

Editor's Corner

WHAT IS OUR SOCIETY ABOUT?

by Larry Mellichamp

Starting in 1981 we will be known as the International Carnivorous Plant Society (ICPS). Instead of being merely "subscribers" to CPN, you will become "members" of ICPS, with a subscription to CPN as a benefit of this membership.

I hope that all of our present subscribers will consider becoming members of ICPS. Basically the only things that will change will be that (1) the Society will have a formal name, with CPN as its official publication; (2) a formal set of by-laws will be presented to and voted on by the membership to help govern the activities of the society; (3) officers will be elected from among the membership to help improve the operations and the image of the Society; and (4) regularly scheduled meetings will be planned to help increase communications among the membership. We, the co-editors, feel that these changes will be very beneficial.

There will be many advantages to belonging to the Society. First, we hope that no one will avoid the Society because they think the new name implies that the members are more experienced or more knowledgeable. This is certainly not our purpose. We want everyone, especially beginners, to belong to the Society and feel that they have just as much voice and value as they had before. The fundamental purpose of the Society, as it has always been, is to facilitate the exchange of views and experiences. Do not be scared by the concept of a "society"; the society name is somewhat of a formality that helps with the technicalities of bookkeeping and other legalities that we seem to be getting more involved in as a result of becoming incorporated.

More importantly, the new Society name will give us a long-needed image boost and allow us to attain a level of international recognition that we did not have before. For example, when popular plant magazines prepared their surveys of currently operating plant societies, we would be left out *simply* because we didn't have the word "Society" in our name. We were there, and we did all the important things that any other society did, but we were essentially invisible to some people. The new name should be looked upon as an increase in prestige and we all should be proud to belong.

A more tangible benefit of membership will be the continuation of your subscription to the Carnivorous Plant Newsletter, begun in 1972 and getting better all the time. This is a unique publication because it contains articles dealing with a broad range of topics: from "how-to" articles on propagation and growing techniques, to discussions of historical aspects of CP, their native habitats, descriptions of new species, compilations of data on various color forms and hybrids, and more technical articles and literature reviews with many aspects of the biology of CP. In addition, CPN is a means of expressing your own personal views, your own experiences, of asking directly for advice, and for submitting articles dealing with your own work with CP. It is equally open to the beginner and the experienced researcher, and I must say that we had a very good balance of material over the past few years. We need to maintain this quality and encourage everyone to submit questions, notes, observations, or research for publication. CPN is now found in many popular and academic libraries around the world; it is listed in several scientific indexes; many people, both laymen and scientists are aware of its existence and its value. By becoming a member of the Society you will contribute to the perpetuation and improvement of a newsletter which disseminates information to many people. The scientific value of CPN is now unquestioned, and it is more valuable than the publications of some other societies. As we continue, we will improve our reputation even more. Your support is needed. CPN is something that you should feel like keeping all your copies forever. A complete set of CPN will increase in value over the years. I am

proud to have been a charter subscriber, and my early issues of CPN are bound together in permanent book-form. I refer to them often.

There are other benefits to membership. The seed bank has been a great success. It has distributed seed to many people that would otherwise have been unable to obtain them. Many of the seeds are of rare plants, some are threatened with extinction in nature and should be grown in cultivation so that we may know more about them. This is a valuable service that everyone who grows CP can perform: making observations that may someday make the difference in the survival of a plant, or discovering a use that may be of great benefit to mankind. The carnivorous plants are a very unusual group of plants anyway, and this is part of their wide appeal. The fact that they are easily grown in cultivation means that many people will have access to them. This Society can be the main coordination body to help with this facet to working with CP. In the ICPS everyone will have access to the seed bank and want ads and we hope that many people will contribute accurately labeled seed to help spread the rewards of growing CP to more people.

Members of the ICPS will also have access to any special publications prepared by the Society. There are several in the making, some that would not be possible without the backing of a society.

Thus, we have seen that there are many reasons for belonging to ICPS. There are personal rewards. There is the reward of receiving accurate, up-to-date information on new developments on the world of CP. There is the reward of knowing that you are supporting scientific work, and helping to disseminate information to the public. There is the reward of having a publication containing information useful to your interest in growing CP, and containing information that broadens your general background knowledge about CP all over the world. You have access to seeds and plants. Membership in the ICPS will help you gain access to special collections and workers at Universities and Botanical Gardens through the use of your Membership Card. And there is the reward of belonging to an organization of so many fine people with similar interests in a unique group of plants, where information can be freely transferred.

You have been successful in supporting CPN thus far, and we appreciate it. We hope the benefits to you have been great. We are now asking you to keep up the support as we move into the next phase of our evolution, and help us with the growing pains associated with becoming a full-fledged Society. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome—write to any of the four co-editors and your views will be considered.

CPN SEED BANK

No Seed Bank this issue due to low inventory. Please send in your donations of seed to:

CPN Seed Bank; c/o Patrick Dwyer; St. Michael's Episcopal Church; 49 Killean Park; Albany, NY 12205; USA. See March issue for instructions.