

# The BackBulb

C A R M E L O R C H I D S O C I E T Y

May 2024



## May Speaker: Bob Hamilton

### The 'Orchid Craze', Its Origin and Future

The reign of Queen Victoria (1831-1901) was a time of dramatic discoveries in science, technology, and exploration which dramatically shifted human consciousness from beliefs based mostly on faith to objective-based understandings. Bob's talk attempts to encapsulate and share some of the ideas, including 19th Century science that resulted in the Victorian and subsequent orchid craze.

Bob was born in Berkeley, California in 1946 and educated in the Berkeley School System. He gave up studies in physics to pursue a career as a scientific glassblower specializing in the fabrication of experimental electron tubes, lasers, and other optics, eventually becoming UC Berkeley's Principal Scientific Glassblower.

Bob's interest in orchids began in 1976 when he and his partner, John Leathers, purchased their first home which came with a solarium. They soon filled it with plants including



*Pleurothallis teaguei*, photo by Steve Beckendorf

orchids. Their first orchid came from a UC Berkeley Botanic Garden plant sale, *Stanhopea warscewicziana* which, after blooming was affectionately named "the dead chicken orchid" because of its rather gross, pendant flower spike. Since then,

- 1 April Speaker
- 2 Upcomming Events
- 3 Happenings at the April Meeting

In order to provide a selection of treats at our meetings, we are asking members with last names that start with the letter **G thru L** to bring refreshments to the meeting.

## COS Officers

### President

Amanda Nixon

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John OConnell  
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Carolyn Salmon

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Irene Patton

### Treasurer

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Cathy Walmsley  
Sonya Weininger

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## BackBulb Editor & Webmaster

John OConnell

## Membership

Amanda Nixon

John has gone on to become the leading hybridizer for *Dracula* and *Masdevallia* while Bob specialized in *Odontoglossum* and its intergenerics. They have trekked the forests of Mexico, Central America, and the Andes. During one such trek they discovered *Pleurothallis teaguei* (named in honour of Walter Teague, 1925-2013). In addition to propagating species and making hybrids they do their own lab work and freely share laboratory techniques.

John is the recipient of The American Orchid Society, 2015 AOS Hybridizer's Award and Bob has been awarded the AOS President's Award, granted to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the AOS. Besides orchids, Bob's interests include classical piano studies, art and amateur astronomy.



The very opposite of semi-hydro, a *Dendrobium kingianum* glued to a rock (A real lithophyte!) in Irene's backyard in PG.

## Upcoming Events

### May

5/6 Monday 7PM COS May Meeting at the Church

### June

6/3 Monday 7PM COS June Meeting at the Church

## Happenings at the April Meeting

We met in the Community Church in the afternoon of April 6th and had about 30 people attending. We enjoyed a well-lit room with lots of blooming plants and good conversations.



A couple of plants that Irene has repotted using semi-hydro methods.

Cheri Wagner was our guest speaker from Santa Cruz Orchid Society. She described her method of setting up semi-hydroponic growing conditions for orchids. She uses clay pebbles and sterilizes them after use in her Instapot. Any plastic container can be adapted by using an electric soldering iron to punch 3 holes about an inch+ above the bottom on one side. She flushes the water and fertilizer liberally through the pebbles when watering. Cheri covers or paints her containers to keep out UV light and moss growth. She says she hates bark! This method keeps her

medium fresh with no loss or breakdown and allows her to travel for about a week away from watering.

Our Show and Tell treated us to members' orchids in bloom:

Lycaste, Dendrobium kingianum, Sarcochylis, Masdevallia, Mini Cattleya, Cymbidium, Brassocattleya and a couple of Chysis.

The plant opportunity table never disappoints and this time had more member-grown orchids to take home. Amanda contributed a large Cymbidium. Members were encouraged to bring books, potting materials and other orchid 'stuff' to contribute.

Carolyn gave a brief view of the upcoming meeting speakers and field trips, for a busy 2024.

We all enjoyed meeting in the daylight hours.

**Irene Patton**



# BackBulb CARMEL ORCHID SOCIETY



Top left: *Chysis bractescens* in John's greenhouse

Top right: *Masdevalia coccinea*, grown by Carolyn

Bottom left: Lysudamuloa Red Jewel, grown by Carolyn

## **COS Board Meeting April 25, 2024**

The Board met via Zoom at 7 pm. In attendance were: Amanda Nixon, Carolyn Salmon, John O'Connell, Janette Ford, Irene Patton, Anna Narvaez-helms, Chris Thomas, Albert Satterfield.

The treasurer reported a balance of \$5,491 in the account after expenses. Increased post office and insurance were noted. Income was steady from membership and plant tables at meetings. The report was approved.

After a quick review of the April meeting (everyone loved the daytime schedule) we voted unanimously to buy a new projector so that John could easily accommodate our speakers \$500 is the estimate for a good one.

The Vice Presidents reported on a busy year ahead: May meeting, Peter Lin speaking with his partner John Leathers bringing the plant table of cool growing orchids. Supper with Peter and John is at RG Burger at 5:30 before the meeting.

June meeting, John O'Connell speaker, subject TBA.

Carolyn said Santa Cruz members want to be included (about 15 of them) in our greenhouse tour in July (we are thinking of John's and Carolyn's greenhouses and Irene's lath house and garden). We may also ask Kathie Ritter to open her greenhouse for us. It was mentioned that Sonya might coordinate the greenhouse tour with the Santa Cruz members.

Albert expressed interest in more information to be given to new

members on culture and ID. A members hands-on workshop was mentioned.

Chris told us of ways her society in ID had used potting demos in coordination with a plant nursery for education of members. Anna suggested Hana Gardens.

Chris showed us baskets she had filled with orchid supplies ready to be given at events.

Albert suggested a Q&A session at our meetings. Culture sheets will be brought and available.

Irene suggested a recap of the month's regular meeting to be written for the BB for those who missed the meeting.

Amanda and Irene will work on the Adult Education project for this Spring and Summer. Cathy and Anna will help.

Irene suggested a Board workshop on a weekend day where we explore topics that would help our group reach its goals. Topics might include orchid photography, FB and Instagram postings, articles to write for the BB, planning and goals for our society.

Chris said we should consider meetings without speakers that could address the needs of our members. Amanda summed up the Open House event we held in the past.

Carolyn suggested we think carefully about having half of our meetings in the afternoon since we got such a good response in April.

The next meeting for the next BOD is May 22nd in person at Irene and Rudy's home in Pacific Grove at 7 pm.

Congratulations on retirement to Anna and John!

# BackBulb CARMEL ORCHID SOCIETY



A Cattleya hybrid in John's greenhouse, photo by Cammie Jones

## CARMEL ORCHID SOCIETY 2024 Membership Application

Please make checks payable to the Carmel Orchid Society and mail to: Carmel Orchid Society - Membership, P.O. Box 223462 Carmel CA 93922-3462

Please print

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

If you were referred by a current member, please provide  
his/her name \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal  New Member

Member of the American Orchid Society

Membership  
Single **\$35** \_\_\_\_\_  
Couple **\$50** \_\_\_\_\_  
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Add an additional **\$10** to receive  
the newsletter via USPS