

AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY

Embassy Suites Hotel
Baton Rouge, LA

Annual Convention
June 18 – 21, 2009

FIRST PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE MEETING, 4 P.M., JUNE 18, 2009

President Eddie Griffith called the meeting to order and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Eddie Griffith, 2nd VP Don Mixon, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Fred Roush, Treasurer Walter Bisselle, Executive Secretary Val Longson. Absent: 1st VP Wayne Cameron.

President Griffith announced that all Committees would meet as a Committee of the Whole, and listed several agenda items he wanted to discuss at this meeting that may then be referred to the appropriate committees for possible action and then presented to the full Board of Directors at its meeting on Friday:

- ∞ Location of the 2010 Convention.
- ∞ In 1st VP Cameron's absence, who should chair the Show and Judging Rules Committee?
- ∞ Whether Amateur Exhibitors must be present to enter their blooms.
- ∞ Review the seedling problem that occurred at the April 26, 2009, Lone Star Chapter show.
- ∞ Review and publish the Head Table set up at shows.
- ∞ Review the show-scheduling conflicts within the regions.
- ∞ Divide Texas and Louisiana into two separate regions?
- ∞ Improve and increase hibiscus culture articles in *The Seed Pod*.
- ∞ Review the progress on the DVD Catalogue.
- ∞ Review the progress on the Nomenclature Database.
- ∞ Review the policy on new Seedling Evaluation Committee members rating plants they haven't evaluated very long.
- ∞ How many times should the SEC's Designated Grafter be required to replace plants?
- ∞ Increase the time between when the Designated Grafter receives seedling wood and plants are shipped to the evaluators to nine months.
- ∞ Reminder to all hybridizers not to enter a seedling in a show that he/she has not evaluated in all seasons, and that they must furnish enough wood to the Designated Grafter to produce 12 plants.

The above items were discussed and were referred to the appropriate committees.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 5 P.M., JUNE 18, 2009

Chairman Fred Roush called the meeting to order and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Eddie Griffith, 2nd VP Don Mixon, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Fred Roush, Treasurer Walter Bisselle, Executive Secretary Val Longson; Directors Cindy Erndt, Paul Felsberg, Joyce Comingore, Kathy Grandoff, Wanda Schmoyer; Immediate Past National President Sam Andrews; Chapter President's Coordinator Wally Neef. Absent: 1st VP Wayne Cameron, Directors Bradley Christian and Ed Flory.

Chairman Roush read a proposal from Randy Cox suggesting that the Hibiscus of the Year competition be changed to allow each hybridizer who wins a Best of Show Seedling at a sanctioned AHS show to choose to submit a seedling bloom of his/her choice for evaluation, not necessarily the bloom that won. After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to allow a hybridizer to replace his/her bloom that won BOS Seedling with a seedling of his/her choice to be submitted to the Seedling Evaluation Committee for HOTY consideration. The motion failed unanimously.

Pat Merritt asked the Board to consider changing the present designation of Hibiscus of the Year (HOTY) to Seedling of the Year (SOTY) to more accurately describe this award. After a brief discussion, a suggestion was made to table this until the Board could have time to think about the matter.

Mrs. Merritt informed the Board of the death of Dr. Jana Downing, founding member of the British Virgin Islands Chapter in Tortola, BVI. Thanks to Jean Burns in St. Croix for sending this information.

Director Joyce Comingore handed out updates and revisions to the Policy and Procedures Manual. She volunteered at the November Membership Meeting to keep these pages updated.

2010 Convention Location

Executive Secretary Val Longson investigated several properties for this Convention and recommended to the Board that it be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lake Buena Vista (Orlando), Florida. On motion made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to accept Ms Longson's recommendation.

Amateur Exhibitors

After considerable discussion, the Board voted to keep the current rule in force. An Amateur Exhibitor must be present to enter his/her blooms except under unusual circumstances. The Show Director and/or Show Chairman may make an exception on a case-to-case basis.

FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, JUNE 18, 2009 (con't.)

