EDITORIAL FREEDOM

I was recently on the distinctly minority side of a spirited discussion of editorial freedom. Some one said it was part of freedom of the press and I agreed. On consideration, I was wrong. Freedom of the press is the right to report news free from outside control. Editorial freedom involves the extent of internal control. Every news organ—newspaper, news magazine, radio, TV, even newsletters such as you and I edit—has both an owner and an editor. Occasionally these are the same person (Marina Welham of the Amateurs Digest comes to mind). Generally, they are not. Your owner is the club in whose name you edit a newsletter. Like it or not, your owner has the power to control what you, the editor, can put in "your" newsletter.

In my opinion, the proper function of an editor is to report news in a factual and balanced manner. An editor or reporter's opinion has no place in a news report. That is what editorials such as this are for. The article elsewhere in this issue on the reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act is a news report which reports facts and other peoples publicly stated opinions. Note that it is your opinion which is riot news, other people's opinions usually are. Only here in this editorial do I suggest that our hobby badly needs this legislation, and that you should not only write your congress people, but should urge your fellow club members to do so as well. Urge the congress persons to vote for HR 4045 and against HR 4058 and HR 3092.

Only the New York Times claims to report "all" the news, most of us have less grandiose goals. Selecting what news to print, and just as importantly, what not to print, is one area where we exercise editorial freedom. It is also an area where owners frequently infringe on editorial freedom. Owners, happy to have their side of the news reported, often are reluctant to provide a platform for opposing views. Carried to extremes, the newsletter becomes a propaganda rag, perhaps amusing readers at first, ultimately losing them. Editing such a travesty is a total waste of your time.

This conflict between owners and editors is the stuff of drama, providing plots for TV, movies, novels, and for all I know, comic books. For you the editor, it can add more strain to an already difficult job. Beware of out and out power plays, you are guaranteed to lose! You must "sell" your owner on the desirability of your approach. What if you fail? You can always acquiesce and publish a less effective newsletter, you can continue to argue until the owner fires you, or you can quit. Another area of conflict lies in editorials such as this. Should you have a soap box to express your opinions? Yes!! Doesn't this give you a bigger voice than other members? Yes, but you have earned it. Editor of a C&S newsletter is not a high paying job. What "perk" other than this do you get? And guest editorials allow any opposing views to be aired.

Obviously, I am in favor of editorial freedom. So far only one owner of the three newsletters I've edited limited my freedom. I acquiesced and kept my paying job. My two present owners don't have the club of a paying job, and I will be more independent should they try to limit my editorial freedom!
PRELIMINARY REPORT ON EDITORS' EXCHANGE SURVEY

by Mac Clarke

We have received 8 returned surveys (plus Bill Felts, who has sent a duplicate for one apparently misplaced), one continuing subscription to a newsletter without a survey, and two promises to send them in Real Soon Now. Compared to the 60 odd newsletters sent out, that is not an overwhelming response! We don't want to cheat anybody out of a chance to respond, so keep those cards and letters coming! Dig out the last issue of the Editors’ Exchange and fill out that survey RIGHT NOW before you forget again! Thanks to Lynn and Lowilla Wilson of Tulsa, Dick Kolschreiber of the Epi-Gram, Joe and Carol Wujcik of Long Beach, Dorothy Williams of Sacramento, Peg Spaete of Oregon (the very first respondent), Pat Laursen of Wisconsin, Pearl Lemkuil of Carmichael, Don & Jean Wendland of Orange County, Chuck Staples of Mid Iowa, and Tammy Prather of Kentucky. I responded for Greater Knoxville.

What are you like? (to put important matters first). You unanimously like editing a newsletter, although two of you hedged by saying "most of the time". None of you had any formal training, although half of you had edited other newsletters, not necessarily C&S related. Average time on other newsletters was 4 years. Two of you mentioned working on school yearbooks, an early indicator perhaps. You have edited your current newsletter an average of 6 years, ranging from 2 to 10.

Why publish a newsletter? "Because it's in our bylaws" says one honest editor who goes on to say "we think it's important for a club to keep in touch with all members, not just those able to attend meetings." All of us publish to provide club meeting and program news and to educate members about plant culture, the hobby, etc. Three of you mentioned CSSA news, but all were CSSA Directors. Among the less frequent reasons: cheerleading, stroking good members, news of other clubs, and CITES information.

