

President's Letter ————— August 2004

I view this President's Letter as a way to talk to our members who, for whatever reason, miss a meeting or two. I believe that everyone should know what the CACSS has done, is doing and plans to do. I don't want anyone to be able to say, "Gee, if I had only know that was going to happen." To that end, I hope every member reads, not only my article, but all of the interesting articles that appear every month.

Last month's program was particularly interesting to me. It's my dream that the CACSS can mimic the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society's successful Plant Rescue Program. Chris Monrad and Richard Wiedhopf came up from Tucson to share with us exactly how they got started and where they are now with that program. It was exciting to hear about all of the plants they have rescued. (See the Rescue Program article).

This month's program should be equally as interesting, especially for those in the Society that prefer succulents over cacti. Doug Dawson spent four weeks in southwest Africa and saw a huge number of plants. He was on a Cactus and Succulent Society of America organized tour, in the company of other plant lovers and experts. He will be telling us all about it, accompanied by "just a few" slides. You won't want to miss the show.

In September, plan to find out how to organize, collect and care for a big collection of plants. Pam Slade comes from the H.B. Wallace Garden in North Scottsdale. It's a world class botanical garden specializing in cacti and succulents. If you never been to the Wallace Garden, you need to go. And to that end, we have arranged a private visit to the Garden on October 23. This is open only to members of the CACSS, so get your friends to join, too, because they will be "blown away" by what they see. I promise.

Great news. Our membership continues to grow. We now have 174 members. I don't know if that is an all time high, but it certainly is a recent high mark. Thanks to all the new members for joining. I want everyone, new and old, to know that I want to hear from you if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions or comments about the CACSS. I promise that I will take every issue seriously and, if warranted, bring it up to the Board of Directors. My phone number and email address are listed on page 2.

Speaking of email addresses, I believe emailing is the most efficient way for all of us to keep in touch and pass on valuable information. From time to time I send out an announcement to everyone for whom I have an email address. If you have never received one of my communications and would like to be on the list, send your email address to me at lsbrownson@cox.net.

Finally, I want everyone in the Society to know that they are welcome to attend all of the monthly Board of Directors' meetings we hold immediately prior to the General Meeting. The BOD meetings start at 1 pm and are held in the building just to the southwest of Dorrance Hall.

RESCUE COMMITTEE REPORT

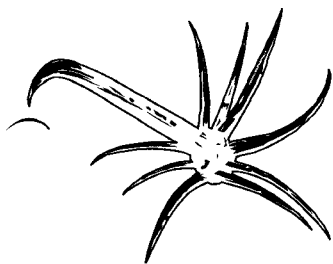
We are just about ready for our first rescue effort. We know the procedures we must follow. The only thing we lack is a site to rescue. Chris Monrad of the Tucson Society told us that the hardest part of the program is scouting sites about to be dug up for development and contacting owners. We need a list of people who have the authority to let us on the property so we can remove the endangered plants.

You can help! Do you know anyone who has ownership of or control over a piece of land that is going to be developed soon? Do you know...

- The owner of a development company?
- A high level employee of a development company?
- A City Planner, Councilperson or Mayor?
- A School Superintendent or other high level School District employee?
- A member of a city Planning Commission?
- A landscape architect?

If you do, I would ask you to do two things. First, call that person and ask him/her

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Calendar

All CACSS meetings held last Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM
at Dorrance Hall in the Desert Botanical Garden unless noted.

August 29, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

CACSS: Doug Dawson. Exploration of the Southern Fifth of Namibia, Summer 2003 Hiking from sunrise to sunset and camping out for 3 to 4 weeks in the South of Namibia provides an up close perspective on many of the exotic succulent species we cherish in our plant collections.

September 26, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

CACSS: Pam Slade will discuss Management of the Wallace Garden

October 23, 2004 Time TBD (Saturday)

CACSS: Members only special tour of HB Wallace Gardens.

October 31, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday)

CACSS: Silent Auction: Gigantocactomanical Silent Auction of members plants. *Wildflower Pavalion*.

