Hi Folks,

Well, it looks like Mother Nature has finally loosened her grip on our weather. Time to check our tubers and get the season started.

While you’re checking those tubers, don’t forget our tuber sale at Petitti’s Oakwood Village on Saturday, April 11th. Sale starts at 9:30 and runs till approximately 4:30. We can use any extra tubers that you could donate making sure that they are correctly identified. Also, if you could volunteer some time at the sale it would be appreciated.

In addition, don’t forget our tuber sale at our April meeting. Again, bring any extra tubers you can donate to make this a fun evening for all. Please make sure they are clean and properly identified.

At our March meeting a proposal was made to increase annual membership dues to be $15/individual and $20/family. This was a joint proposal initiated by the executive board and revised by the membership at the meeting. Because dues are covered in our by-laws, any change must be acknowledged in the Digest and voted on by membership in a following meeting. This proposal is addressed inside this Digest and will be voted on at the May meeting. We’ll have a discussion of the proposal at our brief business meeting in April and then proceed with the fun part of the night—the tuber sale.

Hope to see you at both of our upcoming sales.

Mike
OFFICERS and CHAIRS

Mike Weber, President…………………………... 440-647-3162
Jerry Moreno, Past President………………….……. 440-543-5658
Emily Halderman, 1st Vice President………….330-697-7368
Jim Thompson, 2nd Vice President………….216-926-7419
Sharon Swaney, Treasurer and Membership…..330-562-3296
Sarah Thompson, Recording Secretary……….216-926-7419
Mary Ann Moreno, Corresponding Secretary……….440-543-5658
Dave Cap, Show Chair……………………………440-888-5589
Barbara Hosta, Archives and Librarian……….216-524-2635
Jerry Moreno Digest Editor……………………….440-543-5658
Barbara Hosta, Cleveland Botanical Rep……….440-729-9714
Nancy Riopelle, Sunshine Chair……………….330-483-3360
Tony Evangelista, ADS Representative……….440-867-3711
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster…………………….330-562-3296

REFRESHMENTS

Ed and Jan Flaws, Mary Ann Moreno, Joyce Southerland

MEETING DATES for 2015

March 20 New Introductions; Waking up tubers
April 17 Tuber auction
May 15 Plant auction
June 19 Ron Miner and Tony Evangelista...on virus
August xx Picnic at Brant and Carol’s
October 16 Photo contest, speaker pending
November 20 Alexandra Kermode...another experiment
December 5 Holiday get-together...Wembley Club

2015 Shows

If you have never shown before, PLEASE consider doing so this year. This is especially important at the Cuyahoga County Fair August 15. Nice-looking blooms are important but it is REALLY important that we have LOTS of blooms there. As you can see, the fair show is the same Saturday as the Columbus Dahlia Society. Since this is the 50th Anniversary for the Columbus society, most of the growers (especially those who usually take lots of blooms to Cuyahoga) won’t be doing so this year as they will be in Columbus. So WE NEED YOU to show at the Cuyahoga County Fair. PLEASE!

There are cash prizes for first, second, third for all categories. Also your entry fee of $12 is completely reimbursed because the Fair gives us money for putting on a show. So, dahlia lovers, it’s up to you to make DSO proud!

Mark your calendars for August 15. Thanks!

August 15-16 Cuyahoga County Fair
August 15-16 Columbus Dahlia Society
August 29-30 Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society
September 5-6 Geauga County Fair
September 5-6 Midwest Show in Ann Arbor
September 12-13 Dahlia Society of Ohio
September 12-13 Cincinnati Dahlia Society
September 12-13 Pittsburgh Dahlia Society
September 18-20 National Show Long Island NY
September 19 East Liverpool Dahlia Society
October 3-4 DSO Member Show at Petitti’s
Bob has been a reliable behind-the-scenes member of DSO for a number of years. He supports the society in many ways with no fanfare, just good hard work whether it is setting up at shows or vacuuming our meeting room. DSO is so fortunate to have the Bob Wennings around.

Since 1979, Bob with wife Virginia (married in 1974) and daughter Lisa live in Garfield Hts. He was born in 1949, graduated from Olmsted Falls High in ’69. While there he enjoyed woodshop, music, and taking care of stage lighting and sound for the Drama Club and assemblies. He also made some recordings with his reel to reel tape deck (I still have one!) of school bands, choir and other singing groups. Some were made into LP records. (Have LPs too!) During the 1970s, he worked for his dad in home construction as well as an electrician. From 1982 until being downsized in 1998, he worked for the Cleveland Illuminating Co. Thereafter he was employed at Maple Hts. True Value Hardware from where he retired a few weeks ago.