Lone Star Chapter Show I Seedling Winner

Background: At the April 26, 2009, Lone Star Chapter Show, Barry Schlueter's Mellow Yellow won Best of Show Seedling, Don Florus' Texas Wild seedling won Best Regular Seedling Double, and Mr. Florus' Foxy Mama won Best Miniature Seedling Single. There was no Miniature Seedling Double. On Monday, April 27, when the show results were posted on the Internet, Randy Cox posted an email on the AHSBiz and THML Lists that Mellow Yellow was listed on Barry Schlueter's web site as having been optioned by Hines Nursery for propagation and sale in commerce. Hines Nursery was in Chapter 11 Bankruptcy proceedings and never propagated Mellow Yellow for sale. The hybridizer withdrew Mellow Yellow from the show and apologized for the inconvenience. The Show Director contacted all of the judges at that show and asked them to vote for one of the other two head table seedling winners. The vote for Texas Wild was unanimous.

This was referred to the Show and Judging Rules Committee for a recommendation.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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BYLAWS COMMITTEE MEETING, 8:30 A.M., JUNE 19, 2009

Chairman Don Mixon called the meeting to order with members Rita Hall and David Tate present. Absent: Ed Flory.

Paul Felsberg reported the need to have a date when the bylaws were last updated posted on the AHS web site.

No bylaws changes were requested for this meeting. Don Mixon reported that a couple of Chapter presidents are not cooperating by requesting their show dates in a timely manner, and are demanding certain dates as the only date they can have their show. After discussion of this problem, the Committee recommended that a letter be sent to each Chapter president at the end of each show season reminding them that all show dates must be cleared through the 2nd vice president.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING, 8:45 A.M., JUNE 19, 2009

Chairman Walter Bisselle furnished copies of the Annual Report for fiscal year June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009. A copy of this report is filed with these Minutes.

A deficit of approximately \$9,000 is projected for the coming year with declines in nearly all income categories. Expenses are fairly stable. Insurance has decreased somewhat, and Publications has downsized to a smaller and less costly storage facility.

The chairman briefly discussed the need to contact corporate sponsors.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE, 9 A.M., JUNE 19, 2009

Chairman Paul Felsberg called the meeting to order with members Walter Bisselle, David Tate, Fred Roush and Chairman Felsberg present. Mr. Felsberg presented to the Committee a DVD (digital virtual disc) with 3,309 hibiscus images that will become the digital catalogue sponsored by the Chandler Cox Foundation. The chairman recommended that the AHS furnish one of these DVD's to each paid AHS membership at no charge, and post on the AHS web site that a disc will be mailed to each new paid membership. The disc will be available without membership for \$29.95, which includes shipping and handling.

After discussion, on motion made and seconded, the Committee will present this proposal to the Board at its meeting later today.

Also discussed was using some of the Foundation grant funds to produce other PowerPoint programs on hybridizing, grafting and rooting cuttings for use at Chapter meetings. The cost of producing these programs is minimal.

Publications have been moved to a smaller storage unit, cutting our rental costs by about 50%.

A culture article/column for *The Seed Pod* was discussed, and Pat Merritt will ask Barry Schlueter if he would consider writing it.

Roland Gaudet was successful in finding a printer to produce new Exhibitor Cards for the Amateur and Miniature classes for less than \$500. The need to find a sponsor for these cards is critical. When we are faced with reprinting a quantity of these cards in all classifications, the cost will run into thousands of dollars.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE, 9:30 A.M., JUNE 19, 2009

Chairman Sam Andrews called the meeting to order with members Pat Merritt, Lynn Andrews, Marti Graves, Cindy Erndt, and Chairman Andrews present. Mr. Andrews introduced Dr. Pat Hegwood, professor of horticulture at Louisiana State University, who runs the Burden Center. LSU is hosting the American Hibiscus Society's Nomenclature Database. Dr. Hegwood thanked the AHS for the \$6,000 grant with which Mr. Sam Razi hired graduate assistant Michael Avinash to do the programming. The project is almost finished, and the linking of the hibiscus images will be the last step. Dr. Hegwood and Dr. Rodney Hendrick presented a PowerPoint program charting the progress of the work on the Nomenclature Database, which should be online and ready to use by everyone by Labor Day. Some of the features identified in the program were

- ∞ Easy-to-use online registration form.
- ∞ Ability to reserve names for hibiscus blooms up to 12 months (must be renewed at the end of one year).
- ∞ Searchable fields.
- ∞ Registrations in Excel format are importable into the database.
- ∞ Has the capability of combining all existing hibiscus nomenclature databases into this one.
- ∞ The stability and security of a prestigious university behind it.

