

Minutes of the AIS Board of Directors Videoconference, Wednesday, July 22, 2020
With corrections made August 26, 2020

Present:

Jody Nolin (6) - President, Affiliate Chair

Andi Rivarola (15) - 1st VP, Convention Liaison (temporary), Public Relations Social Media,
Public Relations 2020 Convention, Strategic Planning

Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) – 2nd VP – Judges, RVP 17

Michelle Snyder (15) – Secretary, Insurance

Jill Bonino (15) – Treasurer, Foundation Liaison

Gary White (21) - Immediate Past President, Honorary Awards, Finance

Claire Schneider (15) – Director, Recording Secretary

Doug Chyz (4) - Director, Public Relations & Marketing, RVP 4

Gerry Snyder (15) – Director, Awards

Howie Dash (23) – Director, RVP Counselor

Janis Shackelford (15) – Director, Policy

John Ludi (13) – Director, Publication Sales Director

Lorene Crone (7) – Director, Asst. Electronic Services

Neil Houghton (2) - Director, Image Coordinator, Iris Program Resources Digital

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

Susan Driver (7) – Director, Calendars

Wayne Messer (21) - Director, Exhibition Show Reports, News & Notes, RVP 21

Bob Pries (4) - Encyclopedia Manger, Gardens, Public Relations & Marketing

Elladan McLeester (8) - RVP 8

Cindy Davis (11) - RVP 11

Jean Richter (14) - RVP 14

Eva Barry (23) – RVP 23

Margaret Kelly (9)

Sara Rairden (18)

Cynthia Wilson (23)

The meeting was called to order on Zoom at 5:00 PM PDT.

A quorum was present.

1. Approve the minutes from the previous meeting – Claire Schneider

Motion 1: to accept the minutes of the June 24, 2020, teleconference.

Motion by Michelle Snyder and seconded by Janis Shackelford. Passed unanimously.

AIS SPRING REPORTS

The spring reports classified as “information only” have been posted in AIS documents for the July 22 teleconference from the following sources: Advertising (Dawn Boyer), Bulletin editor (Jane Milliman), Calendar (Susan Driver), Electronic Services (Bryce Williamson), Image Coordinator (Neil Houghton), Iris Programs - Digital (Neil Houghton), Iris Encyclopedia (Bob Pries), Iris Programs - Speaker (Hooker Nichols), News & Notes (Wayne Messer), Public Relations & Marketing 1 and Public Relations & Marketing 2.

In the future, all the reports, spring and fall, should contain the name of the author and the date. In addition, please add at the top of your report “information only,” “for discussion,” or “action required.”

2. Image Coordinator report - Neil Houghton

An addendum to the Image Coordinator’s report was added by Neil Houghton.

Neil reported that he has 1015 registrations from 162 registrars with 421 photos and he gave a demonstration of his process of receiving and uploading the registration information to his data base.

Discussion: One of the photos of any particular cultivar in the Iris Encyclopedia should be a clear and accurate photo, which might not have been taken by the hybridizer. In Neil’s addendum, of the 2019 images for the R & I, 31% of the registrars (i.e. hybridizers) have complete registrations. It has been a requirement for more than three years that all new registrations of irises be accompanied by an appropriate photo. A suggestion was to set a date after which time any incomplete registration would be rejected. Another suggestion was to accept an incomplete registration but exclude it from the award process. A group of interested people will meet to continue the discussion of this topic and report back to the board with a recommended action.

Regarding Iris programs - Digital, Neil Houghton described how each digital program is listed and described on the AIS website.

3. News & Notes report - Wayne Messer

One of the AIS tools used for the rapid dispersal of information is News & Notes. But there are other immediate tools, such as the blog World of Irises, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Wayne asked if there is a way to effectively use these tools in synchrony. Wayne was directed to bring a proposal to a future board meeting.

Currently AISTalk, a Google Group, is open only to AIS leadership who may post and reply. Wayne pointed out that the AIS Board at their Fall 2004 meeting voted to allow the public to view the posts in AISTalk but not participate in any discussions. Andi Rivarola volunteered to deal with this issue.

4. Iris Encyclopedia - Bob Pries

Bob reported there were 122,000 visits to the Encyclopedia in January, 41,000 in May and 30,000 in June. Bob would like the AIS Board of Directors to comment.

The pedigree diagram on page 2 of Bob's report generated lots of discussion. The diagram, including photos, showed four ancestor generations of 'Kayla's Song.' The board complimented Bob and encouraged him to continue this project. Bob was asked to create a presentation on this topic of iris pedigrees to be scheduled as a future webinar. Andi Rivarola recommended using app.diagrams.net as a template for creating the diagrams for these iris genealogies.

Bob intrigued the board with the future of iris identification. Google has developed human face recognition software. "It can find an individual in a stadium of 50,000 people." Bob suggested that in the future, this software could be adapted to use the images in the Iris Encyclopedia for the recognition and identification of unknown irises.

OLD BUSINESS

5. Approval of Membership Secretary

Motion 2. To approve the appointment of Pam Messer as AIS Membership Secretary. Motion by Andi Rivarola and seconded by Howie Dash. Motion carried.

6. Membership Fee Structure - Andi Rivarola

Jill Bonino shared a spreadsheet that compared the cost of printing and mailing the Bulletin domestically with the overseas cost. This information was used in the discussion of whether or not overseas membership fees should be higher than domestic membership fees.

Motion 3. To accept the recommended membership rate structure (as presented on the visual), without the senior discount, to become effective January 1, 2021.