November 21, 2004 2:00 PM (Sunday, not last Sunday of month)

CACSS: Woody Minnich, proprietor of Cactus Data Plants. TBA

December 12, 2004 12:00 PM (Sunday, not last Sunday of month)

CACSS: Holiday Party, Elections. *Webster Auditorium*.

EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE SOUTHWEST AREA

September 2, 2004 7:00 PM (Thursday)

TCSS: Chuck Hanson of Arid Lands Greenhouses will be doing a presentation on Succulents of Madagascar.

September 14, 2004 7:00 PM (Tuesday)

ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY: Wendy Hardy & Daryl Workman

The first meeting after our summer break will be an interesting presentation from the City of Scottsdale regarding the native plant salvage program. Please mark you calendar to join us, and invite a friend or two!

October 1-3 2004

ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY: Annual Conference (see notice p.4)

CACSS is looking for submissions to Central Spine; articles, images, newsclippings, websites of interest, etc. Contact Nick Diomede at 602.266.2976 or nick@agavex.com for information on submission.

WWW.CENTRALARIZONACACTUS.ORG

Publication of the material in the Central Spine does not imply agreement with the ideas expressed therein by any portion of the membership of CACSS, nor does it constitute an endorsement or support for any portion of such material by CACSS, or the Central Spine, regardless of any position or office held by the author(s). All such material represents a comment and/or personal opinion of the author(s).

Richard Greenberg entered 25 plants in our annual show in the novice category this year. He had never entered a show before, and thought that he might learn something from the experience. What he learned is that he may be a novice when it comes to entering a show, but he is no novice when it comes to growing cactus and succulent plants. He won 20 blue ribbons (13 for cactus), 3 red, 1 green, and 2 trophies. "I was sure surprised," he unpretentiously said.

Richard has lived in Arizona for 20 years, now in Peoria. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, he enjoyed several years of living in California. "Twenty-five years ago, I was walking through the garden section of a home store, and the three-inch potted cactus and succulent plants caught my eye. I had never really seen plants like that, and I was completely mesmerized by the different shapes, colors, and textures. I bought my very first plants that day," Richard says.

"I bought a book about cactus and succulents, and enjoyed researching what these plants needed. Nurseries were listed in the back of the book, and I started visiting as many as I could. I bought plants, and got catalogs, ordering from them too."

He got a wholesale license so he could buy large quantities of plants, and started selling them at different markets. He was hooked by this time. This led to a stint working with a commercial operation owned by Allen Leroy called, "A Sticky Business," in Petaluma, California. Richard worked in the greenhouse and at the retail end learning all the time.

"Growing these plants had really been a solitary pursuit for me. Through the years, I learned to go with the ebb and flow of growth and death, especially when moving from California to Arizona. When I joined the club, the solitary part changed for me. I've been exposed to so much through the lectures, conversations with members, newsletter, plant auctions, open gardens, etc.," he said. "I'm so impressed with the knowledge of our members who share it so easily."

Richard's 400 plus plants are primarily grown in pots. The mammillarias, needing bright light, but not able to take Arizona's intense sun, happily live in a shed that Richard converted to a shade house for them. He uses 50% shade cloth.

Favorite plants include astrophytums. Richard says, "Nothing is more beautiful on this earth. They have always attracted me." He also loves gymnocalyciums, but finds it hard to get them to flourish here. "I love looking at my plants daily, searching for new growth or flower buds, checking on their health."

His advises new growers to get a water meter to learn when to water. Also to really look at your plants for changes in color, spine development, creases at the base, etc. "The plants really do tell you when something is wrong. Catching problems early allows you to help the plants survive," he said. He uses *The Ultimate Book of Cacti and Succulents* by Miles Anderson as a good guide for temperature requirements, moving his plants throughout the year to give them the best environment. Richard turns to *Cactus, the Illustrated Dictionary* for identification help, and *Copiaopoa and Their Environment* as an additional source. He has also found that slow-release fertilizer is key to keeping the plants beautiful.

He subscribes to a web site called cacti_etc. The site sends out a daily question, and follows up the next day with all the answers received. Some, he cautions, can get quite technical.

