



THE DIXIE NEWS

Publication of Dixie African Violet Society (www.DAVS.org)
Affiliate of African Violet Society of America, Inc. (www.avsa.org)
Mary Lou Harden, Editor (mlhard@verizon.net)

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President's Message

Lynne Wilson

tpalynne@tampabay.rr.com

Dear Dixie Members,

Looking forward to seeing many Dixie members at the 2018 Dixie African Violet Society Show and Convention in Birmingham, Alabama. Our hosts are members of the Early Bird African Violet Club of Birmingham.

Growers are making last minute inspections, thereby guaranteeing they will acquire blue ribbons on each and every exhibit in both horticulture and design.

The Convention is a great opportunity to meet your fellow growers and designers and it's always a great way to pick up helpful hints and get new ideas. Remember when you joined and how much advice you sought and obtained. This led to many friendships and well groomed plants.

Our Vice President has arranged for our workshops and speakers -- always a high point of our convention. This year's speakers are

- Robbie McMeel, who will give us some clues on Packing for Travel: The Plants – Not the Clothes.
- Mary Jo Modica will share her Brief Spectacular Encounter with Chinese Gesneriads.
- Mahlen and Brenda Petry will speak to us on "The Species-The Wild Children of the Family," and
- Betty Ferguson will show us how to create a beautiful Dish Garden with her topic, "Dish Gardens are Easier Than you might think."

For more information about the workshops, as well as everything related to the Convention, please check the Convention Packet which accompanies this newsletter.



If you haven't sent your awards donation, there's still time! Donations in any amount are always appreciated. Checks payable to DAVS should be sent to Marion and Greg Zoller, Awards Chairmen, at 4815 Oak Lane Cove N., Arlington, TN 38002.

Johnnie Berry, our Membership Chair and Treasurer, is looking for our members to send in their current dues (ALL dues are due February 1 each year), and she will be happy to add new members to our group.

I encourage everyone to bring friends and family to come see our show and spend some time in our sales room. Whether you're a seasoned grower or new to the African violet world, you're sure to find new varieties as well as some of the great oldies, and some species plants. There will also be African violet supplies for sale.

Hope to see you in Birmingham. Happy growing!

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
TODAY!

Dues for all classes of memberships are due **February 1** each year. If you haven't mailed your dues, please do it NOW! And we're always happy to welcome new members! Look for the Membership Application on page 17 of this issue and become a member today!

JUDGING SCHOOL CANCELLED

We will not be having a Judging School this year at the Dixie Convention. If you had planned to take the school or need to renew your judge's certificate, we encourage you to sign up for the judging school offered by AVSA at its Convention in May in Buffalo, New York.

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The Alps

TIP: To avoid problems, don't crowd plants! Space your plants to avoid overlapping foliage. Keep plants clean and well groomed.

Dixie's 2018 Convention & Show "VIOLETS DANCE ACROSS DIXIE" APRIL 4-7, 2018



by Kathy Spissman
Dixie's Convention Director
770-939-5289 or mrsstrepstreds@comcast.net

Hope everyone has booked the hotel (**deadline is March 16**), sent in your Dixie reservation (**deadline is March 9**) and is ready to enjoy the next Dixie Convention and Show. Check out the Convention Packet which you should have received with the November 2017 Dixie News. Just in case you did not receive the Convention Packet, we are sending it again with this issue.

Enjoy four wonderful presentations, our FREE Welcome Reception on Thursday night, 2 delicious dinners, presentation of Awards on Friday night and Raffle giveaways on Saturday night and there's FREE parking.

Is this the year you've decided to do a Dish Garden or a Terrarium? I know you are grooming those lovely plants to enter in the show. Dixie always has a beautiful show and plant sale! This year we have four commercials selling plants and supplies, as well as our host club, the Early Bird AV Club of Birmingham. New African violet varieties will be available for you to take home to grow. . .and get a few for club members who could not come. Also, there are many places in Birmingham to check out. Visit the Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau (birminghamal.org). So come early to enjoy the sites and attractions Birmingham has to offer.

Remember: Dixie Convention Reservation Form deadline is March 9, 2018. After that a late fee will be charged. The Cancellation deadline is also March 9. Hotel Reservation Cut Off date is March 16, 2018. Remember: Cancellations must be received 24 hours prior to arrival or a one-night room and tax will be assessed.

Don't forget to sign up to Judge or Clerk! The deadline is March 10, 2018.

Be sure to get your Design Reservations into Michael Jackson by March 17, 2018. Cancellations must be made by March 31, 2018.

ALL AFFILIATE PRESIDENTS: Please be sure all your members have a copy of this February Newsletter and the Convention Packet information. Plus, it isn't too late for your club to donate to the Goodie Bags, Raffle items or Hospitality goodies.

The Early Bird African Violet Club is looking forward to a great convention and that includes every Dixie member. See you in Birmingham in April!



