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# THE XEROPHILE

"The object and purpose of the Society shall be exclusively for the study, appreciation, propagation and promotion of cacti and succulents among growers and collectors; the conservation and cultivation of native cacti and succulents, the exhibition of said materials whenever and wherever possible"

*Early Fall 2017*

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## *The President's Letter*

*Carl Hime, President*

We had a super Spring, Summer, and start of Fall. The Spring Show and Sale were great. The Summer Meeting Programs were fantastic. And the Fall started with a roar with a highly successful Exhibition and Classes at the BioPark Botanic Garden. We had brilliant participation and activities from the Ross Family with both children and adults in the games. Penny and Margaret provided approximately 200 plants as giveaways to the estimated 2,000 people who visited the event. What a show! We must give Margaret and the special committee a huge amount of credit for seeing to it that everything went as it was supposed to for the displays, classes and games.

There are many dedicated and talented people in this Society. And best of all, Sig is back with us and giving us the pictures we so enjoy of "blooming cacti" year-round. Perhaps he will treat us to a program at one of our monthly meetings in the near future.

And lastly, we still need a slate of candidates for the November Meeting, please talk to Steve and do not forget our December Christmas party. We have the meat covered, but will still need the trimmings. I look forward to seeing you at the 20 October 2017 Meeting.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

October, 20, 2017 - Ralph Peters will talk about a backpacking trip to Thunder River in the Grand Canyon. He saw lots of nice scenery and interesting plants.

November 17, 2017 - Doug Dawson from Phoenix will talk about the genus Lithops (living stones) from South Africa.

Saturday, December 9 - Holiday Party starting about 6 pm at the ABQ Garden Center

Saturday and Sunday, April 14 & 15, 2018 - Spring Show and Sale at the Albuquerque Garden Center

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**A NOTE TO MEMBERS regarding the Educational Exhibit at the ABQ Botanic Gardens**

**Margaret Todd, Chairperson**

We have just concluded what I hope all will agree was a very successful exhibition and educational event.

I especially want to thank the Committee members, Ralph Peters, Penny and Gary Hoe, and Donna Behme for all their hard work, input and support. Thank you also to Pia Louchios for the considerable time she devoted to supplying our graphics needs, and to Robert Perz who joined our Committee and donated a great deal of time and effort toward making the event a success. The Ross family, Kate, Claire, Colin, and Matt, did an outstanding job of putting together, and hosting a children's fun and educational exhibit that attracted much attention.

Many thanks go to our presenters and demonstrators -- Donna Behme, John "Obie" Oberhausen, Penny and Gary Hoe, and Ralph Peters.

To those CSSNM members who stepped up and did one or more shifts as show hosts, THANK YOU! And we certainly cannot to forget those who provided the great plants that made the show a big success, thank you, thank you.

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**CSSNM HOLDS FIRST EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT AT THE ALBUQUERQUE BOTANIC GARDEN ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND** by Donna Behrne

And it was a rousing success. Approximately 2000 people visited the exhibit, demonstrations and presentations. There were several serious amateur photographers who spent a lot of time (think about an hour for one of them), photographing the plants. One sent some photos in and they have been posted on our website.



Kactus Kidz wowed 'em as they say. The Ross family put this activity together. The Wheel of Cactus game was a big success. Some of the kids who played were not so little (think adults). Prizes were free plants. There was a steady stream of "customers" playing the photo display game, getting their hands stamped with the special cactus stamp, picking up coloring sheets, and just taking it all in.

Presentations included one on Cactus & Succulents in the Landscape (Donna Behrne), The Edible Prickly Pear (Penny Hoe), and Starting Cactus Gardens & Growing Cactus by John (Obie) Oberhausen. Attendance was a little sparse at the presentations, primarily because they are in an out of the way place, away from the rest of the demonstrations and exhibits. While it may have been sparse, some attended all of them, one or two more than once, and stayed to talk with the presenters and other club members in the room — to include a couple of very interested kids. Free plants were available after all presentations on both days.

Free plants were donated by Penny Hoe and Margaret Todd. They were cuttings and divisions taken from their plants which were potted well enough in advance of the Exhibit so they could root. They were very popular.

Demonstrations included one by Peters on dividing & repotting Demonstrations were held on the front of the Exhibit Showroom with the Kactus Kidz activity. Many the exhibit said they had absolutely there was such a variety of plants cactus & succulent world. "Amazing", "awesome", and "wow" were some the adjectives heard. That included the Botanic Garden employees, some of whom visited the exhibit more than once.



Ralph cactus. plaza in along visitors to no idea in the of some of



It was a lot of work, but a very successful educational outreach on the part of CSSNM's BioPark Exhibit Committee, exhibit hosts and others, and a few dedicated members. Dave Ferguson, a CSSNM member who works at the Botanic Garden was the official door unlocker/locker, etc. Special thanks goes to Robert Perz, a CSSNM member and Botanic Garden docent, who was with us all the way and smoothed the way more than once. Gary Hoe deserves some special recognition as well. He was there through it all, doing whatever needed doing as well as being Penny's projectionist. Not to be overlooked are the CSSNM members who participated in the exhibit by bringing plants. Your plants impressed the public!

