



ON THE DRY SIDE

MAY 2025

From the Editor

When we attended our first Monterey Bay Cactus and Succulent Society meeting, a few years before COVID, we were ignored. No one looked up. Everyone was eating around tables and no one paid any attention to us. We were close to leaving when a cheery man approached us and said he didn't recognize us and is this our first meeting. He proceeded to show us around and get us settled. That man was Gary Stubblefield. He was the official or unofficial MC of the meetings back then. I think he ran the raffle and just generally made everyone comfortable.

Over the years, I got to know Ellen and Gary. They moved across the street from my family's house, the house I lived in as a teenager and my father still lives there. On the weekend, we would see each other at our favorite coffee shop at breakfast. Gary would brag that he put up a flyer for the sale there before I could.

Gary loved the MBACSS show and sale. He loved being at the back door to see everyone leave with a box of plants and a smile. He loved being around the members and always had a smile on his face.

Gary passed away April 19th, the Saturday of our sale. I will miss him. His obituary is in this newsletter. We have lost 3 members in 3 months and this is the second consecutive month we have had an obituary in the newsletter. We all need to treasure each member because we do not know how long we have with them.

Nancy



APPROVED MINUTES

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Call to Order: Mary Cross.

Members present: Mary Cross, Peter Beiersdorfer, Nancy Thomsen, David Kurtz, Jorge Quiñonez, Lou Falek, Lyn MacDonald, Diane Salewski, Meryl Abramson.

Minutes: Mary/Meryl. All action items completed. March minutes accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report: Lou. Accepted as presented. Our CD matured and was reinvested; Lou has adequate working capital at this time. Lou will donate half the cost of the Show & Sale volunteer incentive gift.

Chairpersons' Reports:

Membership: Lyn. We have approximately 140 paid memberships. Report accepted as presented.

Sunshine Committee: No updates.

Programs: Jorge. No general meeting in April due to Show & Sale. The May program will be a travelogue with Troy Stephens. Stan is scheduled to bring the Raffle plants in May.

Old Business: Lyn will reach out to Tom Karwin to ask him to please respond to KSQD, and ask that he write an article about the Show & Sale for the Sentinel and Herald. Diane will add a page to the website about the Club's founders.

New Business: All. The upcoming Spring Show is April 18-19-20. Mary has sent out postcards. Lyn has e-mailed more than 100 people. The press release is out and publicity has started. We have a full slate of vendors but no potters this show. Volunteer incentive mugs have been received. Food, signs, free (give-away) plants, vendor speeches are covered. We will have a small memorial at the Show in memory of Naomi; Lyn has frames and Diane will purchase a guest book so that people can add their memories.

Adjournment: Mary.

Respectfully submitted by Meryl Abramson

Gary Lee Stubblefield, beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away peacefully on April 19, 2025, at the age of 89, surrounded by the love of his cherished family.

Born on December 5, 1935, in Colgate, Oklahoma, to James Edward “Ed” Stubblefield and Jewel Violet Stubblefield, Gary moved at a young age to Chualar, California. There, surrounded by a large extended family, he created a lifetime of joyful memories filled with cousin camaraderie and small-town stories, laughter, and warmth.

A proud graduate of Gonzales High School, Gary left a lasting legacy as a scholar, athlete, and leader. He served as Class President for two years and played on the football, basketball, baseball and track. As quarterback, he led his team through a legendary football victory over King City—still fondly remembered by alumni. His wide-ranging achievements and exemplary character were honored when he was inducted into the Gonzales High School Hall of Fame on May 12, 2007.

Gary’s life changed forever on a Monterey County 4-H ski trip, where he met the love of his life, Ellen Russell. Three years later, they married and began their life together in Bolsa Knolls before settling in King City. There, Gary played an instrumental role in modernizing local telephone systems from operator-assisted to direct-dial, a meaningful advancement for the community.

Together, Gary and Ellen raised three children—Janet (David Sparks), Nancy (Tony Cunha Jr.), and Chris (ConnieJo)—in a home full of devotion, laughter, and hard work. Gary’s life reflected his deep commitment to family and community. He was a proud supporter of the Jaycees and King City Junior Miss Programs, even traveling with Ellen to chaperone a local contestant to the national pageant in Mobile, Alabama. As a trusted local Pepsi Cola distributor and a dedicated Little League coach, Gary gave back with heart—often coaching without having a child on the team.

