



BromeliAdvisory

December 2008 BSSF OFFICERS 2008

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DECEMBER 2, 2008 , 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: NONE

RAFFLE TABLE: NONE

FOOD TABLE: Priceless

This is the annual Holiday Party where food will be Pot Luck delivered and communally eaten.

HOLIDAY PARTY HOLIDAY PARTY HOLIDAY

ANYONE who wants to know ANYTHING about the events of the Holiday Party and most particularly on how he or she can aid in the presentment of food or exchange plants, is only a phone call away. Call Mike Michalski at 305-279-2416 or e-mail him at PGONZA7782@AOL.COM.

Door Prize: Alan Herndon
Education: Nat DeLeon
Hospitality: Elaine Mills
Library: Juan Espinosa
Membership: Moyna Prince
Member Plant Sales: Antonio Arbelaez
Raffle: Peter & Clara Kouchalakos
Refreshments: Patty Gonzalez

What	Who
Sales Table	Antonio Arbelaez

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is again a special BromeliAdvisory. Within are:
1. Transcript of Nat DeLeon speech by Karl Green.
2. Article about the 2008 Extravaganza in Tampa by Jose "Pepe" Donayre who handled the 2007 Extravaganza in Broward.
3. The "Swedish Connection" written by Alan Herndon – who can pass on that title?

ALL PHOTOS ordinarily courtesy of **Michael Schmale** – but this time it was amateur hour by those who will remain anonymous..

In Case You Missed it by Robert Meyer

Transcript of Karl Green Speech

On this honorable occasion, I am proud and grateful to be allowed to present the oral presentation on behalf of the BSSF. As the president of BSSF, I have been involved with Nat DeLeon for a period of years. And, all good years.

I do not seek to reiterate the history of this person. You already received a copy of the



BromeliAdvisory which included Moyna Prince's wonderful article depicting Nat's life history as well as Alan Herndon's great article about the feats of Nat DeLeon in the bromeliad world.

I humbly cannot add to those impressive works and instead wish to focus on another theme.

Everyone knows Nat has received numerous awards, and so I will not hash on that point. What I wish to do is to tell you about the alphabet soup of nat's bromeliad history which you may or may not know about. Numerous acronyms have become a part of nat, and quite frankly, numerous acronyms are the creation of Nat DeLeon. Behind BSI, BSSF, BSBC, BIC, FCBS and many other acronyms, Nat DeLeon played an instrumental role. I shall explain.

You all know of the **BSI** – Bromeliad Society International. When it started, it was primarily an Australian/California organization, managed, handled and led by people of Australia and the American west coast. Then Nat became involved. And the organization's perspective grew. Florida became another venue in which bromeliad cultivation blossomed. Species in Florida would differ – as they still do – from California cultivars or hybrids because of different interests, weather differences or both. Nat gave the **BSI** a new perspective reflective of the bromeliad world you and I see today. And in 2000, Nat was named an honorary trustee – a lifetime appointment.

Emanating from the **BSI** is the **WBC** – World Bromeliad Conference. In 2008, the 18th Annual Show was held. In 1980, the WBC was in Miami

to which Nat was instrumental. Amazingly, Florida hosted this event when few Floridians were **BSI** members.

You all know the **BSSF** – Bromeliad Society of South Florida. What you may or may not know is that Nat was a founder– maybe **the** founder. He was the first president of the **BSSF**. He has been a president on three occasions. And when the **BSSF** grew, he helped arrange the organization of **BSBC** – Bromeliad Society of Broward County. Hence, the overload of the Broward and Dade affiliations could be better served with the two organizations which lead many of the causes for the **FCBS**.

You have heard of **FCBS** – Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies. And you may remember that the **FCBS** is instrumental in delivering research in fighting the evil weevil. When the evil weevil was first becoming a concern, Nat DeLeon obtained a vast amount of *tillandsia utriculata*, and shipped the same to the laboratories of the **FCBS** to perform their scientific studies.



Roth and Pagliarulo took the cake with the frosting that had a photo of Nat.

was at the forefront of this organization's history.

These accomplishments are more pronounced when contrasted to the time of the respective events. Nat has been at the doorstep of many bromeliad accomplishments – the evil weevil study, the World Bromeliad Conference, the creation of the BSSF and BSBC, the inception of the Bromeliad Identification Center and more.

