





Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society

Volume 54 Number 11/12



Barb Stewart's *Sinningia* "EN-Ding Dong'. "Russian hybrid I got at MAAVS last year, labeled *Gloxinia* 'EN-Ding Dong', but is clearly a *Sinningia speciosa*."

President's Message

Barb Stewart

Happy holidays! Are more gesneriads on your wish list? If so, our next meeting is the place to get some. In addition to our holiday pot-luck luncheon, there is usually a great selection of plants on the raffle table. Also, we will have a gift exchange with plant related items under \$20. Bring a gift if you want to participate (which is optional). Guests can participate as well. Yes, family and friends are welcome (as they always are). While there was no meeting in November, a lot of us met up at the MAAVS convention in Gettysburg, Pa. The show committee overcame many last minute obstacles to put on an awesome show. Included in this issue are pictures of award winning entries by some of our members. November/December 2023

National Capital Area Chapter Of the Gesneriad Society		
December 9th	Holiday Party at Johanna's, membership renewal & gift exchange (see details in President's message)	
January 13, 2024	First meeting of the New Year. Program TBA	

This past year our chapter decided to try fewer meetings and continue using Zoom as needed. Those who attended the October meeting generally agreed that fewer meetings, especially in person meetings, left some of us feeling disconnected.

Thanks to Donna for helping to keep us together with monthly issues of Petal Tones. It was agreed to return to regular monthly meetings, with the exception of July when the national convention is held. There will still be a mix of in person and virtual meetings, with Zoom being available for all meetings.

We had some great programs this past year, starting with an informative talk on INSV by Dale Martens. Other programs included the propagation workshop, a great program on miniature Sinningias by Grant Godden, gesneriads in Ecuador by Jim and Drew, and a member presented program on meeting new gesneriads.

Minh is working on programs for 2024 and is looking for feedback from members on topics of interest. Several suggestions were made at the October meeting, but with more meetings we need more program ideas.

At our last meeting, the membership voted on having a show next fall. Bill agreed to be show chairman and has tried to get a date at Homestead Gardens; however, that option has not panned out, so Bill is looking for assistance to find another venue.

This is our last meeting of the year. Our new year starts in January, so, as a reminder, dues are due (still \$10). One final note about joining the Gesneriad Society. If you are not a member, consider joining, as there are many valuable resources available to members. It is well worth the cost of membership. Hope to see you at the Holiday Get Together at Johanna's.

MAAVS's Show



Barb Borleske's Achimenes 'Blue Swan'



Sharon Long's Saintpaulia 'Phnom Phen'



Jill Fischer's Aeschynanthus longicaulis



Kitty's Saintpaulia 'Chanticleer'



Barb B. Michaelmoelleria vietnamensis



Jill Fischer's Natural Garden



Barb B. Gloxinia 'Dragonsong'





Barb Borleski's Primulina petrocosmeoides

See page 12 for more information about this Primulina.

Sharon L. Saintpaulia 'Mac's Coral Carillon'

MAAVS's Show



Bill Schmidt's Best in Design and another winning entry.



Maria Walueff's Pearca abunda



Bill's Gloxinella lindeniana



Barb Borleske's Primulina "Chiaki"



Barb Stewart's photo: A "memory lane" photo of Johanna's terrarium workshop in August 2016



Peggy's miniature *Saintpaulia* 'Frosted Denim' and "two African violets which I most likely obtained at the office at work. One is a medium purple and the other a very deep purple. I don't know the names of them but they are bringing me joy! "



Kitty's Sinningia helleri



Barb Stewart's Sinningia 'Dollbaby' x self'



Barb S. Smithiantha 'Sunset'



Barb S. Primulina 'Charlie'



Barb S. Episcia 'Suomi'



Barb S. *Streptocarp*us OD-Igra Voobrazheniya x other hybrids



Barb S. *Sinningia* 'Ozark Blue Popcorn'



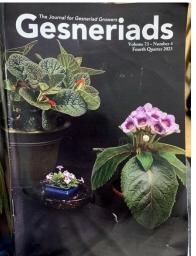
Barb S: "Gesneriad tray garden in a coffin for Halloween"



Bill discussing his *Henckelia* at the October '23 meeting. Photo by Barb Stewart



Bill's perfectly grown Eucodonia 'Olivia'





Local Convention Co-Chairs: Bill Schmidt, Barbara Stewart, Sharon Long

Our members in Gesneriad journal.