A final note. It is very easy for club members to lose sight of CSSNM's purpose. Our Articles of Incorporation, as amended, state that the corporation is "organized exclusively for educational purposes" and further state "the purpose of the Corporation is to promote the and appreciation of cacti and other succulents". CSSNM Bylaws, Article II as revised, state that "object and purpose of this Society shall be exclusively for the study, appreciation, propagation and promotion of cacti and succulents.....the exhibition of said materials whenever and wherever possible...."



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CSSNM cannot achieve those goals without educational outreach. While some educational purposes are met by the programs we present each month, they have limited application, primarily just to club members. Special exhibits such as this one go a long way toward complying with CSSNM's legal requirements and protect our legal non-profit status.

Special thanks to the 2017 BioPark Committee: Margaret Todd (Chair), Ralph

Peters, Robert Perz, Penny & Gary Hoe, Donna Behme, Kate & Clair Ross (Kactus Kidz) and Pia Louchios (Graphics).

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**Saguaro Cactus by Jeff Schalau**, Backyard Gardener, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, <https://cals.arizona.edu/yavapai/anr/hort/byg/>  
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The saguaro cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*) is an Arizona icon and our official state flower. Saguaro cacti are not native to the Verde Valley but I've seen a few of them growing in private landscapes in Cottonwood, Arizona. These specimens are grown in protected areas where a warmer microclimate has been created. These microclimates may include masonry walls or structures having thermal mass that will reradiate heat when freezing temperatures are present. I wouldn't be surprised if the owners of the Saguaros also use blankets or heaters to get them through the coldest nights. I'm not recommending them, but there are certain gardeners that look for a "challenge". They may be the same gardeners that try to grow blueberries, hostas, and hydrangeas in Arizona. Saguaros are the largest cactus species in the U.S. and can grow more than 40 feet tall yet they are very slow growing. In the northern portion of their range saguaros are most plentiful on the warmer south facing slopes. By 95100 years in age, a saguaro cactus can reach a height of 15-16 feet, and could start to produce its first arm. By 200 years, the saguaro cactus has reached its full height, reaching upwards of 45 feet tall. It is difficult to age saguaros because they are not true woody plants with growth rings. Saguaros are pollinated by bats, birds, and insects. In their native range, young saguaros are often found under mesquite, ironwood, or palo verde trees. They grow there because a cactus wren has eaten the fruit, landed on a branch, and passed the seed in their droppings. This is fortunate for the saguaro because the tree acts as a "nurse plant" providing protection to the developing cactus. Saguaros don't always grow in the iconic form we recognize in cartoons and movies. Some exhibit a "crested" growth form having a fan-like structure referred to as a cristate. You often see crested specimens at arboreta, but it is rare to encounter one in the desert. Biologists disagree as to the cause of the crested growth form. It could be from a mutation or possibly a lightning strike. Either way, look around for crested saguaros when you are out exploring the Sonoran Desert. Saguaros also provide habitat to many bird species which include the gilded flicker and Gila woodpecker. Once these two species excavate a nest cavity, elf owls, screech owls, purple martins, and finches will subsequently occupy the established nesting cavities. Harris hawks and red-tailed hawks build nests out of sticks in the saguaro's arms. After these species abandon those nests, ravens and great horned owls may also move in. Cactus rustling was once a common problem in Arizona. Here, plant thieves, clandestinely excavate saguaros, load them into trucks, and transport them away from their native habitat to be sold into landscape slavery. Maybe this is a little dramatic, but Arizona's Native Plant Laws were developed in response to widespread cactus rustling. Today, many species, including the saguaro cactus, are protected by native plant laws. Skilled professionals may also bid for salvage contracts when saguaros are in the path of development. Another threat to saguaros is a disease called bacterial necrosis. Here, the bacterial pathogen enters the cactus through a wound and infects the tissue. Dark, soft circles appear and enlarge, splitting open and leaking a dark, odorous material. Other infected areas may become dry, crack open, and reveal the remains of dry diseased tissue. Spectacular crested specimen, Don Campbell

Yet another threat to saguaro is fire. Invasive grasses have been introduced to Arizona deserts which are very tolerant of fire. Saguaro cacti did not evolve in a fire adapted ecosystem and have no adaptations which allow them to withstand fire and the associated heat. Buffelgrass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is a warm season perennial and



**A note from Ralph Peters----Because he is sometimes unavailable....Margaret Todd will be Ralph's backup for sending out CSSNM emails. If your email server rejects "unknown" people, please allow Margaret Todd -- abqmcatt@q.com -- to send you email.**

**If your e-mail server rejects tlme5168@ msn.com, please allow Ellen Taylor to send you an e-mail.**



**SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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