To make online hotel reservations,
Click on the following link:

[Book your group rate for Dixie African Violet Society](#)

Special Group Rate: \$109 per night
Last day to book: March 16, 2018

If you have any questions, contact Kathy Spissman,
Convention Director mrsstrepstrels@comcast.net or
770-939-5289

JOIN THE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA

An AVSA membership offers the following benefits:

- Six full-color issues annually (64 pages each) of the African Violet Magazine filled with great growing information
- Regular columns include
- For Beginners
- Question Box
- In Search of New Violets
- Gesneriad Advice
- Thinking Small
- Coming Events



The AVM gives members continuous information on the latest developments in the African violet world. Commercial members advertise and sell the latest and most popular violets and products. The September issue contains an insert which lists all commercial members so you can find one near you or write for their latest catalog or list. *(Some information formerly published in the AVM, such as the Commercial List, can now be found on the website, on the Magazine page, and is available for members only.)*

- Discounted prices on all products sold in the AVSA Store.
- AVSA holds annual conventions in various regions of the country. All members may participate in these exciting events which feature judged shows open to all registered AVSA members.
- Informative presentations are made by experts in African violet culture.
- AVSA maintains an extensive library of slide and video programs which are available to members at a nominal service charge. Individual Membership is \$30. Send check with contact information to:
AVSA
2375 North Street
Beaumont, TX 77702
- Or register online at www.AVSA.org
- Commercial members also display their newest introductions and have booths where plants and plant-related products are sold.



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

by Johnnie Berry
Treasurer and Membership Chair

Wayne Geeslin, Sugarland, TX
Roy Smith, New Life Member. Cantonment, FL
John R. Griffeth, Danielville, GA



Lovely Rainbow

THE OTHER GESNERIADS

MEDIUM AND LARGE SINNINGIAS

by Thad Scaggs
Spring Hill, FL
tascaggs@gmail.com



S. Florida Floozie

Since we've covered 2 groups of Sinningia, speciosas (florist gloxinia) and miniatures, that leaves the largest of the 3 groups I've broken the genus sinningia. This

was not a scientific breakdown, just groups I thought most of us would relate to within this large, well known and grown genus.

Sinningias are all native to Central and South America, but the cultural needs can vary quite a bit among the 80+ species of this genus widely ranging in size, shape, foliage and blossom color as well. They are tuberous with a few exceptions, a couple have small chain like or thready tubers and a couple of species do not have tubers at all.



Some of the species and hybrids do well and look very interesting with their tuber partially exposed showing 1/4 to 1/3 or more above the soil line. The tuber of those species that bloom directly from the tuber like *S. defoliata* would not be covered. The exposed tuber can be part of the ornamental value of an exhibit just like foliage texture or decorative calyces. The amount of tuber exposed usually depends on the natural habitat of the species or in the case of hybrids, the habitat of their ancestor species. A few are epiphytes,



S. Prudence Risley

some grow on cliff sides or open meadows and some near river beds. When grown from seed, the tuber will position itself by growing under the soil line or partially above. Some species will do fine whether their tubers are buried or partially exposed. Keep in mind tubers, like rhizomes are storage units or modified stems that

can become too wet, so do not allow a pot to sit in water. I have had success growing sinningia species and hybrids in my regular African violet/gesneriad potting mix and plain, long-fiber New Zealand sphagnum moss, both with and without wicks.



S. Party Dress

I do not grow a lot of species of any genus except sinningia and primulina, and nearly all grow outside year round in Central Florida, most in strong light. I grow the primulina more for foliage plants though a few bloom throughout the summer every year and sinningias also have many different types of foliage, but their blossoms present almost the entire color spectrum--some with spots or stripes! And that's just the species. The many, many hybrids that have been created offer more shades, spots, stripes, blending, etc., than most know. I grow them in the ground, in pots, planters and hanging baskets. Many of the species enjoy full sun, growing in open fields while others grow under taller plants in varying amounts of shade. Most have performed well for me in full or nearly full sun.

I have a *Sinningia sellovii* bush that was given to me as a large chunk of what looked like part of a tree stump, but was cut from a huge tuber with a chainsaw. It has been giving us long arching stems of hanging red tubular blossoms spring into summer for over 10 years. Foliage may be hairy or fuzzy, smooth and shiny, quilted or flat and at least one, *S. defoliata*,



S. guttata

loses its foliage before it blooms from the tuber. Some blossoms hang from long stems, others on peduncles from axils and some bloom in platforms--they send a peduncle that blooms in a circle around the peduncle which may grow above the first "platform" of blossoms and put out another circle of blossoms.

Several sinningias bloom in the platform style, but do not make another "platform" of blossoms above the first. Some of the species go dormant every winter regardless of climate, others never go dormant, some depend on temperature and light and some go dormant and never wake up. Some species are great, heavy bloomers well worth a spot on your plant stand, patio or porch. Of the species I have grown, I recommend *S. aggregata* (yellow form), *bragae**



S. aggregate (yellow form)

(formerly sp. "Ibitioca", dark purple/blue blossoms), *bullata** (formerly sp. "Florianopolis", very fuzzy underside of foliage), *cardinalis* (several variants/colors), *conspicua*, *douglasii*, *eumorpha*, *guttata**(shiny dark green foliage, white blossoms heavily spotted purple), *leucotracha**, *piresiana*, *polyantha**, *richii* 'Robson Lopes' (bright yellow), *sellovii*, and *tubiflora* (scented).



