

ILLINOIS ORCHID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JAMES F. SPATZEK, EDITOR

Dorathy Kuper Chosen "Orchidist of the Year" by the Mid-America Orchid Congress!!!

The Illusive Black Orchid

by

Joseph & Rosalie Dixler

We knew that a trip to Borneo needed planning far in advance. Almost a year prior to our departure, we bought a few

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guide books and with the help of old "Orchid Bulletins", began learning where the orchids were. Of course we would include Kota Kinabalu National Park and Pring Springs, as well as the Orchid Center at Langud Sebrang (near Tenom) where Tony Lamb worked, and the Semonggok Research Center in Kuching. These were all on the Malaysian side of Borneo and relatively easy to get to. But when we read that on the Indonesian side of Borneo there was a 5000 acre orchid reserve, Kersik Luway, where rare black orchids (*Coelogyne pandurata*) grew in profusion, we couldn't resist the quest.

If you have lived long enough you can remember the comic strip character Brenda Star, the beautiful red-headed reporter, who was in love with her mystery man. In order for him to survive, he had to develop and grow a black orchid from which he was able to produce a potion that kept him alive. As we all now know, there is no such thing as a black orchid. However, there are

orchids whose coloration is so dark in various parts of the flower, they appear to be black. The *C. pandurata* has some of this dark coloration and it is referred to in Indonesia as the "black orchid".

The book said that you travel to Tenggarong, near Samarinda in East Kalimantan, the principal starting point for trips up the Mahakam River, and book passage aboard the regularly scheduled passenger boats which ply the river and stop at the various places of interest. It continued on to say that "Time is needed, because most boats are slow...Travel is best up the smaller tributaries between September and December, when they are most passable, as it is too shallow at other times, and only paddle canoes are possible. When the water is too swift and high, you may need to walk along the riverbanks and carry the canoe over boulders or through the jungle. In a hard rain, you may have to wait two or three days for the waters to recede; about all you can do is to stay dry and catch up on sleep. The key to

traveling this river is time and plenty of luck." The book also mentioned that orchids grew in the rear of the Mulawarman Museum in Tenggarong and that a visit to Tanjung Isuy home of the Day Benuaq group (former head-hunters) was not to be missed.

In typical American tourist fashion, we figured that we had only four nights to spare for this excursion so we would need to book the river boat from here. After locating a specialist in travel to Borneo, she said she had never arranged a trip to that area. She faxed her friends living in East Kalimantan to find out how to do it! Somehow an itinerary miraculously appeared with all arranged in time for our critical three plane connection via Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur which would get us to Kuching. There was no direct flight across the island which would have taken about a 45 minute flight "as the crow flies". You must fly through the international airports to the domestic ones as these are two separate countries that share the island.

Imagine our relief when we were actually met by an English speaking guide and a drive at the Balikpapan airport who would drive us to our very own private houseboat. After reconfirming our next flights, we left the airport. We had imagined Balikpapan to be a primitive village with longhouses, but found a traffic congested city, complete with plastic policemen standing on various corners to remind the erratic drivers to go slower! There were even high rise buildings and a modern Hilton-looking hotel that would be our final nights' stay before our critical departure flights.

Our itinerary said the first stop was to be the Wana Orchid Park, about 6 miles from Balikpapan, but the driver couldn't find it. He did find another backyard orchid nursery and several people's homes with private collections. Would our itinerary prove to be as illusive as this first stop? We then drove about an

hour and a half to Loa Janan to board our houseboat. With great trepidation we walked through the owners stilt house to the rear dock where his three boats were tied. His sister-in-law had come from Balikpapan to be the cook, and various other relatives were the crew, six in all, for just the two of us. We agreed that this would either be the best or the worst part of our trip.

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November Meeting

We are thankful that **Marguerite Webb of J & L Orchids**, in Easton, CT, will be the speaker at our next monthly pilgrimage on Sunday, November 21st, at the Botanic Garden. Her subject will be "**The Fascinating World of Miniature Orchids**" and will include her primary interest in *Masdevallia* species and hybrids, as well as *Dracula*. She has designed this lecture for the beginner as well as the experienced grower. Having been a featured speaker at five World Orchid Conferences, and a writer for "Orchids" magazine, this program promises to be one of the highlights of the year.

She will have a harvest of plants for sale, with an additional 20 percent discount and no shipping charges if you pre-order plants that will be brought to the meeting. Marguerite will bring additional inventory for sale which may flower for you. Her orchids are always unique and

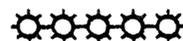
beautifully grown. Phone her at [203] 261-3772 or E-mail: jlorchid@snet.net. I have a limited amount of catalogs available.

