SOUTHERN ONTARIO ORCHID SOCIETY NEWS March 2012, Volume 47, Issue 3

Web site: <u>www.soos.ca</u> ; Member of the Canadian Orchid Congress; Affiliated with the American Orchid Society, the Orchid Digest and the International Phalaenopsis Alliance.

Membership: Annual Dues \$30 per calendar year (January 1 to December 31). Surcharge \$15 for newsletter by postal service.

Membership secretary: Marilyn Crompton, #1908-21 Overlea Blvd., Toronto ON M4H 1P2, phone 416-467-0018

Executive: President, Yvonne Schreiber, 905-473-3405; Vicepresident Laura Liebgott, 905-883-5290; Secretary, Sue Loftus 905-839-8281; Treasurer, John Vermeer, 905-823-2516

Other Positions of Responsibility: Program, Mario Ferrusi; Plant Doctor, Doug Kennedy; Meeting Set up, Tom Atkinson; Vendor and Sales table coordinator, Diane Ryley; Membership, Marilyn Crompton, Eric Terreau, Karen Hazelton; Web Master, Max Wilson; Newsletter, Peter and Inge Poot; Annual Show, Peter Poot; Refreshments, Joe O'Regan. Conservation Committee, Susan Shaw, Tom Atkinson; Show table, Iryna Bonya.

Honorary Life Members: Terry Kennedy, Doug Kennedy, Inge Poot, Peter Poot, Joe O'Regan, Diane Ryley, Wayne Hingston.

Annual Show: 2012 cancelled. Next show February 16 – 17, 2013



Terry Kennedy and Sherry Decyk with Dendrochilum tenellum, photo pp.

Meeting Program Sunday, March 4, Toronto Botanical Garden. Sales at noon, program at 1 pm.

Eric Lee will present a new way of growing the common Phalaenopsis, or "moth" orchid, at our next meeting on March 4. The medium he will discuss is

sphagnum moss. He will discuss light levels for growing these orchids, their fertilization, and so on. Almost all Phalaenopsis orchids, when purchased today, use a bark-charcoal-perlite medium, or some similar mix. Taiwan is a hotbed for the breeding and propagation of Phalaenopsis, and increasingly the medium of choice for growers there is sphagnum. It behoves us to understand new trends in orchid care, so perhaps for those of us who have difficulty with the "simple to grow" Phalaenopsis, salvation is at hand.

Eric and Ellen Lee own a large nursery in the GTA, Crystal Star Orchids (http://www.crystalstarorchids.com/). They grow approximately 60,000 individual orchids, of many kinds, in a facility of 10,000 square feet (900 square metres). At the society's monthly meetings you will find Eric and Ellen with some of those orchids for sale.

Do come and enjoy what Eric has learned and will pass on. Part of his presentation will be a demonstration of (re)potting Phalaenopsis orchids using sphagnum. There are good ways to do it, and not so good ways. To see is to understand; to understand is to be a better grower.

If you do not Renew now this will be your last issue of the SOOS NEWS.

2012 membership \$30 with the newsletter by email. Newsletter by Canada Post \$15 extra unless you are a pre 2011 member in continuous good standing receiving the newsletter by Canada Post.

SOOS President's Remarks

Fellow orchid aficionados:

Thank you goes out to those of you who brought in treats to share for our January 29th meeting. The letters of the month for March will be last names that start with the letters **E**, **F**, and **G**. We are asking anyone whose last name starts with these letters to bring in a treat to share. These treats should be finger foods only i.e. something that can be picked up with your fingers and does not require a plate or fork.

Although the S.O.O.S. show has been cancelled for this year, there are other orchid societies who will be providing us with an opportunity to get our orchid fix. The London Orchid Society will be hosting first show of the season on March 17th and 18th, to be followed by OrchidExpo in Montreal on March 24th and 25th. In April the Toronto Artistic Orchid Association (TAOA) show takes place on April 14th and 15th. The Ottawa Orchid Society show is the following weekend, April 21st and 22nd. SOOS will be constructing a display at each of these shows and, of course, will need flowering plants. Laura Liebgott will be doing the display in London and Don Wyatt has volunteered to take a display to Montreal.

The Town Hall Forum was well received. Thank you to all for your comments, suggestions and praise, both fair and damming. All your comments were recorded and will be collated and discussed prior to being presented to you. It is our plan to come up with an implementation plan in response to your ideas.