S.sp. Ibitioca

There are several more I would like to try--*S. brasiliensis*, *kautskyi*, *leopoldii*, and *ramboi* are a few,

but finding some of these is easier said than done. Many species have variations, usually in blossom color. *S. cardinalis* is reddish orange, *S. cardinalis* 'Innocent' is white, and another variant has a white peloric blossom. *S. richii* was always thought to have white blossoms. In 2008 it was rediscovered, *S. richii* 'Robson Lopes' has yellow blossoms, *S. richii* 'Itamaraju' has purple blossoms. Plant Delights out of South Carolina offers a couple of sinningia species and a few hybrids hardy to 7B.

There are many hybrids in this genus, probably one of the most grown and hybridized in the gesneriad family. One reason for hybridizing these species and/or cultivars is the ease of most to grow and the wide range of foliage and blossoms, but a big plus is it only takes 30 days from making a cross to a ripe seed pod. You could easily make a cross, grow it out, then back or side cross growing 2 generations to bloom in one year. The hybrids present an even wider range of foliage and blossom textures, coloring and markings than the species. There are many sinningia hybrids I've grown and recommend, many I'm sure you've heard of, 'Apricot Bouquet', 'Bewitched', 'Diva', 'Florida Floozie', 'Gabriel's Horn', 'Kevin Garnett', 'Party Dress', 'Spellbound', 'Texas Butterfly' and the list goes on.



S. Spellbound

For very detailed information on the genera *Sinningia*, *Paliavana* and *Vanhouttea* (with a side of humor) try Alan LaVergne's site:

<http://www.burwur.net/sinns/sinns> and for detailed information on the entire gesneriad family, try Ron Myhr's site www.gesneriads.info. Both sites are filled with great information.

DID YOU KNOW? AVSA SHOWS ARE MERIT JUDGED. SIZE OF THE PLANT IS NOT CONSIDERED UNDER MERIT JUDGING. IF TWO PLANTS HAVE THE SAME DEGREE OF PERFECTION, BOTH WOULD RECEIVE THE SAME AWARD.

WHAT'S EATING MY PLANTS?

by Penny Wichman pennypwic@aol.com

First of all let me say that in the almost 30 years of growing, I thought I had pretty much experienced it all. I've had my bouts with thrips, mites and mealy bugs, and a couple of experiments with soil and watering methods that went all wrong, among other things. If it hadn't happened to me, I had heard about it from my violet growing friends.

I was so happy that I was right on schedule for the Ohio State Show and had all of my violets repotted and my new babies potted up. My stands were cleaned off with new plastic on the shelves. I had the violets and seedlings in trays and draped plastic over my stands to help with the humidity. I had not gotten to my gesneriads yet, and had a couple of streps that were blooming nicely, so I thought I would just let them bloom until I got back down to finish repotting.

It was several days later when I made my way back down to the basement to check on them and I was shocked to see that the blooms on the streps were gone. Not just done blooming and fallen off, but completely gone. My first thought was one of the cats had gotten in the basement and chewed them off. We don't usually let them downstairs, because even though they do not usually bother the plants, they do like to jump up on the shelves and knock things over.



No bug that I have ever heard of could completely eat the blooms with nothing left. Upon closer examination, I found what looked like little black grains of rice on my clean stands. Mice? Do mice really eat blossoms?

I got on my computer and did a little research and found out that mice pretty much eat anything, but how could we have mice when we have 5 cats? Granted they do not go in the basement much, but we have 2 outside cats who should have been doing a better job of "patrolling the grounds." Anyway, I thought, OK, I'll let the cats downstairs overnight and see what happens.



The next morning, there was a dead mouse by the basement door. “Good Kitty.” Problem solved—or so I thought.

Since my job as assistant to the general manager and program director of a 64-lane bowling and entertainment center requires me to fill in when someone is on vacation, or a manager gets fired, it was almost a week later when I was able to check on my plants again. I was completely devastated and in tears. There were plants that were knocked over in the trays. Seedlings were pulled out of their pots, leaves were chewed off and the centers of several plants were completely gone. It was unbelievable the amount of damage that was done to my violets.

This means war. Even though I really do not like to kill any living creature (I even relocate spiders that get inside) I had to do something. I went up to the Family Dollar Store which is the closest store to where we live and bought 3 mouse traps. I put a little peanut butter on each one and set them up on my plant stands. The next morning I had 3 dead mice. I carefully removed them to the outside and reset the traps. Thankfully there has not been any more plant damage and no more mice in the traps. I will still keep them set and they will become part of my growing area just like my yellow sticky traps.



I still cannot figure out how they managed to get in past the outdoor cats or where they could possibly have found their way inside. We have never had a “mouse problem” before and we have been here 15 years. We had an exterminator check the outside of the house and he cannot find where they could have gotten in. Hopefully it never happens again—but in just in case my traps will be set.

The good news is African violets are resilient and I’m sure the centers will be growing back and the damaged leaves will grow out. Unfortunately it will not be in time for the Ohio state show. Just another one of the trials and tribulations of an African violet grower.



LOUISIANA STATE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

by Becky McMeel
Louisiana State Director



Hello all,

When life throws you a curve ball, put on that glove and catch that sucker!!! Sundowners caught that ball and chose to explore new ideas!

