



Desert Breeze

Newsletter of the Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society

May 2006

Friday, May 5, 2006

InnSuites Hotel

“Evolution of the Sonoran Desert”

Tom Van Devender

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Deadline for copy: 18th of each month

TCSS Web Page: www.tucsoncactus.org

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 1, 2006.
Junior League of Tucson
2099 E. River Road, Tucson

May Refreshments

**There will be no May refreshments
because of the Member Dinner.**

Everyone is Welcome!
Bring your friends, join in the fun,
and meet the cactus and succulent
community.

This is a special member's dinner meeting in conjunction with Sonoran VI. The presentation will discuss the history and evolution of the Sonoran Desert from Tropical forest ancestors to the modern Sonoran Desert with special emphasis on succulent plants.

Tom has been a Research Scientist at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum since 1983

Before working at the Desert Museum, he was the Endangered Species Botanist for the Arizona Natural Heritage Program in Tucson. With his wife Ana Lilia Reina, he has explored many areas in Mexico. Tom has published over 100 research article, book chapters and edited six books including Las Cactaceas de Sonora in Spanish.

Tom earned a B.S. in biology from Lamar University and a M.S. in Zoology and Ph. D. in Geosciences from the University of Arizona.

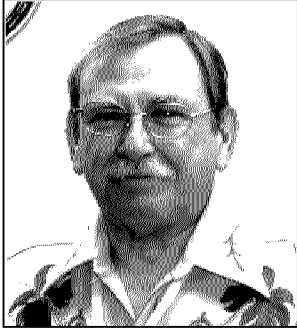
The dinner event starts at 6:00pm and is limited to 200 including registrants, vendors, workshop leaders and speakers. Please RSVP by May 2 to insure a place at the dinner. If you can't make the dinner, you are welcome to attend the presentation which starts at approximately 7:15pm followed by the opening of the plant and book sales, plant show and the start of the silent auction.

There will not be a meeting on Thursday, May 4

Meeting Place



President's Message



On Friday, April 14, 2006 The New York Times front page featured a story on our rescue program and the impact it has had. This was a first hand account written by Patricia Leigh Brown who spent a day out in the field

with our rescue crew asking question and gaining understanding of just what we do and why we do it. We are very appreciative of what she has presented to the whole country about our effort to save a little bit of this environment.

This story was also printed by the Arizona Daily Star who also gave us a "cactus flower" for what we do. ABC new has been here to continue the coverage of this effort and will provide us with more national and local coverage.

The founders of the rescue program (Chris Monrad, Vonn Watkins, Lois Ladwig and I) never dreamed that the rescue effort would bring so many wonderful people into the organization and make it a nationally recognized program. Joe and Patsy Frannea joined the program in its first year and have been backbone of the rescue program ever since. There are also about 150 great members who over and over again assist in rescues, plantings and sales. We continue to grow and expand our education and outreach efforts and our membership is over 700.

We must encourage others around the country and the world that this type of a grass roots, low tech, low cost, educational and environmental program can work. Many of the plants we are interested in grow in some of poorest and least developed areas of the world. We can not ask someone to make choices between their family's welfare and some succulent plant, but we must find ways to develop a process that will work.

The 2009 convention of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America will be held in Tucson and would be a great venue to launch a program aimed at helping people and special plant survive together. I welcome your input and look forward to informing the world what we do in Tucson.

Dick Wiedhopf , President

Rescue Diversity at It's Finest



The Rescue Crew showed up in mass, fifty-five strong, to remove plants from a native desert area that was getting ready for a new road. The area, sixty feet wide and about a thousand feet long, was rich in plant diversity. As the

Crew headed to the area and began work, it looked like a trail of ants neatly working in a straight line, checking and removing very small and large cacti.

Cacti rescued included small, medium, and large *Ocotillo*, medium and large Sotol, *Dasyliirion wheeleri*, see photo of new member with a large catch, *Agave palmeri*, *Yucca arizonica* and *elata*), Hedge Hogs, *Echinocereus fasciculatus*, Prickly Pear, *Cholla*, Fishhook Barrels, *Ferocactus wislizenii*, Spiny Stars, *Corypantha vivipara biseeana*, and several really nice Sonora Pineapple *Echinomastus erectocentrus* in bloom.



