

# The Sheath

## November Meeting

Date: November 26, 2010

Time: Doors open 7:00 PM

Place: San Mateo Garden Center

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo, CA

Take the Alameda de las Pulgas exit off of Hwy. 92.  
The Garden Center is located between 26th and 28th  
Avenues

Mailing address: P.O. Box 6894, San Mateo, CA 94403-6894

Skill Session at 7:00PM  
Preparing Your Plants for  
Show

**Carol Zoltowski**

Meeting plus Show and  
Tell Table - 7:45 PM  
followed by

**Dennis Szeszko**

**Habitats of Mexican  
Orchids**

Opportunity table by  
**Anna Chai**

### **How to Grow Your Mexican Orchids** **Speaker: Dennis Szeszko**

One of the greatest failures of most orchid books is their notable lack of information about the ecosystems where they grow. In my estimation, this is one of the most important pieces of information that should be given. It is the reason that people unwittingly, but routinely, kill their plants when they are unable to approximate the growing conditions of a species in its native habitat. The aim of my talk is for people to gain a deeper appreciation of the types of ecosystems that can be found in Mexico and the species of orchids most representative of those environments. After hearing my talk, I want the audience to be able to place Mexican orchid species within the context of their environment. This information will help people to grow better and healthier plants.

I will talk about three distinct biomes in Mexico: the temperate forest, cloud forest and tropical deciduous forest. I will go into detail about the climates in those biomes, where those

habitats are found in Mexico, and most importantly, what species of orchids grow there. This presentation will be a tour of orchid habitats in Mexico with me as your guide. As I lead you through the Mexican countryside, there will be lots of beautiful landscapes and great pictures of orchids blooming in their native habitat. I hope you can join me for what promises to be an entertaining and enjoyable adventure.

### **Dennis's Biography:**

Dennis Szeszko had what most of you would consider a "dream job", when he was lucky enough to spend five years traveling throughout southern Mexico in the pursuit of orchids. During that time, he was employed by the Mexican government in the Ministry of Agriculture and his job was to find the species of Mexican orchids best suited for use in the commercial flower industry. His adventures took him through the states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Campeche, Michoacan and Mexico State looking for the most beautiful clones of many of Mexico's most

(cont. from page 1.)

acclaimed orchid species. He has extensive first-hand knowledge of Mexican orchids, where they can be found, and ex-situ cultivation techniques.

As part of his research objectives, Dennis completed a flora of all of the orchids species that grow in Mexico State. Although Mexico State makes up only about 1% of the total territory of Mexico, it harbors one-fifth of Mexico's total orchid species. Dennis is working with the Mexican Commission on Biodiversity (CONABIO) to take the information that he generated from his study and use it to understand the growing ranges of orchids, and the best way to protect them and their habitat.

During the course of his travels, Dennis took many beautiful photographs of orchids in the wild. He has over 25 gigabytes of orchid photographs that will form the basis for a commemorative, "coffee table" book soon to be published by the Mexican government. Furthermore, he has one of the largest and most important collections of orchids in Mexico that includes over 900 specimens that were all personally collected by him. The locality information accompanying the specimens makes his living collection critically important for scientific research and conservation efforts. He is also the discoverer of six new species of orchids that he is currently in the process of formally naming and describing.

In addition to his scientific research with orchids, Dennis has a keen interest in the business of orchids. He leads a government initiative to commercialize Mexican native orchids and transform them into an important new crop for Mexico. He founded a company that is breeding and developing new varieties of Mexican orchids that will be sold as pot plants and cut flowers. Dennis is particularly excited about the possibility of using species of *Barkeria* and *Encyclia* as the cornerstones of this new enterprise.

Dennis currently resides in Boston where he is completing the requirements for an MBA from the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He speaks three languages and holds an undergraduate degree in history from Princeton University.

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#### Auction statistics provided by Rene Biggs

Total # of Providers: 46	Total spent per bidder
Total # of Donors: 40	\$400 - \$500: 1
Total items auctioned: 384	\$300 - \$399: 2
Total # items donated: 218	\$200 - \$299: 2
Total # of bidders participating: 46	\$100 - \$200: 12
Total # of buyers: 44	\$50 - \$99: 13
	less than \$50: 14
Total Sales: \$4,746.91	
Tax included in above: \$401.91	
Payments due to providers: \$1,796.25	
Due to POS: \$2,548.75 (less expenses)	



Carol and Rene have the software firmly under control.



Some of the 384 auction items.



More of the 384 auction items.