Richard uses Black Gold soil with no peat moss available at Fry's Marketplace. He adds pumice, perlite and a slow release fertilizer, and fertilizes throughout the year. "I really like to grow the plants to their full potential, and maintain a high level of health when they are under my care," he said. All the blue ribbons are proof of his success

MARGARET CALDWELL
1919-2004

Margaret Caldwell, a long time member of the Desert Botanical Garden and the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, passed away in March of this year at the age of 84. She was born in Brimfield, Illinois, the daughter of Lloyd and Maude Hasselbacher. She grew up in Brimfield and graduated from Bradley University as a research laboratory technician.

While working in the medical field, she met and married a young up-and-coming physician, Hayes W. Caldwell. After Dr. Caldwell served his wartime overseas stint in the military, the couple settled in Phoenix where they raised their two sons.

Margaret was a true renaissance lady who explored every aspect of the natural world. She was interested in tracking the stars of the night sky, studying the creatures of the ocean's beaches, investigating the ancient ruins of long-gone civilizations and exploring the slopes and forests of the Rocky Mountains. She was an accomplished equestrian, a white-water rafter, an avid grower of succulent and non-succulent plants, and a skillful chef as well as a devoted mother.

Margaret's interest in the desert environment led her to the Desert Botanical Garden where she was soon selected as a member of the Board of Directors. She served many fruitful years on that Board. She also served on the CSSA

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NEW JOURNALS:

British Cactus and Succulent Journal, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 2004. Articles of Interest:

- John's Quarry. By John Hughes.
- Intergeneric hybrids in Cactaceae – 2004 update. By Gordon Rowley.
- Flowering of *Agave gypsophila*. By Len Newton.
- Ortegocactus* in the wild – warts and all. By Bill Weightman.
- A selection of 2004 ISI plants. By Harry Mays.
- Cacti and succulents on society badges. By John Cox.
- Early images of *Mammillaria mammillaris*. By Roy Mottram.
- Bookshelf 1 (Book Reviews): *Haseltonia* No. 9 2002.
- Pitayaha (*Hylocereus* species) by Paul H. Thomson.
- The Sound of Cacti (CD audio). Music inspired by cacti.
- Denmoza* Britain & Rose. By Charles Graham.
- Orostachys* – a sadly neglected genus. By John Hughes.
- Additional comments on *Melocactus deinacanthus*. By Pierre Braun
- Bookshelf 2 (Book Reviews): *Yucca* (Agavaceae) by F. Hochstaetter.
- A Synopsis of the Tribe Hylocereeae F. Buxb. By Rolf Bauer.
- The aloes of Mount Ayliff. By Rogan Roth.

STILL MISSING: We still cannot find anyone who knows the whereabouts of:

- *Cacti*. By V. Cerutti (1998, 126 pp).
- *The Euphorbia Journal*, Vol 4. Euphorbia Society. (1987, 169 pp).

Please check to see if you might have any of these books at home. If they don't turn up and we have to replace them, it will cost the society about \$70. Thanks!!!

BOOK SUGGESTIONS: Read or browsed any good cactus or succulent books lately that you think might be good additions to our library? We've already had 2 great suggestions and the CACSS has approved purchasing both. Contact me for your ideas (see contact information below).

HOW DO I CHECK OUT CACSS BOOKS? To see a list of the books we have please see our catalog. Paul Schueneman, the CACSS librarian, can email you a copy of the catalog (see contact information at the end of this article). Or, you can pick up a catalog from him at a CACSS meeting. Or, there's a copy of the catalog on the CACSS website: www.centralarizonacactus.org/liblist.htm. When you would like to check out books or journals, contact Paul at least a couple of days before the CACSS meeting and he will give the books to you there or he will go with you to Webster Auditorium (our books are shelved there) after the meeting and you can browse/check out books.

BINDING: Several of our older books, particularly the paperbacks, are starting to fall apart. Some of the books cannot be replaced (eBay, Alibris, etc. do not have them). Does anyone know how to bind books or have the equipment they could loan me to do it? Professional bookbinding is beyond the library's budget.