The current International Cultivar Registration Authority for Hibiscus rosa-sinensis Brian Cheers of Australia has been very cooperative with this project, but he has had some health and computer problems recently.

There followed a lengthy discussion among the committee members about technical issues dealing with finishing the web site.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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CHAPTER PRESIDENTS' MEETING, JUNE 19, 2009

The Chapter Presidents' Coordinator Wally Neef called the meeting to order with the following Chapters or their representatives present:

Conrad Sunrise: Paul Felsberg

New Orleans: Fr. Bob Gerlich

Lone Star: Marti Graves

Harry Goulding: James Bridges

Michael Bernard Acadiana: Sandra Theall

Golby Reasoner: Don Mixon

Gulf Coast: Wally Neef

Sunset: Fred Roush

Space City: Cindy Erndt

James Hendry: Wanda Schmoyer

Red Stick: Damon Veach

Tampa Unbelievable: Don Mixon

Central Florida: Gary Mathews

Thirteen of the fifteen Chapters had presidents attending or were represented by another member. Getting new members is the main focus from most chapters. The Hendry Chapter signed up nine new members at their show by offering \$3 off on each plant with a new paid membership. The Red Stick Chapter offers two free plants with a paid membership at the show. The first one is given to the new member at the show, and they can pick up the second one when they attend their first meeting. The Space City Chapter had its best show season this year partly because of Hurricane Ike. Many people in that area lost everything in their yards and came to their three shows to replace their hibiscus plants. It helps greatly to have shopping carts available if you have the room in your show venue. Many do not. The Sunrise Chapter makes more money on their two Chapter auctions each year than on their show plant sale. The bottom line from every Chapter was publicity makes your show. Make friends with your local newspaper's garden editor and try to get a mention in the paper the day before your show.

Chapters with web sites, please link to other chapters' web sites. Share resources with other chapters.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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SHOW AND JUDGING RULES COMMITTEE, JUNE 19, 2009

Second VP Don Mixon called the meeting to order in the absence of First VP Wayne Cameron. Members present: Paul Felsberg, Marti Graves, Zelma Neef, Bonnie Orpi, Pat Merritt, and Bobby Dupont.

This Committee ran concurrent with the Judges Seminar. A list of judges attending was sent to the 1st VP for his records.

A proposal for a judging rules change was presented to the committee that, during the Gold Seal judging, judges abstain from voting in the classification in which they exhibit. At most shows, a bloom will win by only one or two votes. If there are husband/wife judging teams, they can sway the vote for their bloom. In the discussion that followed, some of the negative points were: a TX/LA show may only have four or five judges, and nearly every exhibitor will have blooms in the Miniature classification. It was acknowledged that the rule will have to be tweaked somewhat. After discussion, on motion made and seconded, this rules change, if approved by the Board, will be tried for one show season. This will begin with the Conrad Sunrise and Harry Goulding Chapters' shows this fall. A report will be made to the Board at the Fall Membership Meeting. This motion carried unanimously.

At the Lone Star Chapter Show I on April 26, 2009, an exhibitor entered a seedling that won Best of Show Seedling. The next day it was reported on the AHSBiz and THML lists that this seedling had been offered in commerce and was, therefore, ineligible for this award. The hybridizer withdrew it. The Show Director reconvened the judges via email, posted pictures of the two other head table seedling winners and asked them to vote for one of them to replace the withdrawn seedling. The judges unanimously voted for Texas Wild, and that seedling was turned in to the Executive Secretary as the Best of Show Seedling for that show. Because of the "Seedlings Do Not Move Up" rule, the Lone Star Chapter is asking for a one-time exception to this rule to allow this show to have a seedling winner. A motion was made and seconded to allow this one-time exception for Mellow Yellow to be replaced by Texas Wild. After discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

A brief discussion about positioning blooms on wires (facing forward or straight up) resulted in the committee telling the Show Directors to use their common sense in arranging the blooms to their best advantage.

The Committee next reviewed the current Miniature List and made several corrections to it.

President Griffith thanked all of the judges for traveling to shows, and stated that the judging process in Florida had gone very smoothly. He reminded the judges present to move the process along by not taking too long on any one bloom. A competent judge should be able to look at a bloom and tell if it should be a Gold Seal bloom.

