

**AIS BOARD ZOOM MEETING MINUTES  
January 22, 2025**

Note: The attendance is located at the end of these minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm CST (5:00 pm PST) by Bonnie Nichols. She welcomed the attendees and thanked Andi Rivarola for his service to the AIS.

A quorum was present.

1. Minutes of the AIS Fall Board Meeting November 2, 2024- Claire Schneider

**Motion1:** To approve the minutes of the November meeting as presented.

Motion by Howard Dash, seconded by Jill Bonino. Motion approved.

**REPORTS**

2. President's Report- Bonnie Nichols

A digital report was posted, information only. Bonnie shared a spreadsheet with 50 names and corresponding duties and committees. All play a critical role, including non-Board members from Veronica Johnson who is the legal counsel to past presidents. Bonnie made this document so she'll have a better idea of the committees, structure, etc. It is a very fluid document and will change repeatedly. This will be helpful in succession planning or disaster recovery with redundancy built in.

3. Exhibition Schedules-Olga Batalov

A digital report was posted, information only. There were 106 shows approved in 2024, including two Fall rebloom shows as well as two AIS-accredited virtual shows. So far, there are 21 approved shows in 2025. Expenses were on average similar as those in the past. Printing of certificates not outsourced. Shipping is going to be the main expense. Average turnaround time to approve show schedules is 3 days. Olga made an Excel sheet with added information on whether the show has artistic design, container-grown, or single blossom sections in addition to date of show, Show Chair information, number of certificates requested, etc.

4. Exhibition Reports-Adam Cordes (joined in late due to technical issues)

A digital report was posted, information only. Claire read Adam's report. For 2024, there was a total of 106 approved shows, three clubs cancelled so the total was 103- up from 2023. There were 19 clubs with Youth Divisions. There were 58 Exhibition Certificates issued. Two iris varieties tied for the Nelson Award, each variety winning Best of Show twice: 'Lady of Lometa' LA (J. Landers 2013) and 'Tuscan Summer' TB (K. Keppel 2010). There are only 27 Bronze and 50 Silver medals left in the inventory. The last shipment of medals was received in 2023 and will last into 2025.

He plans to order more. No issues of returned medals. It has been requested that an online source be easily accessible for clubs to print off a new show report. For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, expenses totaled \$412.79. Income was \$60 for additional medal requests.

5. Exhibition Supplies- Nick Stewart (absent)

A digital report was posted, information only. Claire read Nick's report.

A very good year for our shows. With a total of 64 orders, 7 more than 2023. A total of 64 orders yielded sales of \$ 5,289, in merchandise. In the fall, he will reorder the necessary backfill items of rosettes, etc., and have that order sent straight to the new chair. He will work with the new chair for a smooth, seamless transition.

Bonnie Nichols: Nick and his wife are moving to a smaller home. We will need to find someone to replace Nick. The biggest issue for the exhibition supplies chair is having some space for storing the supplies. Consider helping on this. If you know of anyone, Bonnie will be happy to talk to them and get this taken care of quickly.

6. Electronic Services-Linda Wilke (absent)

A digital report was posted, information only.

Wayne Messer presented a progress report on what we're doing with the website and additional software separate from the website to add to the Integrated System (IS). The website is getting out of date in the software because we are unable to update a couple of things in it because of the proprietary nature of the program put together earlier. The two major pieces are WordPress and PHP. We have WordPress 5.2, the current version is 6.2. The data bases are from PHP. We've contracted with Tim Valenzuela to migrate it to his servers- that will occur later this year.

We look at content all the time to keep it up to date. Appreciate it if you will let Linda, Lorene, or myself know of things that need to be changed, updated, or have trouble finding so we can incorporate them.

Other projects: incorporating the Affiliation process into the integrated online system (IOS.) One of the problems is generic emails at irises.org. Not all of them get through. Don't know if moving to Tim's servers will help this but that remains to be seen.

