Hoe gaan dit met jou? Yes, you are reading correctly. This first sentence is in Afrikaans, one of the 3 languages you hear everywhere in Namibia, and translates "How are you?" I just got off the plane from my trip to Namibia, Africa. It seems that everyone in Namibia knows Afrikaans, English (the official language) or German, or all three.

We saw so many exotic plants throughout the trip, from the giant baobabs up north to the mesembs in the far south. Namibia truly is a wonderland of vetplants (succulents). And, yes, I did get to see several colonies of Lithops, which are called beeskloutjies in Afrikaans and translates to "little animal hooves".

After 31 days away, I came home to find my plant collection in fine shape, due to some watering by fellow member Tom Steuber (Thanks, Tom!), and what many have told me was a very agreeable May. I will spend quite a few hours sorting through about 2000 photos I took on the trip. Digital cameras make it so easy to take many more photos than my older SLR 35mm camera. The genus I probably photographed the most was Commiphora. If you haven't explored this genus, please do so. Commiphoras are relatives of our Burseras and there are many bonsai-like species throughout Namibia. There is an inexpensive, yet colorful book on Commiphoras by Steyn, which I am sure you can get through Rainbow Gardens Books out of Tucson.

The summer will get hot, but please make a special effort to come to the monthly meetings of the club. Sometimes in the summer, attendance goes down and people can lose touch with each other as we all hide under a shady rock. Our June meeting will have as speaker, our very own Scott McMahon who also is a member of the DBG staff. He is one of the best plant growers I know. You always see superb plants of his in the April Show each year. I am sure that at the June meeting we will also hear from those members who were able to make it to the CSSA conference in late May, held in Seattle. So make sure you attend.
OFFICERS

President—Doug Dawson
480-893-1207
doug.dawson@gcmail.maricopa.edu

Secretary—Julie Plath
623-915-7615
revegude1@juno.com

Treasurer—Celeste Gornick
602-548-8106
hheaven77@aol.com

DIRECTORS

Lee Brownson
480-951-4945
lgbrownson@cox.net

Steve Plath
623-915-7615
revegude1@juno.com

Cynthia Robinson
602-615-2261
crobin500@msn.com

Gard Roper
602-996-9745
tommy15@cox.net

Lois Schneberger
480-946-8373
lschneberger@cox.net

Daniel Sumberg
480-361-6503
daniel@csmorrell.com

Ingrid Swenson
602-957-9865
iswenson@cox.net

Librarian
Erik Anderson
480-967-3984
woodcraftman@earthlink.net

Newsletter Editor & CSSA Affiliate Rep
Cynthia Robinson
602-615-2261
crobin500@msn.com

The Cover Photo:
A member of the Portulacaceae family, *Lewisia rediviva*, covered the hills of the Quilomene Wildlife Area near Ellensburg, WA. This species of Lewisia has a thickened taproot and does not produce leaves until after flowering. Flower color ranges from medium pink to white. Photo taken by Cynthia Robinson.

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

LOCAL CALENDAR

June 24th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker Scott McMahon, Curator of the Cactus Collection at the Desert Botanical Garden, will give a presentation entitled *Cactus 101 - A Survey of the Family*.

July 29th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker, Norm Dennis, will be reviewing *The Genus Mammillaria*.

August 26th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker, David Yetman of the Tucson TV show “The Desert Speaks."

September 30th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker TBA.

October 12th - 14th, Friday - Sunday, All Day
Desert Botanical Garden Fall Plant Sale
Volunteers are needed to assist the DBG staff with answering cactus & succulent related questions, giving out CACSS & CSSA info, etc.

October 20th, Saturday, 10 am
Field trip to the Wallace Desert Garden

October 28th, Sunday, Noon Setup, 2 pm Auction
Silent Auction of Member’s Plants
Wildflower Pavilion, Desert Botanical Garden

November 18th, Sunday, 2 pm
Regular club meeting
Dorrance Hall, Desert Botanical Garden
Guest speaker TBA.

