

AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY

**Best Western Hotel
Punta Gorda, FL**

**Annual Convention
June 17 – 20, 2004**

FIRST PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE MEETING, 3; 30 P.M., JUNE 17, 2004

President Roz Merritt called the meeting to order, and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Roz Merritt, 1st VP Rita Hall, 2nd VP Ann Buchanan, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Sam Andrews, Executive Secretary Val Longson. Absent: Treasurer Penny Benninger who had a property closing and would be in later.

New Business

The President's Committee approved the Charter for the Red Stick Chapter in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, by email vote in May, and it is hereby presented to the full Board for its consideration.

Director Phyllis Mohn has been ill and unable to attend the last two Board meetings. The president recommended that Ed Flory be named to replace Ms Mohn for a term ending in 2006. The Committee voted unanimously to present this recommendation to the Board.

President Merritt announced the retirement of Cindi Armstrong from the position of AHS Meeting Planner, and asked that anyone with an interest in this job contact Mrs. Armstrong to discuss it.

A concern was expressed that one of the candidates for National office was not eligible to run because of non-payment of MAL dues. This candidate subsequently paid her dues and is now current. With the change in treasurers, some MAL dues invoices were not mailed and some irregularities occurred. The president made the decision before the beginning of the Convention that the ballots should be counted and the results will stand.

Seedling Evaluation Coordinator Randy Cox asked the Committee to consider a fair method of reimbursing the Coordinator for expenses incurred in producing evaluation plants. Instead of trying to keep track of the chemicals, water, electricity, fertilizer, etc., used just for evaluation plants, he asked the Committee to determine a set price-per-plant. After a discussion, with input from the commercial growers present, the issue was referred to the Budget Committee for consideration, and to be placed on the Agenda for the Second President's Committee meeting.

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

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FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 4 P.M., JUNE 17, 2004

Chairman of Directors Sam Andrews called the meeting to order, and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Roz Merritt, 1st VP Rita Hall, 2nd VP Ann Buchanan, Secretary Pat Merritt, Treasurer Penny Benninger, Executive Secretary Val Longson; Directors Dale Armstrong, Audrey McCarthy, Gayle Morrison, Carl Benninger, Don Mixon; Immediate Past National President Curt Sinclair; Chapter Presidents' Coordinator Grace Stamps. Absent: Directors Jo Conrad and Phyllis Mohn.

Chairman Andrews asked the Board for a motion to ratify the President's Committee's appointment of Ed Flory to replace Phyllis Mohn as a Director to complete her term, which runs until Convention 2006. On motion made and seconded, the vote was unanimous, and Mr. Flory joined the Board of Directors. He will continue to serve as Parliamentarian.

A motion from the Chair, seconded, to ratify the President's Committee's vote to grant a Charter to the Red Stick Chapter in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was approved with one abstention.

A discussion followed about the status of the dissolved Baton Rouge Chapter. The Chairman told the Board that if that group wanted to apply for a Charter, and met the requirements to start a new AHS Chapter, the Board would certainly consider their petition. Chairman Andrews asked Ed Flory, Roz Merritt, Zelma Neef and Lynn Andrews to form a study group to prepare a brief report to the Board at its Second Meeting about the defunct Baton Rouge Chapter. He also asked Roz Merritt to act as liaison for the AHS with this group.

This triggered a discussion about the balance of funds remaining in the dissolved Baton Rouge Chapter's treasury. These funds are now frozen pending a court decision as to the disposition of the money. After discussion and on a motion made, seconded and approved, a Board representative was instructed to write a letter to BankOne citing the provision in our bylaws that in the event of a dissolution of an AHS Chapter, the balance in the treasury after all outstanding bills are paid shall be returned to the American Hibiscus Society. The balance remaining in the treasury is approximately \$6,000.

Election Report: Zelma Neef

National Nominating Committee Chair Zelma Neef reported that out of 900 ballots mailed, only 300 were completed and returned. *The Seed Pod* issue containing the biographical information on the candidates was mailed too late to reach the membership with the information needed. After discussion, the consensus was to mail the biographical information with the ballots and not rely on the information to reach the membership via *The Seed Pod*. Chairman Neef was asked to prepare a guideline for incorporation in the Policy Manual.

FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 4 P.M., JUNE 17, 2004 (con't.)

