmother was a plant enthusiast, Giovanni was not interested in orchids until one of his undergraduate classes in plant morphology required that he dissect a *Cattleya trianae* flower whose anatomical features perplexed him. A semester later, he learned more about orchids during his plant systematics course and encountered his first orchid in the wild



during a field trip for the course. He still recalls the beauty of that *Habenaria subdentata* growing by a creek, and to date, it remains his favorite *Habenaria* species. Before finishing his undergraduate degree, he worked as manager and curator of the University's tropical greenhouse. His undergraduate thesis, "Orchids of Santa Maria (Boyaca, Colombia)", was later published as a field guide manual.



Giovanni's Ph.D. in Botany from the University of Wisconsin-Madison was also fieldwork-based. It involved studying several orchid species in their native habitats. His thesis focused on *Epistephium* and other genera closely related to *Vanilla*, the genus with the most significant agricultural value in the family.

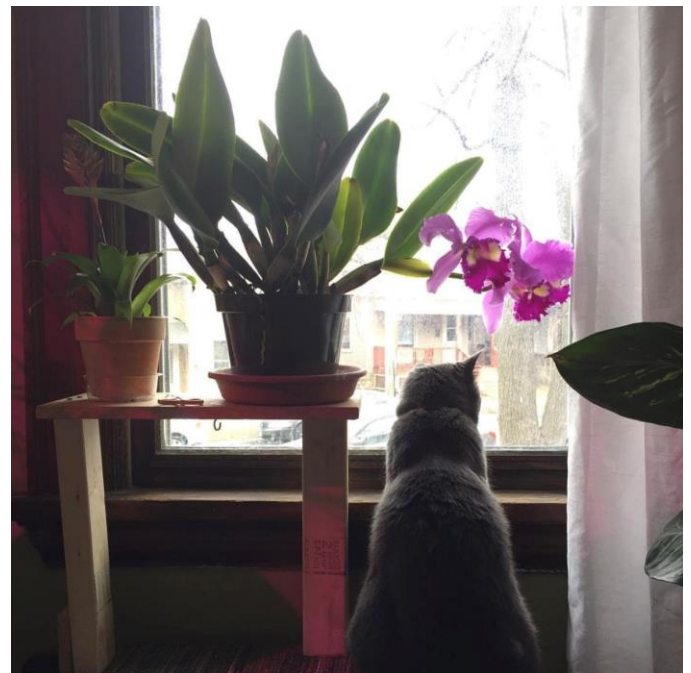
When I first met Giovanni at the OSWP Picnic, his enthusiasm, personal warmth and willingness to talk about his role was palpable. Animated and friendly, his Instagram account describes his wide range of interests as "orchid and tropical plant lover/hoarder" and "aquarium enthusiast." And yes, he moved to Pittsburgh with his cat Antoine, a rabbit (now sadly deceased), several fish, and many plants (most of them orchids). This parallel animal-related love has existed from childhood and included a crab (his first "pet"), plus a large variety of creatures that ranged from turtles, hamsters, a squirrel, cockatiels, frogs, anoles (a type of lizard) and exotic goldfish, among others.

Giovanni's ties to OSWP center on his work with Phipps volunteers. "They do a great deal to help with the

collection and are truly amazing. They help with repotting, updating the inventory, testing for viruses, and maintaining the collection and greenhouses. As an instructor at heart, I try to explain what needs to be done and why it's important, and then I follow up with review and other suggestions when needed."

"The OSWP Pfunsters have benefitted in many ways from working together with Giovanni," reports Demetria Marsh who helps to coordinate the Pfunsters. "From his warm, sense of humor, the twinkle in his eyes, the depth of his orchid knowledge and passion, and how he patiently shares his growing techniques as many times as necessary, so they can all learn together and grow."

Sheila Nathanson, an OSWP volunteer and one of our Show co-chair's echoes the sentiment. "The pandemic shutdown was a lonely and difficult time for many reasons," she recalls, "not the least of which was no Pfun. The Pfunsters were eager to get back to work, but Phipps remained in volunteer shutdown. We knew Phipps had hired a new orchid grower and wondered what the fate of Pfun would be."



"Phipps decided our exile could end, as long as we wore masks and limited contact, which we were happy to do. And Giovanni was very enthusiastic about our return. He welcomed us back to work on and to delight in the extensive Phipps orchid collection. He is a very good teacher, with a wide depth of knowledge about all things orchids. He gives clear, detailed directions about

how to pot many different orchids, and is also fun! He absolutely wowed us at the 2023 OSWP Show with a dendrobium kingianum that was the centerpiece of the Phipps exhibit and had to be seen to be believed! He is definitely a Gem!