Wayne reviewed the website usage statistics. The number of visitors, number of visits, pages they looked at, bandwidth of the things that were served continue to increase. 2019 was when we went over to a new system.

*Comments/questions:* Bonnie noted that there were 109,681 visitors in 2024 Bob Pries asked if there are any problems with the Chinese or AI interfering with the number of visitors. He can tell that ¾ of the Iris Wikipedia visitors are bots because the phony accounts have Chinese IP addresses. Wayne mentioned that the statistics are

supposed to omit Bots like Google Search Bots. He doesn't know if the Chinese fall into this category.

#### 7. Policy-Janice Shackelford

A digital report was posted, information only, with 31 pages of tabulated motions made and actions taken from 2000-2024.

#### *Comments/questions:*

Jill Bonino asked if this should be on the website. Wayne mentioned that the Policy Report of motions is on the website, either in Excel or pdf. It's in the Archive which you can find under the Resources menu. We don't have the latest yet, but will get it from Janis or from the link provided by Claire.

Jody Nolin seconded Jill's idea of having this easily available. It's a valuable thing for research. The Library Committee has used it several times.

#### 8. Nominations-Susan Driver

A digital report was posted, information only. The committee has met twice, and identified a list of potential candidates. So far, there are 6 people who can be considered for the director position, one declined. The final list of candidates will be given prior to the Spring Board meeting.

#### 9. Symposium 2025-Riley Probst

A digital report was posted, information only.

Dusky Challenger won again this year, went away for 2 or 3 years. He doesn't have a way to keep track of the number of people who voted, but 5700 individual votes for an individual iris (based on AIS membership).

Howie Dash counted 180-200 individuals who voted in 2024. Every RVP sends tallies for each region, some lumped the votes together.

#### DISCUSSION:

Bonnie Nichols: The TB Symposium was created in 1941, The Tall Bearded Iris Society (TBIS) was created many years later. There are symposia for each section e.g., Spuria, Louisiana, etc. Bonnie reached out to Hugh Stout, president of TBIS, and asked him if TBIS can continue the symposium if AIS discontinues producing the ballot and the support of the symposium. Hugh's response was "The TBIS already has a popularity poll and he doesn't see any problem upgrading to the AIS version." AIS usually sends out the symposium ballot with the spring issue of the *Bulletin*. There are only 200 people or less voting, it is hard to get people to vote. Question to the Board: Should AIS continue the TB Symposium or turn over that responsibility to TBIS?

Howard Dash: If we are going to continue it, it is important that it be in the *Bulletin* because we get more people to vote that way.

Harriet Robinson, RVP Region 1: There is very little interest in her region, only judges vote, one judge voted this year, five judges previously. She thinks it's because there are many different classes of irises that iris society members grow now and are interested in medians, dwarf irises, and Siberians in Maine. It may be something we can encourage regions to do with irises they like in their region instead of AIS pushing TB.

Jill Bonino: If TBIS accepts it, they will send it only to TBIS members. The pool of voters will drop.

Susan Driver, RVP Region 7: The TBIS poll has a different format.

Anita Moran, RVP Region 4: Sending it electronically is cheap and easy. We might get more responses that way.

Bob Pries: We need to work out a system where we evaluate which irises do best in different parts of the country-NE, NW, SE, SW, Central. Voting can be done electronically with one person managing it for AIS. Part of the problem now is the huge number of choices on the ballot which is overwhelming. Right now, all we have is a popularity poll, not information on how well a particular iris grows in different climates.

Eric Tankesley-Clarke, RVP Region 18: Asked what motivated the question whether AIS should continue it. Bonnie replied that there has been a decline in voting over the years, and an increase in the amount of choices. TBIS also does its own popularity poll. Eric thinks that we should first decide what kind of symposium we would like to have.