The Seed Pod Report: Rita Hall

Editor Rita Hall reported that the printer (Fidelity Printing) had promised that their second issue would not be as costly as the first one they did (\$3,300) because there would be no first-time charges associated with the second one. The second issue cost the same amount as the first one, and the printer would not give Ms Hall a breakdown of the costs. Another printer was found who suggested some changes that would reduce the cost of each issue. These changes include a lighter weight paper for all inside pages, grouping the color pictures so that they are in the same print run. The first issue by Travis Printing was the April/May/June 2004, and the cost for 1500 copies was \$1,994.

New Officers and Directors Information Packet

Rita Hall is going to prepare a packet of information to be given to each new officer and director as they take office. This information will contain the duties and responsibilities of each office. She also suggested that each outgoing officer sit down sometime during the meeting and go over the duties and any methods he/she used that are worth passing along to the incoming officer/director. Executive Secretary Val Longson pointed out that all of this information is contained in the Policy & Procedure Book, copies of which will be given to each new officer and director at this meeting.

Calendar Proposal

Second VP Ann Buchanan showed the Board a 16-month calendar as a possible model for the Society's consideration. The current printer of *The Seed Pod* furnished Ms Hall with a quote for a calendar of \$3.62 each for 1,000 to 2,500. Pat Merritt also obtained a quote from a Houston printer of \$7.47 each for 1,000. This proposal was referred to the Publications Committee for further study.

Convention 2005: Cindi Armstrong

Meeting Planner Cindi Armstrong presented six properties for the Board's consideration for the 2005 Convention. These were:

- Radisson Suite Beach Resort (\$104), Marco Island, FL
- Embassy Suites (\$82), Boca Raton, FL (site of the 2003 Convention)
- Sheraton Safari Hotel (\$95), Orlando, FL (site of the 2002 Convention)
- Gaylord Palms (\$109), Kissimmee, FL
- Embassy Suites (\$139), Ft Lauderdale, FL
- Best Western Hotel (\$54), Punta Gorda, FL (site of the 2004 Convention)

Mrs. Armstrong also checked on a Carnival cruise (*Inspiration* 5-day cruise to Cozumel and Grand Cayman). They can accommodate our meeting space needs. Prices ranged from \$555 to \$694 per person.

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

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SECOND PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE MEETING, 3:30 P.M., JUNE 18, 2004

President Roz Merritt called the meeting to order and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Roz Merritt, 1st VP Rita Hall, 2nd VP Ann Buchanan, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Sam Andrews, Treasurer Penny Benninger, Executive Secretary Val Longson.

President Merritt asked the **Budget Committee** Acting Chairman to give a brief report. Don Schermerhorn presented the following Budget Committee recommendations:

1. Increase the Registration Fee for both the Convention and Fall Membership meeting to \$12 from the present \$10.
2. Increase National membership dues to \$25 from the present \$20, effective 7/1/04. All Chapter members who have already renewed at \$20 will be accepted at that rate. The increase in the cost of printing and mailing *The Seed Pod* and the increase in the cost of liability insurance per person dictate this increase.
3. Allow \$2 per plant to the Seedling Evaluation Coordinator to cover his expenses.

There followed a discussion of these items. There is currently a shortfall of \$9,000 in the budget, and these increases will reduce that by about one half. The dues increase effective date of 7/1/04 was discussed, and the Chairman of the Budget Committee amended the Committee's recommendation to change the effective date to 8/1/04. This will give the Chapters time to get the information to their members. The liability insurance premiums have increased from \$500 to \$1500. Chairman Sam Andrews presented to the Committee some figures of other plant societies' dues structures, citing the Orchid Society's dues at \$58.50 per year and the Rose Society's dues at \$50 per year.

On motion made and seconded, the amended Budget Committee recommendations will be presented to the full Board at their meeting to follow.

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

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SECOND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 4 P.M., JUNE 18, 2004

Chairman of Directors Sam Andrews called the meeting to order and Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Roz Merritt, 1st VP Rita Hall, 2nd VP Ann Buchanan, Secretary Pat Merritt, Treasurer Penny Benninger, Executive Secretary Val Longson; Directors Dale Armstrong, Jo Conrad, Audrey McCarthy, Gayle Morrison, Carl Benninger, Don Mixon, Ed Flory; Immediate Past National President Curt Sinclair; Chapter Presidents' Coordinator Grace Stamps.

Chairman Andrews presented to the Board the President's Committee's recommendation to approve the Budget Committee's proposal to increase the Registration Fees for both the Convention and the Fall Membership Meeting from \$10 to \$12, increase the National dues from \$20 to \$25, and establish a \$2-per-plant reimbursement to the Seedling Coordinator. On motion made and seconded, the recommendation was unanimously approved.