The venue where SAVS has had their show since the start has been shut down for renovations. I think they hit a home run with the new location as they have been relocated to a different building in the same area. When people show up at the Garden Center and find out it is not open, they merely need to take a short walk to the Café located around the corner! It is a win win for all.

We are happy to announce that SAVS Annual Violet Show will be held on March 24th and 25th at the BREC Café and Teaching Garden at 7711 Goodwood Blvd. in Baton Rouge. Saturday’s hours are 1p.m. to 5p.m. and Sunday’s from 11a.m. to 3p.m. The theme for this year’s show is “Violets Hit the Vegas Strip”. There will also be some plants for sale, so if you are in the area, please stop by and say hi, and see the show. They have some fabulous growers and designers!

And speaking of plant sales.... The new venue does not allow the same amount of space as the Garden Center so they will try out the LSU Indoor Spring Garden Sale at the John Parker Coliseum on the LSU campus on Saturday, March 10th and Sunday, March 11th from 9a.m. till 4p.m. on both days. The club decided to try something new and different in place of the Hilltop Arboretum in the fall as weather has proven to be a problem-especially at an outdoor venue.

So what is the life lesson here? Be flexible and go with the flow. Has YOUR club been in the same spot where you had to deal with a curve ball?

Kudos also go out to the club members for bringing in 3 new and 1 former member to the club since September. SAVS has grown into a busier, more active club that enjoys sharing their knowledge and love of growing violets with members and friends.

Is your club looking for a way to get new members? Have your members speak to garden clubs, civic clubs, retirement homes and schools. Set up a small display at your local library on a Saturday. Bring beautiful plants, talk about your love of growing and have a drawing to give away violet babies! Let us know what you did and how it turned out.



Midnight Twist



Kissaway Trail

Heavenly Duo

by Betty Ferguson

bettywithviolets@gmail.com

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee met in Orlando, FL, and submits the following proposed nominees to be voted on at the Membership Meeting of the Dixie African Violet Society Convention to be held April 7, 2018, at Birmingham, AL:

President	Lynne Wilson
Vice President	Betty Ferguson
Secretary	Laura Walker
Treasurer	Johnnie Berry
Corresponding Secretary	Robbie McMeel

Marian Zoller, Chair
 Bobbi Johannsen
 Becky McMeel
 Phyllis Hinkle
 Jo Anne Schrimsher

Visit our Website

www.davs.org

DID YOU KNOW? African violets prefer a slightly acid (6.5 to 6.7) soil mix? The water should have a neutral pH since the fertilizers added to it are slightly acidic. African violets grow and bloom in a wider range of pH such as 6.2 to 7.0.

We're warned not to be hanging out there for advice, but for Central Arkansas African Violet Society, it was a marriage made at, well, the hydroponics shop. After meeting for years at Mardel Christian and Education store, we and the other groups holding our meetings there were told we were no longer welcome to use their conference room. Mike Byrum of Fermentables & Home Grown Hobbies, however, opened his door wide for our meetings and our business.



At our first meeting, we made a sizeable dent in his inventory wagging home bags of Fox Farm and Roots Organics soil, perlite, fertilizer, pesticides and even yellow thrips strips.

Another huge benefit to this combo is Mike's conversion to the African violet hobby and to our club. Along with gigantic hydroponic tomato plants, peppers and lettuce, Mike unashamedly displays his blossom-

covered African violets in his front window. Because of his enthusiasm, CAAVS voted him an honorary member. He designed a meeting room specially for us and exhibited his violets in the novice class at our show, winning the Best Novice award and blue ribbons in the Gesneriad division. I didn't ask his permission to share this because he would not have given it, but he contributed to the expense of our shows.



At a hydroponics shop, potting mix spilled on the floor doesn't create a stir. Special orders for specialty products are welcome, as is a member's pooch. Mary



Thompson, who authored the article in the November/December *African Violet Magazine*, "Hydroponic Stores Aren't Just about Pot," pointed out that many towns no longer have nurseries left, and many of our supplies are impossible to come by at the big box stores. But many of the products we use are readily available at hydroponics shops. Joyce Stork in



her July 31, 2017, newsletter article said the same and cautioned, "Remember their advice may be best for

their other customers who are growing a yet-to-be legalized crop."

You may just find a marriage made in your local hydroponics shop as our club did--or certainly products Wal-Mart doesn't offer. And you may find a convert to African violet growing and an enthusiastic member for your club.



FROM THE DAVS AWARDS DESK

Marian & Greg Zoller

marigregz@gmail.com

Here we are, about a month away from our 2018 DAVS Convention. I hope you are excited about meeting in Birmingham. I also hope you have been growing and grooming loads of plants for the show.

The order for this year's rosettes has been placed but, alas, we will be getting a bill for them. Therefore we still need to pay for them and provide cash prizes for the winners at the show. So we continue to ask for your donations to the awards fund. And, not to worry, if there is a huge influx of donations we will either up the amount of the prizes or roll it over to 2019.

Thus far in the two years since the last convention we have received donations from 14 clubs, commercials, and individuals. For comparison, at the last convention we received donations from 30 clubs, commercials, and individuals so please consider making a contribution.

