LOOKING BACK...AND FORWARD

With this number, completing Vol. I, we can reflect on the good happenings and the disappointments we've had this year. We were delighted with the reception and support by the President and Board of CSSA, and with the receipt of articles by Marcia Jacobs, Kathy Malon, Eva Riser-Roberts, Peg Spaete, Chuck Staples, and Joe and Carol Wujcik. Our thanks to all!

On the other hand, we were rather disappointed that we have heard from only 21 fellow editors (See survey article following.). The proportion of questionnaires returned suggests a peer approval rating of only 29%! Is this an accurate conclusion? Or have many of you perhaps examined the Exchange, appreciated, enjoyed or found useful its content, but felt you had nothing to say, or that someone else could, and likely would, say it better. We really need to hear from you and we solicit your help in this effort.

We've received no direct contributions of educational/informative feature articles aside from "newslettering", yet several editors have reproduced the Schwink and Wallace articles that we took from files and presented in the May issue. This is a good indication that editors will use such material if it appears in this publication. Why not search your files for local writings that should have a greater audience?

Mac and I have profited greatly from contacts with newsletter editors. In Tulsa, at the Mid-States conference, we met with Chuck Staples (Des Moines), Jeanne Phillips (St. Louis), Delores Kirk (Omaha), Dave Eppele (Bisbee, AZ) and Jack Makepeace (Kansas City). Mac attended the Eastern Conference in Washington, D.C., and has this report: "At a brief, stand-up meeting, Pete Boudriault of National Capitol, Mac Clarke of Knoxville, Jennifer Effinger of Long Island, Rita Hojnowski of Philadelphia, David Taylor of Toronto, and Peg Spaete of Oregon discussed the value of the Editors' Exchange. Consensus was that it fills a need and should be continued for at least another year. All Editors should note that an Editors' Meeting is on the schedule for the San Francisco Convention in July, 1993. Please let Bill or me know if you would like something on the agenda." B.F.

EDITORS' EXCHANGE SURVEY, PART III

by Mac Clarke

Total returns from the survey are now up to 21, 29% of those sent out. Again, they do not make any significant change in results reported earlier; Purpose, Contents, and You. This issue we cover Layout and Production.

LAYOUT: All but 3 of the 21 responding use 8 1/2 x 11" paper and use the full side for a page. Texas Association of C&SS used an occasional legal size sheet, but again the page size
was the full sheet. Two of you fold the paper in half the short way and then run the page down
the length of the result. Long Beach CC uses 8 1/2 x 14" paper for an 7 x 8 1/2 page, Henry
Shaw CS uses 11 x 17" paper for an 8 1/2 x 11 page. All of you print on both sides of the
page although three of you frequently leave some pages blank on one side. Twelve print a
single column always, two print 2 columns always and six use both 1 or 2. Nobody uses more
than two, perhaps because only one, New Mexico, uses a Desk Top Publishing program. I
defined a mailer page as one deliberately designed to be folded onto the outside for mailing.
By that definition, 12 of you use one. Four of the rest specifically mentioned using envelopes.

Twelve of you have a logo or at least a graphic "nameplate", eight do not. Incidentally, the
thing at the top of the front page on most papers is a nameplate. The masthead normally
appears inside and lists the publisher, editor and similar info. Nine of us use 'fancy' fonts,
something other than standard 12 point Courier, 11 don't. Special fonts may appear anywhere
in most newsletters that use them.

PRODUCTION: You overwhelmingly use xerography to produce your newsletters, 16 do, 2
don't. Oregon C&SS has theirs printed, and Cox Arboretum C&SS uses a laser printer for
multiple copies. Preparation of the master copy utilizes a range of technology. Four of you use
typewriters, three use Smith Corona Word Processors, and eight use computers: six of those
being IBM or IBM-compatible, and two Apple. No two of the computer users employ the same
software! As mentioned above, only New Mexico uses a DTP program. Five print the master
copy on laser printers, two use dot matrix printers, and I use an ink jet printer.

