DIGEST DOER’S PROFILE

PHIL AND ANN JESUP

H. Phillips (Phil) Jesup
Ann Lauer Jesup

HOME:
Five acres of pine/oak woods on a pile of glacial sand in
Bristol, Connecticut. In the middle of a large laurel patch.

AGE:
P: 64 and pleased to be still kicking.
A: Sneaking up on 60 but not yet old enough to consider quitting
doing anything neat.

PROFESSION:
P: Retired bank trust and estate administrative officer.
A: Professional volunteer, professional nitpicker.

OFFICES HELD AND MEMBERSHIPS:
P: President Connecticut Orchid Society; Vice President Greater
New York Orchid Society; Chairman AOS Northeast Region
Judging Center; AOS Trustee; Orchid Digest Corporation.
A: AOS Trustee; Conservation Committee Chair; GNYOS; Connecticut
Orchid Society Conservation Committee Chair; Pleurothallid
Alliance Director; Maxillaria Tribe; IUCN Species Survival
Committee; Orchid Specialist Group; Orchid Digest Corporation.

SPECIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
P: Finding the surface of his desk (only to quickly lose it again);
recipient of AOS Gold Medal for service; Greater New York
Orchid Society Lifetime Achievement Award.
A: Receipt of the AOS Gold Medal.

PERSONAL GOALS:
P: To become more sensitive to human nuances; to become more
sensitive to orchid nuances (i.e., after 46 years of growing to
learn how to grow orchids really well—consistently).
A: Leaving things a little better while still enjoying life.

PHILOSOPHY:
P: Mankind must live in harmony with nature by ceasing to dominate
and overrun it, most importantly by quickly and drastically slowing
reproduction rates worldwide.
A: If it’s worth doing, try.

HOBBIES AND SPECIAL INTERESTS:
P: Herpetology, general horticulture, all life (including human),
newspaper junkie.
A: Family, Orchids, Dendrobatiid frogs, Arabian horses, Longhaired
dachshunds. American history, reading, kayaking, photography,
older Porsches (356 types), horticulture, all aspects of nature.

FAVORITE MEMORIES:
P: Discovering orchids growing in the wild on Mt. Diablo in Jamaica
in 1952 at age 18 (this initiated the obsession), and climbing the
same mountain trail with his 34 year old son Ben and good friend
Don Richardson, Jr., in 1996.
A: Exploring in the Alps, Andes and Appalachians; wonderful animals.

FAVORITE ORCHID:
P: Neocogniauxia hexaperta (But there are hundreds of runners-up)
A: Oh, come on! Any and/or all.

FAVORITE DRINK:
P: Cold V-8.
A: Unblemished real iced tea, Chateau Petrus Pomerol ’61.

FAVORITE FOOD:
P: Ripe papaya eaten by the side of the road on a mountain pass
at 2800 meters in Ecuador.
A: Chocolate, shellfish (not together).

LAST BOOK READ (AND STILL READING):
P: Proofreading, with Ann, the draft of the forthcoming “AOS
Encyclopedia of Cultivated Orchids,” edited by Eric Christenson,
by virtue of their being world-class nitpickers.
A: “Katharine Graham—Personal History” and “America Online for
Dummies” (simultaneously).

FAVORITE QUOTATION:
P: “I don’t know how I ever had time to work.” A frequent quotation
from yours truly.
A: “Keep ’em long enough, they’ll amount to something.” By Ann’s
maternal great-grandmother.
For me, the two greatest thrills of my orchid hobby are finding and collecting orchid species in the wild, and watching the buds develop on my own hybrids. With regard to the former, it is extremely important to collect with great care and to be mindful of conservation. Regarding the latter, in making your own crosses you are restricted only by the space you have in which to raise the seedlings, and the vagaries of your imagination.

This will be a superficial article on the fun of doing your own hybridizing, and, if practical hints creep in, it is unintentional. Plenty of words have been written about how to wield a toothpick, where to find the stigmatic surface, and what phase of the moon to cross by. I will not discuss flasking either — I am too time-stressed and “chicken” to attempt it myself, so I send the pods to those who are smarter and more dexterous.

On to the fun! Actually, hybridizing is an insidious aspect of an insidious hobby. It gets to the point where one is constantly ogling theoretically genetically-compatible flowers wondering what a melding of characteristics would produce. This is the wrong approach. One should have a goal, or many goals, and work toward achievement — in one’s mind or on paper. When you consider the space, time, and effort involved in growing to flowering a batch of baby orchids, impulse
Ann and Phil Jesup, orchid experts, in Nature Center Program

Bristol Press Photo by Phyllis Springer

Jesups Orchid Program Set At Nature Center

Mr. and Mrs. H. Phillips Jesup will present a slide show Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Barnes Nature Center, featuring their glamorous hobby, orchids. Both Jesups have been orchid raisers for over twenty years, and the greenhouse at their Fox Den home reflects their expertise.

Hearts and flowers is a phrase that might have been invented especially for the Jesups, Ann and Phil. Married since December, the two orchid hobbyists met at an Eastern Orchid Congress in Hartford. It was only natural than these two naturalists would find that they had a great deal in common.