The following have made a donation since the last Dixie newsletter:

Marian & Greg Zoller
 Bobbi Johannsen
 Heart of Jacksonville AVS

We look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you

in Birmingham. Please send your awards to:

DAVS Awards
c/o Marian & Greg Zoller
4815 Oak Lane Cove N.
Arlington, Tn. 38002

**BECOME A MEMBER!
(Membership Application on p. 17)**

Please send check payable to DAVS to
Johnnie Berry, Membership Secretary
287 Fennel Way, SW, Atlanta, GA 30331
johnniepearl@comcast.net

TIP: A six-inch pot is usually, but not always, the largest size used for African violets. For standard African violets, AVSA guidelines recommend that the diameter of the pot should be one-third the diameter of the plant.

ROSETTES AVAILABLE

BALTIMORE AFRICAN VIOLET CLUB BEST FANTASY ROSETTE. To order this rosette for an AVSA-judged show, send your request along with check for \$5 to:

The Baltimore African Violet Club
JoAnne Baker-Pruner (410) 315-8513
125 Dalesway Drive
Pasadena, MD 21122-4057
E-mail: jpbaker@coldwellbankermove.com

OPTIMARA BEST OF SHOW ROSETTE FOR OPTIMARA & RHAPSODIE. To order this rosette and a sample kit of Optimara products, send your request to:

Optimara
Attn: Best of Show Rosette
P.O. Box 78565
Nashville, TN 37207
sales@optimara.com

Include your name, name of the AVSA-affiliated club holding the show, dates of the show, your complete address (NO P.O. Boxes), and daytime phone number.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES
February issue – January 15
May issue – April 15
August issue – July 15
November issue – October 15



To include classes for Dixie AVS Collections when writing your Show Schedule! Dixie has ribbons available for the Best Standard Dixie Collection and Best Mini or

Semiminiature Dixie Collection. Cost for the ribbons is \$10.00. When ordering, include a copy of your show schedule, name of the Club, Show chair person's name, complete shipping address with 9-digit zip code, and a contact email address. Send to:

Robbie McMeel, DAVS Affiliate Chair
201 Greenwood Street
Houma, Louisiana 70364
985-868-0439
rmcmeel@bellsouth.net

**Know your 2018 Dixie
Convention Host: Michael Jackson**

by Betty Ferguson
bettywithviolets@gmail.com

"My name is Michael Jackson and I have been hooked on growing African violets since 1980!" Michael wrote on his biography questionnaire. How many violets does he have in his personal collection? 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505 ha, who's counting?!!!"



It all started because his apartment had a sun room and it was empty. Friends would visit and tell Michael he needed to put something in the sun room. "Being on a tight budget as a grad student, he says, "I went to Target and found Parson's tables on sale two for \$1 and African violets on sale three for \$1.



I purchased the tables and violets and solved my problem for \$2." He set the two tables up and started growing the violets having no idea of the proper method. But

one of the three violets, a green foliage plant with a white bloom, started growing and blooming like crazy and really got his attention. "I was so proud of it. I nurtured this plant to the best of my ability all the while enjoying its beauty."

"One day, my plant looked funny and I was not sure what was happening. I kept my eye on it, and it continued to change. I did not like the change I was seeing. My violet leaves were distorted and I decided to find out why. Upon inspection, I found a little baby violet pushing up through the leaves. Wow, my plant had a baby! But the baby was making my violet look ugly."

So, he carefully took a knife and cut the baby from its mother. Then he thought, *I wonder if I can plant this baby and get it to grow.* Yes! Well, the mother plant eventually got back to her original beauty plus Michael had a new violet. "I HAVE BEEN HOOKED EVER SINCE."

Not only are African violets his favorite plant, they're the only plant he grows, although he does favor the *Nautilocalyx* genus. His list of favorites is too long for this article, he said, but he's a huge fan of vintage violets.

What is his favorite part of growing violets? "I just love to grow violets." He also especially enjoys sharing his knowledge with others and learning from others. His least favorite part of growing? Washing and sanitizing pots.

Years ago, Michael learned about Dixie during the week of the Society's convention. He attended the show and was introduced to people in the local club. Since then, he has held all the different positions in his club and is now serving as Show Chairman.

Not only is Michael a skilled grower of African violets--and our upcoming Local Show Chairman--he also owns and operates a printing business and is in his 46th year as a church musician.

His undergraduate studies were at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh and his post grad studies at the St. Louis Conservatory of Music. Michael started playing piano in the third grade. When he was 14, he got his first job playing for a church. His job took a lot of his time, and he also played at nursing homes and different events around town.

Michael was born at Rock Hill, South Carolina, to parents who were employed in the textile industry. He grew up with a sister and twin brothers. Residents of his small town never locked their doors. He describes himself as just a regular kid spending time with his

cousins and friends. His favorite toy was his Rock' em Sock 'em Robots game. Riding his bicycle, playing baseball and swimming were his favorite activities. The family attended church every Sunday.

What do other family members think about his involvement with African violets? After saying, "They think I've lost my mind!" he answered more seriously, "No, they brag to their friends about the beauties growing in my house."

