



# Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania

May 2023

[www.oswp.org](http://www.oswp.org)

## Upcoming Events

May 21 , 2023  
Sarah Hurdel of  
Needmore Orchids,  
Habenaria

## Looking Ahead

June 18 Speaker is Dennis Steinbeck from Flask  
and Flora in Columbus, Ohio.  
July OSWP Picnic

OSWP meetings are held at the **Spartan Community Center of Hazelwood**  
at 134 E Elizabeth St in Pittsburgh. are open to members,  
their guests and the general public. Doors open at 12:30 p.m.  
Program Calendar is also available at [www.oswp.org](http://www.oswp.org)

### OSWP Officers

**Co-President:** Michelle and Dave Panasiuk

**Co-First Vice President:** Natalie Turicik and Carolyn Bolton

**Second Vice President:** Katie Schuller Mentor: Tim Choltco

**Directors:** Tim Choltco, Kathy Grajcar, Dave Motak. Chuck Oldenburg, Brian Powell

**Secretary:** Kathy Collins

**Treasurer:** Janet Greenberg

### What's Blooming Now



### OSWP Exhibit at West Shore Orchid Show 2023



As you can see the OSWP exhibit group took home eleven trophies, awards and AOS awards. Agrest congratulations to the exhibit team Carolyn Bolton, Carol Panza, Chuck Oldenburg and Kathy Collins. See more details below.

## Co-President's Letter April 2023

Hi Everyone,

While it's still too soon to report any numbers, I can confidently say this year's show was a great success! Guests got to enjoy award winning exhibits, learn about orchids from expert OSWP members, try their luck at the raffle table, have their own plants repotted to perfection, and so much more! There were lines to make purchases at the vendor tables and our very own member sales table nearly sold out! I am grateful to have spent the weekend with old friends and getting to know so many others. It was exhausting and wonderful and I wish it could have lasted longer! Thank you all for sharing your time, knowledge, and friendship. I can't wait until we do it again next year!

**Starting with our next meeting on April 16th, the OSWP will be meeting at the Spartan Community Center of Hazelwood at 134 E Elizabeth St in Pittsburgh.** As you know, our long-time meeting location, the Phipps Garden Center, is scheduled for renovations. The Spartan Center is a former elementary school that has been beautifully renovated. There is ample free parking and located only a few miles away from the Garden Center. I will be sure to send more information as the date approaches.

Thank you,

Michelle and Dave Panasiuk

Co-Presidents, OSWP



**Paph. Saturday Night**

## Up Coming Shows & open house

**Windswept in Time Orchids**, 8066 Skyline Dr., Broadview Heights, Ohio 44147

440-838-5757 Call first

**2023 Open House Event Spring May 27 & 28 11a.m. -5 p.m.**

[Windsweptorchids.com](http://Windsweptorchids.com)

## **Orchid Gems: --The Healing Power of Orchids -- Ernest McCobb**

**By: Norma Raiff**

Ernie McCobb is a recent OSWP member who has dedicated his working years to ensuring that our final resting places – cemeteries -- are well looked after areas of natural beauty. He also loves many different types of plants, orchids included.

Ernie is compassionate, responsible, and was one of the first recent members to volunteer to tell his story so that others would become aware of OSWP's secret ingredient: that membership involves socialization, learning about local orchid culture, sharing successes and failures, joking, and finding friends. This is what makes OSWP involvement different from just watching YouTube.



After speaking to him at some length I came away with the impression that Ernie is a kind person who is extremely responsible and who takes care of others, even if it means putting his own plans on hold.

Ernie graduated from Penn State with a degree in horticulture (1980). And although he had planned on studying medicine, his options dramatically changed during his Junior year when his much-loved stepfather had a serious stroke. The family physician put it bluntly: from this time forward Ernie would be the family bread earner. So Ernie shifted to horticulture for the pragmatic reason that he had already accumulated numerous science credits.