The May 6th meeting will be in the Garden Hall. Due to the smaller size of the room people bringing plants for sale on the Member's Sales table will only be able to bring **five** plants and not the usual maximum of 10.

Talk to me at a meeting; e-mail me at <u>yvonneschreiber68@gmail.com</u>, or phone me at 905-473-3405.

Yvonne Schreiber

Questions or comments

yvonneschreiber68@gmail.com or

905-473-3405



Welcome New Members

David Borsellino & Gabriela Luchsinger, Irene Bowman/Michael Dennison, Dee Birchmore, Houw Khoe

Conservation

The SOOS conservation committee is involved in 2 projects now, both of which involve the Toronto Botanical Garden (http://torontobotanicalgarden.ca/). On February 16, Iryna Bonya and Janet Anderson acted as the orchid experts on a tour of the Allan Gardens greenhouses in downtown Toronto. The tour through the 5 greenhouses was led by Paul Zammit, director of horticulture at the TBG. This is a marvellous site, and dates from the 19th century. Plants there range from the very small to the enormous, and from xeric (very dry) to the tropical (and very humid). It was through the suggestion of the TBG director, Aldona Satterthwaite, that SOOS was invited to be part of this experience.

On April 26 and May 10, Tom Shields with help from Henry Glowka will present 2 lectures on orchids at the TBG. Tom is a long-time member of the conservation committee. He said recently at one of the committee meetings, and speaking of these courses, "This is the book which has been in my head for many years now!". Perhaps one day Tom will extend the course material and create that special book!

Editor. The latest edition of 'Orchids' the monthly publication of the American Orchid Society has an informative article on the conservation talks at the World Orchid Conference in Singapore. The author. Peter Tobias, stresses the need for a multifaceted approach to conservation, not the least of which is to preserve large areas of habitat to conserve the orchids as well as the organisms associated with the plants. Peter Tobias is a founding member of the Orchid Conservation Alliance an organisation that has been actively fostering the development of orchid preserves. SOOS ought to be supporting organisation. this (see www.orchidconservationalliance.org)

Publicity

As reported under Conservation elsewhere in this newsletter, on February 16, Janet Anderson and Iryna Bonya were the orchid experts on a TBG-sponsored tour of Allan Gardens. Much interest in both orchids and in SOOS was shown by the attendees at this marvellous event. In part, this was done as support for the TBG. But also, Iryna and Janet did it as outreach to the horticulturally interested public. The society needs new members, not only for what SOOS can give them, but also for the new ideas and concepts which they bring to the society. Now, the "sales pitch" is this and it is simple: if you see opportunities for outreach, seize the day. You may need help and, if so, see Yvonne or any other senior member of SOOS and she / they will help you to make it happen.

The American Orchid Society is moving

For some time, the American Orchid Society has been concerned that the cost of maintaining the gardens and headquarters building at Delray Beach, Florida, was beyond what the Society could afford. The decision was made, reluctantly, to sell the property and to find another location with affordable costs. In November the facility and gardens were sold to the Slomin Foundation, a group which works with the care and nurturing of autistic children. While deeply saddened to lose the facilities, the Board was pleased that it was able to be sold to a group which will maintain and enjoy the gardens and building. After considering many possible sites, and narrowing the choice down to two sites, the Board voted at the fall AOS meeting in San Antonio in October, 2011, to move forward with relocation of the headquarters to Fairchild Tropical Gardens in Coral Gables, Florida.

As a result, the AOS executive has been working with the Fairchild leadership and management to develop an agreement between the Parties that spells out our relationship. Both groups have now agreed on the terms of the agreement and the move is slated to take place at the end of February, 2012. The agreement approved by both Parties establishes a target date of February 29, 2012 to be moved out of the Delray building. In addition, the AOS Board has insisted on two things: a balanced budget at Fairchild and that the AOS employees be located physically at Fairchild. As a result, all positions will undergo significant changes with new job descriptions, duties and salary/benefit packages. While this can't happen overnight, the Board anticipates that it will be completed by the end of the current fiscal year.

