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Next Meeting : Monday, 12th December, 2016

Venue : The Lindfield Community Centre, corner of Bradfield Rd and Moore Avenue, West Lindfield.

This is our Christmas party night, and the formal meeting commences early at 7.30pm. Don't be late.

There is no Culture Class or guest speaker. There is still a full benching of orchids as per any other month but we ask you to minimise the numbers you bench to help us manage space in the hall.

Also, benching doesnt start until 7pm. You only have half an hour to get your orchids on the tables and cards filled out. We don't want you all stressed out before the party. **Please plan your arrival and leave yourself enough time.**

The Party is basically finger food, buffet style. The **Society provides all the savoury foods, and drinks**, including some beer and wine, but we would appreciate members bringing a small plate of cake or slice, or something sweet, to share for desserts. This is a light hearted night where we end the year in a social environment with our partners, friends, family, some of our guest speakers from the past year, and guests from our sister societies.

The main entertainment feature of the night is the traditional Christmas Monster Raffle. The Society supplies two big Christmas hampers, and a few other prizes, but **members are all asked to also donate a present** (raffle prize). Perhaps something worth about \$10? We want lots of prizes so there is a chance for nearly everyone to go home a winner. Donated prizes can be anything – for example a book, chocolates, a plant, a bottle of wine. **Anything you would be really pleased to win yourself.** Please -- no trick gifts or booby prizes. Make them nice.

Best of Evening Hybrid – Paphiopedilum maudiae alba - grown by Henri Choo



Paph Maudiae was one of the very first Paph hybrids. It was registered in the year 1900 by the famous firm of Messrs Charlesworth and Co in London. It was a primary hybrid between two albino forms of the species *P. callosum* and *P. lawrenceanum*. Mating two albino species does not always result in albino offspring but in this case it did. Beautiful green and white flowers with no red pigments – just like Henri's.

It does not follow of course, that all Maudiae look this way. The grex name covers all colour forms and the cross has been remade many times since that first one, both in the albino form, and the normal red, green, and white form which is called 'colouratum', and to complicate matters further however, in recent years a third colour form has been created from strains of intensely dark purple black forms of *P. callosum*, and these are known as 'vinicolour' or claret coloured forms.

Getting back to Henri's plant though, what a beauty. Not only was it an alba, which I happen to think are glorious, it was a hum-dinger. Beautiful big wide green and white dorsals, and amazingly flat. The flowers had a distinctly heavy textured look that led me to believe they are very likely tetraploid, but I guess we will never know unless Henri gets it tested.

Congratulations Henri. The quality of the orchids you are benching these days are just outstanding, and the standard to which you are growing them is close to perfection. My mouth dropped open at those Phallies you had along.

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Society News (if anyone has a news item, please phone Jim on 9476 3383, or email at jimbrydie@bigpond.com)

1. Recapping Arrangements for the Christmas meeting night :

*** This is our Christmas party night. We have moved it a week earlier than our normal meeting night (to Mon Dec 12th) to avoid the real Christmas, and the meeting also commences early at 7.30pm. Don't be late.**

* There is no Culture Class or speaker but there is still a full benching of orchids as per any other month. **Benching only starts at 7pm so you only have half an hour to get your orchids on the tables and your cards filled out.**

* We just love to see all those beautiful orchid flowers each month, but space is always just a trifle tight at Christmas so perhaps you might cut back the quantity just a fraction and limit your benching to your best.

* **We don't want you all stressed out before the party. Please plan your arrival and leave yourself enough time.**

* **The Party food - The Society provides all the savoury foods, and a limited range of drinks. There will be some beer and wine, but if anyone wishes to bring anything specific to meet their own needs, go ahead.**

* The Society provides plastic plates, cups, and utensils etc, tea and coffee, but for sweets we would appreciate members bringing a small plate with some cake or slice, or the like, to share for desserts.