You have heard of **BIC** – Bromeliad Identification Center. This Marie Selby Botanical Gardens organization is increasingly important and better establishes Florida as being an instrumental agent for bromeliad growers worldwide. In 1983, funding for **BIC** was originated mainly from an auction to which Nat DeLeon held a major role. Nat

Nat DeLeon is much more than the man we monthly see delivering stupendously colored plants for show and tell – where he explains and describes the leaf structure, reveals how the lolly-pop colors of the inflorescence evolved, and divulges the rarely known history of the innumerable hybrids to which he has been involved during his decades of bromeliad research. Nat is – in many respects – the Johnny Appleseed of the bromeliad world, especially for South Florida.

Nat DeLeon's Parrot Jungle was the quintessential South Florida paradise for decades. Tourists and locals would visit for the birds, but more often left with lasting impressions of the undercover plants he adorned on the large lot. A zone 10 phenomenon, Parrot Jungle was the place where Tarzan's jungle blended delicately with brilliant tropical grace. Parrot "Jungle" was perhaps a misnomer for this attraction – "Parrot Paradise" would have better described the environment of 57th and 110th street.

Legend has been told that bromeliads were rare until Nat DeLeon and Parrot Jungle introduced this area to the same. I believe that the average landscape of Miami would have a fraction of the bromeliads we see today had Nat DeLeon not resided here. Nat DeLeon – the pioneer in the bromeliad world who excavated the roads for BIC, BSI, FCBS and more – is as much the father to South Florida bromeliad landscaping as he is the father to this organization.

The unselfish energies he has expended to this organization cannot be measured. Annually, he delivered tables of plants to the annual show. His appearances, according to Robert Meyer, culminated with no less than 80 plants in any given year. To give you a perspective of the volume of this entry – that number represents about 25% of the entire show at the World Bromeliad Conference!

This event is indeed a rare event in this organization. But it is an event to which the organization would be remiss if it did not feast and celebrate this icon to the organization and bromeliad world.

At this time, I raise my glass and ask that all join me in making a solemn and heartfelt toast to the father of the BSSF – Nat DeLeon.



Nat (far right) surrounded by Family and President Karl Green (far left)

The 2008 Extravaganza by Jose "Pepe" Donayre

The Tampa Bromeliad Society held this year's Extravaganza on Labor Day weekend at the Sheraton Suites Tampa Airport Hotel. The spacious hotel atrium with its tropical vegetation was an excellent setting for the event and added to a happy reception.

This and the last two Extravaganzas, by the South Florida and Broward Societies, plus the one in Sarasota which faced the problems of a menacing hurricane, have brought innovations in the organization and operation of these complex one-day events. Although most of the progress centered on the running of the final rare plant auction, one very significant addition with broad repercussions for future Extravaganzas was Tom Wolfe's idea of charging an entrance fee (US \$ 3.00) to the sales room for all those non-members coming to buy plants.

As widely expected, Tom Wolfe smoothly handled all aspects of the operation with a well tuned and coordinated team from the Tampa society and the Council. This included a well served reception, a large sale, the seminars, a grand banquet and the Sunday garden visits. The sale was active and sustained all day in the spacious area made larger by moving the cashiers out into the atrium. No doubt, all vendors were very happy at the end and the Society grossed about \$ 32,000 including the proceedings of a well

supplied raffle section where very attractive arrangements caught the eye of many.

Four seminars by Dennis Cathcart (“Tillandsias in the Wild”), Harry Luther, Carole Richtmyer (“Bromeliad Habitats of Brazil”) and Ray Lemieux (“How to grow, propagate and hybridize Terrestrial Bromeliads”) filled the lecture room to capacity.

The banquet was attended by almost everybody involved who enjoyed an excellent choice of meals. It was the occasion for the Council to offer the very first “Friend to the Council” award to Derek Butcher (“Uncle Derek”) of Australia for his help and support in creating and maintaining the Photo Index in the Council’s website. At the same time, the Council recognized the outstanding labor and dedication of many years of Karen and Michael Andreas who were honored with a special plaque each. Karen as the newsletter editor, parliamentarian and protector of the photo collection and Michael as the creator and busy webmaster at the helm of the Council’s extensive website.