Brochure Proposal

The chairman reviewed the status of the Society's color brochure, noting that the supply of the current one is depleted. Jeri Grantham redesigned the brochure last year and turned it over to Mr. Andrews to complete. He passed around a sample of a newly designed, four-color piece for the Board's review. There followed a lengthy discussion on the merits and uses of a membership brochure such as this sample. Quotes for printing various quantities were obtained earlier and discussed. A motion was made and seconded to print 5,000 brochures at a cost of approximately \$1180, and make them available to the Chapters at 50% of the cost. The motion was unanimously approved.

Sweepstakes Tally

Executive Secretary Val Longson reported that she had received a protest from an AHS member that read "I would like to protest the Florida sweepstakes awards for 2003 on behalf of all exhibitors in Florida." This was based on an error in the results of the show at the State Fair, which proved to be an aberration. Ms Longson and Walter Bisselle recounted all of the Florida show results for the 2003-2004 show season to see if there was a common thread of mistakes and what was causing them. Most errors occurred in the large shows during the transference of the count from the clerks' tally sheets to the sweepstakes tally sheets. Time pressure and noisy working conditions contribute to these errors. None of the discrepancies found in the re-tally affected show sweepstakes winners or National sweepstakes outcomes. No Board action is required on this matter and it will be referred to the Show and Judging Rules Committee for further study on ways to improve the system.

SECOND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 4 P.M., JUNE 18, 2004 (con't.)

Archives Report: Barbara Hagan-Smith

All of the archive material has been moved to a climate-controlled storage unit near Wesley Chapel, Florida. Most of the Society's collection of slides is also in this facility. Former Executive Secretary Jeri Grantham will be sending a number of boxes of material, also. Ms Hagan-Smith plans to organize and catalog all of this material. The estimated budget for this work is approximately \$1200 for the storage and archiving materials. Ms Hagan-Smith asked the Board to consider if it wants to solicit materials from Chapters to add to the archives. She also does not recommend digitizing the slides at this time, but to consider it after she has organized and catalogued them. In climate-controlled conditions, they will be well preserved. If members have material to add to the archives, it should be sent to Mrs. Barbara Hagan-Smith, c/o Betsy LeFever, 31515 Cross Creek Lane, Zephyrhills, FL 33543

Grievance Procedure For Chapters

Chairman Andrews called on Roz Merritt to discuss the need to establish a grievance procedure for Chapters to address problems before they become major obstacles. On motion made, seconded and unanimously approved, Roz Merritt was appointed to address this issue and report to the Board at the Fall Membership Meeting.

Dissolved Baton Rouge Chapter

The chairman asked Ed Flory to report on the study group appointed to review this subject. Mr. Flory told the Board that a letter will be sent to BankOne notifying them of the Society's claim to all of the remaining assets in the dissolved chapter's treasury, citing Article XII of the bylaws: "ARTICLE XII DISSOLUTION: Should the Chapter be dissolved, all assets will be immediately forwarded to the national treasurer of the Society, and the charter to the executive secretary of the Society." On August 16, 2004, at 9:30 a.m., there will be a meeting in the 19th District Court of Louisiana where this matter may be resolved. Roz Merritt is the contact person for the Board in this matter.

Future of Traveling Trophies: Val Longson

The Harry Goulding Grafting Award Trophy has no more room for brass plates after the 2004 award is presented. This large, heavy trophy is brought to each convention and then returned to the executive secretary's storage. Each recipient is presented with a small keeper plaque, and his/her name is engraved on a brass plate that is affixed to the large trophy. After discussion and upon motion made, seconded and approved, this trophy will be presented to Harry Goulding's son Joe Goulding and the City of Punta Gorda, Harry Goulding's home, for permanent safekeeping and display. Future recipients of this award will continue to receive a keeper plaque.

The Norman Reasoner Traveling Trophy, awarded to the Chapter with the most Amateur Exhibitors at a show, was discussed. On motion made, seconded and approved, this trophy will be presented to the Golby-Reasoner Chapter to find a suitable permanent home. Chapters receiving this award in the future will continue to receive a keeper plaque.

SECOND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 4 P.M., JUNE 18, 2004 (con't.)

The Woody VanDeusen Road Warrior Trophy, awarded to the person who travels the greatest distance to the Convention, was established by the Lone Star Chapter to honor one of its deceased members. The Chapter asked the Board to retire this trophy permanently, discontinue the award, and give the existing traveling trophy to the Chapter president. On motion made and seconded, this request was unanimously approved.