Gary White: suggested the following

- a. reduce the number of entries by half
- b. voting should be electronic, done sort of the way the AIS ballots are done and tabulated automatically per region as Bob discussed. For those who want it printed, it can be downloaded and printed, then sent in.
- c. add in those sections that are willing to have their popularity poll included, separate for each iris class.
- d. publicize it more. The symposium comes out in the *Bulletin* every spring but it would be better if it can be downloaded.
- e. there should be a group set up to discuss what we should do and bring it back to the Board with suggestions for improvement.

Gary personally doesn't think that we should hand out the symposium to TBIS for reasons already mentioned.

Bonnie Nichols: a link to the symposium into *News and Notes* would be helpful.

Gary White: Repeated prompts in *News and Notes* so people will remember to do it.

Phyllis Wilburn, Region 14, membership secretary of TBIS, said there are only 375 TBIS members.

Anita Moran: If we have historical data, we can break it down to what grows best in what regions because those are the ones that will get voted on.

Heather Haley, Region 4: Regional reporting is valuable. Open to all irises. Understand our audience. Ballot should be user friendly, aimed for someone who is not yet an advanced iris collector, a non-judge, somebody who wants to get involved and participate, someone growing named irises. A committee that will create a plan is a great idea. In that plan, who we are trying to attract and how we report that.

Michael Reed: Going electronic is the right call. Non-judges can vote so if it's available to the public on the website, we could attract more votes. A spreadsheet contributed by each society could be part of the database. It could become part of Awards and Honors. Other than being only a popularity vote, there could be an award for a plant that grows the best in the widest geographical distribution similar to the 'All American Honor Selection' given out by the Rose and Daylily Societies.

Howard Dash: Follow-up comment. The way this works now, the RVP gets a tally sheet of the symposium that Howie created. Each RVP fills out the tally sheet with all the votes from their region. The votes come in by region, so that information is already available. The ballot is online. People can download and print it as pdf, then fill out, and send to their RVP, who tabulates results.

Great idea to have links in the *News and Notes* throughout the growing season into July. The only way for people to be able to vote directly online is if it is in the Integrated Online System.

Bob Pries: If it is on the website, the general public can vote. The RVPs need not get involved if it's in the Integrated System.

Andi Rivarola: We did have a group that met on this once. I think we should go back to the beginning. What purpose does it serve? What are we going to use the result for? We should make an effort to get it done and don't give it to TBIS.

Bob Pries: 40 years ago, people liked it. It was seen as a perk of being an AIS member but it has lost its value and meaning now.

Bonnie Nichols: Please email Bonnie if you would like to be on the committee. The meeting will take place ASAP. Heather, Susan, Anita, and Michael signed up.

## **UPDATES AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### AIS Webinars-Gary White

Through 2024, we have had 38 webinars. All but one are on the AIS YouTube Channel. In the winter issue of the *Bulletin*, all of the webinars will be listed. Nine hours of JT available. Register for the webinars the Friday before the scheduled date.

Three more webinars coming up, mentioned in the recent *News and Notes*:

January 29- Part 1. Chuck Chapman. Topic: Broken Color irises

February 5- Part 2. Chuck Chapman. Topic: Genetics of Broken Color irises plus a short lecture on judging broken color irises on the show bench.

February 19- Karen Wrigglesworth in New Zealand. It will be about Jean Stevens and the 'Blooming Impossible' Project. This should be of interest to historic iris growers.

### Basic Iris Culture-John Ludi

A digital report was posted.

The *BASIC IRIS CULTURE* (BIC) BOOKLET, Fourth Edition, is now available for purchase from the AIS Storefront. Recommended pricing: single copy \$10.00 US, pack of 20 \$188.00 US

**Motion 2**: For John Ludi to sell a single copy of the *Basic Iris Booklet* 2024 edition for \$10 each, a pack of 20 for \$188.

Motion by Claire Schneider. Seconded by Jill Bonino. Vote taken, motion carried

### 2025 Convention Update-Delane Langton

263 registrants to date. Optional tour is sold out.

