



# PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 3

JUNE 2015



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please note the **June 20th meeting, 2 to 4 pm at the Yavapai Title Company, 1235 E. Gurley**. It will be a very busy time full of valuable information. Dennis and Sharon Luebkin will show photographs from the national convention in Portland, Oregon. Barb and Kathleen will give us a report on the May iris exhibit. In keeping with our training theme this year, a demo on digging iris and preparing the rhizomes for the July sales will be presented. For members who do not know how to get rhizomes ready for our sales this is where you will get that knowledge. For members who know, you will share your knowledge, so no one is left out.

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer. I have been very busy with my gardens, lots of visitors browsing and buying iris and placing big orders for fall digging. Sorry for the brief message, but I do things short and sweet. Dan Schroeder

## 2015 EVENTS CALENDAR

June 13	Sculpture Garden workday
June 20	General Meeting 2:00-4:00
July 7	Iris dig-Citizens Cemetery
July 11	Iris dig- YC sculpture garden
July 18	Marking Party for iris sales
July 25-26	Iris Sale-Sharlot Hall Museum
August 2	Iris Sale-Yarnell-Dan's Garden
September 10	Sculpture Garden workday
September 19	General Meeting 1:30-3:30
September 26	Fall Trek Preparation
October 3	Fall Trek Preparation
October 9-10	Region 15 Fall Trek-Prescott

## Exhibit Stats

- 4 new winning participants
- 542 attendees
- Over 700 potted iris sales
- 42 volunteers
- 175 iris varieties



Indulgence Blyth 2004

Venetian Love Terada, 1999

Photos contributed by Sue Crabtree, Barb McCurry and Judy Book

## 2015 Peoples Choice Winners

Category	Participant	Variety
Best of Show Iris	Joella Cheek	"Different Flavors"
Best Youth Iris	Victoria Van Klompenburg	"Joyce Terry"
Best Space Age Iris	Vera Stewart	"Abby and Me"
Best Historic Iris	Barbara McLandress	"Circus Stripes" 1975
Best Artistic Display	Sue Crabtree	"Orange You Glad ..."
Best Tall Bearded Iris	Dan Schroeder	"Drifting"
Best White Iris	Barbara McCurry	"Mesmerizer"
Best Beardless Iris	Darol Jurn	"Abalone Pearl"
Best Median Iris	Barbara McLandress	"Princess Bride"
Best Aril/Arilbred Iris	Carolyn Alexander	"Noble Warrior"

### May 2, 2015 PAIS "Kaleidoscope of Color" Iris Exhibit Mortimer Nursery, Prescott, AZ

Our annual iris show was a bloomin' success on so many levels. First and foremost was the cadre of volunteers over 40 strong who pulled off the event in style. Volunteers included longtime members and plenty of new members, spouses, other family members, and a small troop of Prescott Boy Scouts. Also essential was the Mortimer staff at the ready to help with anything we needed.

We were so fortunate with perfect weather, record show attendance at 542, record number of volunteers at 42, record cash sales estimated at \$4072 (not including iris bucks), record number of iris pots sold at over 700, record number of iris entries (180) that included only five of the same iris, an assortment of iris winners over the nine categories plus Best of Show (won by Joella's stunning iris "Different Flavors"), a lot of first time winners this year, and a record number of helpers dismantling the show.

There were fewer iris at Grandma's table thanks to our team of intake volunteers who took the time to identify unknown iris.

We had a visitor, Janice Chesnik, whose namesake iris was entered in the Beardless category. In talking with her, she agreed to be a speaker on spuria iris at one of our spring 2016 meetings. She also told us that our show was one of the best, if not the best, iris show she's ever attended. She was amazed at our overall club participation, the information/education provided, and the positive attitudes and energy exhibited by our members. The President of the Sun Country Iris Society came by in the afternoon and expressed her amazement at the number of iris on display and our club's involvement. All topnotch comments from people in the know.

Some observations...lots of folks with cameras taking photos, lots of folks smelling the iris and being amazed by their fragrance, lots of "wows" over such beautiful healthy iris, and lots of interest and questions on iris horticulture. I also received many great suggestions from this year's volunteers that will make next year's show even better. I will summarize these comments soon and share them with everyone.