Dasyliirion wheeleri

The special plants are almost always purchased by Cactus Rescue Crew members, which is one of the benefits of being on the crew. Send an email to CactusRescue@TucsonCactus.org to join.

TCSS Exhibits at SAHBA Home Show



The Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society was invited to be one of the 450 exhibitors at the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association (SAHBA) Annual

Spring Home and Patio Show. It was held April 7th, 8th, and 9th at the Tucson Convention Center (TCC).

We created a cactus display in our 10x12 booth area to highlight sixteen different native cacti in the Tucson area and also had a display board to show TCSS activities including our Cactus Rescue Crew program. We handed out 1,200 of our new Cactus postcards and about 400 brochures to those interested in our booth.



About 330 people fill out a door prize slip to win one of five items.

We had a nice Adenium from Plants for the Southwest (PSW), a great Organ Pipe cactus from B&B Cactus Farm (not in photo), two plant books from Rainbow Garden Bookshop, and a cactus garden in a dish from the Cactus Rescue Crew which included one of the seedling Ocotillos from PSW.

Also, a big thanks 15 TCSS volunteers who staffed our booth in 3 to 4 hour shifts and to Ed Taczanowsky at SAHBA for inviting us.

Joe Framea

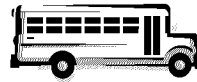
93 MEMBERS ENJOY DILLON HOME TOUR

We want to thank TCSS member and landscape designer Greg Corman and our hostess Mary Dillon for the opportunity to tour her Garden on Sunday, April 23. This was inspired by an article in the November 2005 issue of Sunset magazine entitled "Desert Walk Careful Pruning Brings New Life to our Oro Valley Garden".

We are sure that Mary Dillon would appreciate a note of thanks from all who went on the tour. Her address is 545 Orango Place, Oro Valley, AZ 85737-9757.

California Botanical Gardens Trip May 10 Deadline

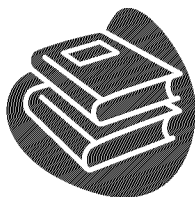
This event is a 4 day trip to California to visit the Living Desert Museum, Huntington Botanical Gardens and Lotus Land. This will be a trip to remember forever. You need to respond by May 10, 2006. A \$50 down payment (refundable till June 15) is required to hold your spot on the bus. This trip is limited to 54. You will be put on an alternative list in the order of response and payment if you are not one of the first 54. Your down payment will be totally refunded if there is not a spot on the Bus for you. Call Jack Ramsey for more information and reservations. 888-6137



Special Saturday Night Dinner & Speaker

Our speaker following the Saturday night dinner will be Jack H. Lasseter who will be sharing with us the "History of Tucson". Mr. Lasseter is a Tucson attorney and a lifelong Arizona resident (since age five years old). He loves history and is extremely knowledgeable of the history of Arizona and the southwest. He taught U.S. history at Pima College, is often requested by groups as a guest speaker, is a story teller and is currently writing a book on the life of our former governor, Raul Castro. He is a very informative and even more importantly a very entertaining person. Please don't miss this excellent opportunity to hear about the true history of Tucson! BBQ Steak or Chick Dinner \$25.00 Reservations needed by May 2.

Library Update

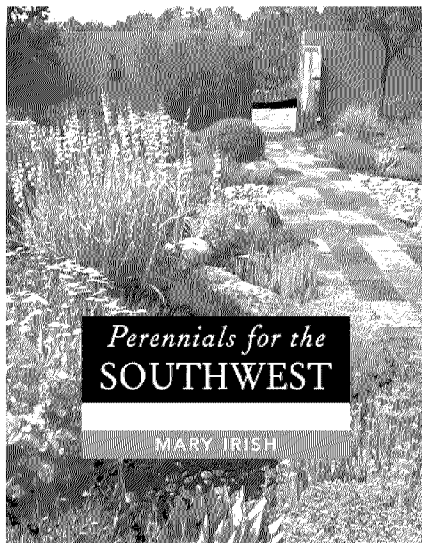


There is no library this month. If you are planning to leave Tucson for the summer before the June meeting and have books to return, you can call me at 327-1217 or e-mail me at joietgo@yahoo.com

and I can arrange a pickup.

There will be new books at the June meeting.

