



PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY

February 2011

Volume 8, Issue 1

President's Message

It's hard to believe we are in a new year. I'm still having trouble remembering to write 2011 on my checks and letters. Last year just flew by so fast that I'm not sure I didn't miss some of it. Where did it go? I didn't expect to be your President again this year, but here I am once again. We have a lot of good ideas and plans in store for PAIS this year and we hope to get all our members more active and involved. Starting with a lot of fun, prizes and good food planned for our first general meeting.

Thanks to all members who have sent in their PAIS renewal forms for 2011. We are in the process of updating our membership roster now; don't get left out, send in your payment to our P O Box now. This will be your last newsletter unless you renew.

Wow! How about that cold front and very lasting snow stacked just about everywhere? Unfortunately it was stacked on my iris leaves for quite some time and many of the leaves died. We've had several nice days this week that I spent out in the garden removing dead leaves and excess soil around the base of the iris. By looking at the weather report we have more good days ahead of us that we can work in our garden. Keep your iris beds clean and if possible, devoid of dead leaves and other debris. Insects love to hide & lay eggs in rotting vegetation, just waiting for the sunny day so they can attack your iris. Be on the lookout for yellowing leaves, this could be a sign of rot if its base turns mushy and stinks. Left unchecked, this bacterial rot will destroy the entire clump. See the Fall 2010 PAIS newsletter for details on how to correct this problem. If you have lost your newsletter and need help, give me a call or email me at artwest@cablone.net.

We are working on creating a web site for all iris lovers in the Prescott area. It will have back issues of newsletters so you will be able to refer to them whenever you want. Of course you will need access to the internet. If you don't have your own computer, the library will let you use one of theirs. The new web site will be unveiled at our February 19 meeting. So you won't miss out, mark your calendar now and I'll see you there.

Carolyn

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 19

12:30-3:30 p.m.

Yavapai Title*

...

April 9

1:30-3:30 p.m.

Yavapai Title

April 30

Region 15 Spring Trek

Stanton Iris Gardens

Valley Center, CA

...

May 7

Spring Show

Mortimer Nursery

**Yavapai Title, 1235 E. Gurley, Prescott at the Gurley and Sheldon intersection beside Circle K*

Note time change for

meeting: 12:30-3:30

February 19

Lunch 12:30-1:30

Meeting 1:30-3:30

Everyone is invited! Let's kick off the New Year right!

- * The Board is preparing a food extravaganza!
- * Come see our brand new PAIS web site
- * Like to play Bingo?
- * Beef Pot Roast with lots of extra sides and desserts
- * Learn to use the AIS Wiki site to locate your irises
- * Round Table discussion on some preplanning for 2011 special events

BINGO WINNINGS

Gift certificates for Sutton Garden's
Potted irises

Local hardware/garden supplies
Bayer Systemic Flower Care

The Art of Hybridizing—Follow-up—Patrick Orr

Patrick intended to share this additional hybridizing method at the November 13 meeting but ran out of time. The following information is from an email he sent to Roger.

Don Spoon wrote in the AIS bulletin several years ago about self-pollinating your favorite iris. You plant your favorite iris in an area with plenty of room around it and lots of organic matter tilled in. When it blooms, pollinate the iris with its own pollen. (So if you pollinated Mesmerizer, you would call this cross Mesmerizer X Mesmerizer or Mesmerizer selfed).

Plant the seedlings from this pollination in a circle around the parent iris. When they bloom, take the best of them and cross them to each other (considered a sibling cross) or cross them back onto the original parent (Mesmerizer) to reintroduce its strengths. Take the resulting seedlings from these crosses and plant them in another circle around the first circle.

What you have done is called Line Breeding. The reason for line breeding is to bring out any hidden recessive traits that may be stored in the genes. Line breeding is the only way to get those hidden recessive traits to be expressed. Doing this is how new and exciting patterns and colors emerge. Perhaps out of Mesmerizer you may get a totally green iris, or an iris that has turquoise flounces...one never knows.

Once you have established a line that has new and distinctive characteristics, you can then cross it with other irises to introduce those new characteristics into different colors or patterns. A turquoise flounce on a purple iris could be named Turquoise and Amethyst. From there you could cross it to a lacy black iris like Hollywood Nights and then again to its children to obtain a dark lacy self iris with turquoise flounces that would stand out from across a garden!!!