First and foremost, the AOS exists to serve its members and will be closely examining how best to accomplish this as well as stem membership decline. Fairchild has been extraordinarily successful in increasing their membership and the AOS looks forward to working with them to expand ours. The AOS hopes to utilize some administrative services they currently employ which will necessitate changes in the way we do business. These are difficult times. You are asked to support the AOS as it makes this change and continues to serve its members with an updated and greatly expanded web site, AQ Plus, Orchids magazine and other benefits members receive.

Mario Ferrusi and Jean Hollebone

Trustees of the American Orchid Society, Feb13, 2012

Coming Events

2012

March

3, **Toronto Centre judging** 1 pm at the Toronto Botanical Garden.

4, SOOS meeting Toronto Botanical Garden, sales 12 noon, program 1 pm

17,18, London Orchid Society Show

23, Manitoba Orchid Society Show, Winnipeg.

24,25 Montreal Orchid Expo

30,31,1, Genesee Region Orchid Society Show, Rochester, NY.

April

1, SOOS meeting Toronto Botanical Garden, sales 12 noon, program 1 pm

7, **Toronto Centre judging** 1 pm at the Toronto Botanical Garden.

14, 15, TAOA Show, Toronto

21, 22, Ottawa Orchid Society Show, Ottawa.

25-29, AOS meetings Wichita, Kansas, USA.

AOS Judging Results

Please note, all of these awards are provisional until published by the American Orchid Society

Toronto Centre, February 11, 2012:

Paphiopedilum (Maiden Paradise x Olympian Paradise), AM-AOS 80 points, Wilson Ng.

Cattleya walkeriana var. coerulea, JC-AOS recognising strong peloric form, Joe DiCiommo.

Lepanthes af. dodsonii, CBR-AOS, Jay Norris.

Dendrochilum tenellum, CCE-AOS 90 points, Sherry Decyk.

Dendrochilum wenzellii, CCE-AOS 93 points, Sherry Decyk

Rhyncholaeliocattleya (DiCiommo's Rainbow x Cattleya Tangerine Imp), HCC-AOS 78 points, Joe DiCiommo.

Note! The next regular judging will be held at the TBG on March 4 at 1 pm. AOS Judging is a service of the American Orchid Society and is open to all! Bring us your flowering orchids. We need the practice.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

The plant of the month went to Sherry and Peter Decyk for the specimen plant of *Dendrochilum tenellum*– a huge ball of grass all covered in brushes of little white flowers. This particular species of dendrochilum is not easy to grow well and bloom. The secret is a lot of light, so the Decyks grow it suspended high in their greenhouse. Let it dry a bit between waterings. Very impressive, Peter and Sherry!

Best grower, based on the highest number of monthly show table awards and orchid show ribbons in 2011, is **Synea Tan**.

Most active participant of the show table, based on the highest number of monthly show tables where he entered one or more orchids that were awarded 1^{st} , 2^{nd} or 3^{rd} , in 2011 is **Henry Glowka**.



Webstore only: 10% discount for SOOS members Coupon code: SOOSNL12



Neofinetia falcata has arrived from Japan!! More than 50 varieties.

富貴蘭專賣店 富貴蘭已從日本抵達了! 50多樣的品種.

富貴蘭専門店 50品種以上、 お問い合わせください。

FLORA PECULIA Terry Kowalczuk (416)828-8023 florapeculia.ca tarasmk@hotmail.com

A Star is born.

Crystal Star Orchids offers broker service with over 15 top orchid nurseries from Taiwan and the U.S.A, including:

Ching Hua Orchids, In Charm, Krull Smith, and Sunset Valley.

Our website is up and running. If you have any questions please feel free to email us at: crystalstarorchids@gmail.com or call Eric Lee at (905) 478-8398.

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February (aka January 29) 2012 Show Table