Fred S. maps out his strategy



Good seats were still available as the beginning of the auction neared.



There was time for socializing.



Monica, Dan, and Olga are getting antsy, waiting for the bidding to start.



Dennis and Rene warm up for the fast-paced action to follow.



Dave T. practices blocking Monica's paddle arm, to no avail as it turned out.



Todd announces the slate of officers for 2011 - voting takes place at our Nov. 26 meeting.



Dennis auctions one of the larger plants.



Amy ready to run the orchid to the winning bidder, and Dennis grateful for a smaller plant to hold up.

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER:****'Nuff Said**

All is said indeed, and so there shall be a Peninsula Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale, on 21 – 23 January 2011. Still to be done is the event itself, for which all members are invited to take part in the manifold activities that comprise what has been our finest local orchid show.

We have a show chair! Stepping up to the task is POS Past-President Mike Drilling who introduced himself at our September meeting, especially to those who have joined us during the several years of Mike's absence from POS activities. Mike told us that the Chairman of the show was no more than the coordinator of the many volunteers who really make the occasion happen. He has filled the many positions of responsibility with veterans and beginners, who are worthy of our consideration for their willingness to come forward and make the show happen. There is yet more to be done by you and me, so do not be surprised by the call to assist, whether it comes from Mike or any of his several assisting chairpersons - see elsewhere in this Sheath and at our November meeting.

A most agreeable form of participation in the show is exhibition. It is not too early to contemplate which plants you have that might be in bloom at the right moment to star in the show display. Now is the moment to start training those stems upward and outward to make a well-balanced flowering plant of the sort that gets a "Best in Show." We welcome just about any healthy, tidy, blooming plant, and our judges are loose with the ribbons.

That brings to mind another opportunity - to take part in the judging itself. We welcome our members to assist in the judging process on Friday night, 21 January after 6:30 PM. We will have a sheet for names of members who are interested in this, which is really an opportunity to learn what makes a superior orchid. Besides, member clerks get to take part in the ribbon- and trophy-awarding deliberations.

Note that our next meeting in November is also our Annual Meeting of Members, with election of officers for 2011. The meeting will be open to nominations from the floor - it's not too late to join the party!

C. Todd Kennedy

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**Notice of Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of Members of Peninsula Orchid Society, Inc. shall be called at 7:45 PM on Friday, 26 November 2010 at San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo CA. To be conducted is the election of officers for 2011 and such other business properly arising. All members in good standing as of the date of the meeting are allowed to vote and present business before the meeting.

Rebecca Grubb  
Recording Secretary

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## **Proposed Slate of Officers for 2011 - voting takes place at our November meeting**

President: Mike Drilling

Vice President: open

Treasurer: Sharon Langan

Corresponding Secretary: Judy Evans

Recording Secretary: Mike Rector

Membership Chairperson: Janusz Warszawski

Ways and Means: Dan Williamson

Director at Large: Jon-Michael Irving

Director at Large: Monica Irving

Director at Large: Chaunie Langland

(Todd Kennedy has declined the board position of Past President. He has driven to board meetings from San Francisco enough times this past year while doing his part for the society.)

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## **AOS awarded plants belonging to POS members, July-September 2010. The awards are sent out monthly by Kathleen Barrett. Congratulations to all the award owners!!!**

*Laelia Cattleya* Amethyst Star 'Neon', HCC 77, (Lc. Mini Purple x *L. longipes*), exhibited by Japheth Ko.

*Paphiopedilum* Joyce Hasegawa 'Sun Hee', HCC 76, (*Paph. emersonii* x *Paph. delenatii*), exhibited by Anna Chai.

*Acineta superba* 'Winston', AM 80, species, exhibited by Amy and Ken Jacobsen.

*Bulbophyllum alaguense* 'Gilbert', CCM 84, species, exhibited by Carol Zoltowski.

*Dendrobium schneiderae* 'Gilbert', HCC 75, species, exhibited by Carol Zoltowski.

*Anguloa ruckeri* 'Winston', HCC 79, (*A. clowesii* x *A. hobenlobii*), exhibited by Amy and Ken Jacobsen.

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### **P.O.S. LIBRARY**

**submitted by Judy Evans**

We have a library full of information on orchids available for your use, located in the Rose Room at the Garden Center. If you are interested in checking anything out please ask Rex Castell or Mary Gerritsen.



Ken and Janusz check out a plant ID



Sharon considers a plant while Dan waits to write down the winner.



Dan in action - one of over 350 auction items.