Our meeting will be held in the Multipurpose Room at 12:00 noon. Please have display and sales plants settled by 12:30pm. The Society will be grateful for any contributions to the feasting afterwards.

Tom Franczak, who has been in charge of our library since the Pilgrims landed, will present the workshop. He will discuss various books that help with identification, cultivation, and general referencing, all of which would make an excellent addition to your personal library.

By popular demand "Orchid Doctor Leo" will be back to help with your problem plants. Bring them in a plastic bag to avoid contamination with others.

Joe Dixler



American Orchid Society Judgings

The judgings of the American Orchid Society Chicago Judging Center are held monthly in the Linneaus Room of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, IL,

on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 1:00PM (unless otherwise announced here and in the AOS Bulletin, Orchids).

November 8, 1997--1:00PM
 December 13, 1997--1:00PM
 January 10, 1998--1:00PM
 February 14, 1998--1:00PM
 March 13, 1998--6:00PM
 April 11, 1998--1:00PM
 May 9, 1998--1:00PM
 June 13, 1998--1:00PM
 July 11, 1998--2:00PM



Calendar of Upcoming Events

- 11/14-11/15/97 Kansas City Orchid Society Show
- 2/7-2/8/98 Wisconsin Orchid Growers Guild Show Madison, WI
- 2/21-2/22/98 Batavia Orchid Society Show, Charlestowne Mall St. Charles, IL
- 3/14-3/15/98 IOS Spring Show Chicago Botanic Gardens, Glencoe.
- 3/21-3/22/98 Illowa Orchid Soc. Show, Bettendorf, IA
- 5/7-5/8/98 Southern Ontario Orchid Society Show & Spring Mid-Amer. Orchid Congress & AOS Trustees Meet.
- 9/26-9/27/98 Wisconsin Orchid Society Show, Milwaukee, WI.
- 10/15-10/16/98 IOS Fall Mini Show Chicago Botanic Gardens, Glencoe.



The Illusive Black Orchid
(continued from Page 2)

After boarding, we explored our two story home for the next three nights. The river boat, about 75 feet long, was locally made of plywood and other found items and was just above the quality of the African Queen. All was very clean. The lower deck held the kitchen and dining room with open-air sides, that converted to the crews sleeping quarters at night--when they placed their sleeping bags on the floor next to the table. Our room on most of the enclosed second level, had two mattresses on the linoleum floor that were about 3 inches thick with Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters patterned all over them, surrounded by mosquito netting. We had no furniture except two folding captain's chairs on the small verandah along with a rear staircase. We used it to go to the lower deck which also included the bathroom. With flashlights in hand we descended these narrow steps at night, as we carefully stepped between the crew sleeping there when the urge was overwhelming. The toilet had a seat but all was deposited in the river below--fortunately there were hardly any waves!

It was about 4pm when we left the dock. Our first impression was the cleanliness of the local people, who had just arrived from work. As we passed behind each stilt house, we saw entire families bathing from the dock or along the banks and brushing their teeth with river water. It was almost an embarrassing view, like seeing them in their bathroom. Each unit had an outhouse located behind their house on their dock with an obvious departure point into the same water. The Mahakam is the heart and pulse that controls the lives of the people who live there. Their food, occupations, transportation, and way of life revolves around this river.

The setting sun cast an orange glow over the area that created an incredible scene. We were struck with the realization that this would be a unique experience. While our crew spoke no English, we

always communicated perfectly. That evening we realized what an outstanding cook we had. She had two woks on a portable propane stove and created miracles from the freshest seafood and vegetables purchased from local markets, from the floating foodstalls at Senoni, and from vendors who came alongside in dugout canoes to sell their produce. After an exotic, delicious crayfish dinner, we went upstairs to our deck chairs to enjoy the view. Sitting on the verandah, time slowed down and our clocks stopped talking to us. We had nowhere to go but where the boat went, and relished the feeling of being out of touch with our world and having no control in this one. We were completely absorbed in watching life on the river go by.

It was not long before we heard the ever blasting ship horns in the night and witnessed the lights and flares of numerous passing barges and river boats. Then we noticed something enormous approaching that defied comprehension. It was like a galactic spaceship from a science fiction movie. As it came closer, we discovered it was an enormous raft(the size of a football field) of huge hardwood logs, with a crew camped in tents along its length. Numerous torches were placed from stern to bow, alerting other boats of its perimeter and imposing presence on the river. Seeing so many of these floating cities made us aware of the incredible deforestation taking place.