But Ernie also “always knew he had to take care of his family.” His dad died when Ernie was only two years old and Ernie came to an early understanding that he would have to take care of his mother and grandmother. That’s because his mom had polio as a child and resulting medical complications made it impossible for her to continue working.

Ernie’s stepfather, Harris Fritz, was a bright spot, a person who Ernie recalls as kind and as someone to look up to. “It was a pleasure knowing my stepfather who was a highly decorated soldier in the Armored Division. He was a good man. He also apologized to me for his inability to continue working after his stroke.”

Ernie’s horticultural degree provided entry into the field of cemetery management, which included tending the facility’s greenhouse, supervising plants for funeral arrangements, cleaning up weather-related damage, and taking care of the landscape. His career involved positions at both the Homewood and the Allegany Cemeteries.

Ernie recently retired from work because of chronic health issues. He is now occupied with growing plants and remodeling his home which is located outside of Brackenridge Borough, 22 miles north of Pittsburgh.

Ernie’s history with orchid growing was sporadic, marked by failures and personal resilience. His mother paved the way by being extremely fond of orchids. Unfortunately, Ernie’s first attempts at growing orchids were unsuccessful: a fate which he eventually attributed to unfavorable growing conditions. However, he remained unfazed. “I always wanted to try again, and one year I got a phalaenopsis for Christmas that I successfully grew for many years.”

Sadly, his subsequent attempts at orchid cultivation failed for reasons related to mealy bug infestation and using decayed potting bark. Undeterred, Ernie then adopted a different approach to learning. “During the pandemic, I listened to You Tube a lot. I listened to a gentleman from the UK who is an amateur grower who specializes in orchids. His channel is Roger’s Orchids (<https://www.youtube.com/c/RogersOrchids>). Through listening, he encouraged me to start growing orchids again.” (Note: Roger’s Orchids has 3,932,166 followers, near-daily postings, and emphasizes orchid growing.) “And so I learned more about humidity, how orchids could be

grown successfully. I now know that I should have put them in the basement where I could control the growing environment.”

Ernie’s collection currently consists of some 20 orchids, including phalaenopsis, zygopetalums, and cattleyas. And his adventure continues. His recent Spring Show acquisitions included an oncidium and a catastetum from the Raj collection, a cattleya from Ecuagenera, and a Habenaria Pinkie from Edgar Stehli (Windswept in Time).” I enjoyed the show this year, especially the international vendors and the new supply vendor. They were very nice to deal with.”

“I’m willing to experiment with different genera and learning what they need.” For example, “Stenoglottis Venus (purchased from OSWP member Hossein Noorbaksh)– is beautiful, a bluish purple similar to violet.” And like many of us, Ernie has a number of \$5 Lowes’ orchids. He also grows various houseplants.

Although Ernie had attended some shows and several meetings earlier, he did not join OSWP until March 2022. “I knew I was going to retire in June and I wanted to grow more orchids and learn how to flower them better.”

Ernie also values the friendships he has made and how nice people are. “I enjoy the camaraderie of everybody. I enjoy that people bring in plants for Show and Tell. I love the experience of growing orchids and the challenge of learning how to grow them.”

And to shift focus, this is also a story about orchid-friend relationships that make an unexpected difference. When Ernie was telling me about being informed that he would now have to be the “family breadwinner”, I shared a story about Rich Sipko, a former OSWP member whose mother and grandmother also told him that he had to be “the man of the house” when his own dad died. I further remarked that while Ernie wouldn’t know Rich Sipko, both had also inherited their love of orchids from their maternal side.

“But no”, he said, “I do know about Rich Sipko.” When Ernie was at the point of seriously doubting that he could successfully grow orchids, he also worked with Mike Lysy (newcomers will know Mike as the person in charge of the Show kitchen – among many other things.) And while working at the greenhouse, Ernie was responsible for growing one of Rich Sipko’ plants that Mike had acquired

Talk about coincidence: “The greatest thrill I can say, is when I was looking at Rich Sipko’s plant and seeing the sheaths extend, and then having the thrill of seeing the plant bloom.”