* **The Raffle** - The main entertainment feature of the night is **the traditional Christmas Monster Raffle**. The Society supplies two big Christmas hampers, and a few other prizes, but **members are all asked to also donate a present** (a raffle prize). Perhaps something worth about \$10? We want lots of prizes so there is a chance for nearly everyone to go home a winner. Donated prizes can be anything – for example an orchid, a book, chocolates, a plant, a bottle of wine. It should be something you would be really pleased to win yourself – **Please - no tricks, booby prizes or rubbish.**

* This is a light hearted night where we end the year in a social environment with our partners, friends, family, some of our guest speakers from the past year, and guests from our sister societies. Lets have a good time.

2. A Final request for the Xmas Party – Please, remember to wear your **name badge** to the party (as well as every other meeting). You know why. Put it in the car now so you don't forget it, **and wear it when you get there.**

3. A note from Bob Ellis who arranges the Society's Culture Classes : “Another year is almost over which means that there will be no more Culture Classes until next January. On behalf of all members I offer our sincere appreciation to: **Bernie Britton, Pauline Onslow, Trevor Onslow, Geoff Le Marne, Chris Nidagal, John Bardell, Max Clothier, Jim Brydie and Sebastian Torrasi** who gave their time to run Culture Classes this year and to make them full of information and simple tips on growing and photographing Orchids. I am sure that all members who attended the classes would agree that they were highly informative and professionally presented.

I am always looking for ideas, topics, and for people to run classes, so if you have any suggestions, or would like to volunteer to run a class, please don't hesitate to let me know. I am always available.” - Bob Ellis 9987 4403

4. Congratulations to our members : A few of our members deserve our special congratulations this month. Phil Spence received the 2016 Award of Honour from the Australian Orchid Foundation, citing amongst other things, his lifetime involvement in orchid culture, hybridisation, and in-vitro cultivation of orchids. Congratulations Phil.

In addition, after a long period of intensive training, Christine Rethers and Dora Law received Provisional Associate Judge accreditation from the NSW Judging Panel of the Orchid Society of NSW. Congratulations ladies, we look forward to you becoming fully accredited orchid judges in due course.

Orchid dates December.

Mon 12 Dec. Kuringai Orchid Society meeting night and Christmas party. **Remember, its a week early.**

Best of Evening Novice – Cymbidium Australian Midnight - *grown by Lisa Harris*



Well here is another orchid that just keeps on winning. Not always the same grower of course. Last year same month, Frank Hofbauer's plant got a best of the evening, this year it was Lisa's. It is a stunning thing, nearly black flowered and looks amazing in the flesh, it is just that it is nearly impossible to photograph the flowers, especially at night. Our photographer Ron took some great shots at the meeting, but I have decided to borrow a photo from the internet to help show you what a stunner this orchid can be. This pic isn't Lisa's (or Frank's for that matter), but I assure you that they were rippers too.

Cymbidium Australian Midnight is the cross between our Australian species - Cym. canaliculatum variety sparkesii (the very dark form), and the Asian species Cym. atropupureum. Australian Midnight's flowers are a little larger than the stunning sparkesii, but just as black/red, and if anything, even more colourful in the lip. Perhaps the biggest improvement over sparkesii however, is supposed to be that Australian Midnight is at least a little less touchy to grow due to hybrid vigour. Unfortunately, it isn't as simple to grow as a basic standard Cymbidium, but at

least many more growers manage it than *canaliculatum*.

Cym. canaliculatum is widely distributed in Australia, from the Kimberleys in the north of WA, across the northern part of the Northern Territory, and from the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, along the east coast of Australia to central NSW. It is found in dry sclerophyll forests and woodlands, in low rainfall situations, and usually grows in the rotted heartwood of the hollowed trunks and branches of trees.

In the north it occurs near sea level, but in the southern part of its range, it is usually found well away from the coast, and can be in areas up to an altitude of 900m in areas that can get quite cold. It has very stiff, dry looking leaves and is obviously a dry grower.

