

Petal Power

Golby-Reasoner Chapter
American Hibiscus Society

December, 2003

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Around the table, starting with Len and Dorothy Erikson, then Meg and Mike Bossert, Beege and Bob Hunter, and Rae and Dave Flanders, celebrating Christmas at the Bradenton Yacht Club.

"Festive" is the word...

"Festive" certainly is the word to use when summarizing the Chapter's Annual Christmas Party held December 13th at the Bradenton Yacht Club. There were many festive decorations throughout the Club; many of the 61 attendees were in festive attire, carols were sung by a choir – sort of, and there was a "blooming" Christmas tree surrounded by lots and lots of presents. If one was not in the Christmas spirit before the Party, they surely should have been afterwards.

Major words of gratitude should go to Karin Delbert and Marilyn Shields for all their considerable effort in putting together all the aspects of an event of the magnitude of the Party. Those of us who haven't put together something like it can't appreciate what's involved, but it surely is a big endeavor. Many thanks – Karin and Marilyn! (All the place cards were Marilyn's doing!) And by the way, according to those our reporter talked to, the entree was an excellent choice. Something different for a change and something the kitchen staff had to reach for a bit.

In addition to recognizing Karin and Marilyn, our then President Dave Flanders in his remarks before the banquet recognized several other Chapter members. (1) Carl and Pat Kramer, for hosting us at the Yacht Club. (2) Ankie Watt and Gayler Boettcher for their contribution of the door prize poinsettias and Karin Delbert for transporting them to the Club. (3) Jean Tourt for the Christmas piano music. (4) Gene Haugh for the new Directory, copies of which were distributed to attendees. Dave Flanders also introduced Mark Love, who gave the invocation .

It should be noted that one aspect of the Party will live on. Indeed, it is pleasant to reflect on the fact that the presents under the tree will be appreciated by migrant worker children for weeks and months to come. It is also

pleasant to reflect on the thought that we don't recall ever seeing so many presents under the tree. To those who put the presents there – “you done good”.

The party would have been even better had Eric Golby been able to be with us. Perhaps it goes without saying, but Eric certainly wanted to be at the party. However, his doctor felt that with all the bugs around, it was best if Eric weren't around a bunch of people in an enclosed area. Makes sense. Nevertheless, you were missed, Eric.

Directory Correction Already!

In the listing of Directors on the inside of the cover of the 2004 Directory, please replace the name “Pat Sweeney” with “Frank Vejrostek”. Frank replaced Pat when the Sweeneys moved from the area.

Please let Gene Haugh know if there are any other errors or changes. And, if you have an email address which isn't listed, send Gene an email at ehaugh@tampabay.rr.com and you'll be added to the *ePetal Power* circulation list (which also gets you occasional extras).

Big chill winter?

It was a front page article in the *Bradenton/East Manatee Herald*, but just in case some of our readers didn't read it – conditions are right for a “big chill” in Florida this winter. Since citrus is such a big part of the economy of Manatee County, the article addressed the affect a freeze might play on that crop. Of course, what affects citrus will affect hibiscus.

The article stated that it is three times more likely that we could have a hard freeze in years when neither El Nino nor La Nina weather patterns prevail – and that's what we have this year. Of 12 catastrophic freezes documented in Florida as far back as 1894, 11 have occurred in years in which a so-called neutral weather pattern prevailed. However, the article didn't say what the odds were that freezes would occur in neutral weather pattern years. (It was a Knight Ridder article.)

A point was made that “citrus trees in western Manatee County have on occasion been hard hit by cold weather. Hard freezes in 1952 and 1962 were devastating to Mixon Fruit Farm...” Of course Mixon's groves aren't all that far west, but if they had a hard freeze it was probably cold enough farther west to hurt hibiscus.

We again say, “Be prepared”!

Part of our history....

Eric Golby found a clipping from the December 30, 1957 issue of the *Bradenton Herald* that he thought said something about the history of our Chapter – and we agree. The yellowed clipping displays an article entitled, “Norman A. Reasoner, Long a Leader In Horticulture Development, Dies At 61”. Norman Reasoner was a founder of the American Hibiscus Society and is the “Reasoner” in “Golby-Reasoner Chapter”. Many in our Chapter today may not know that until 1995 our Chapter was named the Norman Reasoner Chapter. In 1995, “Golby” was added to the Chapter name in honor of Eric and Sally Golby. “Mr. and Mrs. Hibiscus”, who along with a couple others, were founders of our Chapter. Since many current members know nothing about Norman Reasoner, we will quote some from the 1957 article