Phil Jesup is well known as an orchid fancier. He has won numerous prizes and awards in flower shows up and down the Eastern seaboard. Many of his orchids are one of a kind plants. He writes a regular column for "Orchidata", the Greater New York Orchid Society magazine, and is a judge for the American Orchid Society, the "mother club" of all orchid societies.

His attractive wife, Ann, describes herself as a "grower for fun". Previously to moving to Bristol, she rented space for her orchid collection, and had to relocate some to the windowsill. Now her orchids will share their fascinating hobby with those at the Barnes Nature Center Monday. The event is open to the public at a nominal charge. Members of the Center will be admitted free.
Six-Class Sweep,
AOS Certificate
For Jesup Orchids

Mr. and Mrs. H. Phillips Jesup of Bristol, orchid
collectors of international repute, have grown equally adept
at garnering awards for their prize collection.

At the 51st annual International Flower Show and Garden
Fair in New York, which concluded last week, the Jesups
swept first-place honors in the six classes they entered.

Sarah Jesup, the distaff half of the his-and-her team, is
delighted with the judges' verdict. She and her husband
have never captured first in each class entered "except in
the days when we entered only one class," she quips.

The couple collaborated on five of the winning displays,
all entries in individual-plant classes. They included three
miniatures (orchids) shown in a terrarium; an orchid grown
on a branch of ilicace attached to a board-base; a group of
three orchids; an Oncidium hybrid entry; and a cane-type
Epidendrum entry.

Mrs. Jesup won the sixth first-place award with a
display of orchid blooms arranged for effect.

Superseding the couple's delight at the six-class sweep
is their exultation in capturing the American Orchid Society's
coveted Certificate of Cultural Merit for the
Epidendrum entry.

The Certificate — rarely presented at the International
Flower Show — was the sole AOS award of any kind made
there this year.

It may be paralleled with the Pulitzer Prize (presented
for distinction in journalism, music, letters, and public
service) in that it is awarded only when a contender
merits the honor.

Judging standards for the Certificate are much more
stringent than for ordinary competition, because a candi-
date is judged against the concept of perfection rather
than against the other competitors in his class.

The Jesup entry totaled 91 points of a possible 100 — a
stunning performance in orchid circles.

In addition to entering their own displays, the Fox Den
Road couple contributed plants to the exhibit entered by
the Greater New York Orchid Society. Phil Jesup is treas-
urer of the society, and Sarah is editor of its bimonthly
publication, "Orchidata."

The Jesups have won more prizes for their collections
in seven years of competition than Sarah can recall at once.

Her husband, trust officer of a local bank, became
interested in orchids at 17, when still in high school. Sarah's
interest dates from the day of her engagement, when she
and Phil made an interesting pact: "I promised to learn
all about orchids, and he promised to learn bridge — a
promise which he has broken. And I consider that grounds
for divorce any time I may want to."

The pair are perennially knee-deep in orchid activities.

Currently Phil is president of the Connecticut Orchid
Society. He and Sarah were guest editors, with Dr. Carl
L. Withner, of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's "Handbook
on Orchids," published last November. Dr. Withner is
resident investigator of orchids at the Botanic Garden and
professor of biology at Brooklyn College.

Interestingly, the handbook is illustrated partially with
several prints by chief Press photographer Peter Maron
and his antecedent, Ted Dully, now a member of the staff
of The Boston Globe.

Another event made November a significant month for
the Jesups. In a presentation ceremony at Longwood Gar-
dens, Del., the old Du Pont estate — they received the
American Orchid Society's Bronze Medal for a display
congregations. “Shepherds and pastors used to be fearless prophets,” he said. “Today, you have not fearless, but fearful leaders of the cloth.”

The straight talk has made him a sought-after sage.

“When I came here, he was one that immediately extended a hand to me and embraced me and encouraged me,” said the Rev. Shelley Best, executive director of the Capitol Region Conference of Churches. “He cares about the whole community. He wants to see everyone do their best for the greater good.” For seven years, Shiloh has operated a weekly soup kitchen. Once a year, the church dedicates a Sunday for the Urban League of Greater Hartford. Every Thanksgiving, there is a feast for all. “He’s been like a father figure to many here, a mentor,” said Shiloh congregant Beverly Berry. “His main focus is ‘it starts at home.’”

This King, too, has left the building. He’s earned a much-needed rest.

Stan Simpson’s column appears on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He can be reached at ssimpson@courant.com

A PERENNIAL FAVORITE

PHIL JESUP of Bristol, an American Orchid Society judge, examines entries Friday at the Connecticut Orchid Society’s Orchid Fiesta at West Harford’s town hall. The event takes place this weekend and will include lectures and tours. Admission is $5. Children 12 and under get in free.
Phil and Sarah Jesup with part of their orchid collection in greenhouse adjoining their Fox Den Road home
Dear Yolanda,

(yes, I still know how to write, but not well).

1) Happy New Year! Hope 1994 is an improvement over 1993, no blather here for the latter was.

2) While trying to find cotton on my desk, I uncovered the 1/1/93 issue of the ANVOS Newsletter, which I had been saving to copy a postcard I received for you and Continental. Before I left home too much, I want to say that I feel I knew the answer...