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THE KEIKI EXPRESS

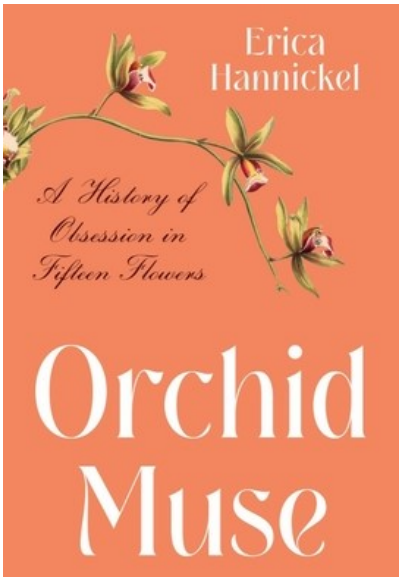
Newsletter of the Virginia Orchid Society
www.vaorchidsociety.org
virginiaorchidsociety@gmail.com

"Orchids and the Botany of Freedom"

Focusing on Edmund Albius and Charles Darwin's attention to orchids and the antislavery cause.

An in-person and zoom Presentation by Erica Hannickel
Author of "Orchid Muse"

May 18 from 1 pm to 5 pm, Lecture at 2 pm
In Classroom 1 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden



Erica Hannickel, PhD, is a master gardener, nonfiction author, and former professor of history. An orchid enthusiast for over 20 years, she grows her orchids on baker's carts and in a miniature orchid cabinet. Orchid Muse: A History of Obsession in Fifteen Flowers (WW Norton, 2023) chronicles the stories of empresses, enslaved people, and naturalists around the world. The book was longlisted for the PEN Literary Science Writing Award, shortlists for the Wisconsin Libraries Nonfiction Award, and won the International Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries Literature Award.

[See page 6 for a short review.]

Erica Hannneckel

Members may bring plants to sell.

Erica needs a ride from the airport to the Holiday Inn Express Midtown, 2000 Staples Mill Rd., arriving on Saturday evening at 6:50 pm. If you are willing to give her a ride, please let Robin (rmyorana@gmail.com) know so she can notify Erica.

Virginia Orchid Society 2024-2025 Officers:

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American Orchid Society
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President's Message

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SUMMER!

What a spring we had this year! Bursts of summer like weather alternating with cold spring days and sometimes frosty nights brought some challenges. First was an overload of pollen in March. Very warm weather early in March forced all trees and shrubs to bloom at the same time and the pine trees joined them too. We have a lot of pine trees in our area and around the house and our outdoor cat, normally of dark grey color, turned into a creature of unidentified color, to the point that I didn't want to receive her affection gesture of rubbing the pollen all over my pants. I silently admired her strong immune system, because she didn't sneeze or cough being outdoors all the time, while I was hiding indoors. Then this year some of my orchids bloomed much earlier than usual and some much later. During this year's cold winter the heating system was running on a lot and it dried the air to the point that the humidity in the house dropped below 30%. I grow my orchids on the shelves in the sun room that is open to the rest of the house. Tired of the water spilling from the saucers, a couple of years ago I made use of black plastic trays from the 72 cell propagation kits to make sort of water catching/ humidity trays. I covered the trays with the white plastic eggshell crates (for covering ceiling LED lights) cut to the size. Now when the pots get watered, the water drips in the trays and slowly evaporates till next watering. This winter I had to add water in the trays in between the waterings, that is how fast it was drying out. But that is a passive humidity device, because it doesn't create a curtain of humidity high enough to cover the plants. I brought the "heavy artillery" in a form of ultrasonic humidifiers. I have two models for household use. Both have one gallon capacity tanks. One guzzles a full gallon of water a day spewing droplets of water, while the other creates fine fog and the full tank lasts a week. I use only distilled water to avoid a fine dust of salts dissolved in tap water settling on the plants. It also prolongs the life of the membrane that creates the fog. Pointing the stream of fine fog to the plants definitely perked them up, especially the Paphs. The cold dry winter spell most likely triggered early blooming of some of the Catts, but others were waiting for warmer more humid spring days. While the logical part of my brain can find the explanations, my non-logical nature will never cease to wonder how do they know, being kept in captivity of relatively controlled indoor environment i.e. being misted every morning to imitate morning dew, get supplemented with LED lights in dark afternoons in the winter and the rest is a normal house environment, when to bloom for a chance to procreate? Nature is amazingly smart.