There are in-garden and classroom JTs. This convention will be a full one week convention that people are used to in the past.

**No additional new business.**

**Next Board Meeting:** February 26, 2025 Wednesday 5:00 pm PST

**Reports due in February (tentative):**

Encyclopedia Image Coordinator- Janis Shackelford

Registrar- Janis Shackelford

World of Irises Blog- Heather Haley

Operation Manual Disaster Plan- Wayne Messer & Claire Schneider

If you are scheduled to give a report at the March Board meeting and want to be bumped up to February, let Claire know:

Awards and Ballots

Bulletin

Membership

Membership Development

Sections and Cooperating Societies

AIS Photo Contest

**MEETING ADJOURNED** by Bonnie Nichols.

**In attendance (47)**

VOTING OFFICERS

Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) – President

Howie Dash (23) – 1<sup>st</sup> VP, RVP Counselor, Audit Chair, President of Aril Society International

Lorene Crone (7) – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, RVP 7, Judges Chair, Electronic Services

Claire Schneider (15) - AIS Secretary, Judges Handbook Chair

Jill Bonino (15) – AIS Treasurer, Foundation Treasurer

Andi Rivarola (15) – immediate past president, Convention Liaison (temporary), Social Media Chair, Strategic Planning Chair, Membership Development Committee Chair, Bulletin Editorial Board (BEB) Chair, 2026 AIS Convention co-chair, President of Spuria Iris Society

OTHER OFFICERS (non-voting)

John Ludi (13) – Publication Sales Director

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

**DIRECTORS**

Beth Train (15) – Director, Recording Secretary, RVP 15  
Carolyn Hoover (14) – Director, Youth Chair  
Doug Chyz (5) - Director, Public Relations & Marketing Committee Co-Chair  
Heather Haley (4) - Director, World of Irises Blog Manager  
Jean Richter (14) - Director, Membership Secretary, Digital Iris Programs, President of  
Novelty Iris Society  
Josh Winzer (22) – Director, AIS treasurer asst.  
Linda Wilkie (21) - Director, Bulletin Advertising, Electronic Services  
Margaret Kelly (9) – Director  
Mike Reed (17) – Director, RVP 17, Annual Awards Chair  
Robert Treadway (22) – Director, Section & Cooperating Society Liaison  
Scarlett Ayres (23) – Director  
Susan Driver (7) – Director, Calendars Chair, Photo Contest Chair  
Harriet Robinson (1) – RVP Representative, RVP 1

**Other guests to Zoom meeting**

Adam Cordes (6) - Exhibition Reports  
Anita Moran (4) - RVP 4  
Anna Cadd (14) - Spuria Iris Society VP  
Bob Pries (4) - Encyclopedia Manager, Gardens, Public Relations & Marketing  
Bryan Earl (12) – RVP 12  
Carol Cullen (14) - Region 14 JT Chair  
Christine Dickinson (14)  
Cynthia Maldonado (10) – RVP 10  
Dan Williams (14) – RVP 14  
Delane Langton (11) & Jane Tibbs- 2025 Convention Co-chairs  
Eric Tankesley-Clarke (18) – RVP 18  
Fred Pedersen (6) - RVP 6  
Gary White (21) - Finance, Webinars, 2026 AIS Conv co-chair, President of Siberian Iris  
Society  
Jody Nolin (6) - Affiliate Chair, President of Japanese Iris Society  
Jeannette Graham (11) - RVP 11  
Kate Brewitt (2)  
Katherin Smith (22) – RVP 22  
Linda Baumgartner (20) – RVP 20  
Mary Platner (15)  
Mason Train (15)  
Olga Batalov (15) – Exhibition Schedules



Phyllis Wilburn (14)

Riley Probst (14) – TB Symposium

Susan Grigg (4)

Tina Muller (11)

Wayne Messer (21) - News & Notes

**Respectfully submitted by Beth Train, Recording Secretary**