REGIONAL CALENDAR

June 29th - July 1st, Friday - Sunday, All Day
Annual Show & Sale of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America
Huntington Botanical Gardens, Los Angeles, CA

August 18th - 19th, Saturday - Sunday, All Day
21st Annual Intercity Show & Sale
LA County Arboretum, Los Angeles, CA

September 1st, Saturday, All Day
24th Annual Huntington Succulent Symposium
Join the Huntington in celebrating the centennial of the desert garden!
Huntington Botanical Gardens, Los Angeles, CA

June 12th - 15th, 2008, Thursday - Sunday, All Day
12th Biennial Mid-States Cactus & Succulent Conference
Grand Junction, CO

April 10th - 15th, 2009, Friday - Wednesday, All Day
33rd Biennial CSSA Convention
Westin La Paloma Resort, Tucson, AZ
**JUNE SPEAKER**

Scott McMahon, the Curator of the Cactus Collection at the Desert Botanical Garden, will be our guest speaker in June. His topic is: "Cactus 101 - A Survey of the Family."

And what a family it is!! Scott is extremely knowledgeable about cacti of all sizes, shapes, and natural habitats, and also knows how to grow many of them in the harsh climate of the Phoenix area. Because the Cactus Family is huge, he may or may not touch upon a genus or species of special interest to you. However, we will be taking questions, so come prepared. Long time members are urged to attend this meeting as Scott would like to have other cactus experts on hand to answer questions about unique cacti that are of special interest to them.

Newer members are advised that, if they seek to know more about these incredible plants, this should be a must attend meeting and place it on their schedules immediately - June 24th at 2 pm in Dorrance Hall.

**CSSA SHOW & SALE**

The CSSA Show & Sale will be held Friday, June 29th - Sunday, July 1st at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California. Anyone who has ever been to this event knows that it is definitely worth the trip! There are many southern California plant & pot vendors that you will not see at one of our local sales, plus the Huntington will have many of their cacti & succulent propagations for sale.

The show also features many spectacular plants, but always seems to be lacking in cacti. As an affiliate member of the CSSA, members of the CACSS are eligible to enter plants in the show. I encourage any member attending the event to consider taking a plant or two to show the Californians how well Arizonans can grow cacti & succulents! Show setup is on both Thursday the 28th from 10:30 am to 9:00 pm & Friday the 29th from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. I have show schedules & entry cards for anyone interested.

Hope to see you there!

Cynthia Robinson
CSSA Affiliate Rep

**BULK PUMICE**

Lee Brownson is trying to arrange a bulk purchase of pumice. Tufflite will sell a minimum of 43 yards (one truckload) at $25 per yard. Lee has found a place to store the pumice. If you would be interested in joining a possible bulk purchase, contact Lee Brownson to discuss this further.

**MESEMB DAY 2007**

Tim Jackson is an experienced mesemb grower who spoke at the St Louis CSSA Convention. He has a very large screen/greenhouse in Phelan, California, in the high desert north of San Bernardino. Each year he hosts Mesemb Day when his Conophytum and Lithops tend to be at peak bloom. This year it is Saturday, October 27, the day before our Silent Auction. Leo Martin went last year for the first time and plans to return. To see many large benches with thousands of conos and Lithops in bloom is amazing. Tim provides food, beverages, chairs, and viewing of his wonderful collection. People bring seeds to share, and lots of advice from master growers is available.

Here is an extract from Tim's announcement, posted to cacti_etc:

"This year Mesemb Day [is] Saturday, 27 October, ...10 am... until late....

"This gathering may be new to some of you. In 1992 I hosted a get-together for Mesemb Study Group members living in southern California.... It has grown over the years; we regularly get visitors from northern California and Arizona, and once in a while from as far away as Australia and Germany. What do we do here? Well, mostly we talk. About the latest mesemb books and articles, taxonomy, cultivation... and the sheer joy of mesembs. There are always plants and seeds to share, plants that need a name, people that need a little help with something unusual, others with something special to show. It's a very informal day -- no speakers, lectures, tours or auctions. Just good people, good food, and great plants. We are a varied group... a few [to] many years' experience; ...most are in between. The one thing we have in common is interest in these nifty plants. There is a large minority who also grow haworthias."

Leo is looking for people who might want to carpool. Depending on how many people go, it might be even better to rent a minivan. Last year's event lasted until about 2:30 pm. The drive is about 5-6 hours from Phoenix. It is physically possible to make it a one-day trip, but this would be exhausting. Leo would suggest either leaving Phoenix at 4:30 am Saturday the 27th and spending Saturday evening in Phelan before leaving for Phoenix at 5 am Sunday the 28th (to get back in time for the Silent Auction); or, leaving Phoenix after work Friday the 26th, spending Friday night in Phelan, and leaving directly for Phoenix after Mesemb Day festivities end Saturday the 27th.