NEED HELP? Contact the CACSS librarian, Paul Schueneman:

(W) 602-381-9859 ~ or ~ (H) 480-706-1672 ~ or ~ (W) paul.schueneman@ndhealth.com ~ or ~ (H) schue888@aol.com

ARIZONA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ANNUAL

CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 1-3, 2004

The Arizona Native Plant Society (ANPS) is holding its annual conference at the Lake Pleasant, Desert Outdoor Center. Arizona's native plants are crucially interconnected with our native cacti and succulents and with our native bird populations. Please join members of ANPS for an informational conference to share ideas and work together to assure the survival of our unique native plant heritage for future generations. Hear 9 speakers including Dr. Robert Ohmart, ASU, Brian Nowicki, Center for Biological Diversity, Dr. John Alcock, ASU, Mary Irish, renowned author/speaker and others. There is a cost for room, board, speakers, etc. for the 2-2½ day conference. Topics will include the relationship between native plants and wildlife, landscaping with native plants, the effect of drought upon our landscape, managing threatened and endangered species in Arizona and other choice subjects on "Plants, Water and People." For more information, contact Doug Green, CACSS member and ANPS Board Member at 480-998-5638 or at azbotman@yahoo.com for added details. Costs for the conference are yet to be determined, but will be held to the bare minimum.

CONT. PAGE 6 BEGINING, LIN LEIVIAN

Instead of Rebutias and Sulcos, I instead favor Weingartias for the outdoor grower. Strangely enough, these cacti, which also grow at higher altitudes in Argentina and Bolivia, are much easier to grow in our climate. Though they look nothing like the Rebutias, Edward Anderson has lumped them in with this genus in his important work *The Cactus Family*. Unlike their tiny globular neighbors, Weingartias tend to grow from 6-8 inches high, sporting a smooth gray-green epidermis and prominent tubercles. They are plump looking plants that bear their flowers close to the top of the stem. The flowers tend to be all shades of yellow, though there are supposedly some orange-flowering species. What I enjoy about them is that they will have bursts of flowering in early summer, after rains, and even in August, when they will send up a flower or two to cheer us up. Unlike the Rebutias, I simply water them as I do my other cacti- just once a week. Of course, this schedule is reduced if we get a good soaking rain. I should mention that I use a simple soil mix of 50% pumice, 50% Supersoil and Osmocote, so if you use a different mix, your watering schedule will vary from mine.

A prolifically offsetting species with attractive yellow flowers and densely haired areoles is *Weingartia lanata*. You will soon have some to give to friends if you repot each year. *Weingartia pilcomayensis* is a solitary plant with an upside down aspect. The dense spination is on the lower 1/3 of the plant. It has strong white spines occurring on the large green tubercles and bears butter-yellow flowers. For a different look, try *Weingartia pulquinensis*, which has dense soft spination covering up its gray-green stem.

Even though I purchased these plants in northern California, they did make the adjustment to Phoenix with little trouble. Just remember to give good, strong morning light. Weingartias will clue you in: too much causes yellowing; too little causes etiolation

CONT. PAGE 1 RESCUE COMMITTEE REPORT

if he/she would be interested in hearing about our Plant Rescue Program. Second, let me know who you are talking to so that we can avoid a duplication of effort.

The only thing you really need to know when you speak with them is that we are talking about the cacti, agaves, and ocotillos that are not required by law to be removed (i.e. large saguaros, etc). Many individuals in those positions think the smaller plants have no value to anyone. You can assure your contact that the plants have value and are worthy of saving. The goal of your call is simply to secure their commitment to talk to someone from the Rescue Committee who can explain exactly what we do.

Contact Lee Brownson, 480-951-9494 or email: lsbrownson@cox.net.

Club Welcomes New Members

At the May 23rd meeting, Doug Dawson announced a program to welcome new members in a meaningful way. New members are encouraged to contact Doug at monthly meetings or at 480-893-1207 to receive an invitation to visit the home of one of our longtime members to socialize, create meaningful networking, and of course, to talk plants and see plants.