Cymbidium atropurpureum, comes from the Peninsula area of Thailand/Malaysia, and also Sumatra, and Borneo and through the Philippines. It is another with thick stiff leaves, but nowhere near as stiff as *Cym. Canaliculatum*. *Cymbidium atropurpureum* usually grows in lowland and lower mountain forests in the forks of trees, but it is occasionally found on rocks as well. It occurs from near sea level to 1200m, but plants have been reported from elevations as high as 2200m. It has a pendulous inflorescence about 30 to 75cm long, and can carry up to 30, strongly coconut scented, 4cm flowers. The best are deep maroon, but in some, the dark colour is suffused with yellow/green.



C. atropurpureum

Congratulations on a well deserved Best of the Evening Lisa. It was a beauty.

Best of the Evening Species – *Oncidium edwallii* - growers Trevor and Pauline Onslow



Trevor and Pauline have to be the best *Oncidium* growers I know, and they seem to have a special knack with the smaller growing gems like *O. edwallii*, *O. croesus*, and *O. harrisoniae*. They have been displaying show winning and best of evening specimens so regularly with our club that I fear they may eventually get bored and stop.

O. edwallii and *O. harrisonianum* are closely related, or at least they are clearly so in my opinion. The plants, the flowering habit, and the flowers themselves look much the same although *edwallii*'s flowers are a little smaller. *Harrisoniae* flowers are about 16mm across, and *edwallii* flowers about 13mm. However, for some reason I don't grasp, some Taxonomists differ in which sections of the genus they

place each of them. *O. edwallii* is always placed in Section *Paucituberculata*, and so is *O. harrisoniae* by some experts, while others place it in Section *Pulvinatum* along with species like *O. divarictum*. Section *Pulvinatum* species usually have a long, flexuous, whip like inflorescence. I guess time will eventually straighten out the situation.

Edwallii is an epiphyte from the Atlantic coast of Brazil, roughly 1000km north and south of Rio De Janiero. In Australia, the equivalent latitude would be about Taree to Townsville, but we don't have the same mountainous forests in those areas.

Edwallii comes mainly from the hot humid marshy areas nearer the coast, but its range also extends right up into the cooler mountain areas. This variation in range is rather unusual and I assume that it either means that it is a particularly tough and adaptable little orchid, or that types from different areas might have very different growth characteristics. Considering that I grow *harrisonianum* quite well but have killed my *edwallii*, I tell myself that *edwallii* must be more difficult to grow. (it couldn't be that I just happened to kill it could it?)



edwallii

harrisonianum

Anyway, under the circumstances, I can't give you any tips on *edwallii* culture but its sister species *harrisonianum* grows quite easily provided you don't let it stay too wet. I imagine *edwallii* should be similar.

Some people grow *harrisonianum* mounted on cork but I find those slatted wooded baskets suit it very well. A good compromise between dryness and retention of some moisture. It tolerates the cold ok, but like most *Oncidium*s it will not tolerate a wet root system. The shallow, airy, slatted baskets help you manage the moisture, especially in winter, but also allows the roots system to ramble out of the slats into the air, and hanging the basket above your other benches also helps. Grown well, the 30cm branched spikes, are covered in gorgeous gold and chestnut coloured flowers in summer.

Just for the record, Trevor and Pauline's *edwallii* has won best of the evening species 4 of the past 5 years, and if you think that's easy, think again. I wonder what happened in 2015? Congratulations guys. I just don't know how you do it. Must be magic fingers.

Signs : *In the front yard of a Funeral Home: "Drive carefully. We'll wait."*

Signs : *In a Podiatrist's office: "Time wounds all heels."*

Signs : *On an Electrician's truck: "Let us remove your shorts."*

Applying Fertilizers by Jim Brydie

For the benefit of newer growers, I feel it is worth starting with a statement that if you decide to grow orchids, a fundamental part of your culture regime, no matter what kind of orchids they are, must be that you feed them regularly. The artificial potting mediums we use for orchids have almost no nutritional value and as the orchids in our home collections are not being constantly drenched in the drip of mineral rich exudates from the rainforest canopy above, the only 'food' they will get is what we deliberately provide in fertilisers. In addition, as orchid mediums are generally coarse and open, they retain little of what we supply, so we must supply it again and again.

