

The

Central

Spine

THE CENTRAL SPINE

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1983

HISTORY OF CACSS

by MARILYN FITZ-RANDOLPH

- JAN. The Central Spine has Lou Steichman as its new editor. It was decided to award a trophy for the Asclepiadaceae Division in honor of Martha Chester. Evidently the meeting was short as it is recorded that members rushed home for the Super Bowl Game.
- FEB. Annual Garden Show
- MAR. Our annual critique of the Garden Show. Victor Gass reported that there were 66 exhibitors and 930 plants. He also distributed a list of plants not well represented in the show in case someone wanted to groom a "dark horse."
- APR. This was our first annual CACSS Flower Show. 21 people brought 384 plants. Vikkie Bone won for most plant families. Most cactus families was a 3-way tie---Ross Berkheimer, Skippy Burbick and Vikkie Bone. Ross Berkheimer also won most mamillarias.
- MAY Henry Triesler is to present our bid for the 1987 Bi-annual Convntion at the St. Louis meeting. Marv Williams showed slides of the Botanical Garden at the University of Calif, Berkley.
- JUNE Last month, with only 22 members in attendance, the Fitz-Randolphs offered their home for the next meeting because the heat and noisy evaporative coller in Webster Auditorium is a stulifying experience. A record crowd of 43 members showed up for a panel d discussion on garden pests, a tour of the Fitz-Randolphs' garden, and refreshments.
- JUL H
- JULY Henry Triesler discussed the 1987 Convention which will be held here! In the valley this month were Gordon Rowley and Henk and Drude DeLooze. Over 60 people attended a lecture at DBG by them.
- AUG. The silent auction was its usual success. Over 8 tables of plants were sold and \$357 was added to the treasury.
- SEPT. George Hull spoke on arid landscaping plants and then donated all the plants he brought for our door prizes.
- OCT. The Club purchased a 5'x8' American flag for the Garden. DBG is joining COMPAS and the Club was asked to help in the fund raising.
- NOV. The program was by Lily Lila of San Raphel, Calif. She showed slides on South Africa.
- DEC. The Christmas party was held at the Fountain Hills Community Center.
 - New officèrs elected were:
 - Pres.-----Victor Gass
 - V. Pres.--James Robbin
 - Sec.-----Marilyn Fitz-Randolph
 - Treas.----Michael Gallagher
 - Aff.Dir---Frank Hennessey
 - Directors-Marv Williams
 - Paul Elias

Remember to get your plants ready for the Cactus Show. It is later than you think.

1984

- JAN. Plans for the 1987 Convention go on. ASU will be the center of activities and the Tucson Club and Boyce Thompson will give us help. Previously this month Stan Jones had the Club tour his greenhouses.
- FEB. DBG Garden Show
- MAR. As part of the annual critique of the Garden Show, it was announced that next year there will be a trophy for children in honor of Jack Taylor. A questionnaire was distributed to all members to determine their expectations of the Club.
- APR. The beautiful bloomers display was held in the Garden lath house. Vikkie Bone won the gift certificate for most plant families. Ruth Halstad had the most unusual "bloomer" there. Remember it?
- MAY The meeting was held May 20th, but the minutes have disappeared. Guess we'll mention here that this year the minutes were computer-printed.
- JUNE The first copy of the Central Spine for 1984 was prepared by Vera Gamet. The topic for the meeting was the watering of plants: an apt topic for a Phoenix summer.
- JULY Henry Triesler was elected to the Board of Cssa. The results of the questionnaire showed that most people joined the Club for its programs and to learn about cacti and succulents. Major dislike was that too few people do the majority of the work.
- AUG. Convention '87 goes on. Fran Tolleson is getting commitments from growers to grow plants from seeds for us. Elaine Taylor is in charge of private garden tours. Marilyn Fitz-Randolph is collecting photographs for a pictorial history of the Club.
- SEPT. John Robbins presented a program on grafting. Members were encouraged to bring their own plants and make this a "hands-on" experience. CACSS had a booth at the Garden Plant Sale and at the "Celebrate Yough" Festival at the Civic Plaza.
- OCT. This was the silent auction and the members stalked around the tables, pencils poised to keep their bid on top. \$211 was raised for the Club.
- NOV. The members crowded into the Garden Library for the meeting as the auditorium was used for the Photo Show. J. Fitz-Randolph told of his recent visit to the Tucson Botanical Garden where Rodney Engard is Director.
- DEC. The Christmas party was held at the home of Charlene Berke. The members enjoyed friends, food, sunshine and a strolling mariachi band.
 New officers:
 Pres.-----Margaret Caldwell
 V.Pres.----Stan Jones.
 Sec.-----Charlene Berke
 Treas.----Marv Williams
 Aff.Dir.--Frank Hennessey
 Directors-Fred Kaspar
 Ed. LeMay

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Hubert Earle.

