



Council News

Missouri Valley African Violet Council

Volume 20, Issue 1
March 2004

The President Speaks

Hello and Happy New Year to you all!

Well, the holidays are over and we can now get back to taking care of our plants and preparing them for the upcoming shows.

I would like to thank the Lincoln and Omaha clubs for returning the registration fees from the fall convention - our treasurer is a little happier now. And while I am in the thanking mode, I would like to express my thanks to all the officers for the help that they have given to the Council and to me. David Harris is doing a great job collecting "Did You Know?" tidbits from the old newsletters and John Carter does a bang up job with the newsletter. The other officers may not be quite as visible as David and John, but I couldn't get by without their help.

You will remember at the Fall convention that it was decided that we should have a MVAVC web site. Since John seems to meet himself coming and going these days, we decided to help him out by asking Jimmie Toney to build the website. Some of you may not know Jimmie yet but you will—he is only quiet for a little while! Jimmy has been working very hard to build the site and has done an excellent job. It is now up to all of us to help him keep the website current. Affiliates, please send your show and sale dates to him so that he can post them on the Calendar page. After the show send him your winners and pictures and he will post them. Like the Council, this website belongs to the members and should represent all the members and affiliate clubs. If you have any questions or ideas, contact Jimmy — he will be glad to hear from you.

The AVSA Convention will be in Tucson, Arizona this year and there will be a few changes, so be sure to read the details carefully. The people in Tucson have been working hard and it looks like a good convention is shaping up, so start planning which tour to take or which presentation to attend. Our own Jackie Jones and Pat Sutton will be on a panel presenting *Advanced Judging Skills-Design*. Both Jackie and Pat are judges and teachers. They both do very nice designs, so designers and judges, perhaps this presentation would be one to attend. The convention is being held at the Doubletree and this hotel has received good review ratings. Hopefully MVAVC members will again take plants and designs and bring home lots of blue ribbons and awards. I would just like to mention how lucky our council is to have such very talented growers and designers. I could mention names but it would be quicker and easier just to look at your membership list!

Spring Meeting - Don't forget that the spring meeting is a great time to find out what is going on in Council, see Violet friends and, most important, you get a chance to acquire some new plants. The meeting is being held in Bethany, MO and is hosted by the Mid America AVS.

Fall Convention - I would like to offer an apology to the Lawrence affiliate for scheduling our fall convention over their show date. We tried to reschedule it for another weekend, but unfortunately it was not possible. Awards are needed for the fall convention and Randy Deutsch will be more than glad to take them. It may seem a little early to be asking for fall show awards but if you do it early, it is just one less thing that you will have to remember.

I look forward to seeing a lot of you in Tucson. Mona

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**Plan now for the Spring Meeting
And Plant Sale
Sunday, June 6, Bethany, MO**

Spring Meeting

The Mid-America Club will host the spring meeting on Sunday, June 6th, at the Bethany, MO Community Center. Lunch will be at 12:30 PM followed by the meeting. Bethany is about 80 miles north of Liberty, (meeting location in 2002). Take the second exit to the left coming from the south. Go to Casey's Corner, turn right one block. The community center is next to the police station. Lots of parking is available. The June newsletter will be published before the meeting and will repeat the instructions and include a map.



MISSOURI VALLEY WEBSITE

MVAVC is pleased to announce that our website is now in operation. The address is www.mvavc.org and it has a pretty violet icon shortcut to the site for your desktop. At the website, you will find a calendar of events, information on all our affiliates, membership information and the newsletter. A brief synopsis of the newsletter is hopefully enough to encourage people to join our council. By entering a password you will be able to see the complete newsletter. Several newsletters will be posted on the site, and for some of us who never seem to put things away, we can now find the newsletter. Visit the site and let us know what you think and offer any suggestions that you might have.

The current password to access the full version newsletter is **fuzzy**. This password is valid thru 2003 memberships. Once 2004 memberships are paid you will be given another password.

We realize that the password can be given out to non-members, but hope that the members do not. The newsletter page of the website is for the convenience of the members only. Hopefully others will see the advantage of joining our Council or one of the affiliate clubs after visiting the website.

On the website you will find a listing of all the affiliate club show and sale dates. Please check out this page before planning an MVAVC event so that our event will not conflict with affiliate events. You will find the list under the password protected section of the newsletter. Affiliates, please check to make sure that your show dates are correct and if not, let Jimmie know.

