

# The

# Central

# Spine

THE CENTRAL SPINE

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(Courtesy of ELAINE TAYLOR)

1985 CONVENTION-GACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
By Frank and Phil Hennessey

We arrived in San Diego on Saturday, July 6th, about 11:30 A.M., and it was a good thing that we arrived early. Naturally, we went to the wrong side of S.D.S.U. campus. (west of College Ave., instead of east.) And we could find no one, on a Saturday, who knew where our dorm was or where the convention was to be held. Just lots of shrugs. We finally got to the east side and to registration and to our dorm. To say the least, the dorms were spartan. But, we were being charged much less than hotel or motel rates, so this was a compensation. We were on the 6th floor of Zoru Hall. WE got all of our gear to our room, had lunch at the local "Jack-in the box", found out how to get to church, then a couple of hours rest. We had a wonderful Chinese dinner that evening, got back to our room and no air conditioning, with the temp. at 90 and our room on the west side of the building.

On Sunday, we bussed to Arcadia, about 120 miles away, to see the national C.S.S.A. show at the Los Angeles Arboreteum. We arrived about 11:30 and had to leave by 2:15. It took one hour to eat, because of the long lines at the cafeteria, and then to the rest rooms. Now, we only had one hour to see the show and get to the sale. What we did see of the show was outstanding. One had to see these plants to believe them. And the crests-WOW!! Finally got to the sales area, but it was so crowded that we bought very little. Couldn't get close enough to the plants. Sometime, we are going over just to see this show and the Arboreteum.

On Monday morning, we found the plant sales for the convention. There went the budget! The first programs were at 2:00, two programs on at a time, this afternoon. Decisions, decisions. We attended "Ferro-cactus of Baja" by Dorothy Dunn; Cacti of Carlsbad Caverns Nat. Park, by Steven Brach; (which included White Sands N.M. and Guadalupe Mountains N.M.) and "Cacti of Big Bend National Park" by Kenneth Heil. All were very interesting.

Monday evening was the opening banquet. It was announced at the banquet that the convention registration was 369, the largest ever, representing 64 clubs from 47 states and 14 countries other than the United States. After dinner and all of the introductions and awards, Susan Carter Holmes spoke and showed slides of Euphorbias of East Africa in Habitat. The plants were unbelievable.

Tuesday, we had nine programs, starting at 9:00 and ending at 9:00 P.M. with time out for lunch and dinner and a morning and afternoon break. The first one was "Cacti of the Dutch Antilles" by Paul Thoma. The Melocactus were enough to make one drool. (We have been nursing a Melocactus intortus for almost 20 years and no cephalium yet.) He showed M. intortus with cephalium 18 inches long, and some with offsets larger than our plant. And ALL of the offsets had cephaliums, including those only a few inches in diameter. The second program was by Charles Uhl on "American Crassulaceae". The third program was by Werner Rau on "Peru and its cacti". The fourth program was by Roberto Kiesling on "Argentine Cacti", then a break for lunch. The fifth program was again a choice, with two simultaneous programs. We chose the program on "Show Judging" by Joseph Clements. The sixth program was another choice. Our choice was one by Hernando Sanchez-Mejorada on "Conservation of Mexican Cacti". The seventh program was a round-table discussion by David Grigsby, Kent Newland, and the owner of a wholesale cactus nursery whose name escaped me. Subjects discussed were "raising cactus from seed and diseases and insects in succulents". After dinner, we decided to skip the evening programs, as Phil was getting badly stiffened by all of the walking and the hard grade to go up using the bridge over College Ave. The evening programs were to be Carlos Ostolaza on "Cacti and the ancient Peruvians; and the rare plant auction."

Wednesday was a day of bus trips to the growers of northern San Diego county, or to Huntington Gardens, or to Wild Animal Park. Since we had been to all of these, we decided to stay home and give Phil's hip a day of rest. We didn't even go to the dining hall, but to our local Jack in the Box instead, for lunch. We did go for dinner, though. After dinner, we attended a lecture on "Bonzai of succulents" by Leroy Phelps. You would have to see these plants to believe them. They were both exotic and wierd, at the same time. All were wonderful, but especially a pachypodium crest that was the wierdest of all. (Even Martin would have appreciated this one.). In order to bonzai the plants, some of the top growth must be pruned to keep the plants in bounds. So, Leroy would prune and toss pieces of the plants as he talked. We came up with a piece of Cotyledon Sinus-Alexandri, which we are now trying to root. (July is not the best month to root succulents in Phoenix, but we will do a lot of praying.) We got back to our dorm about 8:00 P.M. This was too early to go to bed, so we decided to watch a little television in the lounge on our floor. We found Henry Varney was getting ready