Barry holds the next plant to hand over to Ken



Dennis prepares to auction one of the last plants, Mike is holding yet another one.



Paul S., Anna, and Clint consider bidding on the current orchid.



Fred C. keeps his eye on the plants while Cordelia checks out the bidding action



The happy bidders pack up and head out.



The plants that didn't sell are a lonely sight at the end of the night.

**Auction Financial Results:**

We netted \$2,400 from the auction this year. Last year we made \$2,132. Very good considering the economy (in 2008 we netted \$4,778) - but our expenses don't go down with the bad economy, so this means we need to make sure our show in January is a success. Please start considering how YOU can help advertise our show. (Also, remember to start staking your plants now so they will look their best!)

Coming up for discussion at the November meeting will be a possible change in how we handle member sales at our monthly meetings.

## Member News



A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO: *Mike Rector, Ronald Gonzalez, Taik Kwun Yun, Virginia Jensen, Chaunie Langland, Dawn Stepro, Paul Ziegler and Elizabeth Lasensky.*

*Getting Well Quickly:* Susan Tong has recovered from October heart surgery, has returned to work this month and plans to come to the November meeting. Our members are tough!

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### Editor's corner

Another auction has come and gone. Each one has its own personality. This time around we ended up with a huge number of items to be auctioned off in our limited time frame. All of the volunteers did a fabulous job.

**Ken Jacobsen and Dennis Olivas** kept the auction from breaking down into chaos by their sheer force of will. (Many of us remember the years when the last plants were sold for a dollar - not enough to even cover the potting expenses of the sellers and certainly not fair to them.) They also did a wonderful job of auctioning the items quickly. In spite of the time pressure, they managed to sell things. Dennis gave such a wonderful description of a *Bulb. lobbii*, that Anna Chai brought in, towards the end of the auction, that I bid on it. After winning it, I remembered that I already have one! But he just made it sound so attractive.

**Rene Biggs and Carol Basey** worked their magic on the computers, getting the software and the printer going, entering all of the bidders and all of the winning bids. It is a fabulous thing that we all get printouts with the names of the plants, the sellers names and the price. This makes it so easy to enter our purchases into our own records. And as sellers we receive the same information (except the bidders names). Right at the auction! Rene and Carol manage to keep the accounts running smoothly every year, no matter what happens.

There was a large group of **volunteers** that made the auction happen - checking the plants in, placing them on the tables, providing food and drink, running the plants to the winning bidders, writing down the plant codes and winning bidder numbers, collecting the money, and cleaning up at the end. You all did a great job! **Thank you all for your hard work.**

The quality of the plants this year was exceptional. I brought home two wonderfully fragrant orchids (C. Chocolate Drop and the incredible Blc. Cherry Suisse), Carol's large *Dichaea glauca* (fern-like leaves), and Dennis's tiny *Sobralia callosa* with dark green ridged leaves, along with 11 other orchids. It was a great year for the bidders.

Happy Thanksgiving! Chaunie

**Peninsula Orchid Society 2011 - Save the dates and VOLUNTEER**

The 2011 POS Annual Show and Sale is rapidly approaching and we need volunteers in a number of areas for all days of the show. This is a great way to support the Society and to mingle with our visitors, most of whom are potential members and eager to learn more about orchids.

The general areas of need are:

**Friday January 21:**

- Set up of the CAB building from noon to 2 pm; critically important, and we need lots of volunteers. Long hours, no pay, you'll love it.
- Check in and set up of show plants from 1 pm to 6:30 pm
- Plant judging assistance from 7:00 to 10 pm

**Saturday January 22:**

- Visitor Admissions table from 10 am to 5 pm
- Membership table from 10 am to 5 pm
- Raffle table from 10 am to 5 pm
- Security and visitor assistance from 10 am to 5 pm

**Sunday January 23:**

- Visitor Admissions table from 10 am to 5 pm
- Membership table from 10 am to 5 pm
- Raffle table from 10 am to 5 pm
- Take down from 5 pm to 7 pm; also very important, volunteers needed.

We will have sign up sheets available at the November and December meetings. Or, you can sign up for a particular function by emailing Show Chair Mike Drilling at [mdrilling@pacbell.net](mailto:mdrilling@pacbell.net) or calling him at 650-692-8998.