From the Webmaster

As some of you know by now, I was asked by Mona Donnell to be the new webmaster for MVAVC's website. The website except for a couple of pages is complete and you may access it by going to <http://www.mvavc.org>. Check it out and let us know what you think. There are a couple of things that I would like those of you that have Internet connection to check out.

First is the affiliate club pages: every affiliate has their own web page where information concerning that affiliate club will be posted, provided the information is provided to me. I will be more than happy to post any and all information concerning any events that the affiliates have. For example show dates, sale dates, show winners—you get the idea, so keep me informed. Information may be sent to me two different ways: either by US mail, Jimmie Toney, 102 North Chisholm, Caldwell, Kansas 67022-1524 or by email either at mvavc@mvavc.org or jtoney@kanokla.net. Again I will say I can only post the information that I am sent, so keep me informed.

The second area for everyone to check out is the MVAVC Newsletter page. If you will scroll down to the bottom you will notice there is a place to enter a password and the password for the next several months is **fuzzy**. You must type in the word and then click on the button which will take you to an area that is for MVAVC members only. The current and past newsletter will be there in full for you in case you ever need to refer back to them.

Continued on page 3

March 26-27 - Nebraska

Lincoln AVS Annual Spring Show and Sale
Westfield Shoppingtown Gateway Mall
61st & O, Lincoln, NE 68505
Info: Joyce Stork (402) 721-1478 kents@tvsonline.net

March 26-28 - Moline, IL

Northpark Mall
Quad Cities AVS Spring show and sale
Theme: "Violets, a Bridge to Friendship"

April 2-4 - Nebraska

Omaha AVS Annual Show and Sale
Nebraska Flower Plant and Landscaping Show
Omaha Convention Center and Arena
455 N. 10th, Omaha NE 68102
Friday 1- 9, Saturday 10 - 9, Sunday 11-4
Info: Joyce Stork (402) 721-1478 kents@tvsonline.net

May 1 and 2, 2004

The MSLAVC annual show/sale will be held from 9am to 5pm, both days, at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. with the theme "Violets Return To The Fair", celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Contact info Publicity Chairman Nancy Amelung, 314-961-7142 or at nannergram@aol.com.

FALL SHOW AUCTION --- 2004

Remember the successful (and fun) auction we had in Overland Park last year? I think I saw some members still wet-eyed in Lincoln! For those that were there I think we had a great time. We have decided to have another auction as part of the fall show next year in Sioux Falls. To be successful we will need items donated for selling. So be thinking of items you can either send to me or bring along with you when you come to South Dakota! I guarantee, we will have FUN!!!
Randy G Deutsch, Entertainment Committee

FALL SHOW AND SALE --- 2004

PLEASE COME TO SIOUX FALLS!!! You're invited to attend the Fall Show and Sale September 10-12, 2004. We are making plans for a special time for all MVAVC members. It will be our 20th Fall Show and I hope everyone attending will plan to enter exhibits. The South Dakota African Violet Club is sponsoring the Fall Show and is already busy making plans for a great time for everyone. COME JOIN IN THE FUN!!

Are you interested in a Judging School at the Fall Show and Sale? Notify Randy Deutsch so he can determine if there is enough interest to schedule it.

***Your activity can only be listed if
you send it in!***



Having Fun with Petrocosmeas

A little over two years ago I fell head over heels in love with petrocosemas. A club member did a Gesneriad program and shared some small plants. My collection now includes nine species and one hybrid.

Many of the species, such as *P. forresti* and *P. flaccida* have a very symmetrical appearance. The leaf pattern grows in a spiral from a very tight center of leaves to beautifully overlapping rows. It is easy to mistake these two species for perfectly formed African violets until they bloom. *Petrocosmea kerrii* and *P. parryorum* are the exception, growing with a more upright form.

Generally the leaves are fuzzy, like violets, but *P. begonifolia* and *P. parryorum* both have slightly glossy, sparsely haired foliage. *P. minor* has thick succulent leaves with little apparent hair.

The roots are fibrous, but the center stalk of the plant is fairly thick and woody, especially in the species that grow with tight symmetry. Because the perfect symmetry is so desirable, most growers have attempted to keep single crowns. When multiple crowns are allowed to develop, the mature plant seems to lose outside leaves and grow less vigorously.

