

CCSS *Newsletter*

Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

July 2009

From the President

As some of you have heard, the CCSS received sad news in early June: **Frank and Jane Zapatka's** daughter, **Katy**, passed away after a brief illness. I am sure Frank and Jane will appreciate hearing from you, if you wish to express your sympathy to them and their family.

Contributions may be made in Katy's name to:

*The Meriden Humane Society,
311 Murdock Avenue, Meriden,
Connecticut 06450; or Animal
Friends of Connecticut, P.O. Box
370306, West Hartford, Con-
necticut 06137.*



Our June meeting at Van Wilgen's Garden Center went well, and I think that everyone was impressed by the meeting space that they provided, not to mention the somewhat overwhelming selection of plants and supplies offered at the nursery.

Jerry grows . . . probably the best private collection of cacti and succulents in the eastern U.S. . . .

We have a special event coming up in July. In conjunction with the **Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts**, the CCSS will be hiring a motor coach to take us to **Gerald and Bea Barad's** fifty-third annual open house, in Flemington, New Jersey. Jerry grows what is probably the best private collection of cacti and succulents in the eastern U.S., and also maintains beautiful outdoor gardens full of rare and unusual hardy plants. His greenhouses are particularly known for a world-class collection of stapeliads, but just about anything else that you might be interested in is likely to be represented there, from jewel-like hybrid haworthias to tree-sized caudiciforms.

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The Secretary's Report

The June meeting was held at Van Wilgen's in North Branford. We thank **Ceil Bauer** for making the arrangements for the wonderful accommodations. We welcomed a new member, **Diana Lindahl**.

Matt Opel related the sad news that **Frank and Jane Zapaka's** daughter, **Katy** passed away. We were all saddened to learn of this tragic news. We all send Frank and Jane our heartfelt condolences.

The situation with Naugatuck Valley Community College is still in limbo. Two of the people at the college with whom **Dave Schultz** has been in contact to arrange our annual shows are retiring. Dave thinks we can still have the show and sale there, but the conference is in question.

The room they are considering for the conference seats eighty-four to one hundred people. The only other place is the main stage and something is always going on there. Dave had stressed that we intend to pay more for security and janitorial services if that would make it financially easier for the college to accommodate the conference. We need to be able to jointly entertain both the Eastern Conference and our annual show and sale. Matt thanked Dave for keeping on top of things and working on getting permission for both events to be at the college.

Venue for July meeting is changed to Flemington, New Jersey.

The meeting in July had been scheduled to be at Quakin' Grass Nursery in Brooklyn, Connecticut. **Dan Downey**, of the CSSM, came to our June meeting to tell us that their club was renting a bus to go to Gerald Barad's greenhouses in New Jersey and invited the CCSS to join them. The date of the trip is July 11, 2009. Matt Opel made a motion to change the July meeting day from July 12 to July 11. The motion was seconded by **Ken Mosher**. The motion was passed unanimously.

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From the President, continued

Dan Downey, outgoing president of the CSSM, has arranged to get us to Flemington in style, on a fifty-four-passenger touring coach with reclining seats, a video system, and an onboard bathroom. Jerry's place is about three hours from Connecticut, so these amenities will be appreciated. Part of the cost will be defrayed by the CCSS, so the trip will be a bargain for those who attend.

Our meeting with **Wayne Paquette** at Quackin' Grass Nursery, originally scheduled for July, has been postponed until September. Thank you to Wayne for his flexibility. In August we have our annual picnic scheduled at the home of vice president **Jeanine Loya**.

Thank you,
Matt Opel
President



The Connecticut Cactus and Succulent Society

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The CCSS Newsletter is published each month except January. Annual membership of \$12.00 includes subscription to the newsletter. This membership includes all members of an immediate family residing at the same residence. Payment is payable to the Treasurer, Mr. Ken Mosher, 8 Bailey Road, Andover, CT 06232.