Class	First	Second	Third
<i>Class 1</i> Cattleya Alliance	Cattleya jenmanii Michael Hwang	Guarianthe Doris and Byron Heinz Ernstberger	Cattleya (Sophrolaeliocattleya) Mini Apricot
	Potinara Mark Koch John Vermeer		John Vermeer Epicatanthe (Epicattleya) Butterfly Kisses 'Mendenhall' Linda Gough
Class 2 Paphiopedilum	Paphiopedilum Transvaal X Makuli x Jolly Green Gem <i>Heinz Ernstberger</i>	Phragmipedium China Dragon Heinz Ernstberger Paphiopedilum philippinense var. palawanense 'Si' Wendy Hoffman	
Class 4 Oncidium and related			Oncidium Sharry Baby 'Red Fantasy' <i>Sue Loftus</i>
<i>Class 5</i> Cymbidium	Cymbidium Sweetheart John Spears		
<i>Class</i> 6 Dendrobium		Dendrobium mohlianum Peter and Sherry Decyk	Dendrobium nobile Sue Loftus
Class 7 All Others	Dendrochilum wenzelii Peter and Sherry Decyk	Pleurothallis ghiesbreghtiana Erika Lorincz	Dendrochilum curranii Peter and Sherry Decyk Micropera pericolosa Peter and Sherry Decyk
Class 8 Specimen Plants	Dendrochilum tenellum Peter and Sherry Decyk		

ORCHIDS INDOORS

A Basement Greenhouse By Wendy Hoffman

Making a Growing Room Larger Than Anticipated Is a Smart Move



MY FIRST EXPOSURE TO ORCHIDS came in November 2000. We had just moved into our first real house and actually had room to raise something green. I've always had a thing for plants, but without having the space to grow them, they had a quick death — houseplants anyway.

While perusing the local newspaper, I came across an ad with cacti for sale and promptly made arrangements to have a look. Who would know that this lady would also have orchids? I returned home with one cactus and two orchids — a phalaenopsis and a cattleya. I never bloomed either of those two plants, but they were the beginning of an obsession that took over our house.

Before long I had orchids in every window, on every table and unoccupied surface. Those two orchids became 20, then 40. Then, I bought a light cart with several banks of fluorescent tubes. Actually, that was when my husband, Steve, put his foot down; I was banished to the basement with my evergrowing herd.

Soon I had two carts in a section of the basement wrapped in plastic for humidity. Then came the urge to grow more than just phalaenopsis and other low-light orchids, so up went the first of the High Intensity Discharge (HID) lights.

That's when Steve stepped in again. He didn't mind my hobby, but wanted the basement to look half decent, so he decided to build a proper grow room.

Before I moved the plants into their new space, I had to find a home for my used light carts. They were passed on to members of our local society: to beginners, who, like me, had just caught the orchid "bug." The old, used fluorescent lights were taken to the hazardous waste depot to be disposed of properly.

DEFINING THE SPACE The room itself is 8×8 feet (2.4 × 2.4 m) and is in one corner of our unfinished basement. Because it's unfinished, I take extra time to make sure everything is neat and in its place, since I never know when people will drop by to see my plants.

If you ever get the urge to build a basement room of your own, my biggest piece of advice would be to make it bigger.

Walls, Floors and Ceiling The walls are constructed of $2 \times 4s$ that are covered with moisture-resistant drywall. The ceiling had a layer of plastic added between the floor joists and drywall to keep the humidity from reaching our laminate floor on the main

level. We used white melamine bathroom and kitchen paint on both walls and ceiling as it is reflective and easy to clean.

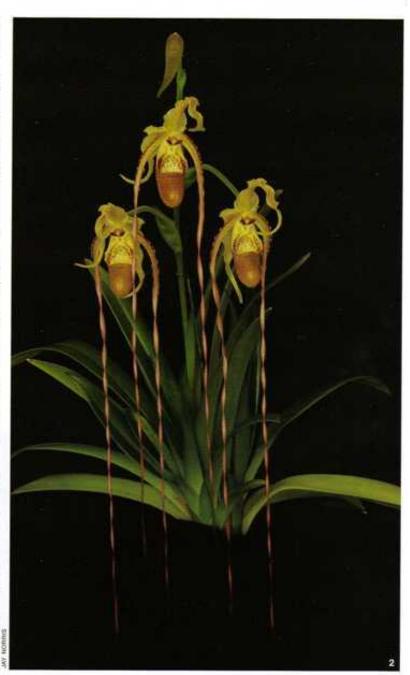
There is some mold buildup on the baseboards, but that is kept under control by clearing the room of anything below bench level, and washing the floor and baseboards with a weak bleach solution (approximately 15:1) twice a year. The plants are left in place and have never shown any adverse effects from the solution or fumes. The concrete floor is painted with light grey garage paint, mostly for cosmetics. There is no drain in the grow room so watering is a bit different (see below).