Amongst them will be Mary Irish's book *Perennials for the Southwest*. This book is extremely informative. The first section of the book deals with design and care. The second part has more than 175 pages of plants. Each page not only gives the family and distribution of the plant, but also when it blooms, the type of exposure it needs, how hardy the plant is and its mature size.



Diane Szollosi writes the following reviews.

Native Trees & Shrubs For Landscape Use in the Desert Southwest

By Charles M. Sacamano & Warren D. Jones

This is a thin concise bulletin issued by the Arizona Extension Service in 1976. Each tree and shrub mentioned is discussed in simple language that covers description, landscape value, maintenance and propagation. It is illustrated with black and white photos.

The Complete Book of Cacti & Succulents
By Terry Hewitt

This is the perfect book for basic information for those people wanting to learn about the cultivation, propagation and display of cacti & succulents. Each family is illustrated with color photos and illustrations concerning height and growth patterns along with information about cold tolerance. He also discusses planting design both indoors and out.

At the back of the book, he has several helpful lists for beginners and enthusiasts. Other lists include plants for different climates and light levels.

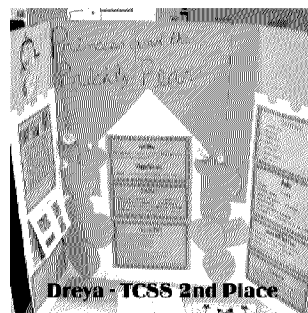
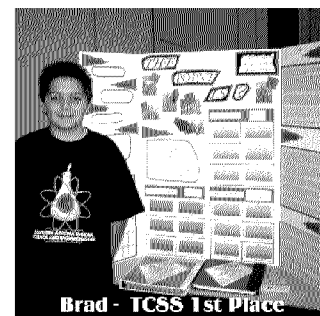
See you at Sonoran VI

Joie Giunta

TCSS 2006 Science Fair Winners

Five judges from the Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society reviewed over 1450 Southern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair (SARSEF) projects for topics pertaining to a "Special Awards" category of Cactus & Succulents. Seven great projects were selected and awarded prizes that included certificates, cash, and honorary TCSS memberships. This was our third year at SARSEF. Thanks to judges Gail and George Virtes, Marty Harow, and Patsy and Joe Frannea.

The Point Is -- Our \$100 First Place Award went to Brad from Pistor Gate Middle School, grade six. A field study of cactus spines in Southern Arizona. *The research problem is to examine different types of cactus spines and compare them to identify similarities and differences.* Brad plans to bring his project to our Sonoran VI Conference to share with others.

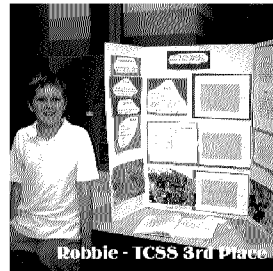


Princess and the Prickly Pear – Second Place Award of \$75 went to Dreya who is home schooled, grade two. Question: *Which has a higher percent water, prickly pears or princesses?* She hypothesized that the

Princess would have more water but found out by drying out prickly pear pads that they have about 75% water versus 60% for a princess.

Environmental Factors That Affect The Survivability of Cacti – This was our Third Place Award of \$50 that went to Robbie from Pistor Gate Middle School, sixth grade.

Question: *What environmental factors affect the growth of large cacti and cholla?* Robbie is to be commended for his extensive field work of observations and recording of data.



Pusch Ridge Christian Academy, seventh grade. Question: *Which needles go deepest into tissue?* You guessed it, the Cholla!