Give yourselves and each other a hearty pat on the back for all of your hard work and your willingness to step up to make our show a huge success. On behalf of PAIS, I thank you all from the bottom of my iris heart!  
Barb McCurry

**2015  
EXHIBIT  
PEOPLES  
CHOICE  
WINNERS**



Best of Show-Different Flavors



Best Tall Bearded-Drifting



Best Historic  
Circus Stripes



Best White Iris-Mesmerizer



Best Artistic Design  
Orange You Glad You Came



Best Youth-Joyce Terry



Best Space Age-Abby and Me



Best Median-Princess Bride/  
Best Arilbred-Noble Warrior



Best Beardless-Abalone Pearl

## JANICE CHESNIK

*Ed. Note: Janice Chesnik, a visitor at our spring exhibit, was pleased to see her namesake iris on view.*

My love for irises began when as a child, on Memorial Day (Decoration Day in those older times) I would ride in my aunt's car to the cemetery in the Flint Hills of east central Kansas just after she and I had cut huge bouquets of irises from her garden to decorate my grandparents' graves, followed by a picnic with the entire huge Jones family. Happy times! And the wonderful aroma in that car from all the irises stayed with me all my life. When I found a Schreiner's iris catalog in 1968, I immediately ordered some for my Phoenix garden, where I lived for 21 years and raised my family. I was active in garden clubbing in Phoenix, and when I met some fellow iris enthusiasts, we formed Sun Country Iris Society, and my hobby really took off. My garden was on the Region 15 Spring Trek in the early 70's, and I met many new friends throughout the region, served as president of Sun Country, and was Region 15 VP for a couple of years after that. I mainly grew tall bearded, but had some spurias also.

After I married Ray Chesnik in '76 we moved to San Marcos, California where he and Bob Brooks had a mail order business specializing in irises and daylilies, called Cordon Bleu Farms. I had acres of iris and tried my hand at hybridizing, but most of that activity was with daylilies. I had two introductions in 1980 or thereabouts, and both won HM medals with AHS. Ray and I both became AIS judges and life members.

A good iris friend was Eleanor McCown from the Imperial Valley in California. She was a major hybridizer of spurias and many prominent introductions in those days were hers. While visiting her garden at bloom time one spring, Eleanor told me to check out her seedlings and she would name my favorite for me. Thus came "Janice Chesnik", which is still grown and sold in several nurseries. I grow it myself, and was so pleased to find it on your show bench last month.

My favorite iris hybridizer is Keith Keppel in Oregon. His iris have been superior through the years in growth habits, branching, bud count, etc. When I first met Keith he was a very young man, barely out of his teens. Now, like the rest of us, he's feeling the aches and pains of time and has scaled his iris fields back, but continues to introduce wonderful irises. My favorites of his are Tour de France, Telepathy, and Drama Queen, and his newer ones may be even better, but I haven't placed an order in about 4 years due to all the moving around the country lately. I do know that the west is a wonderful place to grow iris, if you give them good soil, fertilizer and water. I had to deal with too much rain back east, plus voles and rot. I am glad to be back in Arizona, it still feels like home.



Janice and Dan

When the kaleidoscope business Ray and I started in 1980 became more and more demanding of our time, Ray had to turn his share of Cordon Bleu over to Bob, and I had to quit being so active in club activities. I had served a year or two as secretary for AIS, but had to give that up as well. But I have continued to have an iris garden wherever we moved, the last being north Georgia (after 30 years in San Marcos), and from there we came back to Arizona to be closer to family. We're in a smaller house now, and my garden is tiny, but I do still have a few irises. My daughter Lori, in Jerome, shares my enthusiasm for them, and she grows 20 or so.

Now that I am semi-retired (I still make the mirror systems for my son, Jon, who runs our kaleidoscope business now) I have become an art quilter, and many of my quilts are kaleidoscope quilts. It's a good activity for a busy person who likes to work with her hands. My husband needs more of my time due to health reasons, so my clubbing days are behind me, but I do stay busy with my quilts and my tiny garden. We do enjoy life in Cottonwood.

To view Janice's creations, visit: <http://www.capekaleidoscopes.com/janice-chesnik-master-quilter/?sort=priceasc>

### SUMMER IRIS CARE

- \* Continue to keep your iris beds weed free
- \* Water until the monsoons begin—check about 3 inches down to make sure the soil is dry before watering
- \* Fertilize a month after the bloom season—sprinkle fertilizer around the clump not on the rhizomes
- \* Cut blooms stalks off at the base
- \* Remove dirt from the tops of the rhizomes
- \* Start deciding which clumps you will divide and donate to the rhizome sales
- \* Verify that plant markers are correctly placed

### Monsoon Madness Plant and Yard Sale

YAVAPAI COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS' ANNUAL MONSOON MADNESS PLANT AND YARD SALE WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2015, AT THE PRESCOTT RODEO GROUNDS, 7:30AM TO 1:00PM. COME EARLY FOR THE BEST SELECTION.



### Sculpture Garden Workday, June 13, 8:00 am

The iris in the sculpture garden are almost done blooming. The Francelle Edwards area bloomed spectacularly, the storybook medians were a lovely sight, the very healthy clumps of iris from Suttons Iris Garden had numerous stalks which bloomed for weeks, and the Dykes Medal Winners garden which was moved and renovated last fall had about 50% of the iris bloom.