Lights I have three HID lights in use: all of them are 400 watt. There is one High Pressure Sodium (HPS), one Metal Halide (MH) and one that combines both spectrums. I find that using both HPS and MH produces the full-light spectrum needed to grow both mature plants and seedlings. The lights are all stationary; with such a small space. I haven't found the need for a light mover, but with a larger area I would look into purchasing one. Under one of the tables there is a single compact fluorescent light that illuminates the tray where foliage plants are grown for orchid displays.

All of the lights are on a timer that was hard wired by a professional. Each of the electrical outlets has GFI plugs. This safety feature turns off the power if the plugs get wet or there is too much humidity, avoiding the danger of a shock or fire.

During the summer, the timer is set for 16 hours of light and in the autumn it is gradually scaled back to 12 hours for the winter. When spring arrives, it is slowly moved forward until it is again at 16 hours for summer. The HID bulbs are replaced with new ones every 12 to 18 months.

This setup meets the light requirements of almost anything I choose to grow. The higher light-requiring orchids, such as cattleyas, vandaceous and phragmipediums, are placed about 24 to 36 inches (60 to 90 cm) under, or to one side of, the lights on the tables. Smaller specimens sit on the upper shelves. Seedlings are placed on the side closest to the Metal Halide light to take advantage of the green-blue light spectrum. As they mature to flowering size, they are gradually moved closer to the High Pressure



Sodium light. I don't use a light meter, but instead rely on the individual plants to indicate whether the light and location are right. By growing and flowering well, they let me know if I've placed them correctly. This method has been successful for me as my plants have flowered well enough to earn several AOS awards since June 2004, including two cultural awards.

Temperatures The furnace vents in our basement are closed, so most of

- In her light garden, Wendy Hoffman enjoys a good read with her companions Gregory (far left), one of her three cats, and Felix.
- [2] One of the award-winning orchids raised by the author under lights: *Phragmipedium* Nitidissimum 'Wilhelmina Laarman', FCC/AOS (*caudatum* × Conchilerum). The hybrid was registered in 1888.

the temperature fluctuations are a result of the heat from the HID lights. During summer days, the temperature can rise to 80-83 F (26-28 C) but will drop to 65-68 F (18-20 C) at night. In winter, the day temperatures are 75-76 F (24-25 C) and drop to 58-60 F (14-15 C) overnight. I use two inexpensive but fairly accurate temperature gauges (Accu-temp) that also show the humidity in the room.

Benches The year that Steve built the orchid room, for Christmas he also bought two folding banquet tables. One is 6 feet (1.8 m) and the other is 4 feet \times 2 feet 6 inches (1.2 \times .75 m). On top of them I use two heavy duty ebb and flow trays. These are made of heavy gauge black plastic and have a drain at one end. Since the trays are 2 \times 4 feet (.6 \times 1.2 m), I can house quite a few plants in each one. The water drains through a hole into a pail below.

I hung white, plastic-coated wire shelves on the walls above the tables and placed small trays lined with egg crate on them. The smaller plants go on these shelves and the larger plants go on the big trays.

Humidity For those who grow in the house, humidity can be an issue.

Basement growing areas solve part of that problem, as most are naturally more humid and cool. There are still challenges to overcome with HID lights. I compensate for the lack of humidity by using large cool-air humidifiers. For a long time, I had a console-type unit that had a large wheel with a sponge. Air was pushed through it and became cool and humid. Recently, it broke down and I replaced it with a Honeywell, 2 gallon (7.5 L), cool mist humidifier. It does a good job. but I am finding that more than one is necessary to maintain humidity at the constant 60-70 percent that I want.

FANS AND VENTILATION Two fans run constantly in the grow room. Both are oscillating and are on the medium setting unless it's watering day. On those days, I set them on high as I want any residual water in leaf axils and crowns to be dry by dark. Under one of the benches, I have a smaller fan running during the day. It removes any pockets of warm or cool air that might be near the floor, and helps dry the baseboards after I water.

An exhaust fan close to the ceiling on one wall pushes warm air out into the basement to remove the excess heat from the lights. In turn, I have a window fan unit in one of the basement windows to push that humid air outside. The exhaust fan in the grow room automatically starts three hours after the lights turn on and it goes off three hours after the lights are out. That way, I also get the day/night temperature fluctuation that most orchids need for setting buds. The fan in the basement window runs continuously to push excess humidity outside rather than having it stay in the house and cause problems with window condensation, etc.