And in fact, it was seeing Rich Sipko’s orchid thriving that prompted Ernie to start listening to the above-mentioned Roger’s Orchids on You Tube. Ernie’s still hoping to acquire a piece of that particular plant. Final words: I will keep growing orchids and plants until I die. When I die I hope I have a plant in my hand.



**Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania (OSWP)**  
**General Meeting**  
**April 16, 2023**

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

A mini-class presented by Nancy Kline re "Taking Your Orchids Outside" began at 1:00 pm. The business portion of the meeting was called to order at approx. 2:00 pm by Co-Presidents Michelle and Dave Panasiuk.

A number of new members who had joined at the March 2023 Orchid Show were in attendance and were welcomed to their first meeting.

Old Business: The Show Chairs for the 2023 Orchid Show were given an opportunity to discuss the outcome of the Show and ideas for the next Show were discussed.

- a. Welcome Table – Mary Ann Pike noted the addition of the Welcome Table in the Hotel's Lobby helped to capture walk-ins who were otherwise bypassing the Welcome Table in the main Show area.
- b. Society Sales – Nancy Kline noted the success of the Society Sales, due in large part to the donation of plants from member Raj Popat. She also noted the work of Holly Schrum and Leslie Kaplan in getting and keeping the Society Sales very organized and profitable.
- c. Silent Action – Dave noted that, in future, it would be better to have the donated items available in advance. Also, more potential is seen for obtaining donations from local entities (such as the Pittsburgh Penguins and Pirates). Of note this year was the donation from the Pittsburgh Ballet.
- d. Plant Parking – Cindy noted that this area was very busy throughout the Show. Consideration will be given to relocating this area at next year's show to provide more space that does not intersect with the Repotting area.
- e. Raffle – Michelle noted that a number of items from the Crawford Collection were used in the Raffle. However, Show attendees are really looking for live plants and this area actually made more money at the 2022 Show for that reason. OSWP still has 3 crates from the Crawford Collection that will be raffled off or used in other fundraising.
- f. Publicity – Dave Motak noted that 2 press releases were sent out and a number of digital outlets were contacted. OSWP members did guest spots on local television and at the Home and Garden Show. The focus on the international vendors was well received.
- g. Repotting – Katie noted that there were more than enough OSWP members available to provide repotting. Much of what was repotted were plants that attendees purchased in bare root from the vendors at the Show.
- h. Clerking - Carol Panza noted the efficiency of a special table for writing ribbons and other efficiencies that were put in place that allowed the exhibits to open for viewing 1 hour earlier than in 2022.
- i. Hospitality – Mike noted there was plenty of food available but he encourages people to sign up for their donations prior to Show time.
- j. OSWP Exhibit – Carolyn noted that helping to setup the OSWP exhibit is a great way to learn how to design and install an exhibit.
- k. Show Setup – Jim Yamber indicated that, after 35 – 40 years of designing the staging for

the Exhibit and Vendor spaces, he is unlikely to be available in this capacity for the 2024 Show. Whomever takes on this responsibility next year will need drawing software.

- l. Helpers – Demetria noted that there were sufficient OSWP members available. In 2024 she suggests that Security will be split off from the general helper category.
- m. Trophies – Janet noted that OSWP members fund the donations for the trophies and there were sufficient donations received.
- n. Online Registration of Plants – This process was well received and really helped the vendors utilize their time well.
- o. Membership – Kathy noted there were 97 new membership signups at the Show. Of those, there were 144 individuals in total. Approximately 70 plants were provided by Just Add Ice and given as gifts to new members. That means that nearly 30 people joined even without the new plant incentive. Details regarding the New Member Reception are still to be worked out.
- p. Treasurer – The net profit from the 2023 Show (which does not include New Member Sign-ups) was \$7,160.