to set up a slide show of his trip to Peru and Bolivia. (The same program that he gave at our May meeting. The audience of about 20 included John Lavronos, and Jerry Barad and other well known cactophiles. We didn't stay to the end, as the smoke and the heat got to us. The air-conditioning wasn't working, which was what it did best in our dorm.

Thursdays programs were really a trip around the world to places like British Columbia; Socotra; New Zealand; Canary Islands; Mohave Desert; Brazil and Israel. Speakers were John Lavronos; Werner Rau; Micheal Hawks; Karl Johnson; Dave Bramwell; Richard May; David Hardy and Yair Elber. The programs were followed by a delegates meeting which started at 9:00 P.M. and lasted until about 10:20. Since Frank was a delegate, he attended. He didn't take notes, as Eleanor Barker, the editor of C.S.S.A. newsletter will send me a copy of the proceedings. Denver was chosen as the site of the 1989 convention, as the choice of the majority, but not your delegate.

Friday was the last day and only had 7 programs, as follows. Faith Campbell on "Legal restrictions in succulent trade, what and why"; Roberto Keisling on "Carlos Spegazzini, his life and his cacti"; Carlos Ostolaza on "Attempts to straighten out the genus *Borzaicactus*"; David Hardy on "Vegetation of the Venda Republic"; David Bramwell on "Canary Island Succulents"; Susan Carter Holmes on "New euphorbias from East Africa"; and John Lavronos on "Botanizing in southern Yemen". Friday evening was the farewell party around the pool, a Mexican fiesta with lots of socializing and an excellent Mariachi band.

Saturday, after a good night's sleep, and breakfast at our favorite Jack-in-the-box (dining hall meals were over), it was time to pack the plants, and our belongings and drive home, arriving about 4:30.

The weather for the entire week was not up to San Diego standards, with some days in the 70s, some in the 80s, and too many in the 90s. And it was very humid. And with no air conditioning in the dorm, and in the dining hall, it was quite uncomfortable at times. Walking distances were long and tiring. But, the meals were excellent.

But it was a good convention. Good speakers and good subjects. It was fun to renew old acquaintances and make a lot of new friends. This is one of the fun things of these get-togethers. Two of the people from Bath, England looked us up to bring us a message from friends Bristol, England. For those who didn't attend, remember, the next one is put on by us. Take part in it and you will learn to enjoy them.

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON WINTER

The low temperature on our max-min thermometer this past winter was about 24 degrees F. Both thermometers were slightly sheltered by overhead plastic. We have observed that our minimum is close to 10 degrees colder than the official weather bureau reading as announced on TV. The lowest temperature we have experienced in our 14 years residence in this house was 1978-79 when our low was 18 degrees F. As many of you also experienced then we lost many trees, bushes, etc. some completely, some frozen to the roots.

In 1978-79 we lost our *Cassia artemesioides* which froze completely. However, there were many seeds scattered from that plant and the volunteers have become so numerous I have to pull them out like weeds. Some of the unwelcome volunteers have been sprayed regularly with weed killer and cut down but grow back each time. The cold this winter did not affect the cassias.

Our *Acacia Smallii* (Sweet Acacia) were also frozen back (78-79). They were young trees I was attempting to grow as single trunk standards. I had started them from seeds and they had grown to about six feet. After the freeze all three trees sprouted from the roots as multitrunk large bushes. I haven't gotten around to attempting to make single trunk trees of them. The above also applies to our *Lysiloma Thornberi*.

My timing was not the best last fall when I planted outside some young aloes I had been growing in pots. Aloes *barbertoniae*, *simii* and *ferox* all rotted out completely. Also *barbadensis* (vera) had some frozen leaf tips as did a few of the common ones we have had in the ground for some years. We also lost *Aloe bulbifera* which probably hadn't been in long enough to become established.