With Sympathy

It was with sadness that we learned from Joel Green, husband of Miriam Kaminsky Greene of Sioux Falls, SD, that Miriam passed away September 14, 2017. Miriam and Joel were married December 3, 1967, and raised three daughters.



Miriam made the communities she lived in a better place through her love of plants and music. She played the clarinet in community bands all over the country and was a producer & hostess of her own local cable TV show in Michigan and South Dakota. She will be missed. Memorial Service was held in October. Cards of condolence may be sent to Joel Greene, 2008 South Blauvelt Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57105-3223.



We were also deeply saddened to learn of the sudden and unexpected passing of John M. Cook of New Bedford, MA. Along with his wife Barbara, John was the proprietor of Cape Cod Violetry. John passed away on January 8, 2018. John was formerly employed by the Falmouth Grain Mill and the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket Steamship Authority until his retirement. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, raising Beagles and was a member of the Paskamansett Beagle Club. He was a member of many African Violet Societies. John had served in the U.S. Army. In addition to his wife Barbara, John is survived by a son, Peter Cook of East Falmouth, two daughters, Deborah Watts of Wisconsin and Donna Guest of Georgia, a brother, James Cook of

Dartmouth, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His Funeral Service was held January 15 in New Bedford. Cards may be sent to Barbara Cook, 587 Shawmut Ave., New Bedford, MA 02740.

THE GREAT AMERICAN TEACH-IN



Having fun with African violets. . .and with the kiddos at Broward Elementary School, Tampa, FL

by Mary Lou Harden

Six members of Tampa AVS spent the morning of Thursday, November 16, at Broward Elementary School for the 2017 Great American Teach-In. We arrived at 8:30 am and were greeted in the parking lot by Miguel who was on patrol duty and told us he was in his 5th year at Broward. He was bright, well mannered and extremely helpful. He accompanied us to the Media Center where we signed in and got our assignment.

We gave our program to two successive classes of third graders.

Miss Mary Lou (Harden) introduced our group and told a little about the Club and showed the students some beautiful African violets as well as a couple of Streptocarpus and a Dish Garden she had put together to show the students some ideas for them to do. Here's a picture of the dish garden. Although she seldom uses accessories in dish gardens, in this one she placed a rabbit and a turtle – which the students loved!

She then introduced Mr. Tom (Schaefer) who taught the students all about growing African violets. It was quite evident that Tom is used to teaching! He had a well-planned script and very creatively compared growing African violets to the ways children grow – both need the right environment and food. He also talked about how no two children are alike – all are different – just as there are many different types and colors of African violets. Mr. Tom then introduced our other assistants, Miss Jean (Krauchik), Miss Anita (Adlin), Miss Terry (Jordan) and Miss Angelina (Grundhoff).

Miss Jean and Miss Anita gave the students the history of African violets, where and when they were discovered and Miss Angelina and Miss Terry each talked about their background and how they became interested in growing African violets. Angelina brought

two beautifully blooming semiminiatures and Terry brought some lovely Streptocarpus as well as some leaf cuttings in various stages of growth.



All of us then potted up fresh cut leaves from our 2017 Project Plant, Pink Watercolor, placed the leaves in plastic baggies and every student received a leaf to take home.

However, the students wanted to keep all of the leaves together at the school as a

school project, and the teachers happily obliged. So we made a lot of students happy with a new project. The teachers received AVSA culture folders and TAVS business cards so they will have information about where and when our meetings are held.

We highly recommend this idea as a way of reaching young people. The Great American Teach-In Day is usually held each year on the 3rd Thursday in November.



FOR KEEPING YOUR AFRICAN VIOLETS PROBLEM FREE

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

1. Observe your plants often.
Daily is best. Whether it's your plants, your children, your husband – checking on them often is important to their (and your) well-being. If there's a problem, it's always easier to “nip it in the bud.” So, if you see a sucker forming, remove it earlier rather than later. If allowed to grow, suckers often destroy the symmetry of your plant.
2. Consistent care is key.
 - Watering

- Fertilizing
 - Repotting
 - Cleaning trays, matting, pots, labels
3. Good air circulation is important. If you don't have ceiling or other type fans, use clip-on fans. If you don't have good air circulation, you're more apt to get problems such as mold or powdery mildew.
 4. No over-crowding! Easy to say, hard to do! We've always got to have "just one more plant!" You'll never have a show plant if your plants are crowded or even touching other plants.
 5. If buying new plants:
 - Buy only from reputable sources – those which have proven themselves to sell only high-quality, bug-free plants.
 - If you're concerned about buying plants and introducing them into your collection, perhaps it would be wise to just buy leaves.
 - When adding new plants to your collection, be sure to isolate for one month at a minimum. Some suggest a 3-month quarantine.
 6. Keep in mind that African violets are really quite inexpensive. What's the worst thing that can happen if your plant has a problem and doesn't look good? That's right – death! Get tough on your plants. If they don't perform well, get sick or otherwise just don't bring joy to you, give them a nice funeral and buy a new plant!