So how did Bob get interested in dahlias? While at True Value, Bob asked a frequent customer who was retired what he used to do. The customer was Eugene Woznicki. (Gene passed away a couple years ago. He was a member of DSO, grew absolutely gorgeous large dahlias, and was owner of Bedford Dahlias.) Well, Bob would tell Gene of his parents having bought 14 acres of land on Lindberg Blvd. in Olmsted Falls back in ‘39. They started the Cleveland Dahlia Farm there. Bob’s dad build a large greenhouse and grew dahlias wholesale for garden centers and people across the United States. One of his customers was F. W. Woolworth stores. In addition to the wholesale business, he sold to people who would stop and drive in for fresh cut flowers. His dad kept the business until 1958 when he found a more lucrative trade as a home builder. Bob added that dahlias are deep-seated in the Wenning family as his grandfather owned Bazil Dahlia Farm in Indianapolis, Indiana back in the 1920s-30s.

One day at True Value, Gene surprised Bob with a shoe box of 6 tubers. That got him started growing dahlias and to remember what his dad and grandfather grew so many years ago. Bob began taking blooms (from Gene’s tubers) to the hardware store to show and typically people would ask what they were and are they real!

Gene encouraged Bob to join DSO. From Bob, “The next thing I knew I was helping set up at the Cuyahoga Fair show. I brought in one flower just to show Jerry Moreno. I didn’t think it was good enough to enter but Jerry said not to worry and enter it. I was elated when my Alfred C made it to the Court of Honor for Novice.” Since then Bob has won many blue ribbons. From the beginning of 6 tubers from Gene, Bob now grows 75 plants of 40 varieties in his 25’x35’ backyard. He said that he is looking forward to helping more with DSO now that he is retired. He closed with this encouragement, “You novice growers, try entering at the next County Fair.”

Terrific advice, Bob, and thanks for an absolutely delightful contribution of telling us of your career and your life with dahlias. Oh, another note from Bob. In the 1970s, on weekends, he owned a part-time disc jockey business called Wenning Productions. He played records and tape music for wedding receptions, parties, ski clubs, etc.
Judge’s Corner

Ron Miner

This column is a departure from others; I’m on vacation! :-) Actually, I’m caught away from my computer and all my usual resource materials, pictures, etc. We are spending Easter with Jeff and his family in California.

It is, however, ok, because it gives me an opportunity to reinforce the importance of the virus research work underway by Prof. Hanu Pappu at WSU. Jim and Carl Chuey’s donation to WSU in support of the virus project there has precipitated new research that I consider to be a watershed change in our ability to make a real difference in control of virus in our gardens. Their donation has also sparked a wave of communication among dahlia growers. The essence of the change is that we can now identify, with confidence, the presence of virus in our gardens. That identification is based simply on the appearance of the foliage of our plants. In the past, I, and no doubt many of you, blamed the virused appearance on poor vigor in the plant and responded with more vigorous fertilizing and/or addition of minor element soil amendments to our gardens. Dr. Pappu’s counsel in that situation is to forget it! The plant has a virus. Pull it out and throw it away.

The other half of that watershed change is the additional knowledge that some dahlias (hopefully “many,” soon) do not have virus. Thus, pulling out virused plants and leaving plants with a healthy appearance will lead us toward virus-free gardens! I said here a couple months ago that the relationship to judging is straightforward. In contrast to some of my earlier counsel, you must penalize the appearance of virus!

The bottom line is heartfelt thanks to Jim and to Carl Chuey for their commitment to the virus research project. Carl’s legacy may well be felt by all of us who love dahlias!

Ron

Proposal to Change Dues

Having reviewed the current and projected future fiscal status of DSO, the Board is proposing an increase in annual dues from the current $10 to:

$15 for single membership
$20 for family membership

The change is being proposed based on:
- Our dues have been at $10 since 1999.
- Our deficit last year was $1500 and has been in the red the past three years.
- Price of tubers that we purchase to augment our sales and cutting propagation has increased.
- The Midwest Conference has encouraged societies to increase the number of categories being awarded Court recognition in the name of promoting all forms of the dahlia. We have done so the past few years.
- The current Digest in color costs $11 to copy and mail for 6 issues per year. Before this year, the cost has been donated.
- Supposing that there are 100 family members, the increase in dues would produce $1000. That does not cover the annual deficit so discussion will be needed on where costs can be reduced.