Motion by Neil Houghton and seconded by Gary White. Motion carried with one dissent.

Discussion: The current membership prices are confusing. The fee structure should be made less complex. A suggestion was to remove the senior discount from the membership fee schedule. The current AIS fee schedule is much lower than the membership fees of other horticultural societies and in some cases, is half what other societies charge. E-membership and regular membership should renew at the same time. Lifetime memberships should include an e-membership. Any motion regarding the membership rate structure should contain an implementation plan that includes when to begin the new rate structure and the process of combining regular and e-membership. Should the membership fees be increased? Postal rates for mailing the Bulletin will increase. The transition time for combining regular membership and e-membership is likely to result in a loss of funds.

7. The non-discrimination policy - Jody Nolin

Motion 4: That this inclusion statement be added to the AIS mission statement: The American Iris Society welcomes all people regardless of race, religion, socio-economic status, ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation.

Motion by Andi Rivarola and seconded by Phyllis Wilburn. Motion carried.

Discussion: This is not policy; it is part of the AIS mission statement. The AIS legal counsel was not consulted because this is not a policy.

8. Webinar update - Andi Rivarola

There was an average of 150 attendees at the first two webinars (“Irises and AIS - the early years” and “Irises and AIS - the middle years” by Gary White). Andi has received lots of inquiries about future webinar programs. The next two webinar programs will be presented by Bonnie Nichols. After her program, she will go over the 10-question test so that attendees can receive judges training credit. Andi is looking for speakers for the Winter Webinar Series. Hooker Nichols is the coordinator of speakers for AIS and has been involved in the webinar programs through his liaison, Bonnie. For more information about the webinars, to request a copy of a webinar or to volunteer a program, send an email to AISwebinars@gmail.com.

Discussion: The webinar programs and judges training sessions are important AIS resources. Access to these resources should be a benefit available only to members and not posted in the wiki where everyone in the public has access. Andi reported that the final resting location of the webinar programs has not yet been determined. Discussion about the creation of a “members-only” section of the AIS website, who would have access and which resources it would contain is on-going. Webinars on general iris subjects should be available to the general public. But most webinar programs should remain as a benefit of full membership and not to the public.

9. The shipping of Mike and Anne Lowe iris material to AIS, a proposal - John Jones (absent)

The AIS Board was surprised to learn that Mike and Anne Lowe have passed away. According to Hannah Lowe Goddard and her brother Eric, there are about 25 bankers boxes of iris materials including slides, photos, AIS Bulletins that date back to the 1920s, programs, judging materials, books, registry information and more. The AIS and irises were “their passion and we would hope, their legacy.”

John is asking AIS to pay the shipping costs of the iris items accrued by Mike and Anne Lowe. John proposed that the slides go to Janet Smith to be cataloged and scanned, that the registration and pedigree information go to himself and the remainder of the material be sent to Dave Silverberg for the AIS library. Ultimately, all the slides and registration information would end up in the library, too. The quote John gave for shipping this material seemed unrealistic, so he was directed to come up with a more detailed estimate of the cost of the shipping of all of this Lowe material.

Discussion: Before the AIS Board can allocate money for this worthy effort, a more precise and accurate estimate of the shipping costs should be proposed. The Foundation might be able to pick up some or most of the cost of the shipping. A suggestion was to send some of this material to the AIS virtual library. This raised a question of procedure: what is the first destination of any donated material? Is donated material scanned and uploaded to the virtual library or should material be sent to the AIS library first?

Jim Morris, editor of the Bulletin Centennial supplements, added that his office is stacked high with AIS historic material. A suggestion was that Jim rent a U-Haul truck and deliver it to Dave Silverberg.

10. Diagrams.net - by Andi Rivarola

As a follow-up to Bob Pries' pedigree diagram of the iris 'Kayla's Song,' Andi recommended the application diagrams.net as a tool for creating pedigree diagrams. Download this program and you can create charts, diagrams, maps, floor plans, etc. All the file names in Diagrams.net will end in OIO.

11. Calendar update - Susan Driver

Last year the Photo Contest provided several photos for the calendar. But because there wasn't a photo contest this year, Susan requested that photos of irises be sent to her. Jim Morris volunteered to send Susan fifty thousand slides of his irises but that she would need to scan them. No problem, said Susan, "I have a high-speed scanner."

12. By-laws conundrum - Gary White

Gary received an inquiry about the consequences of clubs and regions being unable to follow by-laws because of the social-distancing restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Clubs haven't met since February or March. Being unable to meet, clubs haven't held elections as prescribed in their by-laws. What are the consequences of disobeying by-laws? One suggestion was to ignore the by-laws and "do what you need to do because you (and your club) have to follow state and federal laws" and directives.

After doing some research, Gary found this resolution from the Northwest Ministry Network that was written with attorney input. "Therefore be it resolved that the XYZ church board of directors be granted the power to act in any legal, reasonable and prudent manner they deem necessary to conduct such business that might conflict with current XYZ church by-laws, provisions or requirements including the suspension of an annual business meeting and other regular business until such a time as the current pandemic is resolved and emergency measures are lifted."

Gary recommended that the AIS counsel, Dale Strauss, be consulted on this matter and that AIS produce a resolution that might ease the concerns that clubs and regions have about not following their by-laws.

Discussion: Clubs can meet in ZOOM meetings. AIS has a ZOOM account that can be used by clubs and regions.

13. Announcements

The next teleconference will be August 26th. Please have all agenda topics to Jody the week before.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Schneider