A suggestion was made to separate the tracking and managing of the judges from the office of the First Vice President. That job already has a lot of responsibility, and the tracking of judges needs some continuity. This should be brought up at the Board meeting.

Bonnie Orpi gave a presentation on bloom preparation for shows.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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SEEDLING EVALUATION COMMITTEE, JUNE 19, 2009

Chairman Rod Hendrick called the meeting to order with the following members present: Sam Andrews, David Tate, Kathy Grandoff, Greg Graves, Rod Hendrick; Absent: Pete Conrad, Gayle Morrison, Annelle Cox, Bradley Christian.

The chairman announced that Gayle Morrison has resigned from the committee.

Chairman Hendrick led a discussion about the timing of delivering wood from winning seedlings to the designated grafter. Wood from winning blooms must be submitted by November 1 of the year they win. Growing plants must be furnished to SEC members by Convention of the following year. There are at least two fall shows in Florida, and it is impossible to get wood to the grafter by November 1.

The chairman's computer malfunctioned and the evaluation numbers for 2006 and 2007 were wrong. He will redo the evaluation sheets and a special meeting will be held later.

The committee members discussed the individual blooms under evaluation for 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The chairman nominated Cindy Erndt, Lone Star Chapter, Alvin TX, to be a member of the Seedling Evaluation Committee. On motion made and seconded, Cindy Erndt's nomination was approved unanimously.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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SEEDLING EVALUATION COMMITTEE RECONVENED, 10:30 A.M., JUNE 20, 2009

The Seedling Evaluation Committee reconvened its meeting with the following members present: Sam Andrews, David Tate, Kathy Grandoff, Greg Graves, Rod Hendrick, and Cindy Erndt. Absent: Pete Conrad, Annelle Cox, and Bradley Christian.

Chairman Rod Hendrick told the committee that Jim Gedicke has offered to enter the evaluation information in Excel spread sheets.

Corrected summary sheets for 2006 and 2007 were handed out to members and discussed.

The chairman again asked the Committee about allowing a hybridizer to insert a seedling of his/her choice for this year and have plants delivered to the SEC members in November 2010. This died for lack of a motion.

The chairman again asked the Committee about allowing a winning hybridizer to substitute a bloom for the one he/she won with. This died for lack of a motion.

Chairman Hendrick made a motion that the seedling winners at the fall shows have until October 15 of the following year for plants to be delivered to the members. The vote passed unanimously.

Changing the designation of Hibiscus of the Year to Seedling of the Year was briefly discussed, then tabled until the November Membership meeting.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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SECOND PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE MEETING, JUNE 19, 2009

President Eddie Griffith called the meeting to order and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Eddie Griffith, 2nd VP Don Mixon, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Fred Roush, Treasurer Walter Bisselle, Executive Secretary Val Longson. Absent: 1st VP Wayne Cameron.

President Griffith announced that Gayle Morrison resigned from the Seedling Evaluation Committee, and that committee appointed Cindy Erndt to replace her. On motion made and seconded, Mrs. Erndt's appointment was approved.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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SECOND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, JUNE 19, 2009

Chairman Fred Roush called the meeting to order and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Eddie Griffith, 2nd VP Don Mixon, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Fred Roush, Treasurer Walter Bisselle, Executive Secretary Val Longson; Directors Cindy Erndt, Paul Felsberg, Joyce Comingore, Kathy Grandoff, Wanda Schmoyer; Immediate Past National President Sam Andrews; Chapter President's Coordinator Wally Neef. Absent: 1st VP Wayne Cameron, Directors Bradley Christian and Ed Flory.

Paul Felsberg proposed to the Board that a copy of the DVD Catalogue be given to each membership at no charge. Each Chapter will receive 10 copies to use for fundraising or as they see fit. The funding for this was provided by a Chandler Cox Foundation grant. On motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board approved having 1000 DVD Catalogues made and distributed to the membership. Mr. Felsberg will handle this.

On motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the Board confirmed the President's Committee's approval to add Cindy Erndt to the Seedling Evaluation Committee.