According to our By-laws, this constitutes Notice of a change to be discussed at the April meeting and voted on at the May meeting.
Special Awards to be Given—Midwest Show 2015
Ann Arbor Michigan, September 5-6

For those who are planning on showing at the Midwest Show, keep the following special awards in mind. Prizes can be as much as $100.

Best Zorro
Best Country Dahlia
Best Nellie’s Rose
Best Penhill Introduction
Best Valentine Garden Introduction
   (Valentine Lil, Nancy Ann, Danae, Stella R)
Best Baron open center Introduction
   (Baron Aunt Dorothy, Baron Kathy, Baron Sylvia, Baron Larry, Barbara’s Favorite)
Best Marcella Louise
Best Hilltop Introduction
Best JS Introduction
Best Canadian Introduction
Midwest Flower of the Year—Any size White dahlia

SOIL PREPARATION in APRIL

Having survived a horrendous winter, we are all itching to get into the garden. But be careful not to compact your soil by walking on it before it has a chance to dry out a bit. Tilling (assuming that you till as there are those who are in the no-till camp) when soil is too wet and/or not warm can cause the structure of the soil to collapse. Compacted soil will inhibit root penetration.

The traditional way to check if the soil is too wet is to take a handful and squeeze it. If the ball of soil in your hand does not fall apart when poked, the soil is too wet to be tilled. To check for warmth (at least 60 degrees), a soil thermometer can be used, or I’ve been told to stick your hand a few inches into the soil. If you can’t keep it there for a minute or more, the soil is too cold. (Quite frankly, I’ve never tried it.) Others have told me that the average night temperature is a good indicator of how warm your soil is.

Another issue at this time of year is whether your soil has the right pH and nutrients for dahlias. If you didn’t get a chance to get your soil tested last fall, do it now. A nearby lab is Logan Labs in Lakeview. www.loganlabs.com/index.html The results will indicate what is needed to improve your soil. A thorough test every two to three years is recommended.

But the very least to do is to buy a pH tester from a local nursery. pH measures soil acidity or alkalinity that affect the extent to which nutrients are able to dissolve and create a soil solution that is used by roots to grow. Dahlia roots require the soil pH to be between 6.5 and 7 which is

DSO Flower of the Year
Chandra Kay
M FD Y

Introduced by DSO member Doc Hemminger

NEED A PICTURE!!!!!
slightly acidic.

Dahlias like rich soil and good drainage. So, even if you haven’t tested at all, it’s always a good idea to add organic material to your soil such as leaf humus, composted cow manure, household compost. Peat moss can be used but it is acidic so you may need to add limestone to compensate. (As an aside, limestone raises pH, aluminum sulfate lowers pH.)

Regarding chemical fertilizers, it is better to apply them closer to planting time. A soil test will tell you exactly what you need. Otherwise, some growers use a balanced 12-12-12. Recall that the first number is the percentage of nitrogen in the bag, the second is the percentage of phosphorus, and the third, potassium. For example, a 100-pound bag of 20-5-15 would contain 20 pounds of nitrogen, 5 pounds of phosphorus, and 15 pounds of potassium. Nitrogen (N) is for lush, green growth. Phosphorus (P) is for root and flower development. Unlike nitrogen that leaches through soil with ease, phosphorus does not. So depending on your soil analysis, you may find that you want a fertilizer containing little or no phosphorus. Potassium (K) is for overall health and strength. It lingers in your soil as does phosphorus so you may not need much of it either. Many resources recommend that a handful of bone meal be worked into the soil at planting time. From Wikipedia, “Bone meal is a mixture of finely and coarsely ground animal bones and slaughter-house waste products. It is used as an organic fertilizer for plants and as a nutritional supplement for animals. As a slow-release fertilizer, bone meal is primarily used as a source of phosphorus and protein.” Bone meal also contains many other elements that plants need.

**Starting Tubers Indoors**

It’s a good idea to start tubers indoors about three weeks before you plan on planting them outdoors. Come to the April meeting and ask members what methods they use. See you April 17.

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**March Meeting Notes from Sarah**

**Date, Time and Location**

◊ 7:36 pm—9:51 pm March 20, 2015 at the meeting room of Busch Funeral Home

**President Report**

◊ President Mike Weber began the meeting with the program of showing the video on the 2015 New Introductions.
◊ After the video, he thanked the new and returning board members for 2015 and had members welcome guests who were introduced.
◊ Mike announced that Tony Evangelista is the new ADS rep and thanked Jerry for years of service in that position.

