Greetings!

We are resurrecting the newsletter of the California Botanical Society. The last newsletter was almost a century ago and we thought it was time to bring it back (see below). That newsletter carried dates and locations of field trips and notes on general meetings. Our goal is to inform membership of upcoming meetings, new botanists in the state, short articles about plants or their environment, and letters discussing different topics. So please, participate in this new forum. You can email the newsletter editor, Tom Parker, at parker@sfsu.edu.

The original newsletter of the society.

In this first newsletter, I want to introduce the membership to the MEDECOS meetings. Parts of the west shares a climate with 4 other regions of the world. Roughly every 3-4 years, scientists from these regions meet together. The last meeting was in Chile. The tarantula spotted us walking on the same trails near Ulmué, Chile, and waved in joy!

Announcements:

The Northern California Botanists will hold their annual meeting in Chico on 10-13 January 2016. Cal Bot Soc will host the mixer on the 10th. More information is available at: http://www.norcalbotanists.org/

The 2016 Banquet Meeting for the California Botanical Society will be held in 9 April 2016 at California State University, Bakersfield. The meeting features a special field trip to the Tejon Ranch with Maynard Moe as the local botanist guide. Should be amazing because there is actually rain this year! Just hope it continues a while, without floods and mudslides. Phil Rundel (UCLA) will be the banquet speaker! You can follow this event and find more details at our website: http://calbotsoc.org/events/

The next Graduate Student Meeting sponsored by the California Botanical Society will be held in April 2017. As you know, it is never too early to begin preparing. The Santa Barbara Botanical Garden has tentatively agreed to host the meeting. Keep watching the webpage until we’ve firmed this up. We’re all looking forward!

The newsletter provided information about meetings and field trips, and other items of note. We hope to carry on the contact among us who are all spread out in the west.
Dale W. McNeal  by Mark Brunell (University of the Pacific)

While attending the 1969 International Botanical Congress in Seattle, Dale W. McNeal became a member of the California Botanical Society. That same year, he began his academic career at the University of the Pacific (UOP) in Stockton, CA. Dale served as president of the Society from 1987-88. Dale has been focused on taxonomic problems and new species descriptions in the genus Allium since his Ph.D. dissertation.

In a recent interview, Dale reminisced about the workings of the Society in the early 1970s. The Society held monthly meetings for general members (expect during summer), with locations varying between UC Berkeley, Stanford, and UOP. During these meetings, members would give talks, and Dale did at least three himself. Attendance at these meetings would range from 10 to 20 people. He remembers that the banquet took place once per year, and the Society would get a prominent individual to speak. While Dale was president, one of the members had a connection with Stephen Jay Gould and arranged for him to speak (for free). Dale remembers that as a highlight of his time as president.

Dale was born in Kansas City, Kansas, and spent summers in Estes Park, Colorado, learning about nature and plants in particular. He started his undergraduate education in engineering at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Finding that he disliked math, his father suggested that since he liked Colorado, nature, and plants, he should move to Colorado College and major in botany. After one semester in Lawrence, Dale followed his father’s advice and became a botany major at Colorado College. This school had a single botanist, C. William T. Penland, who had a great influence on Dale.

Dale thought about forestry as a career, and decided to work on his master’s degree at the New York Forestry College in Syracuse, where he met his wife Arlene. One of the faculty at the college was John L. Morrison, who had been a student of Lincoln Constance. John Morrison also had a great influence on Dale and convinced him to become a taxonomist. Years later, Morrison retired and moved to the Bay Area, near San Francisco, allowing Dale and Arlene to continue their relationship with him.

After receiving his M.S. degree, Dale served in the army for two years. He was stationed in West Germany, and married Arlene there. Looking ahead to his Ph.D., Dale wrote letters to a few schools out west. He received offers of support from both Oregon State University, which offered him $1500 per year, and from Washington State University, which offered him $2800 per year. The choice was obvious. He wrote to Marion Ownbey and their relationship began. In the process of looking for a project, Dale reviewed Ownbey’s Tragopogon work and decided to go another direction. Ownbey had a series of Allium specimens that were collected in the 1950’s that were sitting and needed attention. Dale took an interest and began work on the Allium acuminatum alliance. He graduated with his Ph.D. in 1969. Dale’s most memorable Allium story is when Allium shevockii was laid on the table before him for the first time. He commented “that’s new”. Dale subsequently published it as a new species. It occurs in the southern Sierra near Chimney Creek campground, a favorite collecting and camping spot for Dale and UOP California Flora class students.