Chairman Roush was appointed at the Membership Meeting last November as Seedling Evaluation Committee Clerical Manager. He now feels that this position is redundant and resigned. The Board did not replace him, but reserved the option to appoint someone to replace that position at a later date.

A suggestion was made that the tracking of judges and judges-in-training be separated from the office of First Vice President to ensure continuity of this important function. This would require a bylaws change and was tabled until the November 2009 Membership meeting.

Nomenclature Committee Chair Sam Andrews presented a motion to the Board that the Nomenclature Database be named the Roz Merritt Memorial Nomenclature Database for Hibiscus rosa-sinensis on the Acknowledgement Page on the web site. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Seedling Evaluation Committee Chair Rod Hendrick proposed that the SEC summary sheets evaluating the HOTY candidates by years be posted on the AHS web site.

Acting Show and Judging Rules Committee Chair Don Mixon presented to the Board a proposal passed by that committee at its meeting earlier in the day. That judges abstain from voting in their exhibitor classification during final Gold Seal judging if they have blooms in contention. This would also apply to final Best of Show voting. On motion made and seconded, the proposal carried unanimously.

Acting Chairman Mixon presented a request made by Marti Graves, President of the Lone Star Chapter that a one-time exception be allowed to replace the winning Best of Show Seedling Mellow Yellow with Texas Wild. Please see details in the Show and Judging Rules Committee Minutes. On motion made and seconded, and after a lengthy discussion, the request was approved by a vote of 6 to 5 with two abstentions.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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FIRST GENERAL SESSION, 8:30 A.M., JUNE 20, 2009

President Eddie Griffith welcomed everyone to the First General Session, and asked Rita Hall to deliver the Invocation and Wally Neef to lead the salute to the flag.

The president thanked the three Louisiana Chapters Red Stick, New Orleans and Michael Bernard Acadiana for their wonderful hospitality.

2010 Convention

The site of the Convention will be the Embassy Suites Hotel in Lake Buena Vista (Orlando), Florida June 17 – 20, 2010.

President Griffith touched briefly on the following topics, details of which can be found elsewhere in these Minutes:

- ∞ DVD catalogue
- ∞ Culture articles for *The Seed Pod*
- ∞ New Seedling Evaluation Committee Member
- ∞ The Seedling Evaluation Committee Chair, when calculating the numbers for the Hibiscus of the Year Winner for 2008, unknowingly used an old Policy and Procedures Manual, thus using an outdated method for his calculations. The actual order of finish last year using the current method was:

First Place:	Morning Light	52.650
Second Place:	White Diamonds	52.095
Third Place:	C N Stars	51.230
Fourth Place:	Tiger Cub	49.410

Treasurer's Report: Walter Bisselle

Copies of an Annual Report for the fiscal year June 1, 2008 through May 31, 2009 were available. See the Budget Committee Minutes for details. An anonymous donation of \$1,000 was received a couple of days ago and is not reflected in this report. We need to increase our efforts to contact corporate sponsors for things such as exhibitor cards.

Bylaws and National Awards: Don Mixon, 2nd VP

No bylaws changes were proposed and there were no National Awards.

Show dates for 2010 requested to date:

January 17, St. Croix
February 6 – 13, State Fair
February 21, St. Thomas
March 20, Golby-Reasoner
March 28, St. Croix
April 10, Central Florida
April 17, Sunset
April 18, Space City I
April 24, Conrad Sunrise

FIRST GENERAL SESSION, JUNE 20, 2009 (con't.)

April 25, Lone Star I
May 2, Red Stick
May 9, Harry Goulding
May 15, Space City II
May 16, Gulf Coast
May 23, Michael Bernard Acadiana
May 30, New Orleans
June 6, Space City III
June 6, James Hendry
June 13, Lone Star II

The Seed Pod: Rita Hall, Editor

We have a new advertiser in the July issue, Barry Schlueter. We will start a new column with regional culture information in the October issue. The *Texas Bloomers* column written by Pat Merritt for the past 11 years was handed over to Cindy Erndt. Her first column appears in the July issue.

Chapter Presidents' Coordinator: Wally Neef

See the Minutes of this meeting.

Members At Large: Sam Andrews

The MAL membership continues to grow. *The Seed Pod* is vital to keeping these members informed about the Society, and the Nomenclature database will be a most welcome resource when it is completed.