The flowers vary in size typically with two lobes above and three lobes below a center throat, similar to violas. Colors vary from softest lavender to deep purple, often with a yellow patch on the lower part of the throat. Flowers often appear at about the same time that the plants begin suckering.

They can be propagated either by leaf cutting or by suckers. Plants tend to sucker very freely, especially when the diameter of the foliage is equal to the diameter of the pot. Suckers can be prodded loose rather easily, but it is also easy to damage outside leaves which spoils symmetry.

Petrocosmeas are not difficult to grow in an African violet collection but there are some differences. The keys to success seem to be humidity, space, and light. I have found that they do best in a terrarium type setting with humidity over 60%.

When in this situation, I get broader leaves and bigger plants. Blooms seem to last much longer and there are more per blossom stem. When grown in the open, they do best when hand-watered rather than on constant water.

Plantlets developing from rooted leaves will stay very small until they are given individual pots, and then they will grow very rapidly. It takes some courage to transplant such tiny plants! I pot tiny starters into 2" pots and as soon as the leaves are nearing the edge of the pot, I move them into the pot they will be in permanently.

The plants need a great deal of root space. They do not enjoy being transplanted, and it is easy to lose a mature plant if the roots are disturbed. It seems the plant will grow to the diameter of the pot, regardless of how broad it is. Several species have done very well in 5- or 6-inch pan pots, but the same species have also thrived in 3- or 4-inch pots. When transplanting, it is wise to set the plant into a well that is exactly the size of the previous pot so that roots experience very little trauma. When a young plant is potted into an oversized pot, it is necessary to water it very carefully to avoid root rot.

Petrocosmeas seem to thrive under conditions similar to the culture for our African violets. My plants are about 12" below the lights and on for about 12 hours a day. Rotating seems to help prevent leaning. Some species (especially *P. parryorum*) seem to need much cooler temperatures, especially to bloom, but most grow well at 70 degrees Fahrenheit. I use 15-30-15 violet fertilizer at a rate of 1/8 teaspoon per gallon of water weekly.

While not disease prone, fungus can be a problem. *Petrocosmea kerrii*, a species with long velvety leaves and less symmetry, seems to be the only one prone to suffer from powdery mildew. All seem to struggle with root rot when the soil is kept too moist.

The perfect symmetry and easy growing habit makes this Gesneriad a real joy and fun to exhibit. Petrocosmeas are a delight!

Joyce Stork

There is also a links page for anyone that happens to have a website of their own. If I have missed any member's website I am sorry and will be more than happy to add it to the links page. Concerning a website, to add to the links page the only criterion that must be met is that the owner of the web site be either an individual member or affiliate club member. The web site can be personal or commercial and does not have to be violet related. Who knows, you may

provide a service that some of us might be able to make use of.

Remember this is a website for MVAVC and you are MVAVC, so if you have any criticism or ideas about the site feel free to let me know. Also, please remember it is just as good as the information that I am provided.



Humidity and Humility (A tale of African Violets)

I have just emerged from several years with pitiful looking violets. I don't need to describe pitiful. Every long time grower of African Violets knows what I mean - - scrawny plants with poor centers and no blooms. It happened gradually. I went from beautiful plants, full of bloom, to last year when I only had two plants at our spring show. And I am a forty-year veteran of growing African Violets. So it can happen to any one. I made many mistakes. In retrospect, I can see what I did - inconsistency, switching from growing on individual reservoirs to growing on matting, always wicked, but going back and forth. Altering the PH with vinegar without testing and, of course, battles with insects and disease along the way.

If I had it to do again, I would throw away all plants in the beginning, sanitize my growing area, and start again. This is what I did in the end, only a little bit at a time.

The frustrating part was that my starter plants were beautiful. It was when I went to bigger plants in three-inch pots that the trouble began. I should have learned from that scenario, that the problems were in my culture, not in the plants themselves.

Last year, I finally had no big plants left, because I had pitched everything with any problem. And that was all the bigger plants. But I had all these beautiful starter plants, most of them in trays, wicked on matting, under plastic lids or sheets of saran wrap. The light began to dawn. The problem had to be low humidity, with low temperatures. Because natural gas has become so expensive, I had put space heaters on the lowest setting possible and kept it there. Of course plants under cover were warmer and had higher humidity.

