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## What Are U Doing New Year's Day (or any other holiday)?

Submitted by Susan Kent with quotations from a CSSA article by Carol Wujcik

Dear Cactus and Succulent enthusiast,

Are you new to the "Valley?" Do you and your family and friends have a void of "tradition" during the holiday season? Does this sound familiar? Read this little item and start something that brings joy to your life!

We live in the unique "Four Corners" area of the US. Moreover, we Las Vegas people live smack dab in a Mojave valley surrounded by "higher desert" ranges. We're a stone's throw from what's living in CA, UT, AZ, and even ID! From a desert plant diversity perspective, it's just a hoot to some C&S lovers.

I'm suggesting that people think and act on a tradition that's been alive for years, but maybe not in your heart. I'm going to quote from an article that appeared in the CSSA November/December, 1989, issue of the CACTUS AND SUCCULENT JOURNAL Volume 61, No. 6. It's an article written by Carol Wujcik. Many of us know both Carol and Joe . . . certainly hundreds of C&S enthusiasts know Wujcik pottery. Try this tradition. Fill your lungs with clean air. Fill your eyes with Mother Nature! I begin the quote (in italics), with permission:

*"Some people go to Grandma's house for the holidays . . . some people go to the desert . . .*

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<sup>1</sup> The content of this newsletter is simplified, thanks to our new website design. News items are placed on the website as we have the opportunity to post them or whenever people make contributions for inclusion. At the end of the month, those postings are copied into the newsletter format. The website can change; the newsletter serves as the historical document.

A CACTOPHILE'S CHRISTMAS by CAROL ANNE WUJCIK

Visiting our local deserts in Southern California has become a holiday tradition for my husband and me. A daytrip to visit spiny desert dwelling friends in their awesome homes of tumbled, sculpted boulders is soul-satisfying and fun.

Christmas in America is composed of many things - family and friends; presents; exhaustion; long, cold nights; firesides and song; garish displays; togetherness and smiles; and for some, profound religious joy. The holiday season for me usually includes all these things, but ever since my first desert experiences at Anza Borrego Desert State Park and Joshua Tree National Monument, Christmas and often New Year's day as well means the crunch underfoot of decomposed granite, cold winds, mittens and scarves and coats, towering rocks and winter meadows of Joshua trees, fuzzy-topped *Echinocactus polycephalus*, sun on the golden *Opuntia chlorotica*, and the warm gold and ultraviolet light of a late afternoon sun on the white/lavender florets of *Opuntia erinacea ursina*. The beauty of the holidays has become the desert for me. Christmas, especially, is Joshua Tree National Monument - a place inviting spontaneity and poetry - a place many call "sacred."

For our Christmas '88 celebration, good friends joined our annual visit to plant friends in Joshua Tree. The weather was cold and clear. As we drove up into the high desert, Morongo Valley on State Route 62 was a basin of winter white. Snow and frost sparkled on Joshua trees and *Opuntia*. Every leaf and branch was outlined in ice, and the several Saguaros outside the cactus nursery beside the road were bejeweled. Even the lowly creosote bushes were luminous. Thinking we would have a chance later for photos of ice or snow-covered plants, we continued out of the enchanting little basin into clear, cold sun. Cool but no ice or snow. Our memories will serve as a remembrance."

The article continues complete with a desert poem written by Carol that points out the paradox of the very dry desert marked with washes and dry basins that have been carved by water . . . yet none is to be seen. She laments that it is too cold and windy for the family to put up with decorating a Joshua Tree and certainly doesn't stand still long enough to sing a modified rendition of, "Oh Joshua Tree! Oh Joshua Tree!" They visit their favorite plants to check on their well being and say hello to new little beings that might have surfaced. The article closes with their list of visited plants. When I recently visited the desert, I was happy to see most of the plants listed. Take the checklist below, and see how many you can find!

