

The Petal

Monthly publication of the
Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)
www.tampaafricanviolets.com



November 2025

The Tampa African Violet Society is an affiliate of the African Violet Society of America (AVSA), the Dixie African Violet Society (DAVS), the African Violet Council of Florida (AVCF) and the Gesneriad Society.

A message from our President

Happy (almost) Thanksgiving!

Life has been busy, when I keep thinking it should finally be calming down. Seems I'm always wrong about those things. Letting you know what's going on is one of the things I'm responsible for, and although the African Violet Council of Florida (AVCF) show set several of us back a bit, it's now time to catch up! You'll find a report on the AVCF show elsewhere in The Petal, but right now I'm going to concentrate on our participation in the Florida State Fair.

In 2026, it *feels* like the fair is later than usual. Setup must be done between January 30 and February 3. The last day of the fair is February 16, with removal of displays to take place February 17 and 18. The fair is asking for something different this year. To quote the information we've received, "...we're moving away from the traditional displays. We're encouraging horticulture societies...to design unique, engaging



Deep Purple Dreaming

Sinningia

Photo by Mary Lou Harden

A message from our President (cont.)

displays or exhibits that showcase the beauty and importance of agriculture in fresh, imaginative ways. Our goal is for the area to be vibrant, inspiring, and approachable for guests of all ages.” That sounds wonderful...but our show setup date is Thursday, February 19. The show judging is February 20, and we close at 3PM on February 21. This is a lot of activity in a short period of time, and we don’t yet know whether we’ll be expected to do four 30-minute programs as we have been the past couple of years.

I’m asking you to think about this prior to our November 21 meeting and come prepared to discuss whether YOU have the time and energy to help make our long-standing participation possible in 2026. This is a decision we need to make as TAVS; it shouldn’t be made by the Board, but by our members. Both the day meeting and ZOOM meeting attendees will have an opportunity to be involved in deciding whether to participate or not. The only caveat, in my mind, is that if we drop out of the Florida State Fair for a year, we may not have an opportunity to be part of the fair in future years.

If you’re not at the day meeting, I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Board, to wish you all a beautiful Thanksgiving, spent with family and friends!

Sandi Soto, President

Our Meetings

Our meetings are held the first Thursday of the month via ZOOM at 7pm and the third Friday of the month at 10am at:

**Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension Service (HCAES)
5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584-3334**



Our thoughts and well wishes go out to TAVS member Todd Grandy who is currently in the hospital in satisfactory condition.



Birthday wishes go out this month to:

- 🌸 Tom Schaefer - November 1
- 🌸 Glenn Shelton - November 19

Send us an email and let us know how you are doing if you cannot attend the meetings.



**ZOOM/Evening Meeting -
Thursday, November 6 @ 7pm**

Here come the Russians! We will see two short videos showcasing some of their hybridizers, their shows and even their retail shop.

Join ZOOM Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?
pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz0
9&omn=82307270619](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324792391?pwd=ZzBkTmxZTmRJOFY0SmxZbHNnU1Evdz09&omn=82307270619)

Meeting ID: 932 479 2391
Passcode: TAVS

Mary Beth Bryant will be hosting the virtual night meetings via ZOOM! We will have a program to begin and lots of time for any questions. Then we will open it up and do some show and tell. So get your precious blooming babies camera ready; I know we all want to see some flowers! Club business meeting will follow.

What's that you say? You don't know how to ZOOM? No problem. You don't need to have a ZOOM account or download anything permanently to your computer, tablet or phone. Be on the lookout for an email from Mary Beth/ Mary Lou a few days before the meeting with a link to access the meeting. Hope to see you then!



Day Meeting -

Friday, November 21 @ 10am

**Hillsborough County Agricultural Extension
Service (HCAES)**

5339 County Road 579, Seffner, FL 33584

Mary Beth Bryant and Sandi Soto will be presenting a leaf potting program, demo, and hands on



**MEETING
MINUTES**

Tampa African Violet Society

November 6, 2025

Night meeting via ZOOM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm by President Sandi Soto. Mary Beth Bryant, Secretary Pro Tem.

ROLL CALL: The members attending were Sandi Soto, Mary Beth Bryant, Mary Lou Harden, Lisa Villabol, Fern Azarian, Sheryl Herold, Michael Kilcomons, Celeste Christman, Stuart Swayze, Joan Reynolds, Tammi Fitzgerald, Angela Newell, and Briony Tomalesky. There were no guests.

PROGRAM: A program was given on Russian African violets by The House of Violets in Moscow, Russia, Vladamir and Tatiana Kalgin, proprietors. Member discussion followed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: No newsletter or minutes.
No Treasurer's Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

Sandi Soto reported on the recent AVCF show held in Lakeland.

Member discussion on what to do (and when) for upcoming club Christmas party. Tammi Fitzgerald will research river cruise prices.

Member discussion on embroidering individual tee shirts or other items such as aprons with TAVS logo and member name.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Tampa African Violet Society

October 17, 2025

Day Meeting

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 10:12am by President Sandi Soto, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Sandi Soto, Mary Lou Harden, Tammi Fitzgerald, Jean Krauchik, Sandy Schultz, Glenn Shelton, Celeste Christman, Jim Boyer, Joan Reynolds, Stu Swayze, and Pat Rutzke. There were no guests.

INSPIRATIONAL: Mary Lou Harden

TIP OF THE DAY: "When in doubt, repot" – Celeste Christman

PROGRAM: Jim Boyer presented a program about show judges and judging.

SHOW & TELL: Glenn Shelton brought "Frozen in Time."

The minutes of the September 19, 2025 meeting were approved as published in The Petal.