There are a number of ways to apply fertiliser to your orchids but they can be readily separated into two categories. The most basic is to water with some kind of soluble fertiliser dissolved in the water. The second is to apply the fertiliser to the pot in a form that slowly releases some fertiliser to the pot, and the plant, over a period of time.

Slow Release : Let's consider the 'slow release' categories first. The first one is a scientifically engineered form of which is really a little ball of concentrated soluble fertiliser encapsulated in a special coating that allows the fertiliser to slowly release through osmosis into the moisture of the pot. Typically, the little capsules are a like 2 to 3 mm diameter balls as pictured at the right. One such commonly available product is called Osmocote.



Slow release pellets like these have different 'life' periods depending on the brand and type. Some last for up to 9 months, some much less. You can use them by incorporating some pellets in with the medium when you repot, or sprinkling them on the surface periodically. The packet will advise on the amounts.

Personally, I find that there is one serious drawback with osmotic release pellets, in that you can't readily measure whether the slow release pellets are still supplying anything. Dead pellets look the same as active ones. You never know when to put some more on.

If you have only a small collection of orchids, perhaps you could just apply pellets to every pot all at the same time. That way you wouldn't need to be able to tell by appearance. The calendar would tell you when they were running out. However, in reality, most of us repot orchids throughout the year and would likely apply fresh pellets when we repot. I am not saying that slow release osmotic pellets aren't a very valuable tool in a scheme of fertilising orchids, it is just that in my view they can't practically be used as the sole basis of nutrient application.

Organic Slow Release : The next type of 'slow release' fertilisers are the organic varieties such as the pelletised manures like Dynamic Lifter and Rooster Booster etc, and the more traditional products like powdered blood and bone fertiliser. Pelletised products like Dynamic Lifter are relatively mild manure based fertilisers that are safe enough to use from the point of view of fertiliser strength. You can add a small volume to the medium when repotting or apply a small pile around the base of the plant during the growth cycle from time to time. For orchids however, the drawback of pellets like Dynamic Lifter is that it clogs the air spaces in the pot. Orchid mediums are designed to create a delicate balance between moisture retention and air spaces. Air content is vital to replicate the root environment an epiphyte would encounter is real life in nature - that is, when growing on a tree or on rocks. Pellets such as Dynamic Lifter contain a high proportion of physical organic material that releases as the pellets break down, and they clog up the medium.



Dynamic Lifter pellets

Blood and bone is less a problem in this regard, but it is best suited to finer, wetter mixes like some Cymbidium mixes or semi terrestrial mixes. It is not absorbable directly by the orchid. It needs to interact with bacteria and other microflora in the pot to break down the fertiliser to mineral forms that can be absorbed by the plant.

The final slow release type that I want to mention is "Magamp". This is an unusual form of pelletised fertiliser that looks like little white rocks, about pea size and a little less. They are formulated to just gradually dissolve away in water, releasing the fertiliser as they dissolve. I have read that they are used in Bonsai culture as a slow release fertiliser mixed into the soil mix, but that is not the way we use it with orchids. Orchid growers use a see through plastic tube mounted in line with your hose. You can make it yourself, or buy a ready made one called a "Nutriflow" applicator. The tube has a wad of shadecloth fitted to each end to stop the fertiliser nodules washing out.



Magamp pellets - Nutriflow applicator

You fill the tube completely with Magamp and use standard clip on hose fittings to attach it to the tap at one end and the hose at the other. As you water the orchids, a very small amount of fertiliser is dissolved away in the water flow and applied to the orchids every time you water. You can see the Magamp slowly disappearing over a period of a year or more, depending on how often you water. When it is getting down to a quarter full, dismantle the tube and refill it. (NB: you can't use the Magamp Nutriflow applicator at the same time as the venturi suction device below)

Soluble Fertilisers : The alternate strategy for fertilising your orchids is to apply soluble fertiliser as a drench. If you only have a small number of orchids, you can just make up the solution in a watering can, and pour it over your orchids, or use a pump action sprayer or a battery powered sprayer. In all cases make sure the pots are moist before you do. When using a sprayer, make sure that you properly soak the plant and the medium with the spray.