Barb Borleske, co-winner of Runner-up to Horticultural Sweepstakes, receives her several awards from Paul Susi, Awards Chairperson.



Johanna Zinn's Boea hygroscopica





Sharon Long: "I selected leaves of *Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Baby Bluebirds' at the Gesneriad convention in July. They started blooming as tiny plants. Can't wait until they grow up!. Hope to see lots of blooms as they grow bigger. They are compact plants, but never expected babies to bloom. Such fun. "



Chrysothemis pulchella

by Barbara Stewart

Chrysothemis is a new world gesneriad consisting of 9 species found from southern Mexico to Brazil. It has clusters of yellow blossoms in orange calyxes. Although the blossoms are short-lived, the calyxes last much longer and add to the beauty of the cluster, as well as to the blossom count when judged in a show.

Chrysothemis pulchella is found along shady roadsides and forest streams in its natural habitat. It is one of only 3 genera that are tuberous and will appreciate consistent watering until it goes dormant. Chrysothemis plants are often sold as houseplants. I bought my first Chrysothemis at a grocery store many years before I knew what a gesneriad was (Anyone remember A&P grocery store?). As many novices do, I tossed it when it went dormant, thinking it was dead (probably from lack of water).

In warmer climates (zones 9-10) they are sometimes grow outdoors as bedding plants. When grown well with multiple crowns, it can be a beautiful plant which is generally easy to grow. I grew *Chrysothemis pulchella* from seed planted in November 2022. This was a fast growing plant that didn't get enough attention or light. After potting up seedlings into a medicine cup, the plants were neglected for months. One seedling grew too heavy and fell over, looking to anchor itself in the matting, which probably helped it survive. In addition, it tried to save itself by sprouting tubers at each leaf node (see photo). It is now happily in a larger pot, staked for stability and placed on a wicking tub.

I have included another photo of a beautifully grown Chrysothemis exhibited by Robert McMeel at the 2022 AVSA convention in Little Rock. It is always good to see a plant like this for inspiration. Maybe my baby will look this impressive some day. One good thing about plants that go dormant is they get a fresh start after a good rest.



Gesneriad Reference web:

"*Chrysothemis is* a genus of nine species native to the West Indies, Mexico (Chiapas), Guatemala to Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana and Brazil (Amazonas State). It grows in shaded areas along roads and streams in wet forests. The genus is distinguished from other longstemmed genera in the Paradrymonia Alliance by the absence of adventitious roots, a terrestrial erect and free-standing habit, the presence of tubers and prominent, often colorful calyx lobes of red or yellow with yellow, orange, purplish or white corollas, sometimes with red markings.

Chrysothemis has long been in cultivation, and forms of species such as *C. pulchella* and *C. friedrichsthaliana* are often seen growing outside in subtropical summer gardens, as well as indoor collections and are often exhibited in flower shows."

Donna Beverin: "My *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Black Flamingo' re-sprouted for the 2021 season and grew strong under LED lights after awakening from its dormant state where it looked dead in the pot over winter! I have seen it online called "Sunset Bells" and "Copper Leaf".

It is wicked and it does drink a lot of water with a light liquid fertilizer. Some of the flowers lose their luster but their calyx keeps their color for a long time. New flowers pop up showing off their orange calyx as their yellow buds grow and open. It is a joy to watch it grow, making new stems and flower stalks. My plant has calyxes which are very orange and I have seen some varieties in pictures where they are very red.

I bought this plant as a baby in September 2019 at the Delaware African Violet & Gesneriad Society's Show and Sale. In 2020 it grew to 17" x 15" so I have to say it is a good grower. Since the tuber was bending the pot it was in last year, I repotted it into a larger pot which is a small hanging basket. Once it gets bigger I shall be refilling the wick's reservoir several times a week as it does not like to dry out and drinks a lot of water to which I add a dilute fertilizer solution.