- JAN. Stan Jones and Frank Hennessey gave tips on preparing plants for the upcoming show. Members were pleased with two new categories: (1) Hybrids and (2) Varigated Plants
- FEB. DBG Garden Show
- MAR. The members drove to Superior for the March meeting at Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Activities included a talk on the cactus family by Kent Newland, plant sale, demonstrations on propagation and a picnic.
- APR. Plant Bloomer Show---but there are no details on the outcome.
- MAY Publications abounded--Vera Gamet had the Central Spine ready and Vikkie Bone had the new directories. Guest speaker was Henry Varney who spoke on his recent trip to Bolivia and Peru. His slides on the plants there were most interesting.
- JUNE The birthday bank was instigated. Each month members with birthdays deposit 1¢ for each year. Money collected goes for library books. Stan Jones presented a program on crested cactus and leaf succulents.
- JULY The July meeting was held on a Friday night to accomodate our guest speaker, Dave Hardy of Pretoria, South Africa. His slides and comments on the Namibia Desert had most of us lined up to buy tickets for there at once.
- AUG. The silent auction this year netted \$333. DBG's Garden Show is going back to the old format of 3 enteries per family per category, so now we have a better chance to show all those plants we purchased.
- SEPT. Members brought many exzmples of Gymnocalycium. J. Fitz-Randolph spoke on stalking succulents (particularly agaves) through China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand.
- OCT. The members drove to Tucson to visit the Tucson Botanical Garden with Rodney Engard directing the tour. Then the members went to two growers, where as usual, they bought lots of plants.

MARILYN FITZ-RANDOLPH



"But where natural resources are concerned we sacrifice a pretty accurately predictable future to present greed. We know, for example, that if we abuse the soil it will lose its fertility, that if we massacre the forests our children will lack timber and see their uplands eroded and their valleys swept by floods. Nevertheless we continue to abuse the soil and massacre the forests. In a word, we immolate the present to the future in those complex human affairs where foresight is impossible, but in the relatively simple affairs of Nature, where we know quite well what is likely to happen, we immolate the future to the present."

"Those whom the gods would destroy they first make insane."

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH CACTUS, THE DBG and THE CACSS by VIKKI BONE

My infatuation with cactus began with a visit to the Cactus Show in 1982. I was awed and inspired. I made a list and headed for the plant sales and bought and bought and bought, and returned again and again for possibly new specimens that might appear from the propagation area.

One day Charles Huckins started talking to me. He needed help. I volunteered and started recording my hours in March 1982.

I have worked plant sales and potted plants for sale, watered plants and washed and washed and washed pots, made labels, worked with seeds, mixed soil and anything that needed to be done. I've worked special events and was a member of the ad hoc committee to form Friends of the Garden. I've taught dried arrangement classes for the Education Department. That led to the Craft Guild for which I have put in many hours creating items for sale.

I became a member of the board of the DBG due to a write-in vote initiated by Margaret Caldwell.

I was happy and useful, doing work I loved with people I loved.

Then in October of 1984 I was told I had cancer.

The next year was the worst year of my life. My month in the hospital and the year that followed was one of shock, depression, fear, uncontrollable emotional outbursts, pain and confusion.

When I came home in November I had to adjust to being alone, learning to walk, living with pain and relying on others for my needs. I hated it and began isolating myself, withdrawing even from my husband.

But I had to cope with this and I didn't know how or if I could. Out of my fear and despair I asked God to help me, but I felt ashamed. I had not been a religious person since high school.

My friends came through with visits and gifts and good cheer and I liked and trusted my doctors. All of this helped temporarily but still in the back of my mind was death.

Some days I struggled to get up and exercise and some days I just gave up.

Then I reinjured my back stubbornly doing things I was not supposed to do like bending over and lifting. I felt utterly useless.

At some point I hit bottom and cried out for God to take over. I could no longer handle it and I needed help.

Ilza Hahlo has been an inspiration to me. Her attitude and words have pulled me out of the depths of despair and depression many times.

Fran and Lee Tolleson came and cared for my plants for months when I could not take care of them.

All the time I did crafts for the DBG Craft Guild.

Slowly other interests became important. I was able to walk farther each day. And then in six months I was able to drive. Freedom! I graduated from wheel chair to walker to cane.

There are still times when I have to force myself to get up and go to the Garden but I go. I can help but I don't life wheelbarrows anymore.

At the Friends' luncheon in '83 I received my 500 and 1000 hour pins. In '84 I received my 2000 hour pin and in '85 my 3000 and 4000 hour pins. In March of '86 I will get my 5000 hour pin.

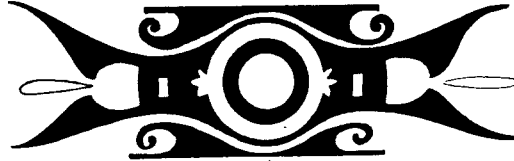
This year in October I got some good news. The new chemo I've been on for three months has decreased the size of the tumors on my spine and some repair work has taken place.

I accept that I will have to fight this battle for the rest of my life which will be very different from what I have had and want, but I am finding new ways to live and I can be useful and productive. I have a wonderful husband, my plants, the Garden and the CACSS and wonderful people to help me.