#### Reports:

- a. Newsletter: Jim Yamber noted that articles are due on the 20th of the month. If you have a submission but are unable to make the deadline, please email Jim so that he can reserve space and, perhaps, make an accommodation for your article.
- b. Treasurer: Janet Greenburg presented the Treasurer's report.
- c. Pfun and POSI: Demetria noted that OSWP continues to volunteer at Phipps on both Monday and Thursday. In order to accommodate those who would like to volunteer but are otherwise working, OSWP and Phipps are looking to add a Saturday morning to the volunteer schedule. Also, OSWP assisted with Phipps' Used Orchid Sale. The plants were sold out after just 1 hour, while there was still a long line of potential buyers outside the gate. Consideration is being given as how to reduce the number of disappointed buyers in 2024.
- d. Hospitality: Carolyn noted that contributions of snacks for the OSWP meetings are always welcome.

#### Miscellaneous:

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

A plant raffle was held. The donated plants were a gift from Matthew of Ten Shin Gardens, one of the international vendors (Taiwan) at our Show.

As this was the first meeting at the Spartan Community Center, feedback on the location is solicited. It was also noted that there is additional parking available in a parking lot across the street. There are other activities going on within the building during the OSWP meeting and the parking lot adjacent to the building may fill and appear to be insufficient.

The business meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m. and was followed by the guest speaker, Clark Riley, who gave a presentation on "My 50 Orchid Mistakes and How to Fix Them."

Submitted by: Kathy Collins, OSWP Secretary

## **May speaker Sarah Hurdel from Needmore Orchids**

Sarah is the owner of Needmore Orchids, an artist, orchid blogger, exhibitor and accredited AOS judge. She maintains a collection of well over 600 orchids under lights in her basement, including a large number of Habenaria species and hybrids. Even without a greenhouse, her plants and exhibits have received AOS award recognition for culture, flower quality, and design. She enjoys sharing her orchid obsession with others through in-person and virtual presentations to societies across the US and Canada.



Each talk combines her love of orchids, photography, and illustration with experienced advice and a sense of humor. Sarah currently has two blog pages featuring her orchid photography and cultural information -

Something About Orchids on Facebook and Blogspot.  
Home Grown Orchids - Under Lights

An entertaining and informative presentation packed with tips, tricks and creative solutions for growing orchids successfully without a greenhouse. All levels - even spouses and children of the orchid obsessed have enjoyed this presentation.

## **SPECIAL INVITATION** **New Member Reception**

Spartan Community Center of Hazelwood  
134 East Elizabeth Street, Pittsburgh, PA. 15207

Sunday, May 21, 2023

New Member Reception - begins at 1:00 p.m.  
Regular OSWP meeting follows at 2:00 and includes:  
Plant Sale - Plant Raffle - Member Show & Tell  
Member Panel with Q & A

(NOTE – due to time constraints,  
there will be no mini-class at the May 21st meeting)

**Please RSVP by May 8th, to:**  
Kathy Collins, Membership Chair  
collinskathya@gmail.com

## OSWP Exhibit at the West Shore Orchid Show



Carol Panza, Chuck Oldenburg, Kathy Collins and I took plants from 7 growers to the West Shore show April 22 in Strongsville Ohio. Set up began at 11 am and we were amazed that we were finished at 4:15 and had lots of time left over to shop the vendors. We had a total of 68 orchids in the exhibit. Plants in the exhibit were from Carol Panza, Hossein Noorbakhsh, Raj Popat, Carolyn Bolton, Sheila Nathanson, Chuck Oldenburg and Phipps. We did very well. We won 11 awards including the AOS Show Trophy and a Silver Certificate.

