

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Barry Rice

We are deep in the new year, a year that has brought new leadership to the International Carnivorous Plant Society. We have said goodbye to outgoing ICPS president Carl Mazur and Steve LaWarre, and are greeting long-time ICPS members Doug Darnowski and Bob Ziemer to the ICPS board. Doug has already started duties with Carnivorous Plant Newsletter (he is the new ICPS president and is also in charge of literature reviews). Meanwhile, in June Bob will have exciting news about back issues of Carnivorous Plant Newsletter.

For me and the ICPS, this is a year of particular significance. Jan Schlauer and I have officially completed decade of editorial duties for Carnivorous Plant Newsletter. I look back at the previous ten years and see many changes have occurred in the ICPS and Carnivorous Plant Newsletter, and in general they have been for the better. Some noteworthy events include the following:

1)After much sturm und drang, the ICPS graduated from a club of murky legal status, to the ranks of a real and true nonprofit organization. This was a crucial development.

2)With its nonprofit status in hand, the ICPS was able to start processing credit card memberships inexpensively. If I told you of the ICPS resources that had been wasted trying to recover money from bounced membership checks, you'd be shocked!

3)The ICPS finally developed a Conservation Program, and began awarding grants to nonprofits that are working on targeted conservation projects that enhance carnivorous plant sites. The ICPS Conservation Program is the largest conservation grant program in the world that is focused exclusively on enhancing carnivorous plant stewardship.

4)The ICPS website was born. If you haven't seen it, what are you waiting for?

5)The ICPS seed bank was restructured into a living entity that seed bank manager John Brittnacher updates on a constant basis. The seed bank works with the ICPS Conservation Program to maintain permits from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, so it can distribute seeds of US Federally Threatened and Endangered species, at least within the USA. Now, if we can only find the resources to address CITES concerns, we could go international!

6)Jan Schlauer has established the ICPS as the International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) for carnivorous plants. While there are those who feel that the international cultivar registration system does not adequately address carnivorous plants, with the ICPS fulfilling its requirements as ICRA for carnivorous plants there is at least a system in place for those who want to use it!

7)Three quiet heroes continue to perform key roles for the ICPS. For about the last decade Cindy Slezak has processed the membership of every member of the ICPS. She has done this with extraordinary grace and perseverance. Steve Baker continues to perform the layout and design of each CPN issue, as he has since dinosaurs roamed the Earth. And former ICPS-President Rick Walker continues to maintain the ICPS membership database.

8)Finally, the look and feel of Carnivorous Plant Newsletter has evolved. Compared to ten years ago, it looks perhaps somewhat more professional and official. Some of this is due to the enormous attention to detail and accountability the editors demand of themselves and the contributing writers. However, I believe that most of the change in CPN has come from technological changes in human society itself. During the first few decades of the ICPS's existence, its main function was to provide a way for its members to communicate with each other. While it did a good job at this when it had no competition, the internet—with its instant email and countless personal home pages—raced in during the 1990s and made the original mandate for the ICPS obsolete. Indeed are there really any functions left for small specialist societies of any kind, when email and web-based communication forums are common and essentially free? Why write a "News & Views" piece or a full-fledged article, when it can be posted on the internet tonight? Why renew one's membership in the ICPS at all?

I believe that the world still does need membership-based carnivorous plant societies like the ICPS and the ACPS, AIPC, BACPS, CCPS, CPS, ECPS, GFP, IPS, JCPS, LACPS, NECPS, NZCPS, OCPS, and VCPS; as well as those groups that are not so prone to acronyms such as Carnivora, Darwiniana, Association Dionée, and Drosera v.z.w., and finally any other society I may have accidentally overlooked! But it will be the heady charge of leadership for these societies to reinvent themselves so they are not marginalized by the internet. After all, if these societies disappear, what will happen to the seed banks and conservation programs? Where will you go for information that has also been reviewed by other people for accuracy and rigor?

Change is the only constancy. The ICPS continues to change. We have a new and energized board of directors, and I am confident it will continue to guide the ICPS well as we move into the undiscovered future!

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