We wish to be very careful not to overlook any new or recently new members, so please contact Doug if you or someone you know could have been missed by this program now or in the future. At the May 23rd meeting, six of our new members signed up for this special greeting program, so we're off to a good start!

Welcome (July 2004)

Kathy Butler; Phoenix, AZ
Sharon Dohms; Phoenix, AZ
Laurie Harrison; Phoenix, AZ
Claire Hockett; Scottsdale, AZ
Debby Kurtz-Weidinger; Phoenix, AZ
Davin Owen; Phoenix, AZ
Nancy Parks; Phoenix, AZ
Margaret Ryan; Sun Lakes, AZ
Elizabeth Wiedhopf; Phoenix, AZ
Catherine Wiedhopf; Tempe, AZ

CONT. PAGE 3. MARGARET CALDWELL

board for many years and held the office of president for multiple terms.

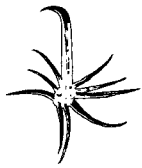
She was in the forefront of the founding of the Central Arizona Cactus and Succulent Society and was one of its 26 charter members. She hosted several society meetings at her spacious "home on the hill" on Camelback Mountain. I am reminded that Margaret conceptualized the Central Spine "logo" we use today and guided her son Tom as he did the artwork.

After contracting Parkinson's disease, her husband was taken from her unexpectedly in 1994. Following Dr. Caldwell's death, Margaret was not as active in the affairs of the society but she always maintained an interest in its activities. She is survived by her two sons, James, who lives out-of-state, and Tom, who continues to live in the "house on the hill."

Margaret will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

SUBMITTED BY HENRY TRIESLER





CENTRAL ARIZONA CACTUS & SUCCULENT SOCIETY
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ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT CENTRAL SPINE ISSUE IS:
SEPTEMBER 5, 2004
SEND TO NICK@AGAVEX.COM

Beginning

Lin Leivian

T.S. Eliot once said that April is the cruelest month, but for those of us in central Arizona, I think August would fit that description. The increased humidity in July has usually led to a few rains at least, and a gratifying flowering response on the part of our night-blooming cacti and several small species of cacti such as *Gymnocalycium*, *Weingartias*, *Turbinicarpus*, *Astrophytums* and some *Echinocerei*. Now the ramifications of those short, but intense rains, up and down humidity, and zooming temperatures, all combine to produce rot in unsuspecting species. Daily vigilance is necessary to assure that fungi-ridden specimens don't spread spores to other plants, and that the insects that seem to flourish in the more humid conditions don't take over our collections. As those of you who have gone on our buying trips have realized, it's best to repot new specimens in your own soil as soon as you get home so you can catch evidence of infection in its early stages, and so you know how often to water. Sometimes, however, it's hard to follow this advice in the extreme heat of July because we are afraid of damaging delicate feeder roots and shocking the plants which are already adjusting to climatic changes. I always have a quarantine area on the opposite side of my yard for plants that need to be treated and a separate spot for new acquisitions that might be carrying unseen pests.

For those of you who are just beginning your collections, the attraction to vibrantly colored blooms may entice you to buy plants such as *Rebutias* and *Sulcorebutias* which look so good in the spring, but can succumb quickly in our more humid conditions. If you have a greenhouse that is cooled, you may have more success in making these plants last year to year. For me the only way to keep them, since my collection is on shelves outdoors under shade cloth, is to withhold water during these humid periods. Why are they more difficult? The most important factor is that most grow at high altitudes. *Rebutias* grow in the mountains of Bolivia and Northern Argentina, whereas *Sulcorebutias* are restricted to the high elevations of Bolivia. Obviously they suffer during our extremely hot summers, yet they must have enough light to keep from elongating. The light requirements can be tricky to achieve as they need at least strong morning light, but they will scorch if exposed to the afternoon sun. The species that I've found easiest to grow is *Sulcorebutia arenacea* which I have owned for many years. It offsets freely from the base and along the stem, has a beautiful globular form with tiny spines flattened to the brownish stems, but grows slowly. The orange flowers occur in spring arising near the base of the plant.

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