

Minutes of the August 23, 2023, AIS Zoom Board Meeting

In attendance:

Andi Rivarola (15) - President, Convention Liaison (temporary), Social Media Chair,
Strategic Planning Chair, Membership Development Chair,
Bulletin Editorial Board Chair

Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) - 1st VP, Judges Chair, Handbook Revision Chair

Howie Dash (23) - 2nd VP, RVP Counselor, Audit Chair

Claire Schneider (15) - AIS Secretary, Recording Secretary

Jill Bonino (15) – AIS Treasurer, Foundation Liaison, Foundation Treasurer

Jody Nolin (6) - Immediate Past President, Honorary Awards Chair,
Affiliate Liaison (absent)

John Ludi (13) – Publication Sales Director, Convention 2024 Co-Chair

Jane Milliman (2) - Bulletin editor (absent)

Cheryl Deaton (15) - Director, Youth Chair (absent)

Doug Chyz (5) - Director, Public Relations & Marketing Co-Chair

Heather Haley (4) - Director, World of Irises Blog Manager

Janis Shackelford (15) – Director, Registrar/Recorder, Image Coordinator, Policy,
RVP 15

Jean Richter (14) - Director, Membership Secretary , Iris Programs Digital

Linda Wilkie (21) - Director, Advertising

Lorene Crone (7) – Director, Electronic Services

Mike Reed (17) – Director, RVP 17, Annual Awards

Phyllis Wilburn (14) – Director, Section & Cooperating Society Liaison

Scarlett Ayres (23) – Director (absent)

Susan Driver (7) – Director, Calendars, Photo Contest Chair

Wayne Messer (21) - Director, News & Notes, Electronic Services

Margaret Kelly (9) - RVP 9, RVP Representative

Anna Cadd (14) - Spuria Iris Society VP

Beth Train (15) - Region 15 JT Chair

Bob Hollingworth (8) - Library, Scientific Advisory

Bob Pries (4) - Encyclopedia Manager, Gardens, Public Relations & Marketing Co-Chair

Carol Cullen (14) - Region 14 JT Chair

Carolyn Hoover (14) - RVP 14

Chad Harris (13) - Convention 2024 Co-Chair

Charlotte Brennand (12) - RVP 12

Christine Dickinson (14)

Delane Langton (11) - Convention 2025 Co-Chair

Fred Pedersen (6) - RVP 6

Gary White (21) - Finance, Webinars

Harriet Robinson (1) - RVP 1

Jacqueline Pountney (23) - RVP 23

Jan Blaedel (13)

Jeanette Graham (11) - RVP 11

Joanne Bassett (2)
Karen Hudson (14)
Kate Brewitt (2)
Kenneth Duke (5)
Lois Rose (4) - Exhibitions Schedules
Mary Platner (15)
Veronica Johnson (18) - Counsel

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM PDT. A quorum was present.

1. Approval of the minutes from the June 28, 2023, Zoom AIS Meeting - Claire Schneider (note: The July AIS meeting was canceled.)

Motion 1: Motion to approve the minutes with changes.

Motion by Janis Shackelford and seconded by Doug Chyz. Motion approved.

REPORTS

2. AIS blog, *World of Irises* - Heather Haley

A digital report was posted, information only. The blog continues to grow, with over 1.5 million users. The posts about iris culture are the most popular. Eight authors contribute to the blog. Heather asked for volunteers to become regular contributors to the blog and for contributions from guest authors.

3. AIS Library - Bob Hollingworth

A digital report was posted, information only. The Library Committee meets monthly. Current issues are finding an appropriate, permanent location for the Library; engaging a permanent librarian; completing an inventory and organization of materials in the Library. During a recent work visit, some old recordings of John Wister, Clara Rees, and the Sass brothers were found and are now being digitized. Bob asked for a volunteer to become slide manager, taking over for Janet Smith. There are hundreds of slides that need to be digitized, organized, and transferred to the Library.

A policy for accessions and rejections needs to be developed. This policy would set up a system for evaluating donations for their value to the AIS. In addition, the policy should make clear that accepted donations become the property of AIS Library and their future home would be determined by the AIS Library.

4. Electronic Services - Wayne Messer

A digital report was posted, information only. Tim Valenzuela continues to work on the integrated system. His recent projects include adding the integrated system to the AIS website, adjusting the process for membership purchases and renewal, and adding functional email addresses (e.g., secretary@irises.org). Wayne advised that all AIS google groups add Electronic Services as a manager or owner to their group in case there is a problem or sudden absence of the original group manager or owner. Wayne

asked that Electronic Services be notified when there has been a personnel change of officer so that the change can quickly be updated on the AIS website.

As of November 1st, Wayne will step down as electronic services co-chair. Linda Wilkie will take his place. Thank you Wayne for your dedication and hours of work for AIS electronic services.

Bob Pries reported that there has been a massive jump in users of the *Iris Encyclopedia* (the wiki), from about 68,000 users in May to over 90,000 in August.

5. General Counsel - Veronica Johnson

A digital report was posted, information only. Dale Strauss formally resigned as AIS general counsel as of June 30th. The primary issue for AIS is the group tax-exemptions. Subordinates and affiliates can join the AIS tax-exemption group if the appropriate forms are filled out and filed. A few affiliates thought they had a 501(C)3 tax-exempt status but in reality, did not. The simplest solution for some of these affiliates was to dissolve and reorganize under a new name and EIN. Veronica encouraged any AIS group that has a problem with the Internal Revenue Service to contact her.