Venturi siphon device : For growers with larger collections, a more practical way to apply soluble fertiliser is to use a venturi siphon device that uses water pressure from your tap to suck concentrate from a reservoir and mix it with the tap water. These devices send a scientifically diluted fertiliser through your hose for you to just water onto your orchids which is very convenient. The device connects to your tap at one end, the hose at the other, and has a smaller diameter hose coming from the side with a filter at the end that goes into the concentrate bucket.



There are a number of brands and designs available, including two of the brass made devices that I have always used. I think the one that George Birrs and Mike Hichcock sell (for \$50?) is the “Hozon siphon mixer” which operates at 16 : 1 (ie it sucks up one litre of concentrate for every 16 litres of tap flow). I have also seen the “Dramm Siphonject” sold here, and that one operates at 20 : 1.

I use one of these siphon devices to apply fertiliser in both my glasshouse and my shadehouse. Because I water thoroughly as I fertilise, I use a lot of fertiliser when I do. I need roughly a 20 litre bucket of fertiliser concentrate to do my 20 foot (6 metres) long glasshouse. When I do my much larger shadehouse, I need a larger volume of concentrate



20 litre bucket 60 litre bin

solution and I use a 60 litre garbage bin. It takes two garbage bin batches to thoroughly water and fertilise the shadehouse. It is probably rather wasteful of fertiliser, but it is the most simple and easily used methodology.

Fertiliser Rates : To give you an example of how to calculate the amount of fertiliser to use, let us assume you are using a Hozon 16:1 device. If you were making up a 10 litre bucket of concentrate in which to place the siphon hose, the total amount of water delivered through the hose would be 170 litres (the 10 litres from the bucket plus 160 litres from the tap). For the 20 litre bucket I use, there is 340 litres of diluted fertilizer delivered to the plants.

If you are using the Peter Excel Calmag Finisher fertiliser that we sell on our Society sales table, the manufacturer’s recommended rate is 0.8 - 2.0 grams per litre of water applied once a week “to the soil” - obviously this is meant for soil grown plants. For orchids, most of our experienced growers recommend less concentrated rates. Perhaps ¼ to ½ the recommended rate, but on the basis it is applied regularly.

Now be warned. Fertilisers do not weigh the same per volume as water. 1 millilitre of water weighs exactly 1 gram but soluble powder fertilisers are different. Some fertiliser packs come with their own measuring spoon which takes this into account in converting grams to volume, but the spoon is designed only for that one fertiliser. A friend and I did some sample measures a few years back which showed for example, that dry Peters Finisher weighed nearly twice as much as Aquasol fertilizer. (5 mls of Aquasol weighed 3.2 grams – 5 mls of Peters weighed 5.8 grams. However when I re-measured the latest Peters Calmag Finisher we are using today, 5 mls weighed 6.25 grams.)

For practical purposes, I personally use a 200ml yoghurt cup when measuring the fertiliser into the bucket or bin. A 200ml cup of Peters weighs about 250 grams. For the 340 litres of diluted fertilizer delivered to the plants from my 20 litre concentrate bucket, that works out at 0.73 grams per litre (250 grams divided by 340 litres). I usually use a little less than a yoghurt cup full in the bucket so I am more likely delivering about 0.7 grams per litre.

When using a different fertilizer or the bigger bin, I just adjust the volume up or down accordingly.