Dale was the Liliaceae (s.l.) family editor for the Jepson Manual 1st edition. He also prepared the Allium treatment for Flora of North America and the Jepson Manual 2nd edition. He also prepared a few other genera in the Liliaceae s.l.
Other Organizations and Meetings

**MEDECOS**

A society that you may not be aware of is ISOMED, the International Society of Mediterranean Ecology. They have been having meetings for decades starting in 1971, rotating among the 5 Mediterranean regions. These are called MEDECOS, for Mediterranean Ecosystems. The first was held in Valdivia, Chile, and organized by Francesco di Castri of the University of Valdivia, along with Hal Mooney of Stanford. The most recent meeting was last year, October 6-9, 2014 in Ulmué, Chile. The meeting included a series of plenary talks, three of which were by Californians, Hal Mooney (Stanford), Phil Rundel (UCLA) and Katherine Suding (UCB, and University of Colorado). The other two were by David Richardson (Stellenbosch University, South Africa), and Fernando Valladares (Spanish Research Council [CSIC]). The meetings included a number of sessions, all focusing on the biology of Mediterranean ecosystems. North America (Alto and Baja Calif.) was well represented.

Anna Jacobsen and Brandon Pratt, current Vice-Presidents of Cal Bot Soc, joining the trip to La Campana National Park.
A highlight of the meetings was an all-day field trip to Parque Nacional La Campana (La Campana National Park) named after the dominant mountain here, La Campana. This is one of the places Charles Darwin hiked to observe Chilean and South American nature. Always exciting to visit places of personal heroes, and to imagine their responses. This park is home to a lot of incredible plants for a North American botanist. One of my favorites was Drimys winteri, from the vesselless Winteraceae. Below is the impressive Echinopsis chiloensis. These large cacti host a beautiful red parasitic plant in the genus Tristerix.

*Echinopsis* (Cactaceae) and *Tristerix* (Loranthaceae)

*Drimys winteri* (Winteraceae) (above)

One of the many *Calceolaria* species
On the north side of La Campana is a large relict population of the Chilean Wine Palm, *Jubaea chilensis*. The website at Kew Gardens says that Charles Darwin described it as a ‘very ugly tree’, but this is one of the most impressive palms in the world.

This palm is called the wine palm because the sap was used to create an fermented beverage. This population at La Campana now is protected.

One of the benefits of international meetings is exploring the world we live in. MEDECOS meetings are especially nice because the habitats all seem so familiar, yet the plants are all so slightly (or greatly) different. Besides, we share weeds; in Chile, *Eschscholzia californica* covers the roadsides and disturbed areas.
And of course, the beautiful Chilean mattral!

Two of the most common plants here were *Listraea caustica* (Anacardiaceae) and *Colletia* sp. (Rhamnaceae).

*Listraea caustica* (bottom left) is one of those plants that can cause severe skin rashes. Fortunately I’m not allergic to it as I didn’t discover that aspect until my third trip into the mattral. Reminded me of *Rhus ovata*.

The species in *Colletia* are all spiny shrubs (bottom right).

Many of the other plants would be familiar to you as well. Several species of *Equisetum* were shrubby size plants that dominate certain areas. Some slopes had large *Puya* plants, a genus sister to the rest of the Bromeliaceae.
One of the most interesting plants was what I thought at first was a strange wintergreen. Then the classic Dutchman’s pipe flower let me know I had found *Aristolochia chilensis* (Aristolochiaceae).

This vine was growing along the ground on the hot north-facing slopes of La Campana, fairly different habitat from out local species.

The entrance to the flower is densely covered with coarse hair.

The next meeting location is still being decided, but the bets were on Spain. I encourage all interested in the ecology of California and other Mediterranean systems to consider going to the next meeting. Because the meetings are small, you get to meet almost everyone and have the long conversations that great meetings are supposed to provide.
Job Announcements:

**Associate Director, CNPS**

CNPS is seeking an Associate Director. The Associate Director (AD) is a new leadership position. Under the direction of the Executive Director, the AD manages and enhances internal organization processes and infrastructure to ensure smooth and seamless operations that support CNPS’s ability to fulfill its mission. Complete job description is available at http://CNPS.org.

**Plant Biologist, Tenure-Track Position**

The Biological Sciences Department in the College of Science and Mathematics at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo is seeking a full-time, academic year, tenure track Plant Biologist beginning September 2016. To apply, visit https://www.calpolyjobs.org

**Director, University of California Botanical Garden (UCBG)**

The University of California – Berkeley seeks applications for a Director of the University of California Botanical Garden (UCBG). This full-time position is anticipated to start in July 2016 for an initial three-year term, and is renewable thereafter based upon performance. https://aprecruit.berkeley.edu/apply/JPF00883

**Assistant Director for Horticulture and Collections**

Assistant Director for Horticulture and Collections at the Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden (MEMBG), UCLA. http://www.botgard.ucla.edu/

**Curator, San Francisco Botanical Garden Society**

Please submit resume and cover letter outlining background, experience, interest and salary requirements via email, to curator@sfbg.org. SFBGS hopes to fill the position as soon as possible.

**Assistant Professor and Herbaria Director position**

Louisiana State University invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor position and Herbaria Director. Visit: http://www.herbarium.lsu.edu

**Rare Plant Biologist, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden**

Responsible for running a comprehensive rare plant conservation research program. monitoring, rare plant seed collection, and species recovery. http://www.sbbg.org/get-involved/employment/current-openings

**California Botanical Society Officers 2015-2016**

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