In order to come up with something unique and different, self pollinating is a fun and effective way to get started.

New Beginnings

It's a new year and for most of us it's also about new beginnings. We promise ourselves to loose weight, get more exercise, stop smoking, or learn how to use a new computer program. Most of us, however, get sidetracked somewhere along the way and by spring all the promises are forgotten. At least, that is what happens to me.

PAIS board members learned through conversations with our members last year that they would be more involved in some of our Iris Society activities if they knew more about what needed to be done. That led the board to consider, "what could we do to help?" Enter the *think tank* concept.

"*Training* (n.) the action of teaching a person, or animal a particular skill or type of behavior". Wow!! That sounds tough. Not at all what I had in mind... and not very fun!

Why use the word training, when what we are doing is so much simpler. Running our iris society is not rocket science. It's about leadership, sharing knowledge and the love of growing iris.

So, for our first meeting of the year (February 19th), we want to gather as many of our members together as we can, for a fun and informative encounter. Our way of saying "thank you" for your continued involvement, is to provide you with a great lunch prior to the meeting. As our meeting topic, we have chosen to introduce you to the various programs and events we run during the year and let you see what goes into mounting that program. What happens in the days before our rhizome sale at Sharlot Hall Museum? How do we prepare for an iris show? What if I want to organize the Garden Tour this year? What do I do?

You select the project which interests you the most and we'll share with you how we organize and do it. It's that simple. For our Iris Society to be successful, all members need to be involved. It is not possible for a small group of leaders to do all the work, all the time. We just don't have the energy.

Let's make this a fantastic and productive year for PAIS. This is about the joy of gardening and sharing our love of the iris. Enthusiasm is contagious. Won't you decide to get the "iris virus" and commit to being active this year?

The Winter Garden

As of this writing, I can almost see all of the iris in our gardens. The iris bed closest to the north east side of the house is still partly covered in snow.

The beds which I can see, need to be weeded already and there are many dead leaves waiting to be removed. Also on my to do list is replacing knocked over plant markers and checking for soft rot.

At the end of February or early March, it will be time to fertilize for spring bloom. I plan to use a systemic fertilizer which will hopefully help with aphid and thrip control.

I stopped by my Mother's home the other day and actually saw some color in her yard. Her pansies were looking slightly bedraggled, but they were blooming.

Pansies may bloom all winter and into spring and summer in our climate.

Pansies have accumulated many nicknames through the

years: "Flame Flower" "Three Faces Under a Hood", "Jump Up and Kiss Me" "Little Flame" and "Heart's-ease" to name a few. There are over 250 pansy cultivars. You may want to pick up a pony pack at the nursery or even try growing them from seed. The ruffled pansy called "Can Can" looks like it might be an interesting choice.



Iris Society Contacts

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American Iris Society

The [American Iris Society](#) has recently updated their website. I especially enjoyed looking at the 2010 [Photo contest winners](#). One of our own members, Linda Smith, was awarded an honorable mention for *Blueberry Bliss*, her entry in the Field and Home division. The AIS site has links to regional and individual club web sites as well as informative articles, such as tips for photographing iris. There is also a link to the [Iris Encyclopedia](#), a valuable resource for identifying and learning about iris.

AIS members receive a quarterly publication, IRISES The Bulletin of the American Iris Society. Each issue of IRISES provides approximately 65 pages of fresh information on iris culture, an array of color photographs of both old and new irises, and an advertising directory of commercial iris growers located throughout the United States. The AIS Convention report in the October 2010 issue included 24 gorgeous photos of iris. Don't be left out. A single AIS membership for one year is only \$25.00. To join online: [American Iris Society](#). You can even follow AIS on [Facebook](#).

The AIS editor has started a column called "In Your Backyard". Send your iris garden experience and photos to the AIS editor at editor@irises.org.



January/February Birthdays

Roger Bigelow
Cheryle Bigelow
Bonnie Haughton
David Nicholson
Candis Peters
Eleanor Pritchett
Daniel Schroeder

On the Importance of Iris Preservation -by Mike Unser, 2005

Photos and article by Mike Unser, printed with permission. All this information and more may be found on the HIPS web site: <http://www.hips-roots.com/>

Even as new varieties overwhelm us in their abundance there are many reasons for preserving iris varieties of the past. It is hard to decide which reason is most compelling - even more difficult to decide which varieties deserve preservation, with as many opinions as there are admirers. I'll try to explore a few of the reasons here.