When we retired to our Mickey Mouse mattresses, we felt the wonderful breeze through our open cabin door. Very few flying insects bothered us, although a few creepy crawlers made their presence known. Sleeping was not easy, especially when we felt the ship engine vibrations on the floor through the mattress!

The next day at Muara Muntai, we boarded a motorized canoe with our guide and two man crew to take us to the Dayak Benuaq village of Tanjung

Isuy. The water, which was not supposed to be shallow at this time of year, was hardly navigable. Even this canoe with its specially constructed, extra-long-shafted propeller that skimmed the surface of the water, continually became bogged down in old fishing nets and refuse. The one hour trip took double the time. When we finally arrived, the local inhabitants welcomed us with a ritual, private ceremony in our honor--an exceptional display of song and dance by about fifty villagers in native dress, lasting about an hour. After negotiating and bargaining for their traditional vegetable fiber cloth weaving and other artifacts on display in their longhouse, we elected to go back on the rear seat of the chef's son's and his friend's motorcycles to a point where the river was deeper and our canoe would wait for the return trip. This was our first motorcycle experience. Hanging on for dear life going up and down muddy passages through small native villages with waiving children made us feel like real adventurers.

In anticipating this trip I had imagined Borneo to be a wild place with primitive, uneducated natives that had few morals, due to their animist religion and head-hunting past. The surprise was that these sensitive, caring, kind people were not only intelligent but lived a life of cooperation and sharing that we can only envy. Unfortunately, TV viewing has resulted in a newly discovered desire for materialism and a more comfortable life. The younger generation is leaving and going to the cities, and their culture is rapidly changing. We feel fortunate we could witness this way of life before it ends.

As we came closer to our objective, our anticipation increased. We docked at Melak and a Rover was waiting to take us to Kersik Luway. But first the drive stopped at the local "filling station" where petrol was stored in containers that had to be poured into funnels to fill the gas tank. Within minutes of

departure from the "town" the paved roads became a series of potholes and dirt. Amazingly, the driver found his way along the ten mile rutted route with unmarked turns. We arrived at our destination to find one official park ranger seated on a crude, wooden bench behind an open-air, thatched-roof hut. He seemed delighted to see us, as we were probably the first visitors in a long time. Signaling us to follow him, we went down a white-sand path amid a temperature in excess of 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The sun, reflecting on the white sand, made the heat almost unbearable. After only 100 yards, he suddenly motioned to turn left. We immediately noticed a drop in temperature of at least 20 degrees as we entered another world. The lush, green and dense vegetation surrounding us was made up of *Coelogyne panduratas* on low trees with a shaded canopy overhead. It was like passing through a time warp. The contrast was so extreme that you could not help but marvel at this change in such a short distance. While we had seen *C. panduratas* many times and even have them in our own collection, this was an overwhelming experience. Fortunately some were in bloom, even though it was early. April is best to see them with weather then and in May and June as good as it gets. Of the approximately 112 species that have been catalogued in the reserve, there were many *Bulbophylums* although not identifiable as they were not labeled or in bloom. After spending as much time as possible, we headed back overland, stopping at the Dayak Tunjung Longhouse, en route back to our boat.

On the return trip we stopped at the Mulawarman Museum Garden in Tenggara, described in my tour book as having an orchid collection, only to find they had none, and no one could recall when they did! It was sad saying good-bye to the friendly and always smiling crew, especially the cook. We would even miss the clanging bells, hooting horns, and Mickey Mouse

mattresses. After our return to civilization and a very nice dinner at our 4 Star hotel in Balikpapan, we had a good nights sleep in an air-conditioned room with a king-sized bed and flush toilet. Next morning we went to the airport in anticipation of our next adventure in Kuching. You may recall that this three plane connection was key to planning the number of days for the cruise. We checked in at Garuda Airlines to be told that our first flight from Balikpapan to Jakarta had been canceled. But, we did manage to get there. Life aboard a river boat was far less complicated and much more predictable. The Mahakam experience was the highlight of one of our most memorable trips.

[If you are interested in a similar quest, contact Rosalie Dixler at 847-948-5300]



The President's Message

by Ed Gamson

Our Mini Show is over, and a great time was had by many! Kudos, kudos to our Show Chair, **Sophia Harris**, who obtained the joint cooperation of the weather, the Garden, the exhibitors, many of our members (old and new) and the general public to provide us with a splendid weekend of great beauty and seamless harmony in honor of **Dorathy Kuper**.