Nomenclature: Sam Andrews

See the Minutes of this meeting.

Publications/Publicity: Paul Felsberg

See the Minutes of this meeting. Publicity is really up to the individual Chapters. Make friends with your newspaper's garden section editor. Become his/her "go-to" person for questions on hibiscus culture. In return, you are likely to get publicity for your show.

Seed Bank: Bob Carran (Walter Bisselle representing)

From January 1 until June 12, 2009, the Seed Bank sent out 1002 seeds to 68 individuals. These totals show a slightly lower number of seed requests than for the same period last year. There are several people selling seeds on the Internet. Approximately 60% of seed requests were from outside the USA, and include all but one continent. Thanks to Connie Roush, Marti Graves, Cindy Erndt and others who have graciously donated seeds.

Seedling Evaluation: Rod Hendrick

See the Minutes of this meeting.

FIRST GENERAL SESSION, JUNE 20, 2009 (con't.)

Board of Directors: Fred Roush, Chairman

Chairman Roush asked the Board of Directors to stand and be recognized. If you have any questions or complaints, take them to a member of the Board.

Director Kathy Grandoff introduced Red Stick Chapter member Julliette Frasier-Salter who hand painted a hibiscus bloom embedded in a fleur de lis on wine glasses. Each attendee received a glass.

Show and Judging Rules Committee: 2nd VP Don Mixon representing Wayne Cameron

See the Minutes of this meeting.

Nominating Committee

A National Nominating Committee was appointed to identify candidates for office for 2010 through 2012 (2010 through 2014 for four Directors). The members are:

Krista Mathews, Central Florida
Carlos Reynolds, Conrad Sunrise
Wally Neef, Golby Reasoner
Zelma Neef, Gulf Coast
Jim Bridges, Harry Goulding
Nancy Kopp, James E. Hendry
Marti Graves, Lone Star
Sandra Theall, Mike Bernard Acadiana
Carolyn McCarroll & Fr. Bob Gerlich, New Orleans
Bonnie Orpi, Members At Large
Carolyn Cormier Stoute, Red Stick, Back Up Chair
Joyce Melebeck, Space City, Chair
Rita Hall, St. Croix and St. Thomas
Connie Roush, Sunset
Kathy Grandoff, Tampa Unbelievable

The president thanked the Board and President's Committee for their hard work in keeping the Society running smoothly.

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 9 A.M., JUNE 21, 2009

President Eddie Griffith welcomed everyone to the Second and final General Session, and asked Katie McClain to deliver the Invocation and Wally Neef to lead the salute to the flag.

The president again thanked everyone in the Louisiana Chapters for their warm welcome, and especially Damon Veach who oversaw everything. He also announced that the auction and plant raffle were very successful. President Griffith thanked Pat Merritt for her contributions to the meetings process. She not only has to sit through every meeting and record it and take notes, but she has to do it all over again when she gets home and writes the Minutes.

Michael Bernard Acadiana, Buddy Short President (Sandra Theall representing)

We had another very productive year. Our primary objective is to continue to promote, increase and retain local membership by conducting monthly meetings from March through November at the Nelson Horticulture Center on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. We teach basic hibiscus maintenance skills focusing around “what is going on with your plants right now?” Twenty to 30 members attend each meeting, and we join with the other two Louisiana Chapters for our annual trek to Dupont Nursery. We also have an annual Chapter barbecue in July, and we support two major flower events each year, the Festival Des Fleur and our Chapter show and sale. Our membership varies from 35 to 45 members and we signed up a total of 14 new memberships at these events. Our Chapter is hosting the hospitality suite at the AHS Convention, and we are happy to provide this service to the Society. Come back to see us!

Central Florida, Fred Fallman President (Gary Mathews representing)

We are trying new ideas to get young members. The 4-H college AG group are involved. We have about 25 members.

Conrad Sunrise, Paul Felsberg President

Our Chapter had another good year. Membership shows an increase, and fund raising kept us solvent enough to have two shows this year. Our Board was very supportive and the membership participated in all events such as our Safari's, Plant and Other Things auctions, socials, community hibiscus education events as well as events at the Mount's Botanical Garden where we have our meetings. We have about 50 memberships (80 people).