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Secretary's Report, continued

Ken Mosher, treasurer of the CCSS, made a motion to allocate \$1,125 for our club's share of the transportation expenses. David Schultz seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

There are twenty-seven seats available on the bus for each of the two clubs. Each member will pay twenty dollars with the remainder of the cost for the coach subsidized by our club. At the closing of the meeting, some members paid and signed up for their seats.

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Dan Downey expects the bus to leave Massachusetts at 6:00 or 7:00 AM with one stop in Connecticut at the commuter parking lot across the street from Naugatuck Valley Community College.

We will leave the Barad's early—late afternoon—forgoing the spaghetti dinner the Barad's are offering, and select a restaurant enroute home. It was explained that if we stayed for the dinner, the Massachusetts group would not arrive home until the wee hours of Sunday morning.

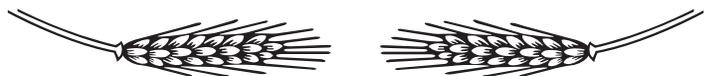
Dave Schultz brought in magazines, books and bonsai scissors for us to examine and purchase.

Matt Opel gave a talk on aloes with many samples that he passed among the members. Matt pointed out that *Aloe vera* is the best known of four hundred species of aloe. He said aloe are native to the old world: mostly Africa and Madagascar, but also from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

. . . aloes survive after flowering, but agaves do not.

Dan Downey brought in a cutting of *Aloe plicitalis* and passed out some aloe seeds. Matt Opel mentioned that *A. plicitalis* are sometimes hard to root from cuttings and need a fair amount of water. When asked to compare agaves and aloes, Matt said that one prominent difference is that aloes survive after flowering, but agaves do not.

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha Brown
Acting Secretary



Zapatkas Suffer Loss of Their Daughter

By Frank Zapatka

Katy Zapatka, at age thirty-three, died on June 2 at the Waterbury hospital after a very short but relentless battle with pneumonia.

She was born on March 14, 1976 in Waterbury, Connecticut, being Jane's and my first child.

Katy was schooled in Connecticut and in Utah and followed her career as a Customer Loyalty Specialist at Aetna Insurance Company for eleven years.

She successfully survived cancer—this was her eighth year cancer free—but the pneumonia was just too strong. Katy went from just a cough to a respirator in two days. She died three days later.

She was loved and will be so missed. Jane and I would like to thank the many members for their cards and thoughts.

Frank Zapatka

A Visit to Tolland Marsh Pond

Dr Matt Opel

Tolland Marsh Pond is a rather large wetland (half a mile north to south) located in my neighborhood in the northeastern corner of Connecticut. The waters of the pond itself are acidic and dark, and ringed with a wide swampy margin of sedges, sphagnum moss, and thickets of blueberry and buttonbush. This is the kind of place where carnivorous plants grow, and in a recent trip to the pond I managed to find several different species of insect-eating greenery.

The most impressive carnivorous plant native to New England is the purple pitcher plant, *Sarracenia purpurea*. The pitcher plants were in full bloom when I checked them in late May. The dark maroon flowers attract pollinating bees, and are held well above the modified, water-filled leaves. The leaves are the business end of the plant; the part that actually traps and kills insects, then breaks them down in order to obtain nitrogen and other nutrients that are in short supply in bogs. Unlike some carnivorous plants, *Sarracenia purpurea* does not move: prey is attracted by the coloration of the leaf and nectar that it secretes, slides into the pool of liquid inside, drowns and is digested by bacterial action.

The pond is also home to both of the species of

sundew that occur in inland Connecticut, *Drosera rotundifolia* and *D. intermedia*. Sundews have glandular tentacles on their leaves that secrete sticky mucilage, and trap small insects. The tentacles and leaves slowly fold around and digest their prey. *Drosera rotundifolia* grows all around the pond in sphagnum moss, or on half submerged, water-



Sarracenia purpurea pitchers, with cranberry plants.

Photo by Dr. Matt Opel

logged wood. *Drosera intermedia* is not as widespread, and I saw just a few patches of it in mucky peat in open areas on floating mats of moss and vegetation.