There is a wide range in size of the newsletters, from 2 to 12 pages. As a result, the time you
spend editing an issue varies widely, from 2 to 35 hours, with an average of 13. The cost of
the newsletter ranges from 29 to 80 cents per issue with an average near $.50. Mailing costs
are from 37% to 100% of the total with an average of 62%. Kentucky C&SS gets their copying
donated, so the only expense is mailing. The balance is copying cost. The size of your print
runs range from 25-360 copies with an average of about 100. Members get most of the copies,
but significant numbers go to exchanges, complimentary copies (libraries, potential members,
CSSA President, file copies, etc.). For a few clubs, generally the smaller ones, the non-member
copies approach 40% of the total.

Would you believe that about 1000 person hours per month go into the preparation of the
newsletters of CSSA Affiliates? And still, every editor who responded, loved it! Maybe those
who didn't respond don't like the job and that is why they didn't respond. Let us hope not!
For truly you are engaged in a labor of love and it shows in your newsletters. It is hard to get
feedback from your readers, a couple of you mentioned getting 10% responses to reader
surveys. Sometimes you wonder if it is all worthwhile. Hang in there, it is! A possible fringe
benefit is that 5 of the 12 current CSSA Directors are active newsletter editors as are two of
the three candidates. Newsletter editors are 30 times more likely to become Directors than
other CSSA members! While these numbers are correct, I am reminded of Mark Twain's
"There are liars, damn liars, and statisticians"!

I've enjoyed reading your newsletters and survey responses, and I've learned a bunch. Hope
you have also. Thank you all very much! Incidentally, you don't have to keep sending me your
newsletters, but we will use them as a source for the Article Bank if you do.

Respondees to the survey were: Carmichael C&SS (Pearl Lemkuil), Central OK C&SS (Bill
Felts), Cox Arboretum C&SS (Barb Fisher), The Epigram (Dick Kohlschrieb), Fresno C&SS
(Sue Haffner), Greater Knoxville C&SS (Mac Clarke), Henry Shaw CS (Kathy Malon), Kansas
City C&SS (Jack Makepeace), Kentucky C&SS (Tammy Prather), Long Beach CC (Carol and
WHAT MAKES UP A NEWSLETTER?

by Eva Riser-Roberts, Ph.D.

The form a newsletter takes is largely determined by the Editor, who has to assess the needs of the club and decide how those needs can be met by the available resources. In our case, those resources have, to a large extent, been our own members.

Unfortunately, it can be difficult to motivate a group to do things—to actively participate in an activity. For the most part, people like to sit back and let others assume the responsibility of entertaining them. But I have had the rewarding experience of soliciting contributions from our club members and receiving an exceptional response.

I encouraged them to write about a subject they were an expert on, or about a trip they had taken, or advice they could offer from their own unique experience. My encouragement and persistence was important, and soon the articles came in. I was looking for experience and knowledge that could be shared. One man became a regular contributor, writing delightful stories about cactus-related episodes from a long term love affair with these plants. A young man furnished us with fascinating technical information in his own exquisite writing style. An I was ecstatic when one member actually came up to me and volunteered to do a regular column to try to find solutions to problems people had with their plants! Our group has had some good writers and interesting personalities, which came through in their writing. I edit as little as possible to maintain their individual flavor. On the other hand, I've found it necessary to be flexible, to accommodate emergencies and problems in members' lives, which can interfere with their contributions.

Because of my own knowledge of the subject and my time for researching articles are limited, I have been grateful for the material other members have supplied, while I write articles or conduct interviews as time allows. This is then supplemented with information borrowed from other newsletters, often along a common theme.

I believe recognition is important. I have acknowledged members in our newsletter and even "promoted" or "awarded" one of our regular writers with the title of "Staff Writer", for which he was pleased. The column writer and Roving Reporter have been given their own graphic logos for their articles.

Some of the articles written for our newsletter have been reproduced in the CSSA newsletter, and the authors have been thrilled. This encouragement is important and a valuable function of the national newsletter, not only for dispensing information of widespread interest but also for acknowledgement of the efforts of members at the individual level.