Most prominently there are the sentimental reasons that drive many of us to preserve irises that they knew from childhood and have been passed down thru our families. These varieties are kept for the memories they evoke and are often the most loved and treasured of all the irises in the garden. Lent A. Williamson



is one my grandmother grew that I now have in my garden. With its hardiness and vigor there is no danger it will be lost to history, but I treasure it just the same. Others preserve irises created by an enterprising family member of the past or that they received from a friend now gone. They are a living scrapbook of our lives. There are also varieties we seek to preserve because of their importance to the history of iris development. Many from the early 20th century fall into this category.



Dominion for instance was the progenitor

of most of today's TBs, as is *Snow Flurry*. The importance of these two irises in the advancement of iris form cannot be understated. Many of our most prominent hybridizers have built their lines on these foundations. These and many others should always be preserved for future generations due to their enormous contributions, and to remind us of the distance irises have traveled to become the forms that grace the pages of today's catalogs. I think it is important to have a living record of iris development that folks can grow and experience in person, to see how the flower was changed thru time by the selections and choices of iris lovers. It is one thing to see photos and slides of irises thru the years and quite another to have a garden bed overflowing with blooms that really brings the whole iris experience closer and more personal for the viewer.

More than ever before genetics is playing a key role in planning and creating new iris varieties. Modern science allows us to unlock the secrets in iris DNA and to use them in breeding for new colors and patterns, and in understanding the ones we already have. Who knows how far this progress will take us? And who can say what old varieties may hold a clue in their genes that answers a question we have yet to even ask? If they are not here for future study, that genetic record will be lost, and perhaps a key gene combination with it.

Old varieties have proven their hardiness, vigor and disease resistance just by being survivors. Many breeders are incorporating them into modern lines to increase these qualities in modern forms and we should work to ensure they will be here for future use as well. But even historic irises that are tender should be preserved if they are important. For instance Tobacco Road, one of the most famous irises and a major color

(Continued on page 5)

break for its day, is a very poor grower and may already be lost to history. It may be the most extensively used iris parent in history, having almost 200 registered progeny, yet it is not to be found in commercial sale and has not been heard of in private gardens in many years. More attention to preserving and spreading this iris about in its preferred climates could have prevented this.

While it is important to preserve historic irises with their names intact I also feel it is important to preserve those that have lost their names as well. Noids, as they are often referred to , (a combination of 'no I.D. '), may turn out to be something significant which has been lost. The case of Golden Eagle comes to mind. A creation of Dave Hall from the early 1940's it was used extensively in breeding programs and is in the pedigree of many later irises. It was lost for many years before turning up in the garden of Roger Nelson in Oregon in 2000 being grown as a noid.

The primary purpose of the Historic Iris Preservation Society has been to identify important irises from history that are in danger of being lost and help to preserve them for future generations to enjoy. We accomplish this by raising awareness of historic irises and their importance. We attempt to widely distribute historic varieties as well, thru society sales and by highlighting commercial sources, in order to ensure that varieties are widely grown and loved.

I also think we should be encouraging preservation on an international scale. The long history of irises in Europe and in the lands 'down under' have left as rich a legacy as American varieties of the 20th century have and deserve conservation and appreciation. Many members of HIPS do import these varieties when possible for preservation here, but efforts in their native lands should also be made. Perhaps in the future HIPS will have affiliates within the local Iris Societies of these nations to focus on preservation efforts in their locales.

The most important reason for me in iris preservation is simply for the sheer beauty of historic irises. There is a certain grace and charm in the old varieties that I do not see in most modern ones. A subtle translucence that allows the light to play thru the blossom seems to be lost with the heavy substance of today's forms. A certain quaint charm missing from these tall and sturdy varieties that yesterday's smaller, daintier flowers had in abundance. Taste in flowers is as varied among growers as taste in any other area is, and fortunately there are folks that dearly love the old varieties. Thanks to the efforts of these dedicated gardeners there are historic irises being preserved for future generations to enjoy and learn from. I hope you'll join us in our efforts, and locate, identify and preserve historic irises in your own garden. To learn more about historic iris on the web visit: <http://www.hips-roots.com/> To join visit [HIPS](#) web site or email judy67543@gmail.com.