For whom do you publish? Members, unanimously. You all exchange with other clubs, but two pointed out that you publish for your members, not the exchange audience. Two of you publish for potential members — one includes a descriptive brochure. Are the rest of us missing a bet? A unique answer was for the public library and the garden center library. That would announce your existence to a wide audience. Your newsletters range in age from 4 to 59 years (the latter "off and on") with an average of 21 +.

More about the contents and mechanics of this obvious labor of love in future issues. As a "teaser", your cost per copy per issue varies from 29 to 79 cents with the average half a buck. Most of your clubs pick up the tabs, but three of you subsidize the newsletter to some degree.

ABOUT THE 'NEWS SERVICE' IDEA

by Bill Felts

Until my co-worker reported (above) on the modest -but let's hope simply tardy- response to his questionnaire, I was disappointed at the lack of reaction to the idea I put forth in the first issue of the EXCHANGE. I still think that most newsletter editors could profit from a pool of good feature articles, and that such will be forthcoming. The material is "out there" in files of club newsletters and in the minds of C&S hobbyists!

So, this issue has two articles on "newslettering" and three we hope can be utilized by our many editor friends. One is on the IOS conference in Phoenix. The others (from my files) are reprints from the Des Moines newsletter, each a type-example that we hope will stimulate similar contributions.
One of the most difficult jobs we face as long time editors is keeping readers' interest. Yes, they will look at the front pages to see who is speaking and what is the plant of the month. But how can we keep them reading?

One way is a "Meet the Member" column. As a 20+ year veteran of marketing research, I know a little about interviewing people. Carol and I put this skill to work by interviewing a member and then writing them up in each issue.

There are always subjects at hand. Some examples:

- **A club officer.** This is a reward for doing a great job or a thank you to someone who takes on a tough job such as programs or refreshments.

- **A worker.** We have a club garden that needs tending. Once or twice a year we feature someone who works there, to encourage others.

- **An event.** We feature someone involved in an upcoming event. For example, at show time, we may feature a member who is entering his first show to encourage others to do likewise. (Be sure to follow up the next month on how they did.) The upcoming speaker is another good subject. If they are not a member, we just change the title to "Meet the Speaker".

- **Newcomers.** This is a way to introduce the newcomers and make them feel more at home. They appreciate the interest.

- **Oldtimers.** They can be a living history of the club! We featured Lillian True (as in Sansevieria Lillian True) just before her untimely death.

- **An "influencer".** When several people credited one person with being a major force in their development, we featured her.

Carol takes her camera to meetings, auctions, and shows to shoot lots of "people pictures". These add a lot to the articles.

To make interviewing easier, we developed a questionnaire. First you relax the subject by talking about their plants and how they got into growing. They love doing that. Then you ease into personal questions. Below is a short version of the questions asked. If you decide to use it, please leave lots of room to write and don't be afraid to deviate from it. Each person is different and can give you quite a surprise.

1. How did you first become interested in cacti?
   1a. When was that?

2. What was your first plant?
   3a. Where and how did you get it?
   3b. When was that?

4. Is there any one person who influenced you in developing your interest in cacti and succulents?  [ ] YES  [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.5

5. Let's talk about today. What is your favorite type of plant?
6. How many plants do you have today? (IF NO, SKIP TO Q.11)

7. Where are they kept? (IF FEW OR IN GROUND, SKIP TO Q.11)

8. What do you consider your best plant?

9. Will/Did you show it in the next/last show? [ ] YES [ ] No - SKIP TO Q.11

10. IF SHOW IS PAST: How did it do?

11. Do you hold a club office today? [ ] YES [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.12

11a. What one or ones?

12. Did you ever hold a club office in the past? [ ] YES [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.14

13. Which one or ones and when was that?

14. (IF APPLICABLE) Did you ever hold a national CSSA office? [ ] YES [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.16

15. Which one or ones?

16. Let's talk about the club. What do you like most about it?

17. Is there one event that you think most helped the club and shaped its development? What?

18. And about you, have you ever traveled to the desert? [ ] YES [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.19

18a. What trips and when were they? What did you see?

18b. (IF SEVERAL) Did you have a favorite trip? [ ] YES [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.19

18c. Where was that to and why is it a favorite?

19. Are you a "native" or did you move into this area from elsewhere? [ ] NATIVE

[ ] OTHER - Where?

20. (IF TRUE) You are known as a "worker" - someone who can be counted on to do a good job. What is your secret?

21. What do you do outside the cactus/succulent world?

22. Are you married? [ ] YES - ASK Q.22 [ ] NO - SKIP TO Q.23

22a. What does your (husband/wife) think of your hobby?