Seal Replacement

The embosser on the AHS Seal has worn out and needs to be repaired or replaced. Motion made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Policy on Outside Fundraising Activities

From time-to-time, the Society is asked to support favorite causes of some Chapter members. The Society cannot honor all of these requests and wishes to be fair to all members. After discussion, the Board adopted the following written policy regarding these requests: "The American Hibiscus Society shall not associate itself in a monetary fashion with any outside fundraising activities." Motion made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Convention 2005 Site Selection: Cindi Armstrong

Mrs. Armstrong went over the six properties presented to the Board at its meeting on Thursday. She explained that the Embassy Suites Hotel in Boca Raton did not have our Convention dates of June 16 – 19, 2005 available, and that if this property was chosen, we would have to hold the Convention a week earlier. This would impact the show dates of two Chapters, Sunset and Lone Star. Mrs. Armstrong asked the Board members to vote for three of the six properties. The Board chose these three properties to be presented to the membership on Saturday night:

Radisson Beach Resort, Marco Island, FL
Embassy Suites Hotel, Boca Raton, FL
Best Western Hotel, Punta Gorda, FL

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 19, 2004

President Roz Merritt welcomed everyone to the First General Session and asked Rae Flanders to deliver the Invocation and Wally Neef to lead the Salute to the Flag. Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll. Present: President Roz Merritt, 1st VP Rita Hall, 2nd VP Ann Buchanan, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Sam Andrews, Treasurer Penny Benninger, Executive Secretary Val Longson; Directors Dale Armstrong, Jo Conrad, Audrey McCarthy, Gayle Morrison, Carl Benninger, Don Mixon, Ed Flory; Immediate Past National President Curt Sinclair; Chapter Presidents' Coordinator Grace Stamps.

The Minutes of the Fall Membership Meeting held in Tampa, FL November 15 – 16, 2003, were accepted as written.

President Merritt welcomed many who were attending the Convention for the first time and asked them to stand for recognition.

The President called upon the chairman of each committee to give a brief report to the membership covering their respective meetings held the day before. Details of reports given earlier to the Board of Directors can be found in the Minutes of the Board Meetings.

Treasurer's Report: Penny Benninger

The treasurer presented the financial report for the period June 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004 (a copy attached to these Minutes). Copies were available for those who wanted them. An audit report is also included with the financial report.

Budget Committee

Bylaws: Ann Buchanan

The new bylaws were completed and are being given to the Chapter presidents and new incoming officers. Extra copies are available from Publications. The Policy & Procedures Manual has been given to the new incoming officers and directors.

All the show dates at present are correct and have been recorded. If yours is not correct contact the 1st vice president to change your show date, and notify *The Seed Pod* editor of any change.

Membership/Publicity: Ann Buchanan

Membership decreased only slightly. We are working on a membership brochure that should be ready this fall. Rita Hall is checking on getting a tear-out membership form in *The Seed Pod*. A membership ad in *Florida Gardening* magazine was approved, but has not yet been run. Curt Sinclair has been "Mr. Publicity" with his appearances in *The Florida Gardener*,

FIRST GENERAL SESSION, 8:30 A.M., JUNE 19, 2004 (con't.)

Martha Stewart Living and the first Florida Flower Show in Tampa. Mr. Sinclair has offered the AHS the use of his booth for publicity purposes at the second Florida Flower Show next year.

At this point in the meeting, Ms Dawn McGibbon with the City of Punta Gorda and coordinator of the First Annual Hibiscus Festival arrived and was presented with the Harry Goulding Grafting Trophy that is being retired and donated to the City that was Mr. Goulding's home.

The Seed Pod: Rita Hall, Editor

Chapter Presidents' Coordinator: Grace Stamps

Thirteen of the 17 Chapters were represented, 12 by current presidents and one by an appointee. Chapter dues were discussed with responses ranging from \$22 to \$30. Many ideas were exchanged concerning membership, recruiting, developing, involving and retaining active members. The chairman shared her Chapter's new membership materials with the group. The representatives were polled on what Chapters do for judges traveling to their shows. These included giving each judge \$10, lunch, a reduced price for plants and/or a small gift. The group suggested ways to reduce the rental of show facilities, such as teaming with Master Gardeners or other horticultural groups; seeking "Friends Affiliated" facilities; joining a botanical garden to use man labor hours to reduce or deplete the cost; the use of churches on Saturday.