Tolland Marsh Pond is not easily accessible, which does have the beneficial effect of limiting the number of



A sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*, growing in sphagnum moss.

Photo by Dr. Matt Opel

visitors to a fairly fragile habitat. There are few informal trails around the pond, but my botanizing has involved a good deal of bushwhacking through laurel thicket (mountain laurel is pretty, but it is a slow and scratchy process to

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Upcoming Events

Saturday, July 11: We will be visiting at Jerry Barad's home viewing his greenhouses and gardens in Flemington, New Jersey. See details in article below.

Bring a light chair and a sack lunch with you. Lunch will not be provided at the Barads'.

Sunday, August 2: The August meeting and annual picnic will be held at Jeanine and Andy Loy's home in East Nassau, New York.

Sunday, September 6: The September meeting will be held at Quackin' Grass Nursery in Brooklyn, Connecticut.

Jerry Barad's Open House

By Matt Opel

Our next "meeting" will be a visit to Jerry Barad's home on **Saturday**, July 11 (Note this is a Saturday, not the usual Sunday.)

We will be traveling with members of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts via motor coach.

The bus will depart promptly at 8:30 AM.

Pickup and drop-off will be at the commuter lot opposite Naugatuck Valley Community College, Chase Parkway, Exit 18 from I-84, Waterbury. The bus will depart promptly at 8:30 AM, and will arrive back at Waterbury around 9:00 PM.

The bus will arrive at Jerry's somewhat before noon. We will have the opportunity to enjoy his greenhouses, gardens and swimming pool all afternoon. (The pool is quite remarkable.) We will meet cactus and succulent enthusiasts from across the Northeast and be able to purchase plants from Jerry and other growers. Jerry will again offer his special soil mix.

We will depart Flemington around 5:00 PM, and stop at a restaurant for dinner on the way back to Waterbury.

About half the seats on the bus were reserved in early June.

The cost of twenty dollars is not refundable and does not include food. Please mail a check to treasurer Ken Mosher, and email or call president Matt Opel as soon as

possible in order to reserve a seat. About half the seats on the bus were already reserved as of early June, and there is no guarantee that there will be enough space for everyone who wants to attend.

Bring a picnic lunch, snacks and drinks, swimsuit and towel, money for dinner, a lightweight folding chair and clothing appropriate for a day outdoors.

Contact Matt if you have a strong cuisine preference for dinner. This will help him in selecting a restaurant.

Jerry's house is about a quarter-mile from the main road, and the bus will not be able to navigate the driveway. Be prepared for a short, mostly flat, walk. In a pinch, Jerry will be able to ferry people between the bus and his house via his giant, all-terrain, garden rover.

If you wish to drive yourself to the meeting, e-mail Jerry for instructions at gsbarad@earthlink.net. ○

[Contacts for both Matt and Ken can be found on page 2.]

Marsh Pond continued from page 3, right column

cross a dense stand of it). The marshes where the carnivorous plants occur are treacherous as well, with floating hummocks and sphagnum mats providing doubtful footing over sunless water and peat slurry of indeterminate depth. Tolland Marsh Pond also has poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), which is a bit like poison ivy, but twice as toxic and as tall as a lilac. Nasty, nasty stuff, which most people will fortunately never run into, since it is almost entirely confined to bogs. ○

Dr. Matt Opel is Curator at the UConn EEB Plant Growth Facilities in Storrs, Connecticut.

Treasurer's Report

Income:

Dues	\$180.00
Jerry Barad trip pre-payments	160.00
Pumice Sale	25.00
Donations	12.00

Expenses:

April Newsletter	\$303.14
June Newsletter	262.34
May Newsletter	197.30
Coir Disks for April Show and Sale	120.00
Hartford Flower Show Parking (Sully)	10.00
Helen Pritchard April Show and Sale	
Supplies	<u>25.43</u>

Total Income (Expense) (\$541.21)