23. Is there anything else I have forgotten to ask you?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Joe Wujcik, of the Long Beach (CA) Cactus Club, says a bit about himself in his article, and his wife, Carol, told of their joint editorship in her article in the February EXCHANGE. Their address: 10860 El Mar, Fountain Valley, CA 92708.
WHAT ARE THE SECRETS OF EDITING A NEWSLETTER?

by Chuck Staples, editor of the
Mid-Iowa CSS Society Newsletter

May 1992

Secrets? There aren't any. Unless you have a large club membership where you may find a professional among the membership, you learn by the seat of your pants. Someone volunteers to do the job; a volunteer job just like all other offices of a club. I volunteered way back in 1979, which was the first time this club started a newsletter. It was just a newsletter for local members only. Somewhere along the line of years, we started exchanging with other clubs. That's when I got more interested in the appearance of the newsletter.

I got a lot of ideas from other newsletters and professional publications. It's a learn-as-you-go technique. After a few years you develop a style if you last that long.

One of the things I've learned over the years is that I am not editing a professional publication. I'm editing a newsletter where the primary purpose is to inform local members — an amateur publication. I don't really edit articles unless I see a gross mistake. Before changing anything I call the author to discuss it. Early on I failed to call an author about what I thought was an obvious change needed and I almost lost that author for future articles. So, I try to be very careful when it comes to editing any articles.

I figure that my primary purpose (as editor) is to put the newsletter together in a pleasant and readable format. Except for a few basic items, I don't really have a format for the articles. I try to judge how much material I have to produce the current issue and decide then on the amount of space needed in determining the type size and how many pictures to use. I like to use pictures as much as possible.

Out of a local club membership of about 30, about half show up for meetings and I get articles from most of that half during the year. Since the early part of 1989, I wanted original material (articles) from some of our experienced members on a constant basis — some on a monthly basis. They agreed. Then I went after the rest of the attending members, some of them fairly new to the club and to the CSSs hobby. I have had some success since I believe all members really enjoy getting the newsletter. They have become conscious of the fact that in order to keep getting a good newsletter, they have to participate in its production.

A number of members have had a real reluctance to put experience to paper — most have a fear of looking foolish — a real fear of writing. A lot of this fear comes from a grammar standpoint. Many of us didn't do well with grammar in school and have a limited vocabulary. This fear of others reading what we write is real. It is not easy to overcome this fear even when you want to tell people of an exciting thing that happened with your plant. It is much easier to tell people at the next meeting or call someone to come over to see and discuss it. As an editor, always thinking about new articles for the newsletter, I hear these stories and immediately ask that member to put it down on paper for me to use in the newsletter. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. However, I feel real lucky to have many of our members write for our newsletter.
SCIENTISTS URGE REAUTHORIZATION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

(The following, dated 7 Apr '92, originated at the 22nd Congress of the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study (IOS) in Phoenix, AZ.)

At a press conference, representatives from several international conservation organizations voiced their endorsement for the renewal and strengthening of the US Endangered Species Act, in light of disturbing new notices of plant and animal vulnerability presented at a special symposium, "The Conservation of Mutualisms". In report after report yesterday, scientists documented the limited seed set and reproductive success of succulent plants, due to the decline or rarity of these plants' co-evolved pollinators. With cacti and with other succulents, whether pollinated by bats or by native bees, from the Colorado Plateau to volcanic habitats in central Mexico, a variety of organisms are under increasing risk of serious long-term decline. Although succulent plants are seldom dependent upon a single pollinator or seed dispenser, the scientists clarified that they remain concerned that such ecological relations have not been given the attention they deserve. Lack of funding for collaborative efforts between botanists and zoologists has slowed the accumulation of research results that could confirm or deny whether the decline of a pollinator is affecting a rare plant, or vice-versa. As a result, scientists from several organizations fear that we will continue to lose biological diversity until environmental problems affecting multiple species are dealt with.

In the United States, there are over 150 species and subspecies of cacti and succulents of concern to the Center for Plant Conservation, because they are either naturally rare, or have undergone rapid drops in population sizes. In Mexico, there are 115 cacti and succulents considered to be rare, threatened or endangered by the government, and many more that have received inadequate attention. Because pollinators which migrate between Mexico and the US may be required by some of these succulents in order to sustain healthy levels of reproduction, long-term conservation of both plants and animals will require international support and coordination.