Giovanni is also genuinely grateful for OSWP’s financial assistance in helping to fill needed supply gaps. Both the Society and specific OSWP members have pitched in to purchase 150 orchid test kits to winnow out diseased orchids that are not only disfigured but threaten the entire collection’s wellbeing. And it’s a fact that while Phipps is known for its many historic plants, many of these early acquisitions arrived before modern cultural care and breeding practices were in place, so the risk is real.

In addition to all the volunteer help and other contributions, Giovanni wishes to acknowledge the OSWP members whose expertise has been specifically

helpful in promoting the Conservatory’s mission of being a center of orchid excellence. “Thanks to OSWP members’ expertise, I have developed my own group of in-house authorities who use their knowledge to lead the volunteer groups. Although getting to know others takes a lot of time, the benefits are almost immeasurable.”



Final Words: “The broader challenge is to set priorities and to focus on the timing and sequence of actions. Since you can’t do everything at once, be selective, especially in taking care of your collection. Plan and match the plant’s seasonal growth and repotting needs to the most appropriate time.”



## ORCHID SHOW CHAIRS – Welcome Aboard New Volunteers!

The 2024 Show Chairs are thrilled to announce volunteers for some key Show Committee Chairs. Drumroll, please:

Hospitality.....Mike Bloom  
 Library Liaison.....Lori Beth Bloom and Joyce Turkaly  
 Security.....Steve Gredzinski

Set Up.....Bob Lusnak  
 Security.....Bob Lusnak  
 Program Book.....Mona Rice

The OSWP is grateful to these members for stepping up and offering to fill these jobs. Each is vital to the success of our annual show, which is not only our biggest source of revenue, but a very effective recruiting venue. We still have positions available for those who are willing to have fun, make friends and always think orchids! And to our new 'hires', we can't thank you enough.

-Sheila Nathanson, Janet Greenberg and Norma Raiff, Show Chairs

## OSWP MEETING MINUTES – September 17, 2023

The meeting was held at The Spartan Community Center of Hazelwood.

A mini-class presented by Jim Yamber regarding managing the pests on orchids as they are brought inside for the winter began at 1:00 pm. Simultaneously, a short meeting of the Board was held at 1:00 pm.

The business portion of the general membership meeting was called to order at approx. 2:15 pm by Co-Presidents Michelle and Dave Panasiuk.

The meeting opened with a performance reprisal of the Phaleanopsis Follies performed by Jim Yamber, Demetria Marsha, Carolyn Bolton and Pam Horter-Moore. This particular performance was in recognition of the many years of service to OSWP by both Jim Yamber and Nancy Kline. Jim and Nancy are each relinquishing certain positions they have held within OSWP for a number of years. They will, however, remain active and a vital part of OSWP.

Recognition was given to Zander Morrison who will be the new 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

Acknowledgment was also made of the new Newsletter Publishing Team – Michelle and Dave Panasiuk.

Discussion began regarding the Logo Contest currently in effect to design a new, updated logo for OSWP. Members (and any other interested logo-designers) are encouraged to submit entries by October 31, 2023. The final choice of the new logo will be made by the Board.

The Spring Show Committee (Sheila Nathanson, Norma Raiff and Janet Greenberg) provided an update for the 2024 OSWP Show. New members are highly encouraged to participate in Show preparation and throughout the weekend when many volunteers are needed. Mike Bloom has stepped forward to assume the role of Hospitality Chair for the Show (formerly held by Mike Lysy). Steve Gredzenski has agreed to take the lead on security for the Show. Bob Lusak will assume Jim Yamber's role in laying out the vendor and exhibit spaces. A new storage unit has been rented near the Show site. Helpers will be needed to transport the equipment to and from the unit to the Show. (After the meeting, Bob Lusak volunteered to assist in transporting the equipment to and from the storage unit to the Show site. Thanks Bob!)

### Reports:

- a. Newsletter: Dave Panasiuk noted that articles are due on the 20th of the month. Submissions should be sent to Dave at: Letsgroworchids@gmail.com
- b. Treasurer: Janet Greenburg presented the Treasurer's report.
- c. Pfun and POSI: Demetria noted that OSWP continues to volunteer at Phipps. The days have been changed so that OSWP now volunteers on Wednesday and Thursday.



- d. Hospitality: Carolyn noted that contributions of snacks for OSWP meetings at the Spartan Center are always welcome.
- e. AOS: Nancy Kline continues to encourage members to join the AOS. The American Orchid Society (AOS) has also requested pictures from Club Shows. If anyone has any photos they would like to submit to AOS, please contact Nancy.
- f. Culture Corner: Should any members have questions about the growth of their orchids, Nancy is available to answer questions at each meeting.
- g. Orchid Gems: Norma and Pam have been contacting those new members who signed up for interviews so their stories can be included in the OSWP newsletter.
- h. Raffle: Margaret Schmitt took home this month's raffle plant. The raffle plant was donated by Hossein Noorbakhsh. The raffle proceeds were \$56. (Thank you Hossein!)
- i. Library Liaison: Joyce Turkaly and Lori Beth Bloom have agreed to share this position. Joyce discussed OSWP outreach through presentations at local libraries. If anyone has a contact at a local library or other group that would be interested in hearing an OSWP presentation, please let her know.