Just after dinner and prior to judging on Friday night (10/17/97), the Society presented Dorothy with a plaque thanking her for her contributions to the IOS since she helped to found it in 1952. Dorothy was also presented with a plaque from the Mid-American Orchid Congress as "Orchidist of the Year". Hermann Pigors presented the plaque on behalf of the Mid-America.

As with other large endeavors, thanks for a job well done go to many people and institutions. I will leave it to others to note and thank most of those who helped with the Show. I will, however, take this opportunity to especially single out and thank two entities. The first is the Chicago Botanic Garden that provides such a beautiful backdrop for any horticultural exhibit, but particularly ours, and also graciously provides the assistance of some of its staff for our shows. The second special thank-you goes to our commercial members including EFG Orchids, Oak Hill Gardens, Hausermann's and Nat's Orchids, who contributed not only exquisite displays but also contributed plants to our raffle and helped with our plant sales.

It was a long weekend for many of us, but I for one am smiling. See you at the Garden for the November meeting.

Quiz #10 Answer

The quiz was, "What is the name 'Orchid' derived from and by whom?"

The name Orchid is derived from the Greek work Orchis which mean testicle and is a reference to the similarity between the human male sex organs and the paired tubers of the terrestrial orchids that grow in the Mediterranean region (Orchis, Ophrys, and probably others). Dioscorides, a Greek botanist of Anazarba in Asia Minor, wrote about Orchis in the peculiar "Doctrine of Signatures". The "doctrine" was written in the 1st Century AD, and endured through the seventeenth century. The "doctrine" was a set of beliefs that taught of the treatment and cure of human ailments by the various uses and application of plant parts that resembled parts of the human anatomy. Many European orchids have small paired tubers which resemble the male testicles; therefore, European orchids were believed to heal various human sexual afflictions...They were even believed to grow where livestock had been brought for breeding or where seminal secretions of birds and beasts had fallen to the ground. In Turkey, still today, orchid tubers are collected by the thousands and are used to make 'salep', a glutinous brew with supposed aphrodisiac properties. Personally I strongly believe that salep is indeed a nutritious drink but I doubt that it has any aphrodisiac properties. Undoubtedly, however, this Turkish custom is causing devastation to the orchid populations in that country. (And by the way, the tubers are underground but they are not part of the roots; they consist of stem tissue). Dioscorides influenced the European superstitions for hundreds of years, but he was not the one who coined the term. Theophrastus(373-288BC), the director of Aristotle's botanic garden was first to coin the term. Theophrastus, who is considered the "father of Botany", was a student and a friend of Aristotle.

A complete answer should have had 'Theophrastus' and 'testicles' in it. I got 9 answers this time(a record, so the Winners Club is getting much bigger) but only 4 were complete. Earl Lock, Nancy Jean Schoo, Kevin Swagel, and Cheryl Kwiatkowski had complete answers and will get 2 entries in the drawing. Rob Halgren, Sophia Harris, Lorraine Meyer, Lois Cinert and Dorothy Nieter had partial answers, and will get one entry each. I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Members of the Winner's Club:

Lorraine Meyer	4*
Steve Peters	3*
J & V Mestadagh	3
Nancy Jean Schoo	2
Diana Maxwell	2*
Betty Blank	2
Anne Kotowski	2*
Kevin Swagel	2*
J & J Emmerich	1*
Joe Dixler	1
June Eguro	1
Jim Spatzek	1
Earl Lock	1
Cheryl Kwiatkowski	
Rob Halgren	1
Sophia Harris	1
Lois Cinert	1
Dorothy Nieter	1

(the number indicates the number of correct entries; *indicates a lucky club member)



Quiz #11

In 1862 Darwin described an orchid from Madagascar with an unusual characteristic that would discourage most pollinators from visiting the flower. What was that orchid; what is the characteristic that attracted Darwin's attention; and, what pollinates it? If you know all three answers, that's 3 chances to win, and if you know the species names, that's an extra bonus. If you don't know all of them, don't despair; send what you know to:

Eric Ladorr

311 Albright Court
Vernon Hills, IL 60061

or E-mail to:

eric.lad@msn.com

or:

uri.ladorr@abbott.com

or fax to:

[847] 935-4994(it should work)



American Orchid Society Awards, Part II

This continues the series begun last month, at a member's request to describe the various American Orchid Society Awards.

Award of Distinction(AD)

Awarded once to a cross, exhibited individually or collectively, representing a worthy new direction in breeding. The award is granted unanimously by the judging team assigned without scoring. The specific values for which this award is granted must be recorded by the judging team. If the hybridizer and exhibitor are different, each shall receive a certificate. The Award of Distinction is not given a cultivar name.