One immediate need is for reauthorization of the US Endangered Species Act, which deals with organisms at risk of extinction in the US, as well as with endangered species unique to other countries. Two of the organizations present, the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study (IOS) and the Species Survival Commission, Cacti and Succulent Specialists Group, endorse HR 4045, an ESA amendment proposal sponsored by Representative Gerry Studds and 45 other Congressmen. It promotes habitat conservation and invests in rehabilitating rare species rather than simply listing them as endangered forever. More importantly, it allows for government agencies to develop recovery plans for multiple species, which is exactly what is needed to help certain plants and their pollinators regain their former numbers.

"Unless the US can show other countries that endangered species legislation remains an essential tool for conserving biodiversity", warns researcher Dr Gary Nabham, "our leadership and sincerity in the global conservation arena will come under question."

Representatives of the Species Survival Commission, Bat Conservation International, Center for Plant Conservation, The International Organization for Succulent Plant Study, and the Desert Botanical Garden offered additional perspectives on endangered species issues. Asked what role the CSSA could play in the problem, Dr Ted Anderson, President of the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study which is composed of members from 25 nations replied that the IOS is establishing Affiliate status for organizations such as CSSA to join their efforts. Dr George Rabb, Director of the Species Survival Commission (and Director of Chicago's Brookfield Zoo) hoped that CSSA could feed ideas on how to improve the situation, "no matter how far out", to the IOS. Dr Gary Nabham suggested urging our members to write their congressional delegation supporting reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.
The Succulent Portulacaceae
by Dr. Robert S. Wallace

One of the flowering plant families in the Order Caryophyllales that has been associated with the cacti (Cactaceae), diderias, (Dideriaceae) and mesembs (Aizoaceae/Mesembryanthemaceae) is the purslane family, the Portulacaceae. This moderately sized family has approximately 21 genera and about 400 species. Of our interest, the succulent members of this family are all relatively easily cultivated, and more importantly are extremely interesting morphologically. The group is comprised of primarily succulent or semi-succulent perennial herbs or shrubs, and the structures of leaf, stem, and root vary tremendously throughout the family. There are various species (i.e. *Portulaca grandiflora*) and cultivars of the genus *Portulaca* which are widely cultivated as an annual bedding plant; *P. oleracea* is the common purslane - a weed of widespread distribution, that appears in nearly every newly prepared flower bed or agricultural field. A cultivar of *P. oleracea* is grown as a potherb, and is eaten particularly when young and tender.

The succulent members of the Portulacaceae (conveniently identified in Jacobsen's *Handbook of Succulent Plants*) are found in eight genera (listed below), and are easily grown (for the most part) given "general" succulent plant growth conditions (relatively high light, warm temperatures, sparing watering, low nitrogen fertilizer, etc.). The diversity of form and structure of these succulent Portulacaceae is remarkable, and would be a very unusual addition to one's collection. Many of the species are available through mail order sources, or from another collector who has had a crop of "weeds" come up in undesirable places (for example, I often have to weed out stray *Anacampseros* and *Talinum* seedlings from adjacent pots - these are very easy to grow from seed!). In the following annotated list, I have summarized the pertinent information about them, and given some additional points about each group. If given a chance in your collection, they will provide their grower with some extremely interesting succulent growth forms, without excessive care or space consumption!!

*Anacampseros* - ca. 70 species primarily from southern Africa; among the easiest succulents to grow, especially from seed; plants remain small, so that a large collection may be amassed in a very small growing area. "Cute" plants with fleshy leaves on often sprawling low stems; flowers freely when mature; sets abundant seed from selfed flowers. All should have at least one in any respectable collection!!

*Calandrinia* - 150 species, of which 8 are considered succulent. From N & S America, Australia. Many grown as ornamentals; succulent forms relatively easy to grow (so I've been told - I've never had any!).

*Ceraria* - 5 species from southern Africa. Heartily recommended, especially for the caudiciform lover. The rootstock becomes woody with age, and short branches with small leaves are formed above this structure. The best cerarias I've seen have been grown "hard" with hot dry conditions. Watering should be done very carefully, with seasonal considerations. Real succulent gems!

*Lewisia* - ca. 20 species from western North America, Central America, and Bolivia, of which about 10 species are succulent. Also forms a caudiciform habit; the leaves are often round in cross section, and are thick and highly succulent.

*Portulaca* - about 40 species, nearly worldwide distribution; 33 species listed by Jacobsen as succulent. Thick fleshy leaves arise from a rosette of shortly branching stems. Flowers probably among the showiest in the family.