**Treasurer Report**

◊ Treasurer, Sharon Swaney stated that the checking account at the end of 2014 was $1327 which included the Memorial Fund, so the net balance was $1520 in the red. The current balance is $1111 including the Memorial Fund or -$1736 without it.
◊ Thus far in 2015, the following have been paid: Midwest Conference dues, Botanical Garden annual sponsorship dues, ADS membership insurance, Garden Club of Ohio affiliate dues.

**Membership Report**

◊ Sharon announced that there are currently 93+ DSO members.
◊ A membership list was passed around the room and those in attendance were asked to verify their information. Additionally, she announced that unless refused, basic contact information would be included in a DSO roster for each member and made available for member use only.

**First Vice President Report**

◊ First VP Emily Halderman mentioned the 2015 Christmas gathering will be held at the Wembley Club again this year.
◊ The annual summer picnic will be held at Brant and Carol’s farm again this year.
◊ A refreshment sign-up sheet was circulated around the room.
Corresponding Secretary Report
◊ Corresponding Secretary MaryAnn Moreno reported that 64 copies of the Dahlia Digest were postal mailed with the note that dues were due for those who have not yet paid. No dues paid, no Digest next month.

Dahlia Sales and Shows Chair
◊ Dahlia Sales and Shows Chair Dave Cap announced that the Petitti’s Annual Tuber Sale will be held on April 11. A sign-up sheet was circulated for volunteers to assist at the sale.
◊ The schedule for shows and sales was provided on the back of the Agenda. A correction was made to the date of the Petitti’s Show. October 4-5 was corrected to October 3-4.
◊ Dave requested the assistance of members at the upcoming sales.

New Business
◊ Botanical Chair Barb Hosta announced that membership to the Botanical Gardens also provides access to select gardens around the country.
◊ Second Vice President Jim Thompson discussed his creation of a DSO Facebook page. He discussed what can be found on the page and how many likes/views the page has already received.
◊ Mike discussed the annual Willoway plant propagation project.
◊ The DSO Flower of the Year is Chandra Kay which was introduced by our own Doc Hemminger.
◊ The DSO Artistic Design Themes for 2015 were announced and distributed to those in attendance. The court award will be named in honor and memory of Linda Vuletich.
◊ With this year’s national show being held on Long Island, NY, Sharon Swaney and Barb Miner looked into the possibility of interested members renting a bus for the trip. With an email distributed soliciting interested parties, it was determined that there was not enough interest to warrant renting a bus.
◊ In consideration of the current checking account balance in the red and the additional cost of printing and mailing the Digest that has been donated to date, a discussion was held about the possibility of raising the annual dues to offset some of the deficit. A motion was made to raise the dues from the current $10 for everyone to $15 for single membership and $20 for a family. The process for taking a vote will be to publish the proposal in the April Digest, conduct discussion on it at the April meeting, and vote on it at the May meeting. Member Jim Chuey offered to donate funds in lieu of or in addition to raising the membership dues if DSO has 501C3 IRS status. Sharon thought that we are 501C7. Jim was thanked for his generous offer.
◊ As another way to help raise funds, the attendees discussed the possibility of selling advertisements to local businesses to be displayed in the Digest. Donations could also be solicited for the annual show. It was agreed that future discussion on this topic would be held.

PLEASE CONSIDER getting your Digest by email rather than postal mail. Every little bit helps the Society reduce its costs. The electronic Digest format is the same side-by-side one as is the printed version. Let MaryAnn Moreno know if you want to receive the Digest electronically. Her email address is maryannjerry@windstream.net Thanks.

AMERICAN DAHLIA SOCIETY announces EDNA C as the BEST DAHLIA of the PAST 50 YEARS based on
◊ Popularity
◊ Dahlia show success
◊ Variety longevity

Runner-up: Hamari Accord
Third: Inland Dynasty

Previous Winner: Jersey’s Beauty
DSO/ADS Membership Application
(Memberships are calendar year.)

Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

Date: _____________________
Name(s): __________________________
Address: __________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
Phone: ___________ Alt Phone: ___________
Email(s): ___________________________

PLEASE choose one of the following membership offerings:

[ ] DSO (includes husband and wife) $10
[ ] DSO + ADS Individual Membership $34
[ ] DSO + ADS Family Membership $37

Snowbirds: Add $6 and enter winter address here:
_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________ 

Would you like to receive your Digest in digital format only? (Be sure to include an email address above) Please circle:

Yes    No

Please make checks payable to DSO.

Mail to: Sharon Swaney
340 Aurora-Hudson Rd.
Aurora, OH 44202