Members-At-Large: Sam Andrews

About one-quarter of the membership income is generated from MAL dues, and 27% of MAL's voted in the recent election. The number of MAL memberships is trending upward, somewhat due to the demise of two chapters whose members switched from Chapter membership to Members-At-Large. The availability of Internet sign-up and payment using PayPal is working well. However, cross selling of MAL memberships and Handbooks continues to be a problem, or an opportunity missed. Materials used to correspond with new and renewing MAL's were reviewed, which included a discussion of the new membership brochure now underway. Discussed starting a MAL Internet discussion group and/or an Internet Bulletin Board. *The Seed Pod* is critical to MAL members, as it is the only tangible link to the Society for most.

Nomenclature: Jeri Grantham (Pat Merritt representing)

The rule that a Best of Show Seedling winner must be registered on the spot with at least basic information is helping to get these in the Nomenclature on a timely basis. It will be helpful if the web master of the online database will note the date each time the database is updated.

Publications: Roland Gaudet (Rita Hall representing)

Discussed an 18-month calendar, with Chapters purchasing pages; option of shrink-wrap, application for membership on last page. Discussed printing bookmarks; making bloom holders available. Also discussed the proposed brochure now in progress. The new printer has suggested collecting all of the color pictures now appearing in *The Seed Pod* and putting them in a booklet.

FIRST GENERAL SESSION, 8:30 A.M, JUNE 19, 2004 (con't.)

Seed Bank: Bob Carran, Chairman (Cindi Armstrong representing)

Sent out my first seeds on December 22, 2003. Since then, just over 900 seeds have been distributed, mostly from my own seedlings. About 95% of my plants are my third and fourth generation garden-variety crosses, with the other 5% using well-known cultivars. Seeds were sent to 35 people in the USA, and to Canada, Denmark, Malta, Greece, Hungary, U.K., Italy, France, England, Guam, Philippines, Vietnam, Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. I receive about two requests per week Please share your seeds with the world!

Seedling Evaluation: Annelle Cox

Eight members were present; two had excused absences. Reviewed the evaluation of more than 60 Best of Show Seedlings now under consideration:

18 for 2001 20 for 2002 19 for 2003 13 for 2004

Discussed the high scores of 19 and 20; the preference of grafted or own-root plants; and the advantage of all evaluation plants being approximately the same size. The Seedling Evaluation Coordinator reported that 355 grafted, established plants had been sent to Committee members since last June at a total cost of \$181.39, plus \$163.48 shipping. He also reported that all plants were released for propagation with the exception of Black Dragon (August 2004) and Magic Moments (June 2005). No response was received from Curt Sinclair.

Show and Judging Rules: Rita Hall

The tracking of seedlings by this Committee is eliminated. It is now the responsibility of the hybridizer to keep track of the number of times a seedling is shown. A seedling may be shown five times in a period of five consecutive show seasons. Hybridizers will use an honor system for this five-year tracking. The current definition of a Commercial Grower does not meet standards of every state's laws. The definition is changed to read: "Any member that consistently advertises hibiscus plants for sale, or wishes to sell plants at an AHS Chapter show should consider themselves 'Commercial'" A sub-committee will be appointed to review the Miniature List and recommend the removal of blooms that consistently bloom over 5".

Slide Bank: Lynn Andrews

Only two slide shows were sent out this year. A few slides were added last fall, but none since. In December the bulk of the slides were shipped to the Society's climate-controlled storage facility in Wesley Chapel, FL. The assembled shows were retained by the Committee Chairman, and are available for check out. Barbara Hagan-Smith will go through the slides and make her recommendation as to permanent archival. I again request that copies of PowerPoint presentations and videos be furnished to the Slide Bank Chairman so that they can be made available for Chapter use.

Board of Directors: Sam Andrews

The Board covered very ambitious Agendas at its two meetings. Most of these items are covered elsewhere in these Minutes. I would like to urge those present to look over the copy of the membership brochure draft being circulated and give us your suggestions for improvement, especially from a Chapter standpoint. This will be an important membership tool and we want your input.

FIRST GENERAL SESSION, 8:30 A.M., JUNE 19, 2004 (con't.)

Convention 2005: Cindi Armstrong

Meeting Planner Cindi Armstrong presented to the membership the three properties chosen by the Board yesterday from the six she presented to them earlier. She made available brochures from each of the three properties for the membership to study. These properties are: Radisson Beach Resort, Marco Island, FL; Embassy Suites, Boca Raton, FL; and Best Western Hotel, Punta Gorda, FL. The vote will be taken at the Awards Banquet on Saturday night.