*Portulacaria* - 1 species, *P. afra*. This plant is native to and used in South Africa and other places as a landscaping shrub, since it can grow to several meters high if permitted. It is one of the more common species of Portulacaceae seen in succulent collections (perhaps next to *Anacampseros*). The fleshy ovoid leaves are borne on thickened succulent stems, very similar in appearance to a "jade tree" (*Crassula arborescens*). An attractive variegated form of this species is also commonly grown.
Talinum - ca. 50 species, of which about 28 species may be considered succulent or semi-succulent. Native to Africa, western USA, Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America.

Talinopsis - 1 species, T. frutescens ( = becoming shrubby], native to Mexico and Texas. A shrubby plant to about two feet tall, with succulent, linear, rounded leaves. I've never seen any in private succulent collections, however it is grown in several botanical gardens.

Cultivation - These genera basically provide little difficulty in growing choice, attractive plants. The beginner would best be advised to start with several Anacampseros species [such as A. rufescens, A. arachnoides, and A. tomentosa] and Portulacaria afra. These should do well for all but the most inhospitable conditions for succulent plants (dark, wet places). Be careful about etiolation; these will really stretch out if the light is not strong enough. The advanced collector will undoubtedly want to try Anacampseros alstonii (often difficult to grow (very slow growing] and expensive), or several Ceraria species which develop a thick, woody caudex. The soil should be relatively free draining, and moderately rich. Almost all of the extremely succulent forms should be grown slowly to achieve their maximum "in habitat" appearance. My collection of about 30 species of Anacampseros thrives on neglect in a single flat, off to one side of my main benches; they occasionally get "whacked" with the spray of the hose once a week or so in summer, and very rarely in winter. They have been in the same pots for about 5 to 7 years, and probably have been fertilized only once per year throughout that time. They are doing marvelously, and flower each year (at least those species that do. flower freely) They get "baked" by the sun in habitat; and thus, they will continue to get "baked" in Ames. For the pleasure they give for the minimal space they require, these plants will make an interesting and rewarding addition to your succulent plant collections.
SOME NOTES ON GROWING POTTED CACTI OUTDOORS DURING VERY RAINY WEATHER

By Tom Schwink

Some of us do not have greenhouses and must keep those of our plants which need a great deal of sunshine outdoors during the growing season. Others, including me, do have greenhouses but not ones large enough to hold all our plants. I need to keep some plants outdoors during the warmer months.

Many years rainfall is normal or below normal and having plants outdoors exposed to the elements presents no big problems. During very rainy years, such as this one so far, the heavy rains can leach significant amounts of essential nutrients from the soil in the pots.

Many of my outdoor cacti stopped growing during and after periods of heavy rainfall. My first thought was that this was just due to nitrogen deficiency, and I started watering immediately after each rainy period, while the soil was still wet, with a high nitrogen soluble fertilizer. I wanted the plants to get some nitrogen before the rains began again. (Watering after a period of heavy rain, while the soil is still saturated, will not make it any wetter.)

They still did not grow, and I then read carefully the contents of the fertilizer I was using. It contained no nitrate nitrogen and no boron. In addition to not growing, the growing points of many of my outdoor plants began deteriorating and some of the growing points died.

Since the mites were now under control, they were not the cause of the damage to the growing points. I did some reading and learned that deficiencies of calcium and of boron caused damaged and dead growing points (as well as damaged and dead roots). Since I was watering with calcium-rich hard water, this had to be boron deficiency. From further reading I learned that heavy rain can deplete soil of boron, although not as fast as it leaches out nitrogen.

I started using, after each period of heavy rainfall, a complete fertilizer containing trace elements, especially making certain that it contained BORON. I continued to use hard water as a source of calcium. Since nitrate nitrogen is the form most rapidly available to plants (and also most rapidly leached out by rain), I wanted my outdoor fertilizer to contain as close to 50% as possible of its nitrogen as nitrate. None of the complete commercial fertilizers I had contained anywhere near this much nitrate (some contained none at all), so I started adding my own to the fertilizer. I usually use potassium nitrate, but if I want to add a large amount of nitrogen I use ammonium nitrate. My fortified fertilizers still only rarely contain 50% nitrate nitrogen, but they contain much more than they did.

Since I started my hard water-nitrate-trace elements regimen my plants which still have growing points are growing again. The growing points that had deteriorated but not died now look nearly normal. Remember to always use a plant food with trace elements, including boron. For calcium and magnesium, either hard water or gypsum + Epsom salt can be use.