Please contact Leo if you are interested, the group can decide final arrangements. Leo is definitely going this year.
THE MAY 2007 CSSA CONVENTION IN SEATTLE  
LEO MARTIN

This was a great Convention: great speakers, great lectures, great field trip, great plant sale. You should have been there!

People asked, "Why Seattle? There aren't many cacti there." Well....

The four lecture days involve sitting in a hall all day. This could be done almost anywhere on Earth. The quality of speakers is the attraction here. The quality here was very high, with five speakers from overseas: Graham Charles and Sheila Collenette from England; Urs Eggli from Switzerland; John Lavranos from Portugal; and Graham Williamson from South Africa.

A plant sale can be held anywhere. There were 5 plant vendors at the Seattle Convention who didn't come to our convention in Scottsdale. That means I bought some plants you don't have and can't buy in Arizona.

The field trip to see Pediocactus simpsonii could only be done there, since the plant doesn't have that wide a habitat. Plus we got to see Ron McKitrick's incredible cactus garden in full bloom.

Finally, the host CSSA Affiliate bids for the Convention. We can't have a Convention without a host society. The Cascade Cactus and Succulent Society was willing to undertake the work of hosting the 2007 Convention.

That said, let's get to the Convention day by day....

Thursday May 24
Dropped off my dogs at the kennel early in the morning, then went home for some last-minute watering. Spending a week away from home during hot season sure gets one worried! Took a taxi to the airport and made the 2-hour flight from Phoenix, arriving in Seattle about 2 pm. People worried Seattle would be an expensive flight Memorial Day weekend; Internet specials were available for just over $200 round trip. The flight can be quite scenic: the Grand Canyon, the Sierra Nevada, Mt. Shasta, Mt. Lassen, Mt. St. Helens with its cone growing and smoking daily, Mt. Baker, Mt. Rainier. It can be a real surprise leaving the desert in late May and flying into the Emerald City.

It was quite sunny with scattered fluffy clouds and temperatures in the mid 70s. A beautiful day.

Made my way from the gate to the luggage pickup, passing only 4 Starbucks, 2 Seattle's Best and some shot glass shops. From luggage pickup in Seattle, it is a brief but confusing walk to the hotel shuttle pickup zone. I felt embarrassed taking the shuttle since it's only 2 blocks to the Seattle Airport Doubletree--just about the same distance as the shuttle zone is from the luggage pickup--but I had to keep company CACSS newsletter editor Cynthia Robinson, her mother, CSSA director Judy Pigue, and the world-famous Crassulady, Norma Lewis, who entertained me with tales from her childhood. Something about tanning skins of rabbits she had trapped to sew into fur coats for dolls. I wish there were several kids like that in my neighborhood.

The Convention room rate was $89 per room per night. Checking in was no problem for me, and the lovely clerk handed me a brown paper wrapper holding two warm chocolate chip cookies from the oven behind the desk. They were so good, later while heading to my room I picked up and ate the chunk that fell on the elevator floor. (I was hungry, having eaten nothing that day but orange juice and peanuts!)

Norma's roommate had changed her mind about going to the Convention the previous afternoon and cancelled the room--without telling Norma. We all agreed this wasn't polite. After a brief discussion Cynthia and Judy invited Norma to stay with them in a room they were to share with CACSS member Sue Hakala, who hadn't arrived yet and thus couldn't object.
We saw Sheila Collenette arrive with Carol & Maury Clapp, and had a nice chat in the lobby. The hotel had lost Sheila's reservation and Maury was arguing with the manager on duty. I went to assist Maury in hazing the manager (I am DOCTOR LEO MARTIN, DIRECTOR of this organization, and I would like YOU to find a room as FAST as possible for THIS ELDERLY LADY IN A WHEELCHAIR, A WORLD-FAMOUS EXPLORER, WHO HAS TRAVELED ALL THE WAY FROM ENGLAND!) Fortunately Dick Wiedhof of the Tucson C&SS, as well as CSSA President and Convention Chair, arrived; he took over the blustering. In a trice Sheila was ensconced in a room adjoining Carol and Maury. We all headed to our rooms and up we freshened. My room was on the 9th floor in the tower, so I got to take one of the four glass elevators that provided a nice view of the SeaTac area. My room faced the airport. You ladies are all saying, "Oh, No!" but for a guy this is heaven. I got to watch airplanes taking off the whole time I was in the room! Big ones, little ones, all different colors! Day and night! The soundproofing was excellent so long as I kept the patio door shut. I like lots of fresh air so it was open while I was in the room. Try to realize boys like the feel and sound of planes taking off as much as girls seem to enjoy rack after rack of shoes on sale.