Election Results

The president asked National Nominating Committee Chairman Zelma Neef to announce the results of the election of new Officers and Directors to serve the Society for the next two years. Mrs. Neef thanked those who helped her count the ballots earlier in the day. Only the Harry Goulding Chapter turned in 100% of their ballots. Many Chapters had very poor voter participation. The issue of *The Seed Pod* that contained candidate information did not reach many members until after the deadline for returning ballots. In the future, this information will be included with each ballot mailed. The election results are:

President:	Rita Hall
1 st VP:	Randy Cox
2 nd VP	Walter Bisselle
Secretary:	Pat Merritt

Directors for a term ending in 2006:

Dave Flanders
Linda Hagenson
Bernard Pages
Don Schermerhorn

A brief discussion followed about possibly electing four Directors by districts and four at large to obtain a more equitable geographic representation on the Board. This will require a bylaws change.

President Merritt announced that a meeting of Show Directors and a meeting of new officers and directors would be held immediately following adjournment.

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

AMERICAN HIBISCUS SOCIETY

**Best Western Hotel
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June 17 – 20, 2004**

SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 9 A.M., JUNE 20, 2004

President Roz Merritt called the Second General Session to order and asked Jane Flory to deliver the Invocation and Will Staver to lead the Salute to the Flag. Recording Secretary Pat Merritt called the roll: Present: President Roz Merritt, 1st VP Rita Hall, Secretary Pat Merritt, Chairman of Directors Sam Andrews, Treasurer Penny Benninger, Executive Secretary Val Longson; Directors Dale Armstrong, Jo Conrad, Audrey McCarthy, Gayle Morrison, Carl Benninger, Don Mixon, Ed Flory; Chapter Presidents' Coordinator Grace Stamps. Absent: 2nd VP Ann Buchanan, Immediate Past National President Curt Sinclair.

Auditor's Report

Treasurer Penny Benninger reported that the accounting firm of R. Thomas Brown had conducted the annual audit of the AHS and found everything to be in order within generally accepted accounting principals.

New Slide Bank Chairman

The president announced the appointment of a new Slide Bank Chairman, Eddie Griffith of the Conrad-Sunrise Chapter in West Palm Beach.

President Merritt next called for Chapter reports.

Michael Bernard Acadiana: Rick Landers, President (Sandra Theall representing)

We participated in the annual Festival des Fleur in Lafayette in early April. President Gwen Williams resigned the presidency because of family illness and Rick Landers was elected to serve out her term. We participated for the second year in the Daylily Festival the first of June. Several of our members are here for the first time at the National Convention. We are preparing for our fifth annual show on June 27th.

British Virgin Islands: Linda Hagenson, President

The BVI Chapter numbers 30 members and meets at the Hibiscus Gardens in Road Town, Tortola. Our favorite meetings are combined with a party, such as a cocktail party hosted by founding Chapter members Jana and Roger Downing. We do not meet in August and September, as these are vacation months in the Islands. In October we met to plan our year, and our November/December meeting was held at the home of members Rose and Keith Gardener on the Island of Virgin Gorda. We attended the shows in St. Croix and St. Thomas in January and February, respectively. Our annual show was March 28th. Our April meeting was a "Round Robin" discussion of what President Linda Hagenson called the "Three S's" of hibiscus gardening: Soil, Stems and Simple Solutions. At the early June meeting we replanted the Hibiscus Garden at the Botanic Gardens. Four members of our Chapter are here at the convention.

SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 9 A.M., JUNE 20, 2004 (con't.)

New Orleans: Fr. Bob Gerlich, President

Enthusiasm is high and we are particularly gratified to note the growing interest in hybridization. Several members have successfully germinated new crosses for the first time. Several of our members want to enter judges training, especially welcome as a lack of qualified judges is becoming an increasing problem in Louisiana as the number of bloom entries grows. In March Bobby and Bootsie Dupont kindly hosted a Chapter-sponsored trip to their nursery, which allowed members to buy plants at a Chapter discount and stimulated membership interest in the new season. Interest in hibiscus continues to run high in New Orleans, with requests for programs for various groups. Publicity for our show remains a major difficulty. We signed up 10 new members at our show June 6th, and the proceeds from the plant sale were more than sufficient to meet our needs.

