

AIS CONVENTION HANDBOOK 2022



Kansas City, Kansas, May 11 - 16
"3 Trails KC"



Madison, Wisconsin, May 31 - June 1
"Mad About Iris"



Victoria, BC, Canada, May 29 - June 3
"Iris-istible Victoria 2011