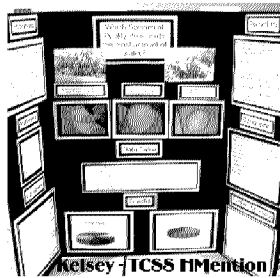
Russell Wagner June 1, 2005 Program

5 weeks of South Africa in 50 minutes

That's ten minutes a week! What is this all about? Well, in April and May of 2003 Russell Wagner, editor of our favorite magazine, *Cactus and Succulent Journal*, traveled to South Africa for a five week botanizing expedition with Steven Hammer of the Sphaeroid Institute. Steven was an ideal guide to the flora of Namaqualand, the winter rainfall desert of South Africa's west coast. Namaqualand is home to many succulents we grow here at home, and Steven had already visited this area over 20 times! As a result, Russell saw many wonderful plants and was able to have them immediately identified by his trusty and stalwart guide. He saw many species of his favorite genus, *Tylecodon*, members of the Crassula family that have pachyform trunks and thick, succulent, summer-deciduous leaves. Tylecodons flower during the summer while totally leafless. On a smaller scale, Russell saw and photographed Hammer's beloved conophytums and countless other wonderful mesembs, plus crassulas, avonias, aloes, haworthias and some cool animals. Of course, a plethora of aloes, especially the wonderfully impressive tree aloe, *A. dichotoma*, were seen in abundance, and a surprising variety of bulbs hid in every nook and cranny.

Which Species of Prickly Pear holds the most amount of water? - - Kelsey received an

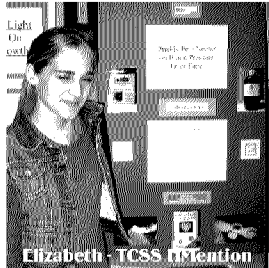
Honorable Mention Award Certificate and \$25 cash. She attends Sonoran Science Academy, seventh grade. Hypothesis: *The investigator thinks that Cows Tongue Prickly Pear cactus holds the most*



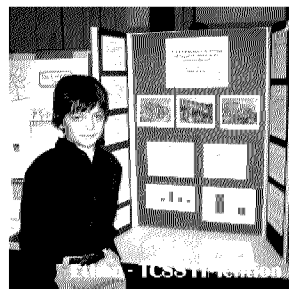
amount of water...

Prickly Pear Nectar on Blood pressure Over Time - - Elizabeth received an Honorable Mention

Award Certificate and \$25 cash. She attends Desert Christian Middle School, eighth grade. Hypothesis: *If two tablespoons of Prickly pear Nectar are taken once a day for two weeks, then blood pressure will lower.*



After four weeks of camping in the winter rainfall desert, with occasional stops at a friend's house for showers and meals, Russell and Steven headed over to the Little Karroo, a mostly (but not entirely!) summer rainfall region, to spend a week seeing haworthias, gibbaeums, euphorbias and many other spectacular plants, plump from heavy summer rains.



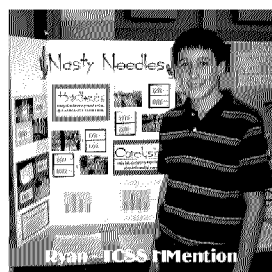
The Distribution and Density of Saguaro Cactus in the Sonoran Desert –

Ethan received an Honorable Mention Award Certificate and \$25 cash. He attends Ida Flood Dodge Traditional Middle Magnet

School, sixth grade. Question: *Is there any difference in the density of saguaros at different sites in Saguaro National Park?* A very nice display with some good field work.

Traveling in the desert is the best way to learn about our favorite plants, but a good travelogue is the next best thing. Russell will take us on a journey through winter and summer rainfall sections of South Africa with bright and beautiful pictures, presented digitally, and lots of interesting details about plants in habitat. There should also be plenty of time for questions and discussion. Russell is known as a dynamic and enthusiastic speaker able to present to any different levels of expertise and interest, so don't miss this talk!

Nasty Needles – Ryan received an Honorable Mention Award Certificate and \$25 cash. He attends



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Cacti Rescued

TCSS Rescue Cacti for Sale

Lots & lots to choose from.....

Barrels - from 2" to 14" diameter (about \$1 per inch)
Hedgehogs - from 1 to 20 heads (about \$1 per head)

TCSS Club Members receive a 10% discount



Photos Barry McCormick and Joe Frannea, Logo Artwork by Vonn Watkins

Upcoming Schedule

- May 5, 2006, Friday - General Meeting and Dinner at Sonoran VI
- May 5-7, 2006. Friday to Sunday - Sonoran VI.
- May 09, 2006, Tuesday – Board Meeting.
- June 01, 2006, General Meeting -- Russell Wagner
- June 9, Friday – Tucson Botanical Garden Weird Plant Sale
- June 13, 2006, Tuesday – Board Meeting.
- June 30, Friday to Monday – Bus Tour to the Huntington.



Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society
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