Making the siphon work : There are limitations you must consider when using the siphon device. The siphon jet requires adequate water pressure and water flow to work properly. You need at least 35psi water pressure to make it suck properly. Sydney’s water supply should easily supply more than that, but the water pressure and flow can be reduced by any of a number of factors:

- (a) The length of the hose. Maximum length when using the siphon is 15 metres but 10 is better. A larger diameter hose may also help if you have problems with low pressure.
- (b) Old hoses may be damaged internally, and may restrict flow. Try a new hose.
- (c) Any chronic kink in the hose, will restrict flow.
- (d) A spray head at the end of the hose that restricts the flow too much and does not deliver a full water flow will be a problem. Don’t use a gun type hose end. (I always use a high volume aluminium waterbreaker spray rose on the end of the hose.)
- (e) When you use the siphon, turn the tap on just about full.



One further issue that can arise is that you need to make sure the fertiliser is fully dissolved before you try to start, and make sure that the filter at the end of the uptake hose doesn’t become clogged. Also, if you are using strong fertiliser rates, a salt encrustation may build up over a period of years in either the intake filter or at the siphon jet itself in the body of the device. When you finish applying the fertiliser, ALWAYS take the intake hose out of the concentrate bucket and apply the hose (plain water stream) directly against the intake filter. Continue to squirt clean water through the intake hose for about a minute to make sure you flush any residual salts. This will help ensure its long use.

If you think the venturi might be affected by a build up of salts encrusting the insides, I am told that sometimes an overnight soak in vinegar will remove deposits that plug the system and it will begin to siphon properly once again.

However, I haven't been able to prove this. I only tried to fix a bung siphon once and that didn't work.

I have been using the brass venturi devices for over twenty years and have only had to throw away one. The part that I always find causes the most trouble is the intake filter. The old ones used to have a 4cm wide, circular intake head fitted with a lovely fine copper mesh filter, which is quite delicate and prone to tearing or falling out. The filter is important to stop the suction head pulling in detritus from the bottom of the concentrate bucket or bin. I eventually had to replace the mesh on mine with shadecloth as a filter, tied it in place with copper wire. I suspect that the device that stopped working, and that vinegar couldn't fix, was probably clogged with a piece of fine debris it sucked in through my adapted, rather coarse filter.

Many growers who buy a siphon applicator without realising the very simple factors above, find that they can't get the siphon to work reliably. If you abide by the rules and take care, these are a great, reliable, orchid growing tool.

Dosatron? While the Hozon is the everyman's siphon device, there are much more sophisticated, more expensive versions of the same kind of device. The "Dosatron" is one example. These are used in many agricultural or horticultural situations where there is a requirement to add a liquid solution to a water flow. It can be used for feeding animals or plants, or applying chemicals for pests or diseases, as well as other functions. It still uses a venturi suction device driven by the water pressure but it is more adaptable because the siphon rate is adjustable and maintains the dosage rate regardless of variations in water pressure. I doubt it is what most growers would be looking for so I won't go into it further here. If you are interested, I suggest you consult Dr. Google.

References :

Suppliers of pots, fertilisers and devices - Mike Hitchcock 0407 583 869, George Birrs 0409 521 869

Applying Fertilisers and Chemicals by Sue Bottom, <http://www.staugorchidsociety.org/PDF/ApplyingFertilizersChemicalsbySueBottom.pdf>

Dosatron website - <http://dosatronsales.com.au/>

How The Internet Started, According To The Bible

Please do not go to Google to check this. I can tell you that they will lie to you. Trust me on this!

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a healthy young wife by the name of Dorothy. And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?" And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?"

And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns, and drums in between, to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. The sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent.

To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures - Hebrew to the People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS. And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums no one noticed the real riches were going to that very enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. Indeed he did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drum heads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others." And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are."

And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." "YAHOO," said Abraham. And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate all sorts of things around the countryside. It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE).

..... and that is how it all began. And that's the truth. (you do believe me, don't you?)

The Wisdom of Age

- You know that tingly little feeling you get when you really like someone? That's common sense leaving your body.
- On retirement you live off the money you saved during your working life. I'm not sure what you do the 2nd week.
- We should stop calling the bathroom the John and call it the Jim. I feel much better saying I use the Jim regularly.
- Anger management isn't my problem. I just need people to stop irritating me!