

MID-AMERICA ORCHID CONGRESS, 9/17-19/2004, NASHVILLE, TN

REPORT TO MID-AMERICA AFFILIATED ORCHID SOCIETIES

Those of us who have fond memories of past MAOC meetings in Nashville were reminded of the importance of Tennessee in the history of the Mid-America Orchid Congress, which was chartered in the state of Tennessee as a non-profit corporation on May 10, 1963. The Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee was one of the eight societies that founded the Mid-America Orchid Congress in 1959, sponsored the third MAOC in 1961 and hosted five other Congresses prior to the present meeting (6% of all Mid-America meetings to date). If one takes into consideration other Tennessee cities which have hosted additional Congresses, the percentage rises to 15%.

The Affiliated Societies Committee met Friday evening, September 17th, with three members present – Doris Asher, Barbara (Bobbie) Brown and Mary Beth Mansour. Mary Beth reported that four of the orchid societies that she has contacted have now joined the MAOC. She requested that she be informed of the name of a contact person of any society not presently affiliated with the Mid-America that might be interested in becoming part of the organization.

After discovering that some registrants were unaware that each of the Sunday breakfasts arranged by our Committee has a theme encouraging participation and an exchange of ideas, Doris raised the question of how to publicize each future chosen topic better. Since the MAOC Affiliated Societies Committee will not have a breakfast when the MAOC meets in conjunction with the American Orchid Society in Bloomington, MN, next spring, the Committee decided to begin selecting topics a year in advance, to notify the host society of the title and to request that such information be included in their advance mailings and in their printed program. To that end, we have already contacted the folks chairing the Cincinnati Mid-America October 21 – 23, 2005, with our Breakfast subject: “Communication within your local society”. A decision on the topic for the Spring 2006 Congress in Omaha will be made in Minnesota. A gentle reminder that this Committee desires input from individuals and member Societies. What would **you** like to hear discussed?

The Fall 2004 Congress, whose theme was “Orchid Wonders of the World”, was well-run, the Hilton Suites Hotel was comfortable, the activities were concentrated in well-marked facilities and any changes in location or times of scheduled events were posted and/or “manned.” The weather permitted the use of an outside terrace for AOS judging, which may have caused the clerks extra steps but provided natural light for viewing the true colors of the flowers. Tom Harper chaired the judging. Eleven AOS awards were given. The Show was staged in a large ballroom which spread out the 28 individual, society and commercial exhibits containing the 419 entries judged by 12 teams of judges. The Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee exhibit won the Mid-America Perpetual Trophy, while R.F. Orchids won the AOS Show Trophy. The Clifford Walters Award for the best oncidium alliance plant went to *Psychopsis papilio* exhibited by Ed Merkle (Orchid Society of Middle Tennessee). Jim and Kathy Bailey’s *Epidendrum laterlae* won the Memoria Raymond McCullough *Epidendrum/Encyclia* Award; the Baileys are with the Miami Valley Orchid Society.

The invited speakers offered a wide range of topics providing something for everyone. Topics ranged from orchid culture (lights, fertilization, propagation), hybridization, history and trends (cattleyas, paphs and phals) and from native terrestrials to the orchids of Ecuador. The lectures were well attended and informative. Having a well-balanced lecture program remains an important part of the whole experience of a Mid-America Orchid Congress and Show.

Due to a warm evening, the auction venue was moved outside to the terrace and proved to be a profitable occasion with Auctioneer Russ Vernon, dynamic “Red” McBride and their active assistants filling in for the

absent Dick Wells. Just as there is no MAOC Affiliated Society Breakfast at joint AOS-MAOC meetings, the MAOC will not have an auction in the spring in Bloomington, MN, and, therefore, will lose one of its main sources of operating funds for 2005. The Nashville auction added \$2,888 to the Mid-America Treasury. About 100 people attended a delicious banquet held immediately after the Auction.

Sixty of the registrants had signed up to attend the Sunday morning Affiliated Societies Breakfast scheduled for 7:30 a.m. Doris opened the discussion at 8 a.m. by distributing a list of the meeting times of the Member Societies as had been suggested at the 2004 Spring Speakers' Day in Atlanta. [An example of how this Committee tries to listen and respond.] The list was in line with that topic, namely "How Societies Can Help Each Other." Several attendees mentioned their Society had used such information to hold joint projects such as program speakers, show exhibits, fundraisers, or other events. The discussion of the day addressed the importance of making new members feel welcome, of involving members by persuasion rather than waiting for volunteers, and of a society taking advantage of new opportunities such as the Indiana Society participating this past summer for the first time in the Indiana State Fair.

The Congress, which schedules meetings five years ahead, has openings beginning in the fall of 2006. Might your Society consider joining with one or two neighboring societies to sponsor a Congress? Such joint efforts have been done successfully in the past. The dates for upcoming MAOC's, which do have hosts, are as follows:

Spring 2005	Bloomington, MN	4/20-25/2005	Host: Orchid Society of MN
Fall 2005	Cincinnati, OH	10/21-23/2005	Hosts: Greater Cincinnati O.S. Miami Valley O.S.
Spring 2006	Omaha, NE	3/ 24-26/2006	Host: Greater Omaha O.S.

All other future dates are open.

The discussion ended at 8:45 to permit set-up for the Business Meeting which followed.

Since the Committee reports will be distributed by the Secretary as part of the Minutes of the Business Meeting, no summary is included here. However, as a reminder that Committee reports are never dull nor dry, Lowell Jacks prefaced his report of the Annual Meetings Committee by presenting Lois Holmes with a pink shower cap alleged to have been left in his bathroom on an unspecified occasion. Lois responded by citing Lowell for love of, longevity and loyalty to the MAOC as reasons the Committee has chosen him as the 2004 Mid-America Orchidist of the Year.

If the Affiliated Societies Committee specifically or the Mid-America Orchid Congress in general can help your society in any way, I hope you'll contact us. Remember, too, to access the Congress's website often to stay abreast of Congress activities (www.midamericanorchids.org). If we can't solve your problem directly, we'll refer it to someone who can!

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Ps: Please share this communication with your Society – give a copy to your newsletter editor – send copies to your board – make an oral report at a Society meeting – please help us help you.

Other members of the Affiliated Societies Committee:

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Pps: We are enclosing a copy of the listing of meeting schedules of member societies mentioned above.