I have tried propagating from leaves without success but this year I have seeds and hopefully can grow some *Chrysothemis pulchella* x self and get plants to share."Supposedly the name is taken from mythology: Chryso Themis was a daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, of Green Mythology. *Chrysothemis pulchella* (beautiful) is the most widespread species, the most variable, and the one found most often in cultivation.

Update 2023: During my time away from home caring for my Father, my Chrysothemis tuber was resting and showed no signs of sprouting as it did every year. When checking the tuber it had died. I am starting some *C. pulchella* from seeds from Mauro's Brazil Plants seed order.

I did grow *Chrysothemis pulchella* from Brazil Plant's seeds in 2021 with great success and sold many at the NCAC Show and Sale in September 2021. Photos below:







I was so happy with my Chrysothemis plant growing in a 10 inch pot. Pictures cannot do it justice. I entered a picture of it in the Gesneriad virtual show during Covid. I hope by the NCAC show in 2024 I can have raised more young plants to share at the sale.



Editor's note: I have never seen *Chrysothemis* 'Amazon' and thought some readers may have heard of this variety. I found this article on line from the Gesneriad Society archives and thought it interesting and then found the article in CrossWords from 1981 on the next page.

'Amazon', the Golden Chrysothemis

by Laura Progebin, Plantation, Florida

The Gloxinian, Vol. 29, No. 6, pages 8-10, Nov.-Dec. 1979

(Editor's Note: This article was published 2 years before the article from 1981 CrossWords newsletter article on page 11.)

Plant lovers harbor strange superstitions. One is never to say "thank you" when receiving a cutting, lest this inhibit its growth; another is the belief that only a purloined leaf will insure success. I have never subscribed to either theory, but was very sorely tempted recently and almost joined the purloiners. When I first saw a plant of *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Amazon', greed hit me with a crash and I bullied the possessor so unmercifully – in spite of many past proofs of kindness and generosity on his part – that he finally gave me two leaves from a plant which had been put in his trust.

I have grown both the green-leaved *Chrysothemis pulchella* and the bronze-leaved kind. I prefer the latter because of its colorful foliage which still makes it a decorative plant when it is not in bloom. The flowers are, in my estimation, a definite and non-botanical 'ugh'. They last only one day, but we are rewarded with the longer-lasting colorful orange calyces which count toward bloom at flower shows.

By contrast, the flowers of *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Amazon' are much larger. Each measures 1 ½ cm (5/8 inch) in length from calyx to corolla edge and has a diameter of 1 cm (3/8 inch). The deep golden yellow corolla flares broadly, with arrowheads and streaks of dark orange. The markings are arranged to give the illusion of a human face, with distinctive eyes, a smudge for a nose and, deep in the tube, a white spot which looks like an open mouth. The flowers stay bright and fresh for several days while the brilliant deep orange calyces, considerably larger than those of the other *Chrysothemis*, last for as long as ten days.

The foliage is a deep green with a bronze cast, and the reverse of the leaves is maroon. The plant, which stood 36 cm (14 inches) high from the surface of the medium when I received it, grew from a tuber about 4 cm ($1 \frac{1}{2}$ inch) in diameter. For two weeks, it was kept in the growing medium it was in and placed in a plastic bag for isolation and to preserve humidity.

Then it was removed to my regular gesneriad mix of 2 parts Canadian peat, 1 part perlite and 1 part vermiculite. Then it returned to isolation for the rest of the time – one month in all – where I keep all the new-comers. At the end of the month, it was again examined, found clean and healthy and now resides with the rest of the plants, on capillary matting. It receives the same culture as the other gesneriads, constant feed at half strength of Peters Special (18-18-18) and Schultz Instant. Occasionally it is treated with plain water to keep down any surface accumulation of salts and minerals. Since we live in the part of Florida which requires constant air conditioning, the matting has to be watered on alternate days, to maintain a reasonable amount of humidity in the plant area.