The banquet ended with the rare plant auction for which auctioneer Mary Whittemore and her daughter came from California and volunteered to give us again a great performance. Ninety six donated items were auctioned under new rules put together by the Council in view of the difficulties we had last year. One of the innovations was the very successful use of colored coupons to keep track of bids, adopted from the ones used at the South Florida Society auctions. The auction produced \$ 4,630 and the plant getting the highest bid was an *Orthophytum conquistensis* donated by Alan and Rhonda Herndon which was sold for \$ 155.

The garden visits on Sunday were simply spectacular. They included Rhoda and Jim Smith’s one inspired by their travels to Bali and China, with an emphasis in the peace atmosphere of water sounds, in contrast with the tropical rainforest effect of Debbie and Guy King’s property, reclaimed from what was at a time an elaborate man-made piece of tropical paradise. The Marilyn and Gus Weekley’s home is set in a historical property where natural pools and streams abound with many varieties of trees where, in a span of a decade, tropicals, bromeliads and crotons have made their presence felt. Finally, it was the Emily and Josephine Black’s garden, a beautiful property landscaped by Tom Wolfe. His hand is highly

visible in the multiplicity of separate gardens and paths and the myriad of bromeliads taking special stage among the striking variety of plants.

We have to thank Tom for having selected such fine and varied examples of gardens for his Extravaganza.

ED PRINCE DAY November 22, 2008

Mark your calendars. The society will go to Sunset High School on **November 22, 2008 on or around 10 AM**, to prepare the garden in Ed Prince’s honor. A plaque has already been commissioned, made and paid for. Plants will be donated by members. Now, we need one thing from you: Sweat equity. Enlist yourselves for an afternoon which will deliver homage and hopefully eternal honor for Ed Prince at the school where his years of school-related work occurred.

The Swedish Connection by Alan Herndon

Tillandsia is named after Elias Tillands (1640–1693), a Finno-Swedish physician/botanist. This is hardly an isolated incidence. *Billbergia*, *Bromelia*, *Lindmania* and *Wittrockia* are all named for Swedish scientists. In addition, *Vriesia* is named for a Dutch botanist and the genus *Neoregelia* is ultimately named for the Superintendent of the Botanical Garden in St. Petersburg, Russia.



. It is natural to question how a group of plants as tied to the tropics as our bromeliads was given so many names based on people working in such northerly climes. In truth, this pattern of naming is largely a matter of historical accident.

The voyages of Columbus, starting in 1492, inaugurated a long period of intensive exploration and exploitation of the American hemisphere by Europeans. Explorations were driven largely by the growing importance of trade in European society. The growing trade demanded a constant supply of new products and new sources for old products. At the same time, the old medieval society was largely overturned. The old aristocrats were

generally content to allow a new class of merchants to control the new trade (after all, overseas trade was quite risky in an era of small boats plying uncharted waters without weather forecasts). As a result the wealth and influence of the old aristocracy began to decline while the wealth and influence of the merchants increased. As merchants gained wealth, they became interested in collecting artifacts that displayed their newfound status. A natural history cabinet became commonplace among successful merchants. After all, what better way to demonstrate the reach and strength of your trade network than to bring home a collection of colorful seashells or colorful insects or plants that could only be found in some far distant, rarely visited spot on the globe. Of course, it became a matter of pride and a mark of status to have artifacts that no one else was able to obtain.

For most merchants, the natural history cabinet never grew beyond an accumulation of objects for show at parties, but some merchants became interested in the objects in their own right. This led to a demand for specialist scholars who could classify (organize) and publicize the collections. Such specialists came from the field of medicine, where a study medicinal herbs was already well established. Before long, larger collections, based in Universities or Scientific academies developed, but the basic need in the 17th and 18th centuries was still to classify and publicize the growing collections.

The basic approach was to sort the collection into groups of related objects, describe the individual objects and publish the results in book form. Descriptions were written in Latin, the language of science throughout Europe at that time, and, since book production was expensive even then, there was considerable pressure to keep the descriptions concise. These condensed descriptions were also used as names for the plants (a system called polynomial nomenclature).

Problems quickly arose with the polynomial nomenclature. Different scholars often worded descriptions differently for the same plant, so there were many different names for the same plant. In addition, since word order is relatively flexible in Latin, there was no easy way to index the names. This made it difficult to determine when a specimen in hand had already been described or to retrieve all past descriptions of a single species. This problem, along with the steady influx of new types of plants from continuing explorations, threatened to make systematic progress impossible.

