When stationed in the San Diego area part-time, it was all South Pacific with the Marine Corps."

"During the war," explains Jack, "the Navy accepted me as a Hospital Corpsman because of my background in bacteriology and biology. I was in the service from 1942-1945." Adds Jack, "The overseas war years did not forward any military service, since Peking, near where he was stationed (6 miles south at Nan Yuan), was and is one of the world's great art and architectural centers."

John William Catlin received the CSSA Special Service Award at the CSSA Convention in San Francisco in July for creating significant hybrids, popularizing the hobby, and sharing genetically important haworthias with England's Succulent Plant Trust.

Catlin, known professionally and to his friends as Jack, was born November 29, 1919 in Springfield, Illinois, and attended the lower grades there. An abiding fascination with cacti and succulents started by age 10. In 1929 he acquired his first haworthia, H. cymbiformis (he still has the same clone growing at his home in La Canada, California).

Jack was aware of the native opuntias that grew through central Illinois, especially in sand flats near river areas. Their dazzling blossoms could neither be ignored nor touched!

Jack says, "Having built a lean-to greenhouse in the south-east corner of the family residence in Springfield with my dad's help, a collection of mainly cacti and succulents did burgeon." About that time, 1935, he acquired a Harry Johnson cactus and succulent catalog, which was a great data source since it was well-illustrated and authoritative. His first Johnson Cactus Gardens purchase was Echeveria setosa. He found Scott Haselton's Succulents for the amateur a treasure trove of information.

Harry Johnson encouraged people to send snapshots of their collections to him. To Jack's amazement, he says, "My offering (a collection of 50 plants) was published in his 1936 catalog, which was no end of encouragement. A publicity picture for the 1937 high school yearbook shows me there in the school greenhouse with an assortment of plants that I set up. The main features were represented as types of the four kingdoms—bryophytes, thallophytes, pteridophytes and spermatophytes."

Jack graduated from Springfield High School in 1938 and during the 1939-1940 school term attended Teachers College at Illinois State Normal University (now Illinois State University) at Normal, where he majored in biological science. However, World War II interrupted the routine. "During the war," explains Jack, "the Navy accepted me as a Hospital Corpsman because of my background in bacteriology and biology. I was in the service from 1942-1945." Adds Jack, "Another botanical experience along the way (September 1945) stands as unforgettable," says Jack. "This was to see Cycas revoluta growing wild and in abundance on Okinawa. In a sense this was the byproduct of another tour of duty—Mindanao, Philippine Islands, to Peking (Beijing), China. The stop there allowed me time to collect a fist-size offset, which was kept viable for six months, soaked occasionally in vitamin B1 solution. Later it rooted at home in Illinois. I still have it in La Canada as a container plant—" a cherished specimen."

Jack found that living in China was an experience in itself, almost worth the whole four years of military service, since Peking, near where he was stationed (6 miles south at Nan Yuan), was and is one of the world's great art and architectural centers.

Upon attaining civilian status, Jack attended the School of Fine Arts, Washington University, St. Louis, for two years. Then he enrolled in the Art Center College of Design on 3rd Street in Los Angeles (now in Pasadena). His formal education completed, Jack entered the industrial design field and created items for the ceramics

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industry—complete dinner sets and pottery lines, vases, planters, and the like. However, he could not avoid the plant field and so launched a rewarding career in landscape design, which extends to the present.

In the meantime, he accumulated an extensive collection of plants, including not only cacti and succulents but bonsai, conifers, lilies, hemerocallis and other amaryllids.

Abutilon hybrids have been a mania of Jack’s for over 40 years; the many outstanding cultivars he created and named have been shared with any and all. Jack has lectured on them at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, once displaying 50 or more colored drawings, created over the years, of his cultivars.

The ISI has offered a few of Catlin’s hybrid succulents:

- *Aeonium tabuliforme × A. arboreum ‘Zwartkop’: ‘Zwartkind’, 1976, to be offered by ISI.
- *A. undulatum × A. arboreum ‘Zwartkop’: ‘Cyclops’, 1988, to be offered by ISI. It is dark bronze and extremely large—14 to 16 inches in diameter.

*E. agavoides* ‘Ebony’ is a selection grown and named by Jack; he acquired this plant from Gary Hammer, who received it from friends who collected it in San Luis Potosí. It closely resembles *E. agavoides var. multifida* Walther; one of the four plants has dark ebony-colored edges. Jack donated it to the Huntington Botanical Gardens, who offered it through ISI in 1992.

When John Pilbeam first visited the U.S. in 1983, he presented Jack with the first copy of his book, *Haworthia and Astroloba*. To the horror of taxonomists, Jack and John also collaborated in coining the term “naminclutter” for haworthias and for any other taxa overly burdened with synonymy.

For years Jack has had a yen for haworthias, especially after he settled in La Canada. Says Jack, “The climate lends itself to collecting beyond the means to house all specimens except the very choice and possibly difficult ones.”

In the late 1950’s through 1960’s, Jack acquired many haworthias from Ernie Beahm of epiphyllum fame. Beahm had a noteworthy collection of haworthias via J. R. Brown and others.

Jack commented, “J. R. Brown’s extensive writings on haworthias and other succulents published from the 1930’s on in the CSSA Journal were a credit to his intellect, persistence and main claim to fame. [Brown’s] collection in a sense was a byproduct, but it had to be viable and maintained to give meaning to the data.”

Vivienne Doney—a great grower known to many—was given the J. R. Brown haworthia collection to maintain and propagate. She carefully accomplished the laborious work of keeping the data and accession numbers. Even then some of the plants’ names were in doubt and were designated “received as labeled.” Her sharing of the collection stimulated much interest in the subject, at least in southern California.

In 1979 Mrs. Doney passed this collection on to Jack as conservator. He remembers, “Space was made for the collection by extending one side of the existing structure. A 5-ft by 40-ft bench was added just for the haworthias, which represented all existing JRB clones.” All this proved to be very successful, and heat is provided only during excessive cold spells.

The Succulent Plant Trust of England is a private organization that has kept the famed Bates haworthia collection going, if not intact. Some clones are from Adrian Hardy Haworth’s (1768–1833) original collection! In spring 1992, a decision was made to share with the Succulent Plant Trust starts of all JRB clones and accession data for preservation and continuity. This joint effort was sponsored by the CSSA and the Succulent Plant Trust. Jack assisted Jean Ellis of the Trust in the actual work of selecting, labeling, and packing. Seymour Linden was generous with hospitality, use of his photocopier, and other assistance.

Quite a few of the JRB numbered clones were originally from the Bates collection; hopefully their return will replace a few that may have been lost during or since WWII.

The JRB collection will be housed separately
from the Bates plants. There is no equivalent U.S. organization that preserves significant living collections. Comments Jack on his own collection, "Even now the haworthias are encroaching on the space for echeverias and other plant groups. Unfortunately, there is no long term continuity projected."

Jack has accumulated a few awards, among them the 1983 Southern California Horticulture Institute Award for Outstanding Contributions for Horticulture, and, in 1985, the first prize for a display at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum with a "Water in the Garden" theme. In 1992 he received the Descanso Bonsai Society Golden Leaf Award.

**THE COLOR FUND**

On the renewal envelope received with this issue you will notice a small box marked “Color Fund.” It may be small, but the consequences can be major. Do you enjoy color photos in the Journal? Of course you do. Unfortunately, black-and-white’s cost $13 but color photos cost about $230 each. The CSSA simply cannot afford to provide all the color you want, so we are asking you to make a tax-deductible donation (in addition to your membership dues and a contribution to the Research Fund) to ensure that larger and more frequent color photos appear in future issues. Your contribution will benefit not only you but all other members of the CSSA. Donors will be listed in the November–December issue.

**BOOK REVIEWS**


Cycads are often referred to as living fossils, as they were one of the main components of the Jurassic flora, coexisting with and being fed upon by dinosaurs. Today there are only 185 species, mostly rare and endangered, dispersed throughout the tropics and subtropics. Although not considered succulents, they do possess thick trunks and leathery leaves similar to those of *Dasylirion,* *Nolina* and *Yucca,* and share with them a bizarre appearance that appeals to many succulent collectors.

David Jones is a prolific Australian author noted for his thorough and beautifully illustrated horticultural books on palms and ferns. Although botanically sound, his treatments always emphasize the beauty of the plants and their use and cultivation in gardens. This new work is certainly the most complete ever published on cycads, describing each living species and providing notes on distribution, habitats, cultivation and propagation. Distribution maps and keys to species are also helpful. However, it is the profusion of color photos that one appreciates first; nearly every species is pictured in color, often with separate close-ups of cycad cones, one of their most interesting features.

It is hard to fault this attractive and useful book, in fact I can think of only one deficiency: botanists not specializing in cycads also need a book describing all the world’s cycads, and Jones’s work would have been far more useful to them if it had included synonyms and full citations of dates and places of publication for all taxa.

M. Kimnach

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A hottentot tribe, the Topnaar, are the only inhabitants of the Namib Desert that stretches along the western coast of South Africa, Namibia and Angola. Like *Welwitschia* and the strange succulents native there, the natives have learned to cope with an almost total lack of rainfall. Succulents eaten or otherwise used by the Topnaar include species of *Hoodia,* *Trichocaulon,* *Fockea,* *Kleinia* and *Aloe.* Anyone interested in these plants or in ethnobotany in general will enjoy this book, which, despite its Belgian origin, is in English. The many color photos do much to enhance the text.

M. Kimnach