Below is the description of *Lent A. Williamson* from a 1928 commercial growers catalog 10 years after it was introduced. Several of our members grow this historic iris and it is unbelievably tall , 42"high and vigorous.

Lent A. Williamson E. B. Williamson, 1918 TB 42" EM

"S. campanula violet. F. bright royal purple. The large flowers have exceptional substance, and are carried on stout stems. Very free blooming. The strongest grower we have ever seen, and it will thrive and bloom better under neglect and adverse conditions than any other variety in our experience. Was a sensation and is still near the top."



Lent . A. Williamson © MU

Word Search - Iris Names M-Z

Find these iris names in the jumble below - See the photos of these historic iris in the [photo gallery](#).

H R I N S S W N A H T E P R E T E N D E R R E
D O M W A S O C E N I E R N W A B A S H H H Y
I N A E O V E X I W P A I L L A S S E J G E V
T G O S X N R R S S P S A B L E P V I V V I M
R I L N K I D I L V M O I R U O S S I M A N A
E S E C A Y C E H M E U R P I O N E E R H G M
W N A E R T W A R S H M A T O L Y M P I O A E
S O N D L T R A N B C L U T R R R A J A H U N
I M U E S C P A T A A N O O A Y T I N A V P R
R V A L I M A R P C S R D M M Y S T I Q U E I
E R M S Y H T N A S H A E Z A H A R O O N R N
M O L M V T R S N P C S A M B U C I N A E L C
U A I A C Y I U A I E I S I N D J K H A R E J
L E O I K H C S P S P P U U Z H O R E L I O S
P A A I V R E A R O O V A T I O N A Q S R O K
O A P I M I C O M R N S W S P E R E H L R B U

MATTERHORN

MAUNA LOA

MEXICANA

MISSOURI

MONSIGNOR

MYSTIQUE

NEWPORT

OLYMPIC

ORELIO

OVATION

PAILLASSE

PATRICE

PICADOR

PINNACLE

PIONEER

PLUMERI

PRETENDER

RAJAH

RAMESES

RHEINGAUERLE

RHYTHM

RUSTICANA

SABLE

SACHEM

SAMBUCINA

SHIRVAN

SINDJKHA

SKYWATCH

SPARTAN

SUSA

SWERTI

VALIMAR

VANITY

WABASH

WONDERBAR

ZAHARON

This will be your last newsletter if you have not renewed your membership. Don't delay, renew today.

Thanks to those who have already renewed.

PAIS Membership Form

PAIS dues run from January through December. Make check payable to: PAIS & mail to: PAIS, P.O. Box 11918, Prescott, AZ 86304

Please enroll me/us as a _____ new _____ renewing member(s) _____ # years a member

Today's date: _____

Name _____

Name 2nd person in HH _____ Name 3rd (person in HH) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email: _____ (newsletters will be sent by email)

Dues:

Individual - Single Adult _____ \$12 (1 Year) or \$30 (3 years)

Household – 2 or more at same address _____ \$15 (1 Year) or \$35 (3 years)

Youth: _____ \$5 (1 year)

*Dual Club _____ \$5 (1 year)

*Dual Membership in PAIS (Dual Club Member - anyone with a current paid membership in a Region 15 Affiliate club) Please note club of primary membership: VAIS _____ Other _____

Birthdates: Month/Day ____/____ Name _____ Month/Day ____/____ Name _____

Number of iris in your garden, circle closest answer: 0-49, 50-99, 100-149, 150-199, 200-249, 250-299, or 300+

Computer skills- - check all that apply:

Email _____ Word processing _____ Excel or spreadsheet _____

Publisher or Desktop publishing _____ Financial record keeping _____

Photoshop or other photo editing software _____ Web Master _____

PAIS is only successful with the involvement of its members. Please indicate how you will help our organization:

May Iris Show _____ Door Prize Contribution/Plant Table _____

Spring Garden Tour _____ Hospitality/Refreshments _____

Rhizome Sales _____ Sculpture Garden Yavapai College Iris Maintenance _____

Youth School Programs _____ Speaker on Iris Gardening _____