As new crowns develop, they are separated from the mother plant and rooted separately in order to provide more cuttings which will be shared. Three months after the original flowering, new buds set in the axils of the main crown. One of the advantages of growing tuberous plants is that, if you make serious cultural mistakes, you get a second chance: the tuber produces another crown, provided you do not cause it to rot with over-watering. For this reason, I use a small watering can to allow the fertilizer solution to flow around the inside rim of the pot without touching the top of the tuber. *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Amazon' was discovered by R.J. Knight and H.F. Winters during an orchid-hunting expedition in the area of Belem, state of Para, Brazil. We are indebted to them for their perspicacity in recognizing that they had made a horticultural find. The plant that they collected was labeled "Undt. sp." (unidentified species) when it was shipped to the USDA in February 1978, for distribution as "ornamental breeding."

While the USDA was harvesting seed and getting ready for limited distribution, identification was made by Michael Bush of the Selby Botanical Gardens, in December 1978, and "Undt. sp." became *Chrysothemis pulchella*. R.J. Knight added the cultivar name of 'Amazon' in March 1979. A telephone call to Dr. Hans Wiehler at Selby Gardens verified that there was agreement to this addition because the leaves are not as shiny as those of the other forms of *C. pulchella* found in the same area. Be on the lookout for commercial listings of *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Amazon'. It is a productive, colorful and rewarding plant to grow.

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF CHRYSOTHEMIS PULCHELLA 'AMAZON'

United States Department of Agriculture Science and Education Administration Agricultural Research

The United States Department of Agriculture, Science and Education Administration, Agricultural Research, announces the release of a container-grown ornamental, *Chrysothemis pulchella* (J. Donnex Sims) Decne CV. (Family Gesneriaceae) 'Amazon' P.I. 424916. 'Amazon' was collected by R. J. Knight, Jr. and H. F. Winters in Belem, Para, Brazil, in February 1978. 'Amazon' is a herbaceous perennial that grows to 30 cm or more, with opposite, elliptic-ovate, serrulate, pubescent leaves. Its upper leaf surface varies in colour from a very dark green (Maerz & Paul 16E4) that may lighten to M & P 16H8, and in older leaves may fade to M & P 15L8, lighter bronzy-green.

The undersurface of the leaves of 'Amazon' is normally a clear Perilla purple (M & P 47J3). In older leaves this may fade to M & P 46J1. Leaves vary from 20 to 25 cm long by 7 to 9 cm at their widest point.

Flowers of 'Amazon' are zygomorphic and of a deep chrome yellow colour (M & P 9L7). They are oppositely paired and borne in the leaf axils, normally in groups of four. They have a tubal length of 3 cm, and the corollas are 1.5 cm wide. A conspicuous red guideline divides the bottom corolla lobe at its midpoint from top to bottom. One or all of the remaining four lobes may be lightly marked with a similar red line, or they may be entirely yellow. Red spots may appear on the petals in warm weather.

The corolla of 'Amazon' is subtended by a waxy, bright orange-red fivelobed calyx that is 2.5 cm deep by 2.5 cm wide. Calyces appear before and persist after the flowers, are conspicuously attractive, and enhance the plant's decorative value. The calyx at its first appearance is a bright blood red (M & P 3L11) but as it develops lightens to M & P 3I10, intermediate between Coralbell and Old Coral.

'Amazon' is easily propagated from 2 to 4 least terminal cuttings which root rapidly under intermittent mist in a warm glasshouse when set in a medium composed of a mixture of equal parts of peat and perlome. This cultivar has not set seed when self-pollinated, and appears to be selfsterile. Older plants form a fleshy tuber characteristic of the species. Where collected, the plants were exposed to full sunlight, and the introduction has survived without shading in a southern Florida greenhouse. However, it has been more successful during summer under the half-shade of a lath house. It needs heat and high humidity for best growth and does not tolerate cool conditions well. It thrives in a soil suitable for African Violets.

'Amazon' is recommended for trial as a container-grown ornamental under conditions where Episcia and other warm-climate Gesneriads thrive. Limited quantities of rooted cuttings are available to research institutions and commercial growers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Subtropical Horticulture Research Station, 13601 Old Cutler Road, Miami.