While all my Vandas for the last three weeks are already outdoors under heavy shade cloth, enjoying those morning and evening dews and the rains, they had to be brought in the house for those few cold nights. For my delight at least two Vandas already put out flower spikes. But the fluctuations in the weather did put on hold the move of all my orchids out on the deck under the pergola. Hope this is the last cool spell we had and I am eager to get them out of the house this coming week. I know the orchids do look forward to the summer as much as I do. They need sun, water, and a bit of TLC. I need sun, walks in the parks, hikes on nature trails, lovely sunsets over the water, blooms of all kinds, and get together

Continued on page 3

Our Meeting Location:
Classroom 1 in the
Kelly Education Center
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
1800 Lakeside Ave., Henrico, VA 23228

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED:

with orchid friends in lovely summer settings. I am so looking forward to the summer, hope you all are too. Meanwhile, don't forget that the May meeting is our annual meeting and attendance is expected for voting on several important topics, including the election of the officers. More information follows.

We will also have a very interesting speaker - an author of a book with fascinating stories and facts, as well as deep historical diggings into the orchid world. Our last two meetings speakers' subjects were not about familiar orchids either – Ophrys and Ghost orchids. And one might think why do we choose these topics? For several reasons. One is to expand our horizons into the huge world of orchids. Educating ourselves about orchids from various parts of the world not only helps us to understand the environments in which they grow (and perhaps gives a hint on the improvements of our own cultural practices), but also understand the scope of the threat they can be subject to due to human activities, and appreciate the conservation efforts to save numerous endangered orchids. Another reason is the life interaction with people who actually saw, documented or grow these unusual orchids. Like Keith Davis, not only a walking encyclopedia of anything about Cattleyas, but a source of all kinds of useful tips and details about other orchids from his own years of experience, which makes his talks very interactive and educational. It is practically impossible for even a very determined orchid hobbyist to see a lot of orchids in situ in different parts of the world, hence learning about them from trusted sources is a part of our society's speakers program. Hope everyone one will enjoy the speaker's presentation of this last meeting in 2024-2025 season.

Irina

The VOS Annual May Business Meeting

There are three important tasks that need to be completed during our annual business meeting that involve our members: Voting to approve the amendment to the VOS By-Laws; approving the elevation of Art Burke's membership to Honorary Member; and voting to approve the proposed slate of officers for 2025-2026 These three items are highlighted below.

Our Constitution defines the fiscal year for the VOS as June 1st through May 31st, so it is time to renew everyone's membership in the VOS. To avoid slipping into delinquency, your dues shall be considered in arrears if not paid on or before the September meeting date. An updated membership form has been included in this newsletter's transmittal: Please complete the form and bring a check or charge card for Square to our May meeting to complete your renewal. Note that there has been a modest increase in membership costs as noted on the form, and noted in the April newsletter.

#1 Proposed Amendment to The VOS By-Laws

The proposed Facebook Committee paragraph (n) is listed below.

ARTICLE V
COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees and their duties.

"(n)**Facebook**: The Facebook Committee shall have charge of the official Virginia Orchid Society Facebook page. One of the Facebook administrators shall be the Chair of the Facebook committee. The Facebook page shall serve as a forum for discussions about all aspects of orchids and their care, including timely photographs of members' orchids. The Facebook page shall remain private and is only available to members of the VOS. The committee shall be responsible for admitting interested VOS members to the Facebook page, setting guidelines for posts, and monitoring such posts periodically for appropriate content."