**Miscellaneous:**

A number of members presented orchids they had brought to the meeting for the purpose of Show & Tell.

Future OSWP meeting dates: Oct. 15, Nov. 12, Dec. 10 (Holiday Party at the Crowne Plaza Hotel)

The business meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m. and was followed by the guest speaker, Gregory Griffis of Longwood Gardens. Greg gave a presentation entitled "Secret Stories of the Orchid World."

Submitted by: Kathy Collins, OSWP Secretary



## PHIPPS CONSERVATORY ORCHID SOCIETY INITIATIVE – PFUN volunteer work

### P-OSI

A joint initiative between Phipps Conservatory and the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania to create and cultivate an orchid collection of note for enjoyment, education and research.

October, 2023

Pfun at Phipps is our OSWP repotting efforts as well as doing the inventory of the Phipps orchid collection. We are also helping as the Clean-up Crew and with virus-testing too. **BIG CHANGE: We are now going to Phipps most Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:45AM – 12:45PM.** It's a great learning experience for all of us.

And don't miss the Fall Flower Show, Hometown Harvest, at Phipps, opening October 7<sup>th</sup>.

**If you would like to join our Pfun/P-OSI efforts and haven't previously signed up with us, please let me know at the email address below.**

Thanks and looking forward to working and learning together.

Demetria Marsh

[Demetria117@gmail.com](mailto:Demetria117@gmail.com)

412-848-4349



## OSWP LOGO CONTEST 2023

The OSWP will be having a big birthday in February, 2024 - our beloved orchid society will be 70!

In honor of this milestone, we propose a freshening up of our logo. We are hoping for something lively and colorful that would express OSWP's desire to be current as well as our strong commitment to community outreach and orchid education.

The logo will help promote brand recognition. And it will appear in the newsletter, website, letterhead and such spring show materials as posters, sponsor & ad requests, promotional materials, vendor outreach, and OSWP branded apparel. So we invite you to be part of this experiment and to take the time to show off your creative side.

### Rules & Requirements:

1. Must include "Orchid Society of Western PA or Pennsylvania".
2. Optional: could include "OSWP".



3. Must include "Since 1954".
4. Must be in color. (Note: Must be easy to view the submission in black and white, for stationery letterhead).
5. Must include a striking graphic
  - a. An original orchid drawing, or
  - b. A digital photo of an orchid. (Note: if using a photo that you have not taken, be sure to list the original source and to provide evidence of permission secured to reprint if the photo protected by copyright.)<sup>1</sup>
  - c. Either choice needs to be easily recognized as an orchid.
6. Optional: Add a feature to tie in to Pittsburgh or Western PA.
7. A digital photo is preferred.
8. Submit to Jan Greenberg [janetg150@verizon.net](mailto:janetg150@verizon.net) by **10/31/23**.

Who can submit:

1. Submissions must be made by an OSWP member or by a member who sponsors a submission on someone else's behalf.
2. Members who act as "outsider" sponsors can also submit their own logo for consideration.

Recognition:

1. The contest winner will receive:
  - a. A \$100 gift certificate to the orchid vendor of their choice.
  - b. Free admission to the holiday party & 1<sup>st</sup> choice on the orchid party favor.
2. Other participants will be recognized at the event and thanked in the newsletter.

Selection process:

1. The winning logo will be decided by majority vote by the of Board of Directors and BOD mentors. The Board also reserves the right not to choose a winning entry.
2. Submissions should will be decided 11/05/23 and will be announced at OSWP's Holiday Party on 12/10/23; however, the logo designer's attendance is not a requirement.



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<sup>1</sup> To see some photo options, google "free orchid photos".



## The Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania

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The Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania Inc.  
Is a non-profit corporation organized to advance  
The propagation, horticulture and preservation of  
Orchid species and hybrids through research,  
Education and scientific endeavors.

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American Orchid Society  
Education. Conservation. Research.  
Affiliated Society

BIG HAPPY BIRTHDAY OSWP!!!! We're 70!!

And what we really want is A NEW LOGO!!

Please submit your ideas to Janet Greenberg  
([janetg150@verizon.net](mailto:janetg150@verizon.net)) by 10/31 (revised date).  
Enter to win prizes.



And if you're not artistic, just write up some thoughts and we'll e-blast them out so that  
someone else might be inspired. Visit OSWP.org for "Logo Call out" guidelines

**10/15 MEETING SPEAKER is Eric Sauer (Maxillaria)**

**10/15 MINI CLASS is Zander Morrison (Spooky Orchids)**