President's Letter

It has been a great year for me. I have been proud to serve as your CACSS president. Together, we should be pleased with our accomplishments. Let's remember:

In April we had a great Show and Sale. Entries were outstanding. There was tremendous novice participation, a good sign; future Masters are beginning to "show their stuff." The highest-point trophy went to novice Richard Greenberg. Vendors brought thousands of amazing plants, most not available locally. Gross sales reached $27,000, quite a haul for our little show, larger than the take at most California shows!

July brought the best road trip in recent memory. First, the CSSA Show and Sale at the Huntington. The buying binge had begun! You who love cacti and succulents need to go to the CSSA Show! We drove to the incomparable Lotusland in Montecito. What a garden! A special treat was seeing the newly-refurbished cactus garden, a plant lovers' must-see. The shopping part of the trip! There was not room on the bus for one more plant. We filled the luggage bins below and shared seats with new plants.

October was an incredibly busy month. We toured of the H.B. Wallace Desert Garden. I am always surprised and invariably see something I had never seen before. H. B and Jocelyn Wallace are good friends of the CACSS and we are fortunate to be able to visit their private garden. October also brought our Silent Auction. The Wildflower Pavilion was the perfect venue. We made more than $1000.

October saw our very first Cactus Rescue. After six months of planning, we were able to join with our sister society in Tucson (TCSS) to rescue native plants at the Verrado development west of town. We owe a big thank you to development company DMB.

Our future is bright. Membership is at an all-time high, pushing 200. The 2005 Show and Sale is being planned. Next year it is going to fill Dorrance Hall and spill out onto Boppard Courtyard to the south. There will be room for more plants and more people.

In August we host the CSSA Convention. Perhaps 600 cactus and succulent lovers will attend! It will be a great opportunity to meet new people, learn new things, buy more plants, and show off our Arizona hospitality. Mark the dates on your calendars!

The Rescue Program will return to Verrado in January. 300 acres await us. We should be able to rescue hundreds of plants from the bulldozer. Everyone had a good time and we look forward to the next one. I hope everyone will give it a try. Even if you can't dig and lift plants, there are other things to do at the site.

I look forward to being a member of this Society in 2005. I hope you do, too. Have a wonderful Holiday Season.

Lee Brownson
Show: April 20-24, 2005

April will be here soon. Exhibiting your plants is a lot of fun. Try it! If you're a pro, enter more plants!

If you've never entered a show before, enter just five of your plants. Pick the ones you like best, or the ones you think look best. Last year novices took Best Succulent of Show and Sweepstakes!

You asked for a clearer explanation of how to prepare plants for the Show. We will provide a leaflet on how to prepare plants and how to enter. We have simplified Show entry to make it easier for everybody.

As there was last year, we will have a non-judged section of the Show, open to all members.

We'd love your help. You don't have to stay a full day; even an hour or two will be welcome. We need people on entry day, Wednesday. This means setup from 8 am to noon and plant entry from noon to 7 pm. Other crucial jobs are answering questions on the Show floor, and running cash registers.

We will change our entry method to make it much easier on all concerned. Exhibitors will bring their plants to Dorrance Hall with cards filled in, just as before. Experienced volunteers will answer questions. There will be no check-in books. Exhibitors will take their plants into the Show hall themselves, and set them on the tables. The Show Chair and volunteers will arrange plants on the tables after entries close.

We will have more space for the show. We will display plants entered by Novice, Advanced, and Masters exhibitors on separate tables.

Begin thinking about plants you might want to enter, and how you might want to display them. The six-month deadline for owning plants to be exhibited in the competitive portion of the Show has passed. If you wish to repot any plants you might enter, a good time would be next spring, several weeks before the Show, so they get settled into their new homes. With this much time you can imagine just the perfect pot.

You don't need to spend your whole paycheck on fancy pots. Long-time CACSS member Edra Drake browses thrift shops for ceramic containers to use for pots. She brings them home, drills holes in the bottoms with a ceramic bit, and has wonderful, inexpensive containers for her many beautiful plants.

We will change judging standards. For Novice exhibitors, judges will award points based only on the plant. Advanced exhibitors will lose points for showing plants in standard plastic nursery pots. At the Masters level, judges will not award ribbons to plants in these kinds of pots. By standard plastic nursery pots we mean the pots plants live in when you buy them, like 1-gallon black plastic, or "four-inch" square plastic pots.

Our aim in this is to raise the level of beauty of our Masters plants to equal that of the best shows in the country, while not discouraging Novices from entering.

Rules and Regulations will be at the December holiday party. Read them! You will have plenty of time to ask questions.
Newsletter Changes

Nick Diomede has resigned as Central Spine Editor. We thank him for his work. Will you volunteer to edit Central Spine for one year? Please contact Lee Brownson to hear the job description.

Election December 12

Here are the candidates for next year's Board. Officers serve 1-year terms.

President
Lee Brownson (Incumbent)
Denise Dederich

Vice President
Michael Gallagher

Secretary
Sue Daley

Treasurer
Tom Ballen (Incumbent)

Directors serve 2-year terms. Half are elected each year.

Doug Dawson  Dana Hiser  Bob Torrest  Cecilia Phelan
Ingrid Swenson  Galyn Jensen  Sundee Helm

We will take nominations from the floor: You must be present and agree to be nominated; or, before you are nominated, the Secretary must receive written notice you will accept the office. Only members present may vote.

Web Site Changes

CACSS news and schedule are available 24 hours per day on our Web site. We now have a plant rescue page. In addition, Leo has posted some season-specific information about caring for plants and growing from seed.

The CSSA Web site www.cssaine.org has a fresh Convention section. Speakers, field trips, workshops, schedule, and more are available.

Leo would appreciate comments and suggestions to improve both sites.

Deadline for next Central Spine: January 5, 2005

Material published in the Central Spine represents the opinions solely of the respective authors. Publication of material here does not imply agreement, endorsement, nor support of ideas expressed therein by any of the CACSS, its Board, or membership.
CACSS
PO Box 63572
Phoenix AZ 85082-3572

CACSS Calendar of Events

Regular meetings are held the last Sunday of each month at 2:00 pm in Dorrance Hall at the Desert Botanical Garden unless otherwise noted. Board meetings are held at 1:00 pm preceding each regular meeting in the conference room of the Marley Educational Building. All CACSS members are welcome at all Board meetings.

December 12, 2004, Sunday - Noon - Webster Auditorium: Holiday Party and Election of Officers for 2005 Setup and Socializing begins at Noon; Meal and Program Begins One P.M.
Turkey, ham, and beverages will be provided. Bring your own plate and utensils. Reservations are important! Please call and us know what side dishes you'll bring: Jo Davis 480-839-3792 Cecilia Phelan 480-488-1205

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 25, 2005</td>
<td>Kelly Griffin</td>
<td>Mid-March, 2005</td>
<td>DBG Plant Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rancho Soledad</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 20-24, 2005 Wed-Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27, 2005</td>
<td>Woody Minnich</td>
<td>March 20, 2005</td>
<td>Annual Show &amp; Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants of Brazil</td>
<td></td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not the last Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not the last Sunday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>