AS STATED IN OUR BY-LAWS, ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS:

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the VOS by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting of the VOS.

Section 2. Amendments shall become effective upon adjournment of the meeting at which they were adopted.

Glamorous Orchids Go On Exhibit

Flowerdom's favorite glamor girl is here in awesome variety.

Dressed in shades of red, bronze, purple, green, white, chartreuse, the exotic blooms create "Orchid Splendor" in the Old Dominion Room at Miller & Rhoads.

Sponsored by the Virginia Orchid Society, the show features forty-six exhibits by growers from throughout the state and from Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis and opens today at 3 p.m.

A bright future for orchids and orchid growers is forecast by the educational exhibit demonstrating a new method of propagating the sometimes tempermental, traditionally leisurely maturing plant.

The new meri-stem method promises blossoms in less than a year.

Creativity in the use of orchids is represented in arrangements in four classifications and in corsages designed for events both festive and solemn.

Largest exhibit is that of grower Dr. Arthur Burke whose blooms cover 96 square feet of space. Next in size is the 90 square feet entry of Henry Young.

Mrs. H. A. Wooldridge is show chairman and A. W. Smith is co-chairman.

John N. Simons is president of the society.

Newspaper article from 1968

#2 Nomination of Arthur W. Burke Jr. as an Honorary VOS Member

It is long past time to officially recognize the many contributions Art has made to the Virginia Orchid Society by formally elevating his annual membership to that of Honorary Member. His involvement goes far beyond the present, beginning long ago with his initial membership in the VOS in 1957. And in fact, his passion for orchids dates even earlier as he attended the First World Orchid Conference held in St. Louis in 1954. Current members know his generosity as the founder of our Founder and Friends Endowment Fund that provides continuing financial support for our monthly meeting speakers. Others will remember his various learned meeting presentations, as well as his never ending knowledge and advice freely offered when asked. In the distant past, Art has served as both Vice-President and President of the society, as an active organizer of past Eastern Orchid Congresses, an award winner for his displays in various orchid society shows, and as well as the equally important involvement in the day to day activities of a blossoming VOS. In short, Art has displayed exemplary devotion to orchids in general and to our society in particular. Thus I whole heartedly nominate Arthur W. Burke Jr. as an honorary member of the Virginia Orchid Society.

Respectfully submitted to the VOS Board this19th day of September 2024,
Ronald Geraci

ORCHIDS REQUIRE TENDER, LOVING CARE

Dr. Arthur Burke Displays Showy Blooms in Greenhouse

Honorary Membership: An active member may propose the name of a member for Honorary Membership, but must do so in writing. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Board to recommend the nomination of an Honorary Membership to the VOS. Such nomination will be brought before the membership at the Annual Meeting and carried by a two-thirds vote of those members present and voting.

#3

Proposed Slate of Officers for 2025-2026

The VOS nominating committee has proposed the following slate of officers for our upcoming year. Voting will take place at our May meeting.

President: Robin Maiorana
Vice President/President-elect: Robert Nordin
Membership Secretary: Joanne Brothers
Recording Secretary: Beth Kunberger
Treasurer: Donna Poland