We try to put brown supermarket bags over the cereus-type cactus when a frost is predicted. We didn't have many cacti in the ground in '78-79 and the few we had, *Trichocereus spachianus*, *Lemaireocereus stellatus* and *L. pruinosis* came through with growing tip damage. We haven't noticed tip damage this year except on some *Espositoas* which had not been in long enough to become established.

Among the other succulent plants we have in the ground we were pleased to see the tiny bluish *sedum dasyacantha* thriving (slowly). Also the *sedum* known as "baked beans" didn't mind the cold or rain. They grow under a palo verde with a haworthia, bulbine, *manfreda*, leafy *euphorbia* sp. and some aloes. The plants in this area in the ground went through the cold o.k. However, I had left a *Beaucarnia recurvata* in a gallon sized pot

under the same tree. One night the bag we had placed over it for protection blew off and the growing tip froze, losing all the leaves. When the weather warmed and growth began on this plant I was delighted to see 7 or 8 branches. I'll be watching this plant to see what it does. I have repotted it but it is still outside under a tree.

I suspect maturity of a plant and length of time in the ground to become established have a lot to do with how well some plants survive. However that doesn't apply to the large pad opuntias like ficus-indica and tomentosa. After the freeze this year large pads and whole branches fell from these plants endangering smaller things growing in their vicinity. Last summer there were so many fruit on the ficus-indica that large pads and branches broke off from the added weight. I think we will eliminate this prickly pear from our garden because of the above. We have two other large opuntias, quimillo and robusta, which were not affected by the cold and have not dropped branches.

We will continue to try desert plants in our yard as we find it gratifying when they do well and a challenge to see what will grow and what we can do to help them.

JEAN SKIRVIN.



Drawings by Lorraine Jones (Mrs. Stan J., V.P.)  
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"....the vast rapidity with which the deserts and forests of the interior of this country are peopled have led patriots to fear lest the nation grow too fast for its virtue and peace."

Ralph Waldo Emerson 1823.

## GYMNOCALYCIUM HABITAT AND WINTER CULTURE by MIKE GOODSON

0 = plants from mountainous habitats --- should be wintered dry, and can be wintered cool

1 = plants from grasslands (chaco) -- do not winter as dry, and probably won't take any frost

achirasense	0	friedrichii	1	ochoterenai	0
albispinum	0	gibbosum	0	oenanthemum	0
andreae	0	glaucom	0	ourselianum	0
anisitsii	1	grandiflorum	0	paediophilum	0
antherosacos	-	griseo-pallidum	1	paraguayense	1
antherostele	-	guanchinense	0	parvulum	0
artigas	1	guerkeanum	1	pflanzii	1
asterium	0	hamatum	0	platense	0
baldianum	0	horridispinum	0	pseudo-malacocarpus	1
bayrianum	0	horstii	0	pseudoragonesei	1
bicolor	0	hossei	0	pugionacanthum	0
blossfeldii(iorum)	0	hybopleurum	0	pungens	0
bodenbenderianum	0	hyptiacanthum	1	quehlianum	0
bolivianum	1	intertextum	0	ragonesei	1
borthii	0	joossensianum	0	riojense	0
bozsingianum	0	karwinskyanum	1	ritterianum	0
brachyanthum	0	knebelii	0	saglione	0
brachypetalum	0	kozelskyanum	0	schickendantzii	0
brevistylum	-	lafaldense	0	schroederianum	0
bruchii	0	leanum	1	sigelianum	0
buenekeri	0	leptanthum	0	spgazzinii	0
calochlorum	0	lumberasense	0	stellatum	0
capillaense	0	marayes	0	stenopleurum	1
cardenasianum	0	marsoneri	0	striglianum	0
carminanthum	0	matoense	1	stuckertii	0
castellanosii	0	mazanense	0	sutterianum	0
chiquitanum	1	megalothelos	1	tilcarensense	0
chloranthum	-	megatae	1	tillianum	0
chlorostictum	1	melanocarpum	1	tortuga	1
chubutense	0	michoga	0	triacanthum	0
comarapense	1	mihanovichii	1	tudae	1
curvispinum	0	monvillei	0	uebelmannianum	0
damsii	1	moserianum	1	uruguayense	1
deeszianum	0	mostii	0	valnicekianum	0
denudatum	1	multiflorum	0	vatterii	0
euryleurum	1	nidulans	0	venturianum	0
fleischerianum	1	nigriareolatum	0	weissianum	0
fricianum	1	occultum	0	zegarrae	1