

The Orchid Conservation Alliance
564 Arden Drive
Encinitas, CA 92024



ORCHID CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

December 8, 2009

Dear OCA Member -

In the time since I wrote the August newsletter* lots of things have happened at the Orchid Conservation Alliance. Probably the biggest was that fifteen of us spent two weeks in Ecuador visiting some reserves and seeing lots of orchids in the wild. This was the third in what has become an approximately annual "Orchids in the Wild" trip sponsored by, and to benefit, the OCA. I am certain that when people see what is happening to orchid habitat and when they also see what can be done with orchid reserves, then people - this means YOU - will be that much more convinced of the mission of the OCA. One reserve we visited was the Reserva Rio Anzu established by Lou Jost Fundación EcoMinga in Baños, Ecuador, with the help of a \$10,000 donation from OCA. Reserva Rio Anzu protects many orchids but the primary reason for its establishment was the presence of large colonies of *Phragmiedium pearcei* along the banks of the river. A fuller description of the reserve, with pictures, can be found at www.ecominga.org and more information about Lou Jost can be found at www.loujost.com. There is no way to briefly tell the story of two weeks in Ecuador in the limited space of a newsletter; you just should have been there. The prospectus for the trip can be seen on our website. Details on the upcoming trip to Brazil in September of 2010 will be in the next newsletter.

Also this fall I have been doing a lot of speaking at orchid societies to bring attention to the OCA, recruit members, and raise funds. It has been lots of fun. I spent about nine days in Texas and Louisiana visiting five societies. As I write, two, the Greater North Texas and Houston Orchid Societies have joined the OCA. I am optimistic that more will join as a result of that trip. Also I visited the Malihini Orchid Society in San Jose and the Orchid Society of California in Oakland. Then too I spoke at the Santa Clara Valley Orchid Sale in San Jose, CA, at the Southland Orchid Show and AOS Trustees' meeting at the Huntington Library in San Marino, CA, and at Orchids in the Park, a sale in San Francisco sponsored by the San Francisco Orchid Society. Many people were very helpful and all this work has paid off quite nicely in terms of money raised, people met, and publicity gained. I don't have the final figures for the year, since it is only early December, but we are just over \$31,000 in the bank as I write. \$15,000 of that is encumbered for the mapping project in Ecuador that will delineate sites for new reserves. The rest is as yet unallocated.

So, if fund raising has gone well, why am I now going to tell you that we need more funds ?

First of all, the mapping project will define new reserve sites in Ecuador. If it takes us years to generate the funds to actually create those reserves, the sites we will target may no longer be available. It's no good going up to someone to tell that we want to buy their land or help them convert it to a sustainable use project if we can't actually do those things. Second, we need to fund a guard's salary to protect the Reserva Rio Anzu. During our trip we saw that someone had cut down a tree in the reserve to harvest its sap for medicine. Whether or not the sap actually has medicinal value, that tree had a lot of value for the orchids that were in its crown and are now dying on the ground. Hiring a guard for one year will cost \$4000. Third, I am very optimistic that we will define a project in Brazil during 2010. Doing that will create another need for funds.

www.orchidconservationalliance.org

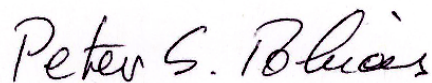
In the near future, unless you recently joined, or renewed during 2009, you will receive a membership renewal appeal from me. Consider these numbers. Of our 264 members, 109 have joined at the basic \$25 level. Of these, 98 have not paid dues for at least one year. If every one does so, OCA will be richer by \$2450. That is more than half the sum needed to hire the guard for the Rio Anzu Reserve. Without breaking down all the other membership levels, if everyone re-ups for 2009, we will net well over \$5000.

What will I be doing to augment OCA funding ? Well, I have already arranged a speaking trip to southeastern Pennsylvania to speak at three societies in April. Additionally I am scheduled to speak at the Southwestern Regional Orchid Growers Alliance Show and AOS Trustees' Meeting in Oklahoma City, also in April. I am pursuing also several other speaking trips, one to northern California and one to New York. Beyond whatever other speaking I can do, Rosario Almeida Braga, our OCA director in Rio de Janeiro, is arranging an Orchids in the Wild fund raising trip that will take place in September. We will visit several reserves and many spectacular orchids, including a site just off the beach between Rio and Cabo Frio where *Cattleya intermedia* is rampant. The August newsletter* had a picture of one clump from that site and one of the clones is shown below. So, please, when you get your membership renewal appeal letter, please know that you are not being asked to carry the funding of the OCA all by yourself.

The trip to Brazil will be announced in more detail on the website in the near future. In addition to the *Cattleya intermedia* site we will undoubtedly visit the Millers at Macae de Cima (www.riotrust.org) and REGUA (www.regua.co.uk). A new book on the Atlantic Rainforest "The Organ Mountain Range" is available through our website. It has lots of fascinating information about the area we will be visiting. The website also offers T-shirts and artwork. Any of these items would make great holiday gifts for that special orchid person in your life - maybe even yourself ?

I must say that I am quite optimistic that 2010 is going to be a banner year for the OCA. Everywhere I go people say that we are doing an important job and that they want to help. Next year will see the definition of new goals for reserve creation and having those definite goals will give us new energy to make progress. There are a lot of orchids out there that need our help and I look forward to working with you for their benefit.

Best wishes for the holidays and the coming new year. I hope you feel the same optimism for your life and your goals that I feel for the OCA.



Peter S.
Tobias, OCA
President



Cattleya intermedia at large in Brazil

* Newsletters are now archived on our web site.