Cleanup is now the order of the day. Bloom stalks and dead leaves need to be removed, weeds dug out or pulled and fertilizer applied. The college maintenance crew no longer sprays weed killer where iris are growing so it is our responsibility to keep the areas weed free.

The workday is scheduled for a Saturday to enable more of you to join in. Bring drinking water, clippers, a container for debris and a tool to dig weeds. Wear a hat, comfortable shoes and sunscreen. The Farmers Market will be open at 7:30 so you may be able to purchase a drink and a treat before the work begins. This is a wonderful way to make new friends. and support your club. If you plan to participate email [jbook@cableone.net](mailto:jbook@cableone.net) or call 928-776-7217. See you at the garden!!

### “Iris in Wonderland” a Magnificent Week

By: Dennis and Sharon Luebkin

The 2015 AIS National Iris Convention in Portland, Oregon, “Iris in Wonderland”, hosted by the Greater Portland Iris Society was amazing and the name was befitting the gardens we saw. Congratulations to Portland for a job well done. The week was a marathon of classes, meetings, judges training, lectures, dinners, garden tours by bus, and long sightseeing tours. We were up early to board buses at 7:00 am and finished late with classes ending at 9:45 pm.

Oregon is beautiful and green with rhododendrons blooming in gardens and wild in the forests. They can grow to 12 feet tall and in some areas form a beautiful canopy of multiple colors. Everything seems to grow in Oregon except cactus. It was cloudy with sprinkles and misting most days with very cool temperatures. The iris blooms were twice the sizes of the ones we see in Arizona. Everything in Oregon is big.

Gardens of six growers/ hybridizers were viewed: Schreiner's Gardens, Thomas Johnson's Mid-America, Aitken's Salmon Creek, Harris' Mount Pleasant, Miller's Manor Gardens and Will Plotner's Wildwood Gardens. Each garden was in a microclimate in both location and elevation; each in its own right was spectacular. Wildwood Gardens was in a cooler, wetter area and much of the irises there had not yet bloomed or had been damaged by the rains. Will Plotner's



Aitken SalmonCreekGarden

5 wife passed away last fall and he and his family are still recovering from the loss.

Peonies, rhododendrons, tall Pacific lupines, foxglove, evergreens and other types of companion plants were planted with the irises in several of the gardens creating a massive display of color with bees and butterflies. It was just magnificent!! Fields of irises for acres.

Hundreds of new introductions and seedlings from iris hybridizers such as Terry Aitken, Paul Black, Chuck Bunnell, Tom Bursen, Francelle Edwards, Bruce Filardi, Joseph Ghio, Thomas Johnson, Brad Kasperek, Keith Keppel, Barry Blyth, Rick Tasco, Bob Van Liere, the Schreiners, and numerous smaller hybridizers were in the gardens for judging.

The Prescott Area iris Society was well represented at the Convention. Sharon and Dennis Luebkin, Linda Rossman, along with Marge and Allen Larson were in attendance. Sun Country Iris Society from Phoenix and numerous affiliates from Region 15 were also present. Representatives from around the world attended including New Zealand, a contingent of 22, Australia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, England, and South America.

Other society sections of the American Iris Society were also represented.



Sharp Dressed Man



Programs during the week were given by the Historic Iris Preservation Society, the Aril Society, Society for Japanese Irises, Spuria Iris Society, the Dwarf Iris Society, Median Iris Society, Society for Pacific Coast Native Irises, Reblooming Iris Society, Tall Bearded Iris Society, Society for Louisiana Irises, and the Species Iris Group of North America. (SIGNA). A new section, the Novelty Iris Society, chartered at the convention will explore space age, broken pattern and other novelty iris varieties.

It was a wonderful time of learning and seeing what other affiliates are doing. Prescott is becoming known as a very active AIS affiliate and questions were asked on what we are doing and how we are doing it. All the convention attendees judged the irises in the Guest Iris Gardens consisting of both named varieties and unnamed seedlings not yet introduced.

Ballots were cast on the last day with awards being made at the banquet on Saturday night. AIS members stay tuned for your next issue of the AIS e-news and the Bulletin for the winners. The names and seedling numbers will be published in our next newsletter when the official information becomes available.

I would encourage all PAIS members to become members of the American Iris Society. The AIS blog, e-newsletters and magazine are wonderful sources for all things iris. For information on becoming a member of AIS contact Dennis and Sharon Luebkin or go to the AIS website <http://www.irises.org> and download an application. Look at the website and the wonderful information available.



Schreiner's garden