The most common problems:

1. **Neglect** – Your plants will show it if you neglect them! Do you have a plant whose leaves are reaching to the sky? That's neglect – also over-crowding and/or lack of sufficient light! Do you have a large violet that is actually 5 or 6 violets in one pot – and it's not a Trailer – that's neglect. The only known cure is to resolve to spend more time taking care of your plants!
2. **Thrips** – They are attracted to pollen and yellow color in general. Blooms die more quickly than they should and often have discolored edges. You can see a sprinkling of pollen on the petals. Use yellow sticky card or a yellow cup with water in it placed on the shelf among your plants. Remove blooms and buds. Spray with Avid, or Orthene once a week for 3 weeks.
3. **Mealy Bugs – White cottony mass in the crown or underside of leaves.** Remove blooms and drench in Malathion/water solution (1 tsp./gal) or spray with Malathion once weekly for 3 weeks. Or use a soft small

brush dipped in alcohol and treat every place you see the mealyes. Then rinse with warm water.

4. **Soil Mealy Bugs** – Your plants will look wilted and unhealthy. Remove plant from pot and you'll see white cottony masses along the roots and stem, and sometimes throughout the rootball. This is why we suggest, when potting up your plants, you sprinkle some Marathon on the soil. But if you already have a problem, you can toss the plant or cut off the root ball, then drench the plant in Malathion/water solution (1 tsp./gal).
5. **Mites (Cyclamen, Red Spider).** Leaves in the crown of your plant become gnarled, misshapen, deformed and gray. Blooms are often gnarled and hairiness is pronounced. Over-fertilization can also cause centers to become tight. If you haven't been over-fertilizing, it's probably mites. Spray with Avid or Malathion or other miticide once a week for 3 weeks.
6. **Root Rot.** Plants become wilted, soil is moist, lower leaves become mushy and fall off. If the leaf stem (petiole) is black where it joined the plant, it's usually Root Rot. You may be able to save some leaves or you can cut off every bit of the black rot and then pot up in a light, moist mix, and place in terrarium-like conditions until it stabilizes and forms new roots.

DIXIE REGISTERED VARIETIES

These varieties were registered on February 12, 2018, by Belinda Thibodeaux.

1811 CAJUN'S CHRISTY
(B Thibodeaux) Single-Semidouble purple pansy/white eye and rays, thin white edge/variable green edge on top petals. Variegated medium green and cream, plain, ovate. Standard



1812 CAJUN'S COTTON CANDY
(B. Thibodeaux) Single-Semidouble rose pink ruffled star/white eye and edge. Variegated medium green and cream, ruffled, serrated. Standard



1813 CAJUN'S MAMA RUBY (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double wine-red star. Variegated medium green and cream, quilted, serrated. Standard



1814 CAJUN'S MYSTICAL STAR (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble white star/random purple patches. Variegated medium green and pink, ovate, quilted. Standard



1815 CAJUN'S STARDUST (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double ruffled blue star/variable white eye; pink fantasy. Variegated dark green and cream, quilted, serrated. Standard



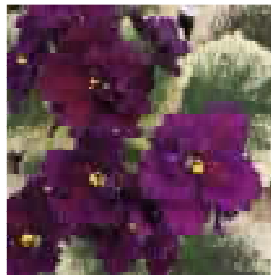
1816 CAJUN'S SUGAR 'N' SPICE (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble pale pink pansy/thin green edge on top petals. Variegated medium green and cream, quilted, serrated. Standard



1817 CAJUN'S SWAMP DANCER (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble blue frilled star/thin white edge. Variegated light green and cream, serrated. Standard



1818 CAJUN'S TOMCAT (B. Thibodeaux) Semi-double bright purple pansy/ruffled darker edge. Variegated medium green, cream and pink. Quilted. Standard



by Sue Hoffmann
DAVS Judges Chair

The first day of spring is March 20, 2018. That means African violet shows are coming. Many of you will be involved--serving as chairmen, helping on show committees, exhibiting plants, creating designs, or judging.

Every show has a common thread – AVSA. The AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges is our how-to manual to ensure continuity in judging throughout the country and around the world.

Regardless of how many years you've been growing or what judging level you have achieved, it is essential to keep information current and update your Handbook when changes appear in the AVM Shows & Judges column.

Here's a recap of 2017 AVSA Shows & Judges Columns, including things that are often misinterpreted.

All Collections must be point scored. Use fractions to judge each exhibit. You'll see the benefits as judging panels rank the winners. At the Judges' Breakfast in Orlando one judge asked about 100 point scoring. Bill Foster, the AVSA Shows & Judges Committee chairman, said no plant is 100% perfect! Awarding 100 points to a plant overrides every other plant in a show. It immediately names the Best in Show plus all qualifying awards without taking other exhibits and fellow judges into consideration.

The Best Trailer in show must be a hybrid trailer. Trailing Saintpaulia species are only eligible for Best Species. The same is true for Best Standard, which must be awarded to a Standard hybrid. Plants winning the Best Standard, Semi, Mini or Trailer awards do not need to be registered varieties.

The only living plant in an Unusual Container exhibit is an African violet - no ivy or other plant material is allowed. Mulch or top dressing (i.e. sphagnum moss or sand) may be used to cover the soil.

An African violet's name does not have to appear on the exhibit card in a design class. A design may not be eliminated from consideration because the variety name is not provided. This did happen and shouldn't be repeated.