OFFICERS' REPORTS: Glenn Shelton presented the treasurer's report, Sandi Soto did not have anything to report and Mary Beth Bryant was not in attendance.

MOTIONS: There were no motions.

NEW BUSINESS: Sandi Soto asked the members to consider what events the group wishes to participate in during the coming year. She also asked members to consider what we are or could be doing for our members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Jim Boyer has been invited to teach about African violets to Palm Harbor Elementary School as part of the Great American Teach Out.

November 21, 2025 – Mary Beth Bryant and Sandi Soto will be presenting a leaf potting program, demo, and hands on class.

MEETING ADJOURNED: at 11:37 am, followed by a raffle.



**Glenn Shelton with
Frozen in Time (9167)
02/03/2003 Sorano**

Potting Party!

In our wonderful new location, we have room to do more “hands on” stuff, so that’s what we’re going to do! POTAVS & The Veep will be bringing a selection of leaves, wicks, perlite, potting mix, and mini-greenhouses, plus anything else we know you need when potting. We’ll demonstrate how WE do things, and we may impose on some other longtime growers (Mary Lou, Glenn, King James, plus!) to demonstrate their methods. Then, all of us who THINK we know what we’re doing will work with small groups of those who just aren’t comfortable starting AVs from leaves, or who simply want to see if one of our methods works better. Come prepared to get your hands dirty, and if you have spare newspaper or a potting mat, feel free to bring it with you, as we will have to clean up before we leaf/leave!



Next month’s Show & Tell comes from Michael Kilcomons about his experience with ordering and growing Russian African violets from leaves. Sorry Michael, your story has been preempted by the AVCF show results!

African Violet Council of Florida (AVCF) Show Report



Those of you who made it to the Council show probably also WORKED at the show, as I don’t remember seeing any TAVS members who weren’t working! The show had higher than expected entries and received AVSA’s top show award with a score of just over 95 points!

AVCF members from the Jacksonville, Lakeland, and Ocala AV societies, as well as several TAVS members, worked to get the site set up on Wednesday and Thursday, and Lakeland members provided food Thursday through Saturday. Nine individuals provided entries, with 56 African violets entered and approximately 47 other gesneriads, plus entries in the 6 design classes and the 3 natural gardens categories.

Not to brag, but without TAVS members, the show might not have gone on! Judges for the event included our own Glenn Shelton and Angela Newell, joined by our *new member* Debbie Wesch! Welcome aboard Debbie! Clerks were Tammi Fitzgerald and the inimitable King James, and everyone did a commendable job. Celeste Christman, always willing to help, handled the member sales both days.

Among the TAVS members entering plants were Mary Lou Harden, Sandy Schultz (who also had a commercial exhibit with plants and her beautiful gift items), and Sandi Soto, who among them won: Best in Show, 2nd Best in Show, Best AVSA Standard Collection, Best AVSA Species Collection, Best Standard, Best Miniature, Best Species, Best Design, Best Vintage, 15 Best in Class, 6 Best in Section, Best Dish Garden, Best Terrarium, Best Interpretive Plant Arrangement, Best Interpretive Flower Arrangement, Sweepstakes, Horticulture Sweepstakes, Horticulture Sweepstakes Runner up, and Design Sweepstakes. Congratulations to everyone on a job well done!

AVCF will hold its spring meeting in the spring. Some things are just obvious. We're looking at April dates, and will make the announcement as soon as a date is set for the ZOOM meeting. All TAVS members can take part in the meetings and can show in Council shows, but unless you are an individual member, you cannot sell plants (except plants entered in the shows). It's a great, friendly organization, and more TAVS members should really consider joining!



AVSA News

Your President (aka POTAVS) will be stretched a bit thinner in the coming months as she didn't have the good sense to say "OMG NO!" when asked by AVSA President Glenda Williams to Chair the Publications Committee. An update of Pauline Bartholomew's "Growing to Show" has been on Publications' back burner for a while, and Chair Sandy Skalkski had resigned due to other commitments. After about 10 days of deliberation, Sandi Soto said yes, again, and will try to get the rewrite moving starting in January. Many of the sections and chapters are complete, but there's still a lot to be done to finish the last bits and pieces, and put the whole thing back together again!

Speaking of AVSA, Convention will be in Dallas the last week of May next year and it appears TAVS will again be well represented. The S's (Sandi S and Sandy S) and Mary Beth definitely plan to attend, and may be joined by another member whose last name begins with S! Bet you can guess who that might be! There's always room for more at Convention, and we'd love it if you'd join us in Texas!



Recipe Box



Have a great recipe to share? Don't want to type it all out? Just scan a copy of the recipe and send it to The Petal at sandylovesviolets@gmail.com. Be sure to include the source.

Upcoming Events

Hats Off to Violets

Presented by the
TAMPA AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY (TAVS)
February 20-21, 2026

SHOW HOURS
Friday, February 20 - Noon to 5pm
Saturday, February 21 - 9am to 3pm

PLANT SALE HOURS
Friday, February 20 - 9am to 5pm
Saturday, February 21 - 9am to 3pm

Temple Terrace United Methodist Church
5030 E. Busch Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33617

Become a **MEMBER**

Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS)

Annual membership (April 1 to March 31)

Current dues are \$15 per year, includes an annual Yearbook and monthly newsletter, **The Petal**.

Send an email to Glenn Shelton if you're interested in becoming a member:

floridainorchids@gmail.com

Checks payable to Tampa Africa Violet Society can be sent to:

Glenn Shelton, Treasurer
7142 62nd Ave, North
Pinellas Park, FL 33781

Visit us at:

www.tampaafricanviolets.com

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Tampa African Violet Society

Sandy Schultz

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