My dream for the Garden is to have a beautiful conservatory where the public can view tropical cactus that cannot take our cold winters in the open, where sun-shy cactus and "other succulents" can be protected, and where small rare species can be given eminent exposure.

Wouldn't that be wonderful?

VIKKI BONE



THE RIGHT STUFF, A PROFILE OF ILZA HAHLO by VERA GAMET

About fifteen years ago Ilza Hahlo came to the Valley on a visit. She looked around and liked what she saw.

On checking out of her hotel she remarked to the desk clerk that she would be back in four months. The clerk smiled and said, "They all say that."

In four months, at Christmas time, she was back again looking for an apartment. She liked the wildness and openness of the Carefree area, which was less inhabited than it is now, and settled for an apartment in Scottsdale for a practicing artist has to be near her market.

Ilza soon became known for her paintings and murals, and in the fashion field, for the handsome skirts, evening gowns, sports outfits, and hats she painted for Goldwaters. She painted five hundred garments, closed that phase of her career and went into other things.

This included buying a comfortable small house in Scottsdale surrounded by a lawn.

The grass was first to go. The yard was fenced and Ilza became immersed in cactus culture.

Doing all the work herself, Ilza started setting small plants, artistically arranging them, and now after years of carefully nurturing them, watching instinctively for when they needed water or fertilizer, Ilza's yard contains an impressive display of handsomely groomed mature cactus, and a greenhouse of selected small plants that cannot stand the rigors of the open desert, 130 species in all.

Ilza has been most active in the Desert Botanical Garden, especially securing new memberships at plant sales. Who could resist that soft friendly smile? She has been very active in the CACSS when she has been well enough.

About 1975 Ilza found out that she had a form of cancer which entails the risk of hemorrhaging and disturbs the blood count, causing anemia. She also has arthritis, suffers constant intense pain and fatigue, and has periods of severe mental depression but she doesn't stay down. With tremendous mental reserves she gets through these periods. She has dedicated herself to staying on top and turns to her art, beginning every morning with a period in her Jacuzzi, exercising her fingers, wrists and elbows.

Then she begins to paint, "paint furiously" she will tell you, and the worse she feels the more glowing are the colors she uses, literally painting herself out of pain. It is a consuming experience but a productive one.

After a career in Europe and New York she was an established artist before she came to Arizona.

In 1974 she painted the March of Dimes Boy, a cute little fellow leaning heavily on a pair of crutches. She gave a one woman exhibit in 1982 after four years off and on in the hospital for bone operations after a fall from a bicycle resulting in a double hip fracture and complications.

But she said goodbye to crutches and got out of her wheelchair and back to her beloved easle.

Her recent paintings are three dimensional. She combines rope, yarn, cactus needles, stones, whatever suits her purpose, covers them with paint, and gives actual depth to the planes of her painting. Always she turns to nature, to cactus, to the Southwest to express herself.

Many of us can paint or draw a reasonable likeness of a saguaro or a palo verde branch, but using motion and color Ilza paints in how she feels about it, her joy in the symmetry of an agave rosette or the excitement of watching a cactus flower unfold in the sun. That is another thing.

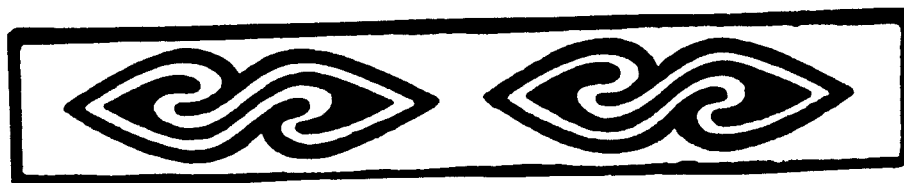
On October 27th of this year Ilza presented an exhibit of thirty paintings called "The Return to Life" for the benefit of the American Cancer Society and sponsored by the Ratliff-Williams Gallery in Sedons. It was well patronzied.

Ilza's primary purpose was not to sell paintings, although she sold several, but to reach other patients suffering with cancer. She spoke about the choice of feeling sorry for yourself and fading away, or believing you have enough to offer to keep on living, a strong belief that the time has come when you must give more than you take, be it to your family, your children, your grandchildren, your religion, your charities, whether it be by knitting, cooking, reading, writing or painting.

It was an electrifying speech covering the emotional heights and depths cancer patients are subject to, their fear of death and suffering, but "hold to any little joy, celebrate being around another day. Shake hands with sorrow and come out the winner."

Moving about in a wheelchair or using a cane, at seventy-seven years of age, Ilza said her show was not a wind-up but the beginning of a new phase in her life, and she invited her audience to other shows in the future.

This is the right stuff.



I wish for you some lovely things:

John Ruskin wrote, "I wish you some new love of the lovely things....some new forgetfulness of the teasing things....some higher pride in the praising things....some sweeter peace from the hurrying things....and some closer fence from the worrying things"

Feliz Navidad!