“It was Mr. Reasoner's father, Egbert N. Reasoner, who first discovered the pink grapefruit in the last century. Pliny Reasoner, brother of Norman Reasoner's father founded the first nursery in Oneco in 1881...The Reasoners Nurseries, which have been operated in recent years by Norman and his son E. S. “Bud” Reasoner , are the oldest in the state under a single family operation. (*Editor's note: “Bud” Reasoner was the father of Andy and Ward, who currently operate nurseries locally.*)

He attended grade school in Oneco ... he went to the University of North Carolina from which he graduated with a degree in chemical engineering ... remained ... as instructor while working on master's ... Signal Corps during World War I ... gun cotton inspector in Du Pont plants ... discharge ... remained with Du Pont for a year until he returned to the nursery business here.

Reasoner was the first president of the American Hibiscus Society ...”

While the article said only something about Norman's role in the hibiscus world in terms of his being the president of the AHS, he was very much involved in the development of hibiscus and in spreading the word about hibiscus beyond the borders of Oneco and Manatee County.

Herald recognizes Eric's milestone

Vin Mannix's column in the *Bradenton/East Manatee Herald* recently contained the following: "Here's a special happy birthday to **Eric 'Mr. Hibiscus' Golby**, who is 95 years young and still going strong." Isn't it neat to have something like "Mr. Hibiscus" associated with, or almost as a part of, your name? Congratulations Eric!

January in the hibiscus garden

Normally, from mid November through mid February, the hibiscus gardener has very little to do. However, if there is a cold front threatening—that can change very quickly and dramatically—depending on how many plants you have and where you live in relation to the Gulf. So usually, in January, other than keeping cold protection material handy and listening to weather forecasts, there is not much to do.

Of course, there will be blooms to pick during periods of warm weather. We don't consider that "gardening" since we equate gardening with work, enjoyable or not, and gathering blooms is pure pleasure.

While January is not our driest month it is still part of the dry season. We will therefore still have to water our plants as needed – weekly? We could have a rain that would bring about a month's normal total in one day, like we did in some areas on December 14th, but that's more the exception than the rule. With January's usually dry weather may come spider mites – unless it is also quite cold. Examine leaves with your fingers for a sandy feeling and/or use a hand lens. If they are there, at this time of year, use something containing acephate (the active ingredient in *Orthene*, which is no long on the market) or some other systemic labeled for spider mites.

Some might suggest fertilizing very lightly in January. This would be meant as a maintenance move—just enough to keep the plants healthy, but not enough to make new growth. It's our feeling that plants will do quite well for three months or so without additional fertilizer. Particularly since the weather is cool enough during November, December and January that not much growth is taking place. Therefore, we continue to trod the path of "no fertilizer". Somewhat the same path takes us to "no pruning", which encourages growth, during the winter months. A rowdy plant that slaps you in face (or some such) every time you pass will have to be dealt with, no matter what time of year it is.

Some of those oak leaves you will probably be raking could be used for mulch and are certainly candidates for the compost pile.

While the plants we cultivate in our garden grow very slowly during the winter months, some weeds seem to love the cool weather. Guess when one says there isn't much to do in the garden, that doesn't include weeding—the eternal pain in the—back.

Golby-Reasoner Chapter, AHS

Chapter Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2003

The business meeting portion of the annual Chapter Christmas Party was called to order by President Flanders at approximately 2:15 PM at the Bradenton Yacht Club.

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes of the November 9th Chapter meeting be approved as published in *Petal Power*. The motion passed.

A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the Treasurer's report. The motion passed.

President Flanders recognized the "retiring" officers and board members Karin Delbert, Betty Seipel and Trudy Topolosky.

President Flanders then introduced past President Robert Hunter to conduct the installation of officers and board members. Dr. Hunter proceeded to install the following in the offices indicated: President – Pat Grant, First Vice-President – Beege Hunter, Second Vice-President – Gene Haugh, Secretary – Gayler Boettcher, Treasurer – Phyllis Mohn, 2006 Directors – Dottie Erikson & Alvin Morgan.

President Grant recognized the contributions made by Dave Flanders in his two years as president of the Chapter. Yvonne Santiago was introduced to present Flanders with a hibiscus from Cold Porcelain Creations to commemorate his contributions to the Chapter during his term as President.

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed.

Gayler Boettcher, Secretary

CLASSIFIEDS

Cold Porcelain Creations! Lifelike Hibiscus and other flowers, singles/bouquets. Yvonne Santiago: (941) 727-7293, vonry01@aol.com, or www.coldporcelaincreations.com