Space City: Grace Stamps, President

We are celebrating our 10th anniversary this year, and our memberships total 63. We increased the number of meetings, and now meet February through November. Attendance is up and our programs have been very informative. For show publicity, we held mini shows at Kroger grocery stores. Our first Exhibition/Sale on April 18th in a new area, Webster, TX, to test the response was successful, although the blooms were not as plentiful. On May 2nd the Lone Star and Space City Chapters sponsored a joint field trip to Dupont Nursery in Plaquemine, LA, and enjoyed the gracious hospitality of Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Dupont. We donated plants to city facilities through out the South Houston area. Our first sanctioned show on May 16th had 543 blooms exhibited. Our last show of the season will be July 18th; we have a grafting party with Lone Star in August, and our joint Christmas party in December.

St. Croix: Audrey McCarthy, President

Our show and plant sale in January was successful, with guest judges Rita Hall and Maralyn Tumelty attending. Our Island judges from St. Thomas and Tortola were on hand as well. In February we had another plant sale at the Agriculture Fair, a three-day event where we answered many hibiscus-growing questions. Our display at the Botanical Garden's two and one-half day event outshone the other plant societies. At our second show held during this event, we had our largest bloom count to date. We continue to maintain a memorial garden at the school where we have our shows and meetings. Bradley Christian's Heritage Group honored our Chapter in May at a Hibiscus Ball. Our membership currently is 24.

St. Thomas: Austin Monsanto, President (Audrey McCarthy representing)

This Chapter is coming back and is in the process of holding elections. They have about 20 members.

Central Florida: Fred Fallman, President (Wally Neef representing)

This Chapter's annual show is this coming Saturday, June 26th at Leu Gardens in Orlando.

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Sunset: Don Mixon, President

Our Chapter did not fold this year, we did not have a lot of strife, although we did cut back from three to two shows per year. We are blessed to have many members who give of their time to spread the word about hibiscus by giving talks to various organizations. The State Fair Show is only getting better. The Sunset Chapter won First Place in the Horticultural Division for its booth at the Fair. Thanks to Kathy Grandoff for spearheading this effort.

Lone Star: Greg Graves, President

We have had an excellent year, beginning with changing the date and location of one of our shows. Instead of having two shows in Bellaire, a community nestled in the sprawl of west Houston, we decided to hold one of them in late April in an adjacent county, Fort Bend, farther west. The Fort Bend Master Gardeners donated their very nice facility, and provided the manpower for set up and tear down and the plant sale. It was so successful that we plan to do it again next April. We still have our August date reserved at the Bellaire location, but the Chapter Board will decide later in the summer if a show in hot August is in our future. We have another possible new location with another Master Gardener group in Brazoria County, just south of Houston. Both of these counties are possible new Chapter sites. On May 2nd we sponsored a field trip by bus to Dupont Nursery in Plaquemine, LA, and enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of Bootsie and Bobby Dupont who served the large group a delicious lunch of Jambalaya and white beans. We held a joint grafting party with Space City in May, which worked into Don Mixon's schedule to bring plants for the Space City show the next day. We continue to present hibiscus slide shows to many garden clubs and civic associations. Our joint Christmas party with the Space City Chapter will be in early December, and the "prunes" will be back for the gift exchange.

Dr. Jack Hoffman: Gloria White, President

We have been adding new members, and our meetings are well attended when the snowbirds are in town. About 18 – 20 members out of the 23 memberships attend our monthly meetings. Our annual show is October 3rd, and we hope to sell out of the lovely plants furnished again this year by the Conrad Nursery. Our members support other Chapters by attending and helping at their shows, and we thank them for supporting our show. Three of our members took the judges' training seminar sponsored by the Conrad-Sunrise Chapter last fall. I completed the requirements to become a Senior Judge earlier this month, and look forward to being invited to judge at your shows.

Harry Goulding: Carl Powell, President

Our Chapter is slowly growing after a long stale period. We had a successful show with over 900 blooms. We are excited about this convention and festival being held in our city. The infamous Randy Cox is now a member of our Chapter. I am sure that next year's convention will be even bigger and better. I would like to thank the Venice and Ft. Myers Chapters for their help, which really made this convention a success.

SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 9 A.M., JUNE 20, 2004 (con't)

Conrad-Sunrise: Eddie Griffith, President

Our Chapter has experienced another outstanding year. Many new members have been signed up from our participation at numerous community events. We have reached out to the youth of our community by giving lectures and demonstrations to groups such as 4-H clubs, and by our participation at events sponsored by Mounts Botanical Gardens such as their "Fall Family Fun Festival" and their "Get Together." We have also given multimedia presentations to various garden clubs and community centers throughout Palm Beach County. We sponsored a judges' training class in which 23 people from various Chapters on the east coast participated. Many of those have already become Novice, Junior and even Senior Judges, thereby insuring that the pool of available show judges remains fresh and full, which is vital to the survival of our Society as a whole. For the 5th year in a row, we sponsored a booth at the Palm Beach International Tropical Flower and Garden Show representing the AHS. I would like to recognize a few of our members whose achievements and contributions are right on target for which the American Hibiscus Society exists. Pete and Jo Conrad and Nola and Carlos Reynolds, whose incredible number of blooms has been the lifeblood of shows that they have participated in throughout Florida. John Webster has been an AHS member since 1972 and is our unsung hero. And, Bernard Pages who has pushed all of us to excel beyond our limits.