Happy desert holidays (365 days a year!), Susan Kent

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*Opuntia basilaris* (Beaver tail Cactus)  
*Opuntia erinacea* var. *ursina* (Grizzly Bear Cactus)  
*Opuntia chlorotica* (Pancake Cactus with yellow-gold spines)  
*Opuntia phaeacantha* var. *major* ("Prickly pear" type???)  
*Opuntia snalyyi* var. *parishii* (Devil or Dead Cactus)  
*Opuntia ramosissima* (Pencil Cholla)  
*Opuntia bigelovii* (Jumping Cholla or Teddy Bear Cholla)  
*Opuntia echinocarpa* (Silver and Golden Cholla)  
*Opuntia acanthocarpa* (Buckhorn Cholla)

*Ferocactus acanthodes* (Fire Barrel Cactus)  
*Echinocactus polycephalus* (Cottontop Cactus)  
*Echinocereus triglochidiatus* (Mojave Mound Cactus; Claret Cup)  
*Echinocereus engelmannii* (Hedgehog Cactus)  
*Coryphanta vivipara* var. *alversonii* (Foftail Cactus)  
*Mammillaria tetrancistra*  
*Dudley* sp. (*saxosa*?)  
*Yucca brevifolia* (Joshua Tree)  
*Yucca schidigera* (Mojave Yucca)  
*Fouquieria splendens* (Ocotillo)

# January Meeting: Thursday Jan. 7 at 7PM Garden Club Building Lorenzi Park

**Program: Panayoti Kelaidis's "Looking for Succulents in All the Wrong Places"**  
Arranged and Contributed by 2010 CSSSN Vice President, Donnie Barnett



The January program features Panayoti Kelaidis's talk on "Looking for Succulents in All the Wrong Places." Panayoti is a world renowned speaker on succulents and rock gardens. He is Curator of Plant Collections at the Denver Botanical Gardens and Vice President of the Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society (CCSS). P.K. has traveled throughout the world searching for succulents and new alpine plants

Panayoti has been a great inspiration to me. I remember meeting him when I was 12 years old at a CCSS cactus sale. Later down road he visited my parent's rock garden in Pueblo, Colorado. He was able to spout off nearly every species of plant in the yard. He showed me that a man with his kind of knowledge could help gardeners and hobbyists improve the horticultural world. This January meeting should be epoch!

**Important Discussion: "CSSSN's Location, Location, Location!", and other items brought to you by 2010 CSSSN President, Victor Lindsey**

## **2010 Officers, Membership Reminder**

### 2010 Officers

President - Victor Lindsey  
Vice President - Donnie Barnett  
Secretary - Ramona Lesley  
Treasurer - Nancy Thompson-Jones

### 2009 "At Large" Board Members

Jay Neitling Pete Duncombe  
Donnie Barnett Paula Garrett Vacant  
Past President - Phil Lawton

### 2009 Key Responsibilities/Point People

Membership - Nancy T-J,  
Programs - Victor Lindsey with Donnie Barnett  
Librarian - Dick Askew  
Cactus Garden at Pioneer Women's Garden - Donnie Barnett  
Raffle Sales & Greeters - Sam Valenti  
Website Administrators - Susan Kent & Jay Neitling  
Web Master - Jay Neitling  
Newsletter - Susan Kent  
Set Up Supplies - Jim Peters & Jim Grothuesmann  
UNLV Liaison & Education - Paula Garrett  
Activities - Hikers - Donnie Barnett  
Little Trips - Victor Lindsey  
Plant Shows; Plant Sales - Pete Duncombe

**JANUARY IS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL  
MONTH: Individual - \$15.00; Household - \$25**

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City, State, Zip**

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Email & website are default methods of communication. If you have an e-mail address, we e-mail the newsletter. A paper copy can be obtained by talking at one of the meetings with Nancy Thompson-Jones, who maintains the membership list. NEW memberships can be paid at any monthly meeting. Thanks for your continued interest!

You might want to join CSSA. The bi-monthly Journal (in color) is excellent and is mailed to your home along with the black and white, "To the Point" publication, which is a good down to earth educational publication.

Check this out! Here's a short writing about the cover plates of a few back issues of the CSSA Journal. (CAUTION: Remember that names may have changed since the original writing.)