Besides the AOS Show Trophy/Silver Certificate these are the class trophies  
Best Orchid Society Exhibit

Best Cattleya AND Best in Show!...Sheila Nathanson's *C. skinneri* alba 'Snow'

Best First bloom seedling...Carol Panza's *Rth. Kabloom* x *Rlc. William Farrell*

Best Oncidium...Chuck's *Tolumnia Genting Pink Lady*

Best Miscellaneous... Chuck's *Maxilaria tenuifolia*...huge plant

Best Pleurothallid/Masdevallia...Carolyn's *Masdevallia Cassiope* 'Alexa'

HCC/AOS

Best Cymbidium...Carolyn's *Cymbidium Memoria Amelia Eahart* 'Scott Valine'

HCC/AOS

Best Vanda...Raj's *Vanda falcata*

Best Dendrobium...Phipps' *Dendrobium aggregatum*





## 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.

### May 2023

Pfun at Phipps, a vital part of the OSWP's volunteer work at Phipps, is repotting orchids as well as doing the inventory of the Phipps orchid collection. The Pfunsters are also helping as the Clean-up Crew. We usually have Pfun on several Mondays and Thursdays from 9:45AM – 12:45PM.

If you don't think you have the expertise to repot orchids or work on the inventory, you can help with orchid greenhouse clean-up. It's a great learning experience for all of us, and we have Pfun and cookies too!

If you would like to join our Pfun/P-OSI efforts and haven't previously signed up with us, please let us know at the email addresses below. We are using at least 4 members each date, with at least one being a more experienced grower.

(If it's your first visit, you must stop in at the Volunteer Office with proof of vaccination and ID and sign a photo release.). We are NO LONGER REQUIRED TO WEAR FACE MASKS! Looking forward to having you join us for Pfun!

Don't miss the Phipps Summer Flower Show: Flowers Meet Fashion, inspired by Billy Porter starting Saturday, May 6th. May Market is outside at Phipps Friday, May 12th (9AM-7PM) and Saturday, May 13th (9AM-5PM).

Looking forward to working and learning together and having Pfun!

Happy Spring!

Nancy Kline  
nancyk412@gmail.com  
412-367-1556

Demetria Marsh  
demetria117@gmail.com  
412-848-4349

### Current Committees Chairs,

AOS	Nancy Kline	Orchid Gems	Norma Raiff, Pam Horter-Moore,
Culture Corner	Nancy Kline	Pfun	Nancy Kline
Facebook	Lance Chevront	P-OSI	Demetria Marsh
Garden Club/Library Liaison		Raffle	Natalie Turicik
Hospitality	Carolyn Bolton	Show	Sheila Nathanson, Norma Raiff and Janet Greenberg
Library	open	Speaker	Carolyn Boltin and Natalie. Turicik
Membership	Kathy Collins	Website	Jinghua Ou
Mini-class	Tim Choltc and Katie Schuller		
Newsletter	Jim Yamber		



First Class Mail

Orchid Society of  
Western Pennsylvania  
James Yamber (editor)  
380 Western Ave.  
Oakdale, Pa. 15071

quail1@verizon.net

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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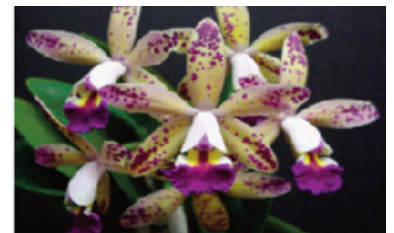
American Orchid Society  
*Education, Conservation, Research,*  
*Affiliated Society*

**Upcoming 2023 speaker**

**May 21, 2023**

**Sarah Hurdel of  
Needmore Orchids  
speaking on Habenaria**

More to come for the future programs for 2023



**WANTED**

***The American Orchid  
Society Judging Program  
is seeking highly  
motivated orchid  
enthusiasts to join the  
judging ranks.***

*Work with other such people and  
help maintain our awards  
programs and educational efforts.*

*For more information contact Dave  
Miller at: 330-307-7189 or  
demjpasml@aol*