Golby-Reasoner, Dave Flanders President (Don Mixon representing)

Our 45th Annual Show was a major success! Our friends from the AHS came through, entering 287 blooms and supplying all of our plant needs. The bloom count was down somewhat, but our guests were delighted. Membership continues to be our number one challenge. It is very difficult to attract and retain active younger members. Chapter life and health are good, but our membership continues to age and physically decline. Overall, the numbers are slipping, primarily due to deaths and physical relocation. However, those members who are active exhibit good morale and willingly support our Chapter's efforts. We had seven formal meetings, two field trips, and three social meetings. The Chapter newsletter

SECOND GENERAL SESSION, JUNE 21, 2009 (con't.)

Petal Power continues to provide an excellent resource and news source for our members. Receipt of newsletters from other Chapters is much appreciated

Gulf Coast, Wally Neef President

We're having trouble maintaining membership. The old members are sick or dying. Young folks are too busy making ends meet. We're hanging in there financially, with show sales and raffles. I was elected president again, as no one else would take the job. Our meetings are held at the library, which is well-equipped for PC picture viewing. We had our usual picnic and Christmas party that were well-attended.

Harry Goulding, Lou Spacco President (Wally Neef representing)

We are pleased to report 32 members. The Chapter had the spring Mothers' Day show that was very successful. Other events were the Punta Gorda Hibiscus Festival this weekend, the Home and Garden Show in April, and a Home and Garden Show in September. Our fall show is November 1, 2009. The Chapter donated 21 hibiscus plants to the Charlotte County Cultural Center and planted them. We are planning a picnic in October and a Christmas party. We are looking forward to another great year!

James E. Hendry, Wanda Schmoyer President (Joyce Comingore representing)

At present our Chapter has 44 memberships and 64 members. Last August we involved ourselves in our local "Taste of Lee County." In order to participate and sell plants, we needed to offer a "taste of hibiscus." We chose Hibiscus sabdariffa, or Roselle punch. We sold plants and memberships. We meet in the FREE Robb and Stuckey Furniture Store's Community Room with programs such as our namesake's great-grand-nephew Kent Kelly of Kelly's Gardens, hybridizer Dale Dubin, and Curt Sinclair who helped us knick seeds and plant them. Two months later we awarded a prize to the biggest and best seedling. A smashing Christmas party with the "Calendar Girls" singing and dancing in their pink sequins and boas kept us entertained. We treasure the hand painted hibiscus ornaments by a member, who also painted and donated a painting of a hibiscus for this auction. Our biggest challenge was dealing with the death of our number one supporter and mentor, Ruth Watson.

Lone Star, Marti Graves President

We have had a very active year. Our first show was in Sugar Land. The facility was excellent, but expensive, and our publicity was lacking. We had more blooms and plants than people in attendance. We were able to use a local grocery store's shopping carts, so the few people that were there bought more plants than in the past. We decided it was a successful show because we netted \$24.17! The second show was this past Sunday in our familiar location in Bellaire. This facility has had a facelift, meaning our rent went from \$150 to \$550. We did get decent publicity and had good crowds all day, netting about \$2,500. The growers didn't have too many plants to take home. Meeting attendance is down, even at our ice cream social in July. Chapter members have presented hibiscus programs at several garden clubs and civic associations. All is well in the Lone Star State.

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New Orleans, Fr. Bob Gerlich President (Carolyn McCarroll representing)

NOLA continues its slow recovery from Hurricane Katrina. Membership has not returned to pre-storm levels, but we are coming close with about 50 members. This year we again changed the venue for our show because of complications that have arisen in post-Katrina New Orleans. Enthusiasm for hibiscus remains high in New Orleans. And, the Chapter continues to expect hibiscus to become increasingly popular as the public once again turns attention to rebuilding their gardens.