Red Stick: Damon Veach President

When the first explorers came up the Mississippi River and reached the bluff we now call the Highland Ridge, they saw a red tree. They called the area Baton Rouge, or a stick of red. Red Stick is the name of our new Chapter. We would like to thank the Board of the AHS for granting us a Charter. We have already held two successful events at which 40 seedlings were displayed, and many plants were sold. We look forward to our first sanctioned show next spring.

Golby-Reasoner: Pat Grant, President

We have 82 members, and recently lost our most famous one. Eric Golby died this spring at the age of 95. The chapel at his funeral was filled with hibiscus blooms provided by our members. We planted 60 of Curt Sinclair's plants at Palma Sola Botanical Gardens. We had a booth at the yearly Spring Fling and sold plants, handbooks and answered hibiscus questions. Each December we decorate a Christmas tree at the Powell-Crosley Museum with fresh hibiscus blooms. Our members change these daily for 10 days. At our Christmas party we collect gifts for the children of migrant workers. A member is the head gardener for Longboat Key where we have our annual picnic. Our July meeting is a luncheon at a local restaurant, and our October meeting is a potluck Halloween party. We do love to party. Our annual show is on September 18, which is a Saturday. The rental on our facility is \$1300, and we are moving to the First Baptist Church gymnasium, which is free. It is right on Manatee Avenue. Hope to see you there.

SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 9 A.M., JUNE 20, 2004 (con't.)

James Hendry: Karla Holmes, President

We added five new members at our 53rd Annual Show on June 6th, and three returned to us. Welcome home! We had 848 blooms on display with 55% Gold Seals. We will have a Welcome Brunch for members at our home next week. We donated a bench to the hibiscus corner at the Fragrance Gardens in Ft. Myers. Randy Cox gave a grafting demonstration at a meeting. We also support the local soup kitchen. Our picnic and Christmas party were well attended.

Indian River: John Celli, President

We continue our meetings the first Monday of the month with a covered dish dinner. Our goal for 2004 is to increase our membership. The City of Vero Beach held a Hibiscus Festival this spring and we participated with a membership drive. We continue to participate in AHS shows and hope to be able to have our own show next year.

Gulf Coast: Walter Bisselle, President

This year has been a solid one for our Chapter. Membership remains steady at 46 memberships and 74 members. Finances are quite healthy. We have done two plantings at new Habitat for Humanity houses this year. Each one costs the Chapter about \$200-\$250 for plants, soil and mulch. Usually, a team of 5-7 Chapter members does the planting when the site is sodded. We have recently agreed to serve on Habitat's Board of Advisors. Our May show at Woodmere Park was a great success. The location, which is a Sarasota County park, was well liked by everyone. Like all county parks, finances are very tight and none of them has a friends' organization to advise and assist. Woodmere Park has asked us to help set up such a board. We agreed and voted to contribute \$250 to start.

Convention 2005 Site Selection

President Merritt announced that the location of Convention 2005, decided by a vote taken at the Awards Banquet last evening, is the Best Western Hotel in Punta Gorda, Florida. The dates of the 2005 Convention will be June 16 – 19, 2005.

Awards Presentations

National Treasurer's Special Award: Penny Benninger

To Roland Gaudet

Award for the Largest Percentage of Members in Attendance at the Convention

Sunset Chapter

Executive Secretary's Award: Val Longson

To Tyler Franz

Greatest Percentage of New Members

St. Croix Chapter

SECOND GENERAL SESSION, 9 A.M., JUNE 20, 2004 (con't.)

Presidential Citations for Distinguished Service: Roz Merritt

To Dave Flanders

To Ed Flory

President Merritt thanked past president Zelma Neef for her continuous work for the
AHS

There followed the installation of the new Officers and Directors.

The last item of business was the presentation by incoming president Rita Hall of a Life
Membership in the American Hibiscus Society to outgoing president Roz Merritt.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Merritt, Secretary.