A solution was found the in the mid-eighteenth century when Karl Linne (*Carolus Linneus* in latinized form) proposed and promoted a binomial system of nomenclature. In this system (the same in use today), each specimen was labeled using two names (binomial nomenclature): a genus name and a species epithet. The genus name indicated a group of related organisms, while the species epithet indicated distinct objects within the genus group. This scheme provided a way to uniquely label distinct organisms in a manner that was highly amenable to filing and retrieving data. The utility of the system was so apparent that virtually all works on plants published after 1753, when Linnaeus first used the system consistently in his *Species Plantarum*, adopted this form of nomenclature.

The accidental part in this history comes from the fact that in the mid-eighteenth century, the field was still sufficiently small that a single person could dominate. Linnaeus was dominant during his generation in terms of publications in the field and in the number of students he sent on collecting expeditions to newly opening areas in the world Linnaeus was also Swedish. It is not surprising that he tended to use the names of people he dealt with on a regular basis when in need of a new generic name.

(Cont. Next page)

Thanks for the Memory(ies)

To members of our Bromeliad Society:

On behalf of Eileen and I, I want to thank everyone for the wonderful tribute given to me last week. I appreciate all the very kind words!

The Society certainly proved once again that it throws the best parties ever! Sandy, Judy and Lori as always did a superb job. The food was delicious and everyone had a great time!

Let's do it again sometime. But sooner than the next fifty years.

Sincerely

Nat

– **Elias Tillands Cont.**–

A century earlier, the center of botanical activity was in Oxford, where Roger Bacon reigned. A century later, the center(s) had moved to the large herbaria of Kew, Berlin, Paris and St. Petersburg (Russia). Had the binomial system of nomenclature been introduced in either of those periods, we could expect a completely different set of generic names.

Traces of this historical anomaly still linger. During the period contemporaneous with and immediately following Linnaeus, small institutions associated with the Nordic countries (in such cities as Copenhagen, Leiden, Stockholm, Uppsala and Utrecht) were among the most active centers of botanical study. They accumulated important collections of early type material that, despite being overshadowed by the much larger and better funded institutions that have arisen since then, still beckon a steady stream of researchers to their doors.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

New Member: New member **Nancy Westberry** joins us, add her information to your membership book – 8261 SW 146 St., Palmetto Bay, FL33158, Tele.: 305-233-0242.

New Member: **Maureen Adelman** joins us as well, add her information to your membership book – 9421 SW 134 St., Miami, FL 33176, Tele.: 305-255-3895, or reach her by internet at mhadelman@comcast.net.

Health: Longtime member **Carl Bauer** recently had open heart surgery and is recuperating from the same. Intends to be back in the saddle again before November 20, 2008 – that is at home instead of at the hospital. We need him desperately back on the ball so he can continue to contribute his smile and graces at the next meeting, and have his calculator mind recharged for the Annual Show which is only months away.

YOUR VOTE COUNTED

On November 4, 2008, the ballots of Florida counted and a new regime was voted into office. The reports were confirmed by all sources and it appears that the new board is:

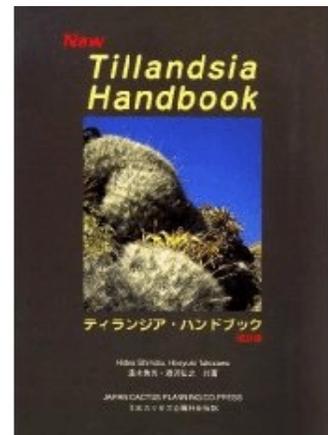
President Robert Meyer
VP: Pepe Donayre
Treasurer: Alan Herndon
Secretary: Barbara Partagas
Past Pres.: Sandy Roth
Directors Lori Weyrick '09
Peter Kouchalakos '09
Judy Pagliarulo '09-'10
Ofelia Sorzano '09-'10

Want to Know More About Tillandsia

Did Alan Herndon's article pique your interest in the **Steve Correale** species?

There is universal agreement that the best book regarding *Tillandsia* is the hard-to-get-anywhere-in-the-world classic: *New Tillandsia Handbook* by H i d e o Shimizu and H i r o y u k i Takizawa.

But, someone in the Society may be able to lead you to a copy of the same.



Derek Butcher says this publication is the "[T]he best book on the market for identifying Tillandsias . . ."

MEMBERSHIP MONTH COMING

Remember, your membership dues will be due in the not-too-distant future.