A Gesneriad (other) may be shown with a cover in the container in which it was grown. Judges should ask their clerk to remove the cover during judging and replace it when judging is complete. Some plants, especially Sinningias and Episcias need high humidity to grow and bloom. The cover is acceptable.

No points should be deducted for air bubbles in an underwater arrangement. Air bubbles may actually add to the underwater design.

Terrariums may not be placed on a base and must be covered. The African violet does not need to be the focal point of a terrarium! Judges should remember that container gardens are not judged for interpretation of schedule or show theme. Therefore, it is not necessary to name container gardens in your schedule.

Horticulture must make up two thirds of the show and Design cannot be more than one third. One third design is not a requirement but should not be exceeded. An affiliate show schedule can be approved with only one Design class.

The AVSA Judges' Handbook is a judge's most useful tool. Answers to most every question can be found in its pages. I've mentioned just a few problems and misinterpretations that came to light at the Orlando Judges' Breakfast. Take time to refer to your Handbook and by all means, read it occasionally. Bill Foster has said many times, "The answer's in the Handbook!"

Upcoming Events

February 23-24, 2018 – Tampa AVS Show & Sale, "What a Wonderful World of Violets," Fellowship Hall, Common Ground Christian Church, 4207 N Boulevard, Tampa, FL. Show Friday (Noon-5 pm), Saturday (9am-3pm); Sales Friday (9am-5pm), Saturday (9am-3pm). Free admission and parking. Information: 813-689-8700 or mlhard@verizon.net.

March 23-24, 2018 - Heart of Jacksonville AVS Show & Sale, celebrating its Silver Anniversary, "Cheers for 25 Years!," Friday (12 Noon–5pm); Saturday (10am–4pm), San Jose Church of Christ, 6233 San Jose Blvd. (Family Life Center Fellowship Hall), Jacksonville, Florida 32217. Information: Sharon@jacksonvilleviolets.org or Website: <http://www.jacksonvilleviolets.org>

Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/HeartOfJacksonvilleViolet Society](https://www.facebook.com/HeartOfJacksonvilleVioletSociety)

March 24-25, 2018 – Moonlight AV & Gesneriad Society show & sale, "Butterflies Visit Violet Gardens," Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard, Ft Worth, TX 76107. Information: Kathy Leach, kbobl@sbcglobal.net, 817-703-6566.

March 24-25, 2018 – Sundowners AV Society Annual Violet Show, "Violets Hit the Vegas Strip," BREC Café and Teaching Garden, 7711 Goodwood Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA. Saturday hours are 1-5pm and Sunday from 11am-3pm.

April 4-7, 2018 – Dixie AVS Convention & Show, "Violets Dance Across Dixie," Birmingham Marriott Hotel, 3590 Grandview Parkway, Birmingham, AL.

April 14-15, 2018 - Cincinnati AVS and AVS of Dayton, OH, are once again teaming up for their annual AVSA-judged show and sale, "African Violets Come in Many Flavors." Eastgate Mall, 4601 Eastgate Blvd, Cincinnati, OH (right off of 1-275). Sales from 10 am to 9 pm on Saturday and noon to 6 pm on Sunday. Information: Karen at 513-325-0395 or kcenci@hotmail.com or Penny Wichman at pennypwic@aol.com.

April 20-21 – Memphis AVS Spring Show and Sale, Central Christian Church, 531 South McLean Blvd., The corner of McLean and Peabody, Memphis, TN. April 20 (10 am–5 pm), April 21 (10 am–4 pm). Contact: Beth Baker bakerbethrn@gmail.com or 901-550-7860. <https://www.facebook.com/memphisavs>

May 20-27, 2018 – African Violet Society of America and African Violet Society of Canada Convention & Show, "African Violets CAN link US Together," Adam's Mark Buffalo Hotel, Buffalo, NY.

July 3-7, 2018 – Gesneriad Society Convention & Show, Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center, Framingham, MA.

NEW COMMERCIAL TO JOIN US

Glenda Williams of Glenda's House of Violets and Ambrosia Violets from McDade, Texas, will be selling at Dixie in Birmingham. Glenda is a past Director of AVSA, currently President of the Lone Star Violet Council, President of the Central Texas Judge's Council and a member of the First Austin African Violet Society. She will also be selling a wide variety of supplies. We welcome her to Dixie.

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johnniepearl@comcast.net



Optimara Yosemite

From the Editor. . . Mary Lou Harden
mlhard@verizon.net

Dear Dixie Members,

With this issue of the newsletter, we are again sending the Convention Packet which includes the Registration form, Show Schedule, entry sheet, hotel reservation form, complete schedule of events, and all the other information needed to register for the Birmingham convention. In her article on page 2 of this issue, Convention Director Kathy Spissman has called attention all of the important dates and deadlines. **Please don't procrastinate!** Get your reservations in as soon as possible. We'll have a great time in Birmingham!

I know you'll enjoy the articles by our wonderful contributors. However, it would be great if more of you would send us your news items and let us know what your club is doing to engage younger members and your community. Also, tell us about any new ideas on how to make our meetings more fun, as well as informative.

I look forward to seeing you in Birmingham!

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