Editor's note; The only other information I could find on line about Chrysothemis pulchella 'Amazon' is this article printed in The Gesneriad Hybridizers Association Newsletter "CrossWords" Volumn 5, Number 2, June 1981

What are Those Stringy Things Growing out of my Seemannias and other Rhizomenous Gesneriads? Donna Beverin

Within the past several months a few gesneriad growers asked about the aerial rhizomes growing out of some of their gesneriad plants. Their plants make 'regular' rhizomes underground and sometimes in the leaf axils, but often they produce these wiry looking stringy growths from the sides and base of their plant. **The Gesneriad Society's website define these as** "aerial scaly rhizomes are sometimes also found. Intermediate forms between stolons and scaly rhizomes are the so-called "stringy rhizomes" produced above-ground in *Sphaerorrhiza* (Gesnerieae-Sphaerorrhizinae)." https://gesneriads.info/articles/gesneriaceae/life-forms-growth-patterns-i/

A rhizome is a modified stem that grows underground and serves as a storage organ. Rhizomes can be smooth or scaly. The scales are modified leaves. Like tuberous gesneriads, those with rhizomes generally have a dormant period and re-

sprout after a short period of time. Gesneriads with those with scaly rhizomes are found only in the New World. Rhizomatous gesneriads provided an additional method of propagation. Besides stem cuttings they may also be propagated by rhizome division. The rhizomes can be divided into sections and each section will produce a plant. Additionally,

propagated by rhizome division. The rhizomes can be divided into sections and each section will produce a plant. Additionally, each individual scale on a rhizome can be used to produce a plant. Sprinkle the individual scales on the surface of the growing mix as you would with seed. The scales will soon develop tiny plantlets. <u>https://gesneriads.info/</u>

The definition of propagule: a vegetative structure that can become detached from a plant and give rise to a new plant, e.g. a bud, sucker or spore. The stringy rhizomes that form on many rhizomatous gesneriads near stems or at the bottom of the plant are often called propagules. These, too, can be divided just like the rhizomes. *Seemannia,* when stressed, will produce many wiry aerial propagules. See video by NCAC member Alcie Maxwell showing *Seemannia's* aerial rhizomes. <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73ipDnMkdH4</u>

Alcie shares some comments about his Seemannias.

Alcie: "I've been having problems growing Seemannias lately because I keep rotting out the plants. But, I've been able to keep them going because I keep propagating the aerial rhizomes. I propagate them by laying lines of them in the soil. I cover the center part lightly with soil and keep the edges at the soil line. The rhizomes can take off from either location (from below the soil or from sitting on top of it), but I find that keeping some of the rhizomes above the soil helps me to remember that they are there. I then cover container and wait a few weeks for the plants to grow. And, if I'm really lazy or busy, I just put all the rhizomes from one plant into a half-empty pot next to the plant. I place the rhizomes do their thing naturally. The pot really doesn't have to be half empty. You can just place the rhizomes on the soil line, but I use the soil to anchor the rhizomes into the half-empty pot."





Barbara Borleske's *Seemannia nematanthodes* was **Best in Show** at NCAC's September 2021 show. The second photo is Barb's plant today with an abundant supply of aerial scaly rhizomes. I hope this short article helps us all grow our gesneriads that grow from rhizomes. Do watch Alcie's video. It is excellent.



Johanna : "This is *Primulina petrocosmeoides* is happily blooming on my kitchen windowsill." Kew Gardens: "The native range of this species is China in the subtropical biome."



Bill Price's multi-crowned *Primulina petrocosmeoides* Best Primullina in the 2019 Toronto African Violet and Gesneriad Society Show.

"Primulina petrocosmeoides is a small-growing but spectacular species with bloom color being somewhat variable, with some specimens having a lighter and pinker tone and other consider a "bluish purple'. It is an Old World gesneriad. Distribution, ecology and conservation status *Primulina petrocosmeoides* is endemic to China (Jingxi County), grows only on outcrops of shaded moist limestone under subtropical evergreen broadleaved shrubs in one big gorge. 900 – 1000 m a.s.l. All plants, not more than 1200 individuals, are clustered together in a fairly narrow area at the top of a cliff . They grow in a popular scenic spot near the town of Hurun, but they are protected from tourists by their elevated location. We propose that *P . petrocosmeoides* should be provisionally considered as ' Endangered ' (EN, B2) Bo Pan and Fang Wen 2014" The Nordic Journal of Botany.



