

Many thanks to John Spain and Ollie Wetmore for all their work on our Club history. Please send your additions and comments to the Editors so that they may be included in the final version to be printed sometime summer.

## The Start Of The Connecticut Cactus & Succulent Society And Other Interesting Data

Dear Members old & new  
A time to reminisce & review  
For the next few pages the records show  
We started small, but still we grow  
So on we go, let's innovate  
For making CSSA a group that's great.

As the records show, the first meetings were held at John Spain's house. One of the first was on Dec. 18, 1977, with a few people attending, John Berak among them. In August of 1976 Pam Rawlin, who ran the greenhouse at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, invited anyone who was interested in greenery to visit. The few people who attended the first meeting at John's house attended another cactus meeting on Jan. 22, 1978. In that same year on Feb. 19 Pam Rawlin invited interested people again, and on March 12, 1978 Tony Bleach, who helped us a great deal to get started, hosted a cactus show in his classroom at Mattatuck Community College. There were no sales.

There were few people involved with the club and meetings were infrequent. Jim Berak & John Spain headed these meetings, with the next recorded one on July 1, 1979.

Regular "Society" meetings seem to have begun early in 1980. Jim Berak assembled the first list of interested people & furnished it to Tony Bleach who made the first mailing of a meeting notice for Feb. 6, 1980. Some highlights from the notice: "Mattatuck Comm. College is proud to welcome a new horticultural Society, CCSS on Sun. Feb. 24, 1980 1-4:30, Higher Education Ctr." The club would become affiliated with the National Society, which had 64 clubs in 1979. At this show a movie was shown, "Flora of South Africa". Also at this meeting visitors were invited to see John Spain's garden.

Membership records begun in 1980 show the following:

1980 -- 22 families	1986 -- 92 families
1981 -- 26 "	1987 - 65 "
1982 -- 20 families	1988 - 137 "
1983 -- 30 "	1989 - 94 "
1984 -- 30 "	1990 -- No record
1985 -- 41 "	1991 -- 84 families

As of now, 1997, we have 87 families as members.

On March 30, 1980 there was a cactus workshop at Mattatuck entitled "Growing Cactus from Seed", lead by Jim Berak. On June 27, 1980 Tony Bleach sent out a notice for all interested persons to visit the greenhouse of a member who had 500 species of "Plants Incredible". This took place on July 13, 1980. The first publicity for our Society was a photograph of Tony Bleach looking at several cactus plants, published in the March 27, 1980 Waterbury American. The caption tells of meetings and invites people to come (These meetings were held at the college). The first regular Society meetings, outside of the college, seem to have been at John Spain's house, starting in August 1980. Betty Rosenbaum was the Secretary, and the original annual dues were \$3.00.

Regular meetings were held throughout 1981. Meetings continued during 1982.

The March 1982 meeting was held at Walnut Hill Greenhouse in Litchfield. The owners of Walnut Hill have been members since 1982.

We received a tax exempt ID # 22-2517487 with the State of Connecticut on April 17, 1984.

Betty Rosenbaum opened our bank account with Banking Ctr. on May 8, 1984 with savings account funds from our first show and sale. Betty Rosenbaum designed and had printed the brochure used to promote our first Annual Cactus & Succulent Society Exhibit held March 1984. It was held in Tony Bleach's classroom at Mattatuck College. 400 people attended. We had our show in 1985 and an exhibit and show in March of 1986, at the same location.

Beverly Jorgenson used the El Paso Cactus & Rock Club constitution and by-laws as a model for creating our own constitution and by-laws. These were drafted after a meeting at Alice Winslow's house and were approved at the August 1984

meeting.

We joined Cactus & Succulent Society of America in Jan. 1985, and were accepted for membership in February 1985.

Our first publication of a full year of planned meetings happened in 1985 and 1986. John Spain submitted a draft of a brochure in 1985. Jessica Milstead put this into her computer. Beverly Jorgenson produced the art work and it was printed.

Officers have been as follows:

	President	V. President	Treasurer	Sec. M	Membership
1984	J. Spain	Jack Phillips	Bev. Jorgenson	Betty R.	Roberta Berguland
1985	J. Phillips	Jessica Milstead	"	"	"
1986	Jessica Milstead	W.&E. Meier	"	"	"
1987	W.&E. Meier	Phyllis Phillips	Jon Wallace	"	"
1988	Phyllis Phillips	Eric Dansky	"	Marion Wickert	"
1989	Eric Dansky	Roseann Richard	Alice Winslow	"	Evelyn Meier
1990	Roseann Richard	Chris Allen	"	Bessie Locke	"
1991	Chris Allen	Casper Ultee	"	"	"

Jessica Milstead instituted a formal learning session as part of every meeting in 1986.

The first judged CCSS competition was part of our March 1986 Exhibit & Sale at the College. There were only four cactus and four succulent categories. 81 plants were entered and 19 members voted on each entry to decide winners.

In March of 1987 we started selling plants at our shows at the College. Also in 1987 we staged our first exhibit at the Hartford Flower Show. We've been there ever since.

A Society library was set up by Betty Rosenbaum in 1986 with a few donated books. In 1987 Clem Zupkus took steps to enlarge the library and Lawrence Loucka helped. Casper Ultee took over the library in Feb. 1990 and in 1991 produced a listing of 34 volumes. Doug and Lois Deal were in charge of The Library as of 1997. David Schultz sells and acquires books for our club.

The Beckers were our first members to attend an Eastern Regional Conference. Six members attended the Fifth Eastern Cactus & Succulent Conference in Toronto.

In June of 1988 Jon Wallace sent out meeting notices, and the Secretary no longer performed that duty. Our membership list had grown to over 90 families.

Our Society, under the direction of Eric Dansky, set up and

manned a booth at the Hartford Flower Show in Feb. 1988. Society stationery was designed by Jon Wallace in 1988.

In October of 1988 our Society voted to accept challenge of hosting the 7th Eastern Cactus & Succulent Conference in 1990. Our first nationally known speaker, Dr. Alfred Lau of Mexico, presented a program for our Oct. 1988 meeting.

In Dec. 1988, Betty Rosenbaum started preparing a Society database covering a broad spectrum of information on each member.

For our 1989 Exhibit & Show, Jesse Richard designed and constructed a 10 foot square simulated desert scene complete with miniature mine and railroad spur. For our 1990 show, Jesse created an enlarged scene with an extensive backdrop.

In 1990 for use at Hartford Flower Show, Chris Allen built a complete 10 x 10 foot exhibit set up that can be assembled & broken down for re-use.

In October 1990 we successfully conducted the 7th Eastern Cactus & Succulent Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Waterbury.

Expanded competitive show rules were prepared by Jon Wallace for the 1991 Exhibit & Sale, including 3 divisions & 60 classes.

The Society expanded the hours of the Exhibit & Sale from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Sunday only, to 2 P.M. to 8 P.M. Saturday and 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Sunday.

Some of our early trips included:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>Date</u>
N.Y. Botanical Garden	Beverly Jorgensen	9-8-85
N.Y. Botanical Garden	Jon Wallace	7-11-88
Brooklyn Botanic Gard.	Chris & Janet Allen	10-15-89

Respectfully submitted,

Ollie Wetmore 1-30-97