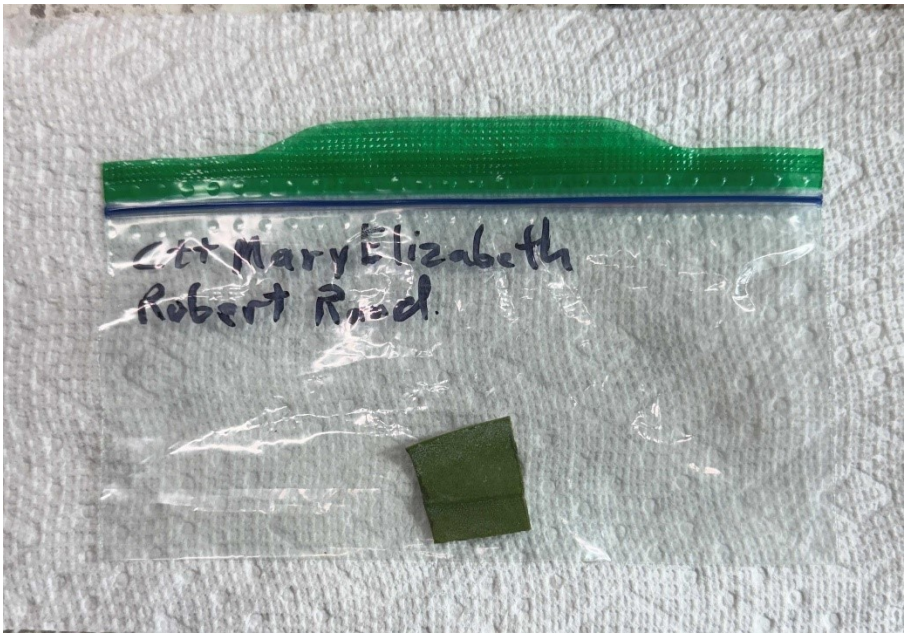
AS STATED IN OUR CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE IV - ELECTED OFFICERS:

Section 4. Election shall be by majority vote of those members present and voting.

Section 5. The newly Elected Officers shall be installed at the Annual Meeting.

Virus Testing Demonstration

This is a reminder that we will have orchid virus testing available at our upcoming meeting. Members who would like tests done need to arrive at 1:00 as testing will be done before the meeting. Robert Rand will be doing the testing. Members must bring the sample(s) they want tested in individual bags, labeled with the name of the orchid and their name. If possible, use **snack sized** bags. The sample size should be at least a square piece, 3/4 of an inch on a side (See picture). Ideally the sample should be from the newer growth areas. Members will need to fill out an entry for each test on a log sheet that will be at the meeting. VOS will charge $4 per test. We require a credit card for our Square terminal (no cash). If Square is not up and working, we will settle at the next meeting! Results will be written on the baggy with the sample in it and returned to the member. Robert will take pictures of every test for the purpose of having a "backup" to the results/log entries. There will be tests for both CymV/Osrv and Fleck virus.



Orchid Muse and "Frida Kahlo's Orchid"

In chapter 4 of Erica Hannickel's book *Orchid Muse*, this paragraph appears:

"In her personal fashion, garden, and art, Kahlo almost exclusively relied upon native Mexican flower species. Mexico is home to an extensive list of New World orchid genera, including ever-adaptable brassavolas, multicolored encyclias, spidery epidendrums, robust cattleyas, star-shaped laelias, triangular lycastes, frilly-skirted oncidiums, and dozens of others, dripping in blooms every month of the year. Her husband, Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, loved orchids, and went out of his way to find and present them to her as gifts. And, so, I've always wondered, why aren't there more orchids in Frida Kahlo's art? How is it that only a single orchid—a giant lavender cattleya—is prominent in one of her major works of art, though one that would become the touchstone of her career?"

Thought provoking and entirely captivating, this chapter reflects the exhaustive research into the lives of those included in her thirteen chapters of famous and not so famous people and their relationships with orchids. As someone who has a fascination with the art and the personal history of Frida Kahlo, I found this chapter particularly intriguing, and a great complement to the current Public Broadcasting presentation "Becoming Frida Kahlo" and the art exhibition "Frida, Beyond the Myth" now showing at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (its only east coast appearance). Ms. Hannickel's in depth discoveries throughout her book are most informative, especially for those of us captivated by orchids. Expertly researched and filled with luscious illustrations, this is an enjoyable read. And I will never look at Cattleya gigas (C. warscewiczii) in the same way again!

RG

Henry Ford Hospital - 1932