I still had some work to do before the Convention began. I had to arrange for printing of the notes for my talks, to be distributed in the lecture hall. And, there would be a CSSA Board meeting at lunchtime Sunday of the Convention, where I would present a draft request-for-proposal for our business manager position. All that could wait for another day since I was on vacation.

I called and found my mom Betty, also attending the Convention and staying in the hotel. (Her room, fortunately, faced away from the airport into a nice greenbelt.) Several of us met in the lobby and asked the concierge where we might find a restaurant that had some vegetarian food for the grazers in our group, and that didn't serve fish, because some in our group couldn't tolerate the smell of cooking fish. He told us about the wonderful coffee shop in the hotel, which featured steaks, seafood, chicken, and pork chops.

We asked about other nearby restaurants that might have vegetarian food and didn't serve fish. He told us about a wonderful seafood restaurant just across the street, a great steakhouse just a few blocks away, and another great restaurant called 13 Coins that was very dark, had very good reviews, but was quite pricey. We asked him what kind of food they served, and he told us he didn't know. It also turned out he had no menus from any restaurants. Oh, he remembered a barbeque restaurant across the street with great pulled pork.

We asked if there were any Indian restaurants in the vicinity, and he told us he didn't think there were any around the hotel. He did volunteer to look in a phone book and found one a few miles away. We hired a cab for $20 and set off: Betty, Cynthia, Judy, Leo, Norma, Russian cabbie. The trip was brief but beautiful; we viewed Mt. Rainier in all its snow-capped glory, a sight I only saw a few times during the year I lived in Seattle back in the 1980s. The cabbie was surprised we wanted to eat Indian food; I told him of course I realized it isn't nearly as good as Russian food, but it has more vegetarian dishes. He got a chuckle out of that.

The restaurant, in an almost-new strip mall, featured an all-Indian clientele, a good sign. We sat down and ordered. Plate after plate of tasty vegetarian dishes (and a few meat dishes for the carnivores) came out and down we chowed. I recalled I didn't have to drive and ordered a beer, or perhaps more. Norma wasn't too hungry and isn't adventurous at all but I managed to talk her into trying the rice pudding, which disappeared promptly. All too soon our cabbie returned and we were back to the hotel. The sun was still above the horizon but it was almost 8:30 pm! Seattle is very far north, and I recalled one can read a newspaper by the sunset's afterglow in June as late as 11:30 pm. Of course, winter days are dark, dark, dark.

After the long day we returned to our rooms exhausted, ready for another big day of touristising around.

Next: Downtown Seattle, followed by a Cocktail Party with Raffle Tickets For Sale!
PLANT QUESTIONS???

Many CACSS members have experience with different kinds of succulent plants. I hope they will add their names to the following list (just call or e-mail Bob Torrest). For now, the list is simply alphabetical with principle interests. When more members add their information, the list will be cross-referenced by topic.

**DOUG DAWSON**
Specialization includes Flora of Namibia, Growing from Seed, Lithops, other Mesembs & Melocactus.
480-893-1207
doug.dawson@gcmail.maricopa.edu

**MIKE GALLAGHER**
Specialization includes Aloes, Haworthias, Columnar Cacti & Turbinicarpus.
602-942-8580
mgallagher26@cox.net

**STEVE PLATH**
Specialization includes Ariocarpus, Astrophytum, Cyphostemma, Echinocereus, Fouquieria, Thelocactus, General Propagation & Desert Revegetation.
623-915-7615
revegdude1@juno.com

**CYNTHIA ROBINSON**
Specialization includes Flora of Madagascar, Growing from Seed, Caudiciform & Pachycaul Succulents, Aloes, Apocynaceae, Burseraceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fouquieriaceae, & Succulent Bonsai.
502-615-2261
crobin500@msn.com

**BOB TORREST**
Specialization includes Desert Landscaping, Unusual (including Rare Fruit) Trees & Shrubs, Aloes, Agaves, Columnar Cacti, Trichocereus & Opuntia.
480-994-3868
robertst9114@msn.com

WHOM TO CONTACT!!!