I stopped doctoring the water with vinegar, repotted all plants into fresh mix - - I had stopped repotting regularly, had gotten to the point where I had to make myself take care of the plants. Typical burnout, which most growers experience from time to time. If your plants aren't doing well, you don't enjoy working with them. Then they suffer from neglect.

I finally realized that the advice I had been following wasn't necessarily right for me. My conditions were different. I finally took the step of putting all plants in trays, wicked onto matting. I put saran wrap over all of the trays. I did that last spring. And, no, my plants did not rot over the summer. I lost very few plants. When I took the trays down, I took off any off sized leaves, removed dead leaves, potted plants into correctly sized pots - - no more pots with crusted brown deposits on them. Of course, if violets are repotted often, the soil nourishes them and the PH stays in balance. I fertilized when I watered. Occasionally a pot dries out. I take it to the sink and water it thoroughly. The matting does dry out between times, so plants aren't continually soggy. This is a whole lot better for my plants, grown under very cool conditions.

By fall, I could see a huge difference. A 'Lavender Lace', which had twisted, gnarled leaves grew normally and now looks beautiful. And by mid November plants began to bloom and bloom and bloom. I have plants blooming that I've never seen bloom before on shelves where plants have never bloomed before. My species plants are outdoing themselves. I know some people would balk at having all their plants covered with plastic. But I change the saran wrap when it gets dusty. The blooms lift the wrap up as they develop, and I can view the plants through the clear wrap and admire them.

I've seen my first bloom on the standard trailer, 'Honeysuckle Rose'. The little scrunched up blooms on my other trailers are gone. And, no, I haven't had problems with mildew or fungus. Maybe it is because spores can't settle on the plants. The looseness of the plastic wrap assures adequate circulation. Of course I want to work on the plants. Who wouldn't? So they are also benefiting from extra care. I have gone even further and have the plant stands draped from all sides, but not the top, to keep drafts off. This house is cool - - where you wear wraps to keep warm, violets are not going to do well. Of course, with the lights on, it is warmer inside the plastic.

I have converted a friend to using plastic around her plant stands. She overdid it for a while by using clothespins to hold the plastic together. The temperature in the plant stand went up to eighty-two degrees and her plants did not like it. She removed the clothespins. But her plants are doing much better, too.

I am convinced that humidity and temperature are critical to good plant growth, when those are the only variables. I have always grown under lights and used Optimara or Volkmann fertilizers with Peters occasionally thrown in.

I have changed the humidity and have plenty of humility forced on me by my plants. At one time I considered myself an expert with many blue ribbons. Going from showing one hundred plants to just having two to show will change that!

I think I'll go admire "Aly's Blizzard Bunny", 'Ness' Crinkle Blue', 'Grangers Blue Puff', or 'Cort Raspkoff's Flash', a nice fuchsia with a crisp white edge. It has been a long time in coming!

The only problem is that it is going to be hard to disbud for show, and I may not do it. I may just take chance that something will be in bloom at show time. I haven't had bloom in so long and am really enjoying it.

Peggy Payne
108 S. Elizabeth St
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MVAVC TREASURY REPORT MARCH 2004
 Report period: 11/20/03-02/10/04
 Treasurer, Nancy Amelung

Council News is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). Deadlines:
 March: February 15
 June: May 15
 September: August 15
 December: November 15

Submit articles and activities to John Carter, Editor at the return address or email at johncarter@valornet.com or call 918-355-8020.

Newsletters are mailed to MVAVC members. Membership is \$15.00 for individuals and \$17.50 for family or affiliate memberships. Dues are payable by May 1st. Dues are half price after December 1st. Send Dues to Jeanne Cotten, 4402 East 105th Place, Tulsa, OK 74137, 918-299-6408.

Checking account balance		\$4049.36
Receipts: Donation Omaha AVS	\$270.00	
Return of registration money		
Total Receipts	\$270.00	<u>\$270.00</u>
		\$4319.36
Disbursements:		
Newsletter/Dec/JC	\$73.83	
Donation/AVSA Conv Book Ad 2004	\$15.00	
Total Disbursements	\$88.83	<u>\$88.83</u>
Balance Checking: 2/10/04		\$4230.53
CD North American Savings, KC, MO		\$2872.32
Interest Oct-Dec/03		<u>\$14.37</u>
Balance as of Feb. 10, 2004		\$2886.69
Total Assets all Accounts		<u>\$7117.22</u>

Did You Know?