Johanna's Titanotrichum oldhamii rooted cutting





Rhizome from Johanna's *Titanotrichum oldhamii* in her backyard. A squirrel dug it up and ate part of it. Showing new growth and recovered.



Johanna: "The first photo show a rooted cutting putting out propagules. I'm fairly certain that the flowering stalks turned into stalks with propagules on the end of the stem once it got cold, but also had small shoots of propagules coming out of the lower nodes."

Propagule from plant and under magnification.

Titanotrichum Oldhamii

Johanna Zinn



Titanotrichum oldhamii, close up of flowers



"This shows a bloom stem that has turned into one that is making bulbils. This happens in late summer or early fall when the days are getting shorter." Photos by Johanna Zinn

Titanotrichum oldhamii was first discovered in 1864 by Richard Oldham, collecting for the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, during his trip to Formosa (now Taiwan) *Titanotrichum oldhamii* was cultivated in Europe as an ornamental for its distinctively deep yellow corolla tube with lobes blotched dark crimson-brown. The inflorescence of *T. oldhamii* is an indeterminate raceme, although the family Gesneriaceae, to which it belongs, usually produces pair-flower cymes. It grows in shaded habitats along creeks, particularly on dripping cliffs or moist limestone slopes in dense forest and on rocks near caves and waterfalls. It is not a common plant but has a scattered distribution in Taiwan, the Fujien province of China, and the Ryukyu Islands of Japan.

Interestingly, although it produces many flowers in the wild, it rarely sets seed and appears to rely largely on asexual reproduction by bulbils and rhizomes. Genetic variation and the failure of seed set are being studied at Edinburgh (C.-N. Wang, unpublished data).



"Small side shoots of the bloom stem that are making bulbils"



"This photo shows how another stem of blooms that has changed into one that produces bulbils plus some side shoots that are producing bulbils."

More detailed and interesting information is available online:

https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.373 2/ajb.90.12.1696

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NCAC Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/174442276299173/? ref=bookmarks

The National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society welcomes all interested Gesneriad growers. The most familiar Gesneriad is Saintpaulia, more commonly known as the African Violet.

Dues are \$10 per year You can send your payment to NCAC into our Assistant Treasurer, Andy Meier via PayPal using the email address: <u>ncacotgs-gesneriads@yahoo.com</u>. Please include a note with your Name, Address, Phone number & email address.

Back issues from previous years available on website. Membership runs the calendar year and can be pro-rated.

The international Gesneriad Society is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, growing and enjoyment of the gesneriaceae. Membership dues are \$25 /year for individuals and \$26 for a family. Benefits include seed fund of hard-to-find plants, reference materials, yearly convention & cultural webinars. National membership requests should be sent to: Bob Clark, 1122 E Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916. Membership includes a subscription to the society journal, Gesneriads. You can subscribe on line also. http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/

Announcements

March 23, 2024 @ 10:00 am - 4:00 pm <u>The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society –</u> <u>exhibit & sale</u> Boscov's Department Store Christiana Town Center, Route 273, Christiana, DE, United States The Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society Exhibit and plant sale Saturday, March 23rd 10:00 am - 4:00 pm For more information contact Donna Beverin by email donnabeverin@gmail.com	April 5, 2024 - April 7, 2024 <u>Richmond African Violet Society – judged show</u> <u>and sale</u> Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden 1800 Lakeside Avenue, Richmond, VA, United StatesRichmond African Violet Society - judged show and sale Show: April 6th 1:00-5:00 pm April 7th 9:00 am - 3:00 pm Sale: April 5th 1:00 - 5:00 pm April 6th 9:00 am - 5:00pm April 7th: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Free Admission to show and sale For more information contact Sharon Long, 804-740-5322
May 4, 2024 - May 5, 2024 African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Syracuse Annual Show and Sale – "Violets Around the Town" Show: Saturday May 4th 1:00 – 5:00 pm Sunday May 5th 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Sales: Saturday May 4th 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Sunday May 5th 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Show is free but parking fee applies For more information contact Penny Moore via <u>e-mail</u> .	