WATERING AND FERTILIZING I believe that water is one of the most important factors for good orchid growing. When I first started, I used plain tap water. But the water in this city is high in TDS (total dissolved solids) and after a short time I could see its effect on the plants. I lost some and others weren't vigorous. That's when I switched to rainwater and the results were amazing. We bought a large rain barrel to collect rain from our roof and purchased several large trash containers to store the water in the basement

The only drain in our basement is in the laundry room area, so I must be

careful and avoid splashing water in the orchid room. I use a small utility pump, with a hose and sprinkler shower attachment for watering. The plants in the ebb and flow trays are watered in place and drain into a large bucket on the floor. I carry the smaller trays to the laundry sink, set the orchids on a wire shelf and water thoroughly with the hose. I enjoy this kind of treatment as it lets me check plants for new growth, buds or anything else, such as critters. I use approximately 30 gallons (114 L) of water at each watering, which is usually once a week for the majority of the plants, and spot water for those needing more or less than that.

Fertilizing is done twice a month in summer and once in winter using a hand pump to foliar feed. I use MSU (Michigan State University formulation) fertilizer for pure water 13-3-15-8ca-2mg, at the rate of 1 teaspoon per gallon (3.8 L). MSU fertilizer is also formulated for RO (reverse osmosis) and Lake Michigan water. I purchased mine from Ray Barkalow of First Rays (www.firstrays. com) when he spoke at our Southern Ontario Orchid Society meeting.

AILMENTS I use an insecticide such as Enstar II once a year to control



pests. My entire collection goes outside and is sprayed twice within seven days. Since bugs are not a problem, this treatment has been

[3] Galeandra dives won Best in Class for the Cymbidium alliance at this year's Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Gardens Show.



[4] Ventilated closet shelving allows for good air circulation around the plants that sit beneath a 400-watt High Pressure Sodium lamp (left) and a 400-watt Metal Halide lamp (right).

successful. I isolate new plants and treat them with insecticidal soap, if needed, before joining the rest of the herd. Once a month, I use a small hand paint-sprayer to mist the entire collection with a horticultural oil:water mix (10-15 ml oil to 1 L water or 38-57 ml oil to 1 gallon water) to control spider mites. That application also keeps the plants looking shiny and healthy when they go to shows.

MOUNTED PLANTS I don't have many mounted plants because they do not do well. Almost everything I have is potted in plastic. I use my own mixes that consist of a variation of coconut husk, perlite or sponge rock, sphagnum and charcoal, and also have a mix of small bark, diatomite and hydroton for those plants that might need it. Generally, I repot my orchids once a year. Cattleyas do best in clay pots as they tend to get big and top heavy, and the mix dries out faster.

SUMMER CARE Most basement growers take their plants outside in the summer, but I am one of the few who prefer to leave most indoors. I have much better luck under the lights as there are no cloudy days, constant rain or insects inside. Our summers tend to be shorter in Ontario, so the plants spend most of their time outside acclimating; by the time they adjust to being outdoors, it's autumn, and time to come back in again. I hang my vandaceous orchids in a tree, but I find they bloom best in the autumn, winter and spring under lights.

For people like me who ran out of window space, I would highly recommend that they investigate the possibility of setting up a basement grow room. It's the closest thing to a greenhouse, without all the expense and hassle of building one. To repeat what I said earlier, my strong advice is to make your room as big as possible, since you'll outgrow it in no time.

Wendy Hoffman has been married for 21 years to Steve with whom she has a 19-year-old son, Ben. Three cats and a Jack Russell Terrier round out her family. Wendy has been growing orchids for more than eight years and actively exhibits plants, winning several best in class awards and nine AOS awards, including a First Class Certificate. She is program chair of the Orchid Society of the Royal Botanical Gardens and is on the board of directors for the Southern Ontario Orchid Society. 6 Walman Drive, Guelph, Ontario NIG 4G2 Canada (email hoffman6731@rogers.com).

This article by one of our members, Wendy Hoffman, is reprinted from 'Orchids' magazine published monthly by the American Orchid Society. 'Orchids' is available from our library in the TBG Library or by subscription as an AOS member.