1995 Membership List

70 individual members,
 17 family members,
 17 affiliate members,
 Total of 104 members.

Your Officers

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Would you like to serve? Contact Ramona and let her know.

SPRING SALE RULES

Please make note of the following if you are planning to sell at the Spring meeting. There will be no exceptions to these rules. If everyone complies with these rules, the sale should go smoothly.

Thanks to everyone for your cooperation.

1. Sales will begin before the meeting is opened (can't keep people away from those plants once they see them). If the sellers want to sell after the meeting is adjourned, 30 minutes will be allotted for this. It is necessary to limit the sale time after the meeting so that people can put away their unsold plants and get on the road home. NOTE: Each seller is responsible for cleaning up their area.
2. You **must** contact Gary Dunlap, the person in charge of the sale and let him know that you will be bringing plants. It is necessary to know how many people are planning to sell so that the adequate number of tables can be secured. The cut off date for notifying Gary is May 28, 2004. Gary's email address is *patspets@jcn1.com* and his phone number is 636-789-3604
3. You may only bring **50** plants to sell. Since the sale is open to only the MVAVC and hosting club members the number of people present will not support more sales.
4. There will be a central collection table manned by our good moneychangers, Wayne Watts and Dona Stilwell.
5. 20% of all sales will go to Missouri Valley and the remaining 80% to the seller. The treasurer will issue checks to the sellers for their portion.



Missouri Valley African Violet Council

First Class Mail

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**Missouri Valley African Violet Council
March 1995 - February 1996**

The 11th MVAVC Spring meeting was held at the Botanical Garden Center in Des Moines, Iowa on June 11th. The program was a slide show from the 1995 St. Louis AVSA National Convention. On August 15, there were 26 violet growers in Nashville Tenn. to tour the Holtkamp operation in the green house escorted by Reinhold & Gisela Holtkamp. Gene Loveland arranged the tour for growers in KC, Tulsa, Wichita and St. Louis. On November 18, the Midwest African Violet Judges Council was formed. In the AVSA magazine commercial section for Mar/Apr, David Buttram highlighted Pat's Pets and Kent's Flowers in the 1995 September/October issue.

Did You Know? (1995)

There was a special request from Linda Golubski for Mona to bring her special brownies for the Fall Meeting because Mona's brownies were a big hit at the 1989 AVSA national convention.

Did You Know? (1995)

MVAVC 1994 newsletters with Joyce Stork as editor won first place with 99 points at the St. Louis AVSA National Convention. Incredibly, two other newsletters topped it to win the top prizes. Good try!

Did You Know? (1995)

Incoming AVSA President L. T. Ozio made the Convention appointment of these MVAVC members: Pat Richards as the new columnist for Mini/Semi violets for the *African Violet Magazine*; Linda Golubski as Awards Chairperson, Charles Wells as the new Commercial Sales and Exhibits chairperson and Jackie Jones as the new Library chairperson. David Buttram continued as Commercial Activities chairperson. Esther Edwards Wells became AVSA 1st Vice president.

Did You Know ? (1995)

At the AVSA 1995 Convention Pat Richards won 3rd best in show, 2nd best AVSA Mini/SM collection, Best Standard, Best Miniature, and won Sweepstakes in Horticulture with 102 Blue ribbons. Other winners were Mary Ann Switzer, Jackie Jones, Shannon Ahlman, Fran Russom, and Esther Edwards Wells as Mid-American AVS editors.

Show Report (1995)

Omaha, Neb. was the place of the 11th MVAVC show and sale at the Sheraton Inn on October 27-29. Show theme was "Ode to Violets" and the show won the blue Standard Show Achievement Award with 99.13. There were two educational workshops: first was "Outpatient Clinic" for the public; the second, "Question and Answers" was moderated by Esther Edwards Wells.

Best African Violet in show: Ness' Crinkle Blue
By: Kent Stork
Sweepstakes in Horticulture: Pat Richards
Best in Design: Jackie Jones
Sweepstakes in Design: Jackie Jones