If a club, region, section, or any AIS subordinate group does not hear anything from the IRS, then the club and group can assume that their 501(C)3 status is valid. The IRS website has an **exempt check page** where tax status can be checked by entering the appropriate EIN number.

6. Registrar - Janis Shackelford

Two digital reports were posted. The online *Iris Register* is up and running due to the excellent work of Tim Valenzuela. Janis recommended several modifications of the instructions to hybridizers. She will forward those modifications to Wayne Messer who can make those changes to the AIS website.

Janis has added this year's AIS Awards to the appropriate irises in the *Iris Register*. She found awards missing from previous years and has also added those.

In her second report, Janis proposed that the online registration system align with the current policy: the registration year runs from December 1st to November 30th. Tim Valenzuela will be able to make this adjustment to the new system.

In addition, the 500 plus registrations recorded in December 2022 will need to be moved to the 2023 registration year.

Janis requested that the details of the registration year be made clear on the AIS website.

To verify an introduction date, Janis requests the hybridizers to email her a catalog.

7. Scientific Advisory - Bob Hollingworth

In 2023, nothing scientific was submitted.

8. Section and Cooperating Societies - Phyllis Wilburn

Phyllis reported that the process of receiving reports continues to be difficult.

9. AIS Awards & the new integrated system - Mike Reed

A digital report was posted in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. Overall, the voting went well. There were a few small glitches, all which were addressed by Mike, Tim Valenzuela, Bonnie Nichols, Janis Shackelford, and others. Three hundred and seventy-nine judges were eligible to vote. Of those, 91% of the judges voted. Fifty-six percent of the ballots were electronic, 44% were paper ballots. Mike also had a breakdown by region of votes cast. Mike included in his report all the feedback for the online voting system. Mike did ask for suggestions on how to increase the number of judges who would vote online. The cost is about \$3000 per year to mail out a paper ballot.

A suggestion was to add to any Awards and Ballots judges training program a review of how to vote the AIS Ballot online.

For those who really like their paper ballot, it was pointed out that a pdf version of the AIS Ballot can be posted for download and printed by anyone who wants it. A printed copy is useful in the garden.

UPDATES & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10. Convention 2024 - John Ludi and Chad Harris

A tentative schedule was posted for the Portland Convention, June 26 to 29, in the documents for this meeting and in AIS4Talking. One of the highlights will be the live auction of Japanese iris. Winners will be handed a live iris. The gardens will be Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden, Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm, Mid-America Garden, Miller's Manor Gardens, and Misty River Garden. An optional tour is planned to the Portland Japanese Garden. Three judges training sessions are being planned: Spec/Spec-X, Japanese iris and Awards & Ballots.

Because there is another Holiday Inn nearby, John emphasized that we speak the entire name, **Holiday Inn Portland-Columbia Riverfront**, when making hotel reservations. At a later time, John will post the phone number and email link for making reservations at the hotel which is located outside of Portland. The hotel does not provide transportation to and from the airport.

11. AIS Convention 2026 - Andi Rivarola

A digital report was posted. Tentatively, the 2026 Convention in New Jersey & New York is scheduled for May 18 to 23, 2026. The four gardens already confirmed are Presby Memorial Iris Garden (Montclair, NJ), Rutgers University Gardens (North Brunswick Township, NJ), Gary Slagel's garden (Gibbstown, NJ), and Brooklyn Botanic Garden (Brooklyn, NY). Tentative optional tours are The Highline (NYC), Grounds for Sculpture (Hamilton Township, NJ), and The New York Botanical Garden (NY). There was a suggestion to include Siberian irises in this convention, perhaps at the Rutgers

gardens. On their 160 acres, Rutgers is willing to place clusters of beardless irises. George Hildenbrandt will be the guest iris chair.

Motion 2: that AIS accept this proposal to have the 2026 AIS Convention in New Jersey and New York.

Motion by Jill Bonino and seconded by Lorene Crone. Motion passed.

Discussion: Because this convention is a do-over of the 2020 centennial convention, some attendees are considering wearing their 1920s costume.

NEW BUSINESS

12. Registering unregistered irises - Bob Pries

A digital report was posted. Last year Bob ordered two Japanese irises from Breck's. When they bloomed he discovered that one iris was misnamed and both were unregistered in the AIS Registry. Bob researched other large horticultural commercial firms and found that many of them are sold as "dinner plate" irises that are unregistered. Bob sent a letter to Melanie Underwood, the international cultivar registrar, asking that she investigate this issue of unregistered irises. Bob suggested that the supplier of irises to Breck's and other horticultural commercial firms be identified and strongly urged to register all their irises.

Discussion: This issue of the sale of unregistered irises also applies to Pacific coast irises. Another aspect is the renaming of registered irises which are then sold under the new name. Andi Rivarola will form a committee to address this issue of unregistered irises. A suggestion was to include the Scientific Committee and a hybridizer who sells their own unregistered irises.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

All of the 2023 awards have been added to the cultivar pages in the *Iris Encyclopedia*. During his work of updating cultivar pages, Doug Chyz is adding cross links between the *Iris Encyclopedia* and the *HIPS Gallery* for historic cultivars.

The next AIS Board of Directors meeting will be September 27, 2023, 5 pm PDT via Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm PDT.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Schneider