Show Committee members looking for volunteers:

Show Chairperson: Mike Drilling

Show Set Up and Take Down: Clint Evans and Mike Rector

Admissions: Gloria Bygdnes

Membership: Janusz Warszawski

Raffle: Daniel Williamson

Member Plant Sales: Amy and Ken Jacobsen

**Feel free to contact the show chairs if you have questions about working in their area.**

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## Upcoming Events

**Nov. 27 & 28 Orchid Society of Santa Barbara Fall Show and Sale.** Held at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Museum admission charge includes the show. For more information go to [www.orchidsb.net](http://www.orchidsb.net).

**Jan. 21 Peninsula Orchid Society Show Set-up, Plant Entry, Ribbon Judging and AOS judging.** There will be a special early plant entry time for those going to the Gold Coast Auction on the same evening. Details in the next Sheath.

**Jan. 22 & 23 Peninsula Orchid Society Show and Sale.** San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo. 10AM - 5PM both days. \$5 entry fee (including non-volunteer members).

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## Why You Might Want to Join AOS

*Orchids*, the monthly magazine published by the American Orchid Society, is one of the best horticultural magazines available. Experts freely share their knowledge in detailed cultural articles, there is a question and answer section, there is always an article on a little known gem of an orchid, there are many beautiful photos, and there are also articles on natural orchid sites.

With the AOS headquarters located in Florida, you may think of it as being more of an East Coast oriented magazine. Not true at all. In the October 2010 issue there is a lovely 10 page article, "A Magical Place", written by our own Mary Gerritsen describing her trip to Borneo in October of 2009.

But that is not the only familiar face in there. Doug Pulley, who has spoken at our meetings several times and whose greenhouse has been on our tour in the past, has an article on Stanhopeas. Marni Turkel, a previous guest speaker and whose greenhouse we visited on our bus tour this summer, has written numerous articles for *Orchids* magazine. This month's issue has fabulous photos from Japan's 2010 Orchid Grand Prix. Truly incredible.

If you are interested in joining the AOS so that you can receive this engrossing magazine, send a check for \$65 (or \$125 for 2 years) with your name, mailing address (for the magazine), and e-mail address (for an additional on-line monthly magazine) to Membership Services Department, American Orchid Society, 16700 AOS Lane, Delray Beach FL 33446. If you pay for a 2 year membership you will receive a \$30 coupon that is good on a \$100 purchase at any one of 13 participating commercial orchid nurseries.

You may join on-line at <http://www.aos.org/source/members/cmmemberinsert.cfm?member=1&Section=Join>.

## Upcoming POS Meetings

**Dec 17. Joint meeting with the Gold Coast Cymbidium Society.** Ron Parsons “Cool Growing Orchid Species” (Cymbidiums and companion species)

**Jan 21. No meeting.** Set up and judging for the POS annual show (Jan 22-23), Community Activity Building, Redwood City



Left: the fern-like *Dichaea glauca*

Middle: Blc. Cherry Suisse

Right: *Sobralia callosa*

### 2010 Board of Directors

*President:* Todd Kennedy 415-664-8851

*Vice President:* Mary Gerritsen 650-348-6492

*Treasurer:* Trudy Hadler 510-483-1277

*Rec. Secretary:* Rebecca Grubbs 650-560-9037

*Corr. Secretary:* Judy Evans 650-593-8625

*Membership CP:* Janusz Warszawski 650-964-0560

*Ways & Means CP:* Randall Takemoto-Hambleton 408-390-4324

*Past President:* Ken Jacobsen 650-631-4235

*Director at Large:* Dan Williamson 650-963-9403

*Director at Large:* Paul Reeve 650-366-3251

*Director at Large:* Sharon Langan 650-365-7160

### Chairpersons

*AOS Rep:* Mary Gerritsen 650-348-6492

*Librarian:* Rex Castell 650-576-4637

*Refreshment Chairpersons:* Rebecca Grubbs 650-560-9037 & Olga Ostrovsky 650-631-0218

*Sheath Editor:* Chaunie Langland 510-494-8850 [the\\_sheath\\_editor@earthlink.net](mailto:the_sheath_editor@earthlink.net)

*Sheath Snail Mail Co-ordinator:* Jackie Becker

*Accountant:* Sue Rose 650-322-9853

*Web Editors:* Fred Cox & Cordelia Wong

Society Mailing Address: P.O.Box 6894

Website address: <http://penorchidsoc.org>

San Mateo, CA 94403-6894

*Remember  
Dues are NOT due until February!*

*It's Show Time! Well, show planning  
time. Sign up to help at the  
November and December meetings.  
Our show will take place January  
21, 22, and 23rd, 2011*

*Peninsula Orchid Society  
The Sheath  
Chaunie Langland, Editor  
878 Cashew Way  
Fremont, CA 94536*