I guess the point of this article is that we should encourage members to contribute what they have to offer from their own unique experience and abilities. They may not realize it, but they do have much to share that is of value to others.
MORE ON REPRODUCING PHOTOGRAPHS

by Eva Riser-Roberts, Ph.D.

When photocopies can be run directly from masters containing pasteups of actual photographs, the reproductions of the pictures are of significantly better quality. However, this works if the masters do not have to flow sequentially through the photocopier and the pages can be copied individually by hand placement on the bed of the machine. Otherwise, copies of the photographs have to be pasted up on the masters.

In this case, I find the quality of the regular photocopies is not good enough for this purpose—too many generations pass before the final copy. On the other extreme, PMT's provide good quality reproductions but are fairly expensive. As a compromise, I like to use a color photocopier set for black and white photographs. This produces an excellent, slick quality copy in black and white or color images for minimal cost. It is the next best thing to the photograph or PMT, and by planning, it may be possible to copy more than one picture at a time on the 8 1/2" x 11" sheet, even further reducing the cost.

WHAT TO WRITE

by Peg Spaete

Selecting an idea for an article is usually the most difficult obstacle a potential writer encounters. The second barrier is putting that introductory sentence in print. Once these have been conquered, you are on your way — unless your pen runs out of ink or your computer crashes!

How do you come up with an idea? One source is the NEWS. When the Gulf War broke out, I did an item on the succulent plants of Saudi Arabia. When Portland and other western points were ordered to ration water, I wrote an article about using drought resistant plants for landscaping and other useful ways to "put in" a yard without grass.

Other ideas —

A trip to someone's greenhouse, or to a conference/convention, or a field trip or just a stroll through your greenhouse. What new ideas did you see? How did you incorporate them into your set-up?

An experiment you have tried with your plants, your growing area, your seed germination, your vegetative propagation...

What type of structure for growing plants do you have, have you seen? Kind of interior apparatus; bench covers, styles, types; ventilation methods; lighting; watering set-ups; alarm systems; stagings...

Different ways to grow the same plant, i.e., Senecio articulatus in a wire basket allows underground stems to protrude, creating quite a unique, monstrose hanging arrangement.

People in the hobby
Book reviews
Space savers; developing areas for plant growing indoors and outdoors; time saving techniques, such as combining water, pesticide and fertilizer and applying it in one application.

Descriptions of new plants and their culture

What goes on at your club meetings
How to start a club
How to build membership
How to organize a show and sale
How to plan programs
How to make new members comfortable
How to select a meeting place

What plants to use for bonsai, techniques

Building and caring for outside beds in cold and dry climates, and in cold and wet ones.
  What plants to use; labels vs. maps for identification.
  How to arrange plants — by flower color, flowering time, country, looks.

Growing C&S under lights

How to grow plants from seed
How to pollinate flowers
How to collect seed
How to clean seed
How to store seed
How to prepare seed for sowing

When and how to water, feed various plants

Related hobbies, such as stamp collecting (C&S motifs), book collecting, cactus crafts, painting...

Changing residence or moving from one area to another — how to prepare plants, modes of transportation, time of year...

How to adjust your plants to different climates, to different types of growing areas, such as changing from fiberglass to glass greenhouse.

Transporting plants to a show or to a demonstration

How to judge; how to prepare plants to be judged
Becoming a member of a club; responsibilities of being a member; learning the V (volunteer) word. ( Mentioning the long hours isn't necessary; just tell them how good it feels to have done a job well and to have done your share.)

Ordering plants by mail — pros and cons; how to pack plants to exchange.
Basics: grafting, potting and repotting, mixes, labels, container types, pruning and grooming, fertilizers, using pesticides and insects for control; indexing your collection...

Things to use with your plants, e.g., a 24" medical clamp makes an excellent weed puller in an outside cactus bed, 8" tweezers for debudding cacti, #12 wire for hoops, loops, hooks and grafting staffs.

Humor; personify a plant and give its view of its living conditions and the "landlord".
Play on names; cartoons; crossword puzzles, jumbles, poems

Now that you have a list of ideas, you have only Hurdle #2 to conquer. I'll look forward to your idea in print!
Despite copyright laws, I couldn't resist this!! [B.F.]