Award of Quality(AQ)

Awarded once to a cross, exhibited by a single individual as a group of not less than 12 different clones or the inflorescences thereof, of a raised species or hybrid which may or may not have been made before, when the result is a sufficient improvement over the former type. At least one cultivar exhibited must receive, or have received, a flower quality award. It is granted unanimously without regard to scoring by

the judging team assigned. The specific values for which this award is granted must be recorded by the judging team. If the hybridizer and exhibitor are different, each shall receive a certificate. The Award of Quality is not given a cultivar name.

Certificate of Cultural Merit(CCM)

Awarded to the exhibitor of a specimen plant of robust health and appearance with an unusually large number of flowers. The plant must have been in the care of the exhibitor at least six months immediately prior to the award. The plant must score at least 80 points on the point scale.

Certificate of Horticultural Merit (CHM)

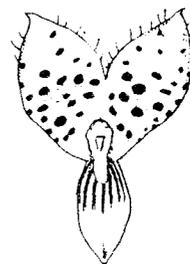
Awarded to a cultivar of a well-grown and well-flowered species or natural hybrid with outstanding esthetic appeal that contributes to the horticultural aspects of orchidology. The entire plant must be exhibited and not just the inflorescence. This certificate may be awarded more than once if a plant has characteristics significantly different and desirable from other similarly awarded cultivars. The distinctive features of the new cultivar must be clearly described, measurements recorded and the country of origin should be noted, if known. The award should not be granted to a cultivar which had previously received a Certificate of Botanical Merit(an award that has been discontinued). A score of at least 80 point on the point scale is required. This award is granted pro- visionally and filed with the judging center chair pending the exhibitor supplying full taxonomic verification by a taxonomist acceptable to the AOS. If such verification is not received within one year, the judging center chair must disallow the award unless there is satisfactory evidence that the question of verification is being actively pursued by a taxonomist. A species or natural hybrid shall not

receive, at the same judging, a CBR and a CHM.

Certificate of Botanical Recognition(CBR)

Awarded to a cultivar of a species or natural hybrid deemed worthy of recognition for rarity, novelty, and educational value. The entire plant must be exhibited and not just the inflorescence. The plant need have no special horticultural desirability. No award of any kind may have previously been made to the species as a taxon. No point scale is used, but the award shall be granted only by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the judging team assigned. Full description, measurements, and the country of origin, if known, must be supplied on the summary sheet since the plant, by definition of the award, has not previously been described in the AOS records. This award is granted provisionally and filed with the judging center chair pending the exhibitor supplying full taxonomic verification by a taxonomist acceptable to the AOS. If such verification is not received within one year, the judging center chair must disallow the award unless there is satisfactory evidence that the question of verification is being actively pursued by a taxonomist. Taxonomic verifications should acknowledge the species name under which it is commonly cultivated if that differs from the botanically correct name. A species or natural hybrid shall not receive, at the same judging, a CBR and a CHM.

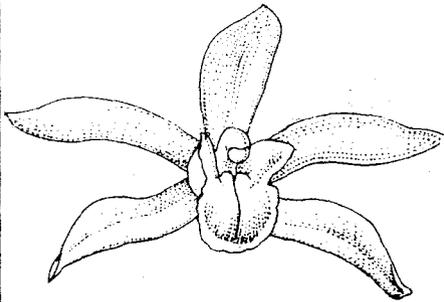
(Continued next month)



IOS Board Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Illinois Orchid Society Board of Directors meeting will be held on Monday, November 10, at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the home of our president, Ed Gamson, at 2823 Summit Avenue, Highland Park.

Summit is east of Rte 41, and South of Route 22(Half Day Road). Call for specific directions(847-432-7825).



A small town fire crew was called to take care of a grass fire. The fire began to spread quickly, and soon proved to be more than the small team could handle.

Someone suggested they call the county volunteer fire department, and though there were doubts as to whether they would be of any help, the call was made. Minutes later the volunteers bounced down the hill in their dilapidated old truck. They drove straight into the middle of the flames, the firemen

leaping out with hoses spraying water in all directions. They immediately snuffed out the heart of the fire, breaking the blaze into manageable parts.

One farmer was so impressed with their efforts that he wrote a \$1000 check on the spot. "You saved my farm," the farmer said gratefully. "Consider this check a donation to your fund".

"So", a local newsman asked the volunteer captain, "what will you do with all that money?"

"For starters", replied the tired chief, "we're going to fix the brakes on that darned truck."