He took immense joy in his role as a grandfather and “Grandpa Great.” His legacy continues through his grandchildren—Kyle Sparks, Amy Rose (Casey), Jaclynn Slobodnik (David), Anthony Cunha III (Monica), Andrew Cunha (Katie), and Crystal Tomlinson (JT)—and his 19 great-grandchildren, who lovingly knew him as “Grandpa Great.” Whether on the sidelines of sports events or cheering from the stands, Gary’s presence brought pride, comfort, and joy to generations of his family.

Gary’s roots in agriculture were equally deep. A proud Chualar 4-H alumnus, he quickly stood out as a leader and was honored as a Monterey County All Star—one of the highest honors a 4-H member can achieve. That early recognition reflected a lifelong passion for mentoring youth. He remained deeply involved in 4-H across Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, volunteering for decades at the Monterey County Fair and serving for years as a livestock director at the Santa Cruz County Fair.

In the 1970s, Gary and Ellen built their dream home on 13 acres in Crazy Horse Canyon, where they lived for 45 years. There, they raised sheep and miniature cattle and developed a deep love for succulents and cactus, eventually joining five different cactus and succulent clubs and showcasing their collection at fairs and events. Together, they also enjoyed attending horse shows, finding joy in the animals and the community spirit that surrounded these events.

Their shared passion extended to travel, with memorable adventures to Australia, Africa, China, London, Russia, and England. For years, they joined close 4-H friends on annual ski trips, creating unforgettable memories.

In 2019, due to health concerns, Gary made the bittersweet decision to leave the land they had loved for decades and move into town. Even then, his resilience, grace, and love for family never wavered.

Gary's legacy is one of kindness, laughter, hard work, service, and unwavering love. His presence enriched every room, every gathering, and every life he touched. In everything Gary did, he excelled.

He will be deeply missed and joyfully remembered.



The annual Spring Show and Sale was held last month. Due to it being Easter weekend, we were short on volunteers, but our vendors helped out and we made it through. The sale was a success, even with the holiday weekend. The show was a People's Choice show and our customers had a great time selecting their favorites and examining all the beautiful plants. I am very pleased with the turn out and we made a profit!

UPCOMING SALES

Our next sales will not be on a holiday weekend.

Fall 2025 September 13 & 14

Spring 2026 April 24 & 25

Fall 2026 September 26 & 27

Please put these dates on your calendar now. Don't hesitate, do it now!

THANK YOU

My first thank you goes to Lou Falek for donating the food

My second thank you goes to Lyn McDonald for preparing the food

As always, Peter Beiersdorfer for managing the sale

Next is Mary Cross for helping with the speakers

And David Kurtz for working with the volunteer program

And Gloria Buxton who worked almost the entire sale at check out

And every member who took time from their holiday weekend to work a shift

And every vendor who brought beautiful plants to sell and helped wherever needed

And to every member who helped promote the show and sale

We couldn't do it without you!

MAKING CHANGES - TIMING

When to repot, prune excess growth, take cuttings, or in any way physically disturb your plants is closely related to dormancy. Succulents differ from many other types of plants when it comes to making changes and the last thing you want to do is disturb them when they are resting. Rare slow growing species are particularly sensitive and drastic changes can indeed be fatal. When repotting, wait until you see signs of new growth. Shaping or trimming back excess growth is best done right before the growth period. For summer growers this would be March and for winter growers, it means August. Fast growing robust species can usually be repotted or pruned anytime.

GROWING IN CONTAINERS

Cultivating succulents in containers is vastly different than other plant groups. Using the right size pot has a huge effect on the appearance of any plant. It's a natural tendency to want to give your plants plenty of root space in the mistaken belief that this will make them grow better or faster. In fact it has the opposite effect as most succulents will slow to a crawl. Many slow growing rare species stop altogether because they just don't like sitting in a large volume of moist mix. Most experienced growers eventually rethink how they pot and abandon the urge to overpot.

When repotting, go up only ½ inch in pot size. For larger plants in 5 inch or larger containers, you can safely increase in one inch increments. If you use a container that is too large, the roots will grow out of proportion to the rest of the plant and most of the growth energy will be channeled to the branches and leaves. One look at a plant with a large crown of thin branches and floppy leaves usually reveals a container that is too large. The right size container makes a big difference when repotting.