Red Stick, Damon Veach President (Carolyn Stoute representing)

We have finished our two major fundraisers, the annual show and sale and the LSU Spring Garden Show at the John Parker Coliseum on the campus. Both were very successful in spite of the rain cutting short our Burden sale. This success and excellence come because of a great group of people sharing a common interest in *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*. We have also increased our membership numbers again this year, 60 active and nine affiliates. Our thanks to members of other Chapters who always assist us in our endeavors, especially everyone who has worked with me on the National Convention. We appreciate so much the assistance from both the New Orleans and the Michael Bernard Acadiana Chapters. We have worked tirelessly for a year to make this one of the best Conventions ever, and I hope we have succeeded. Thank you Marti and Greg Graves and Jim Gedicke for your support in making our annual show such an outstanding one. Thank you to each and every member of the Red Stick Chapter for really enjoying what we are doing, and let's continue full speed ahead! Our newsletter *Red Stick Gleanings* continues to be well received and we share it with anyone interested. We continue our work in the International Hibiscus Garden, and we have set aside money for a scholarship fund for high school graduates who are majoring in horticulture at Louisiana universities. Last, and certainly the most important, is a special thanks to Bobby Dupont who does so much for our Chapter and to Bootsie for always being there to do her part. Robbie Dupont, Robert Dupont and Jeff Dupont are a part of this appreciation as are so many employees at Dupont Nursery. They are, in so many ways, the wind beneath our wings!

Space City, Chuck Brooks President (Cindy Erndt representing)

Space City has had its best year ever! At our three shows we sold 2,400 plants. When checking out at the Texas City show several people remarked that they had lost their entire collection of hibiscus to Hurricane Ike and they were so pleased to be able to replace them. We have about 36 memberships, 16 of them signing up at the three shows.

St. Croix, Errol Chichester President (Rita Hall representing)

We lost a key member when Audrey McCarthy died early this year. We got good publicity for our shows and sold a lot of plants. Our March show is with the Agriculture Fair at the Botanical Gardens. Our membership is limited and we are wearing out our present members. Members volunteer their time weekly at the botanical gardens pulling weeds, watering and fertilizing and whatever needs to be done.

St. Thomas, Mario Francis President (Rita Hall representing)

St. Thomas is a smaller Chapter and they have their show in a warehouse near where the cruise ships dock. They transform this warehouse into a beautiful setting for the show. Lack of judges is a problem for the Island Chapters. Errol Chichester, St. Croix, held a seminar to train new judges, and at their show we had three judges and so many observers we could barely get

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them around the table. Mario is a very dynamic person and is leading this Chapter back to life. He is also working with Lavern Thomas on Tortola to revive the BVI Chapter. The Island Chapters depended upon being able to travel to the Convention in Florida and attend a show before and after to maintain their judging credentials. These shows have been move to earlier and/or later dates and this option is no longer available to them.

Sunset, Fred Roush President

We suffered a great loss with the passing of Jack McClain. He was Mr. Do Everything to our Chapter. He delivered blocks, trays and sharp straight wires to our shows in his classic Ford he called Black Stallion. He always had time to talk with everyone who came through the doors. We have a void that will not be filled, but we are blessed to have known Jack and called him Friend. He is missed. Our monthly meetings were well attended and had the magnetism to attract a scattering of guests. We have about 47 memberships. The problem in attendance is the public library where we meet is unable to give us consistent dates for our meetings, and the local newspaper is reluctant to give us top billing. We had programs on "Where do Babies Come From?" (hibiscus, that is). Pruning (this was our highest attended program), winterizing your hibiscus and waking them up in spring. A real thriller was show procedures and flower prep. Of course, we had the usual grafting and rooting programs and a special presentation on air layering. A guest speaker from the local hydroponics store was a welcome change. Our show was held early this year, so we missed the June heat and also missed the plant buyers, but the show was a great success and we always enjoy hosting all of our hibiscus friends. We have given hibiscus presentations to two garden clubs and are scheduled for two more. We also donated plants to start a hibiscus garden at the Pinellas County Botanical Gardens.

Tampa Unbelievable, Don Mixon President

We are the newest Chapter in the U.S and we are now six months old! Most of our members are from out of our area and we are acquiring members slowly and building our membership with new members to the society. Kathy and I are the main working members and we are hoping to grow. We have seven memberships. Kathy has contacted the Cub Scouts of America and hope to show them how to grow and give free plants to get them and their parents involved. Our first show was the Florida State Fair. We would have been unable to pull this off without the help of Fred Roush and the Sunset Chapter. Be patient with us and we will become a great Chapter in Florida!

Treasurer's Award

Katie McClain

Executive Secretary's Award

Damon Veach

The November membership meeting will be November 13 – 15, 2009, in Tampa FL

With no further business, on motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia B. Merritt, Secretary