Submitted by Susan Kent with a quote from the 1989 CSSA Journal

1967 - *Cochemiea poselgeri* - synonym *Mammillaria poselgeri*. This is a clumping cactus composed of stems about 2 1/2 inches in diameter, but each can be lengthy. The red flower occurs at the tip of the stems. It grows in USDA zones 9b - 11. It must be covered in the event of frost, and in Las Vegas should be placed in a warm corner with other plants that might help increase the humidity creating a little microclimate. (Increased humidity does not mean soggy wet soil.) The yearly average minimum temperature should be around 55 degrees F. (Sounds like it would thrive in San Diego!) [Check out this link](#). Another link that's one of my favorites ([desert tropicals](#)) lists the plant with good info, too.



1968 - *Coryphantha vivipara* (*Escobaria*). Many of us have this gem, or a close relative, in our collections. The plant is very hardy here, but because it is small, I like to protect it from foot traffic. As a result, it's usually in a pot under the edge of a shrub or near a small boulder. This photo comes to us with permission from: Gary A. Monroe @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.



1984 - *Zygocactus* (*Schlumbergera*) A "Christmas Cactus!" And depending on the bloom time, it is also sometimes called a "Thanksgiving Cactus" or an "Easter Cactus." This is not really a cactus, but rather an epiphyte. The care is quite different from that of cactus, and more like the care of an orchid. Unless over watered or left to sun burn or freeze, these plants are long lived and often passed along from one household to another. To encourage blooming, the plant enjoys a bit cooler weather beginning in September or October. It also needs to have reduced light during the same period of time and NO LIGHT at night. Fight the temptation to water frequently during this period as well. You will be rewarded with many lovely flowers. The colors range from white, slightly orchid, salmon, pink, and red. They can be obtained from almost any floral shop or garden nursery or even grocery store! If you want winter blooms, pick them up and start a little collection. Life is not always about cactus!



2007 - *Arrojadoa eriocaulis*. This is not one that I've seen around, but surely one of our vendor/members either has it or can get it! There are two photos included to show the unique form of the plant. Hummingbirds pollinate the flowers which are formed from a cephalium. With the number of hummingbirds that frequent my gasteria, haworthia, and aloes, I'm sure the natural relationship would form with this plant as well. The plant is a native of Brazil and should be a fun addition to our protected "bench" collections.



1989 - The final plant selection is a monumental favorite. Alas, due to copyright issues, the actual cover cannot be printed here at this time. It brings me joy every time I see it. If you read the following paragraph, just imagine: a cute white puppy dog wearing a smile and bright red Santa hat, sitting in the desert next to a great big Saguaro decorated in holiday wreaths, you'll grin and understand. I will quote exactly from the journal: *"COVER PLATE: We are pleased and honored to be able to present as our cover this marvelous Christmas greeting to the "CSSA members and friends" from "Spike", the desert dwelling cousin of Charlie Brown's dog, Snoopy, and Charles Schulz, the artist and creator of Peanuts, one of the most popular comic strips of all times. We had teasingly remarked that for all the fun he had poked at cactus & succulent societies with Spike attending cactus society meetings in the desert in companionship with the resident saguaros, Charles Schulz in penance should contribute a cover to the Journal. Our friend, David L. Eppelle of Arizona Cactus & Succulent Research Inc., Bisbee, Arizona, said that the artist was a very kind and generous person with a real love for the desert and that he was sure that he would, indeed, be happy to contribute a cover to our magazine, and through the intercession of Mr. Eppelle we are able to present this charming Christmas greeting to you all. Dave tells us that "Sparky" Schulz moved from his native Minnesota to Needles, California when he was 7, hence his real*



*feeling for the desert comes quite naturally and from firsthand experience. We are proud and deeply grateful and in turn send our best wishes and those of the CSSA to Spike, his saguaro companions and to Mr. Schulz and the entire Peanuts gang!"*

So, if you can get your hands on the issue (maybe in your bookcase), have a look and enjoy, or call me! I don't know if our CSSSN library houses old issues, perhaps it is there. If you can remember how Snoopy dances around, that's EXACTLY HOW I FEEL when I'm in the desert - - - I'm happy all over when I'm out there!

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**(If you have a C&S gardening question or a specific plant you would like featured in a future issue, send it to [info@csssn.org](mailto:info@csssn.org))**

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