When repotting, disturb the roots as little as possible. Usually the root ball will come out intact in one solid piece. Leave it this way and do not attempt to crush or spread it out like you would for a tropical. This will only set the plant back and can quickly lead to fatal root rot. Also do not put old pot chards, gravel, or anything else in the bottom of your container. This will actually promote root tip decay. Simply use a piece of screen wire to cover the drainage hole.



A TOUR WITH TROY: NORTHERN OAXACA

Troy Stephens is a plant grower, collector, and enthusiast from Alameda and has been growing cacti and succulents since he was a young man. He is a Horticulturist at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco, a perennial volunteer at the Gardens at Lake Merritt in Oakland, and has been on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Cactus and Succulent Society for 7 years, amongst being a member of a handful of the other plant societies of the greater Bay Area.

Traveling is a newer interest, and after seeing the Cacti, Palm, and Cycads of Oaxaca, he hopes to visit more of these special habitats to see these plants we all love. Aloe, cycads, palms, bulbs, and caudiciform succulents represent a significant portion of what he likes to propagate, grow, and collect, but like many of us, he likes to grow a bit of everything. His talk will be focused on Cacti and Succulents and a few other plants in Northern Oaxaca.



UPCOMING MEETINGS:

May 18, 2025

Presenter: Troy Stephens
Topic: A Botanical Tour of Oaxaca
Mini Show: Show and Tell

June 15, 2025

Presenter: Anna Bower
Topic: Journey Through Ganna
Walska Lotusland
Mini Show: Show and Tell

July 15, 2025

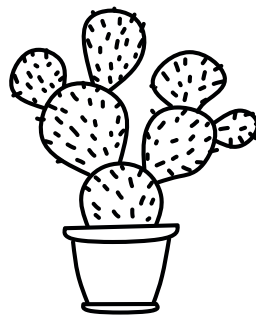
Presenter: Jorge Quinonez
Topic: Epiphytic Cacti
Mini Show: Show and Tell

FUTURE MBACSS SALES SAVE THE DATES

Here are the dates of the
upcoming sales for 2025:

Fall 2025 - Sept 13, 14

Spring 2026 - April 26, 27



SPRING SHOW HIGHLIGHTS



OFFICERS

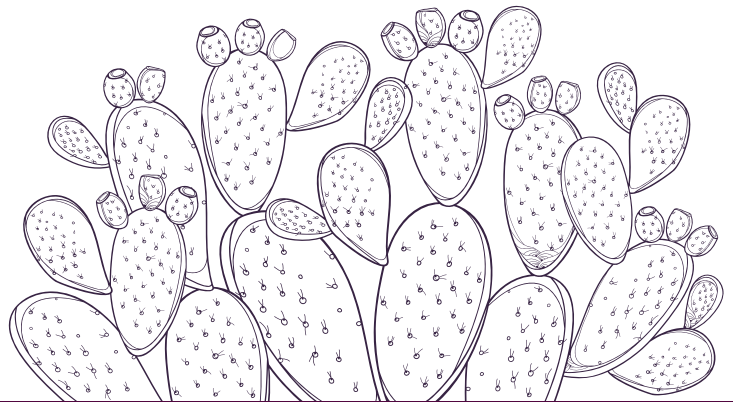
President - Mary Cross
Vice President - Nancy Thomsen
Secretary - Meryl Abramson
Treasurer - Lou Falek
Membership - Lyn MacDonald
Affiliate Representative - Jorge Quiñónez
Directors at Large
David Kurtz
Daisy Szeto
Immediate Past President - Tom Karwin
Founding Member - Naomi Bloss

CHAIRPERSONS

Interim Librarian - David Kurtz
Mini-Show - Stan Verkler
Newsletter Editor - Nancy Thomsen
Photography - Paul Albert
Programs - Jorge Quiñónez
Raffles - Meryl Abramson
Sale Floor Manager - Peter Beiersdorfer
Assistant Floor Manager - Janet Sparks
Sunshine Committee - Cheryl Albert
Webmaster - Diane Salewski
Greeter - Dave Novarina

**See our website for
more information!**

mbsucculent.org



Our next membership meeting will be:

**Sunday, May 18, 2025
Corralitos Grange
165 Little Corral Way, Corralitos.**

There is plenty of parking near the hall and the building is ADA accessible.
Doors open at 11:00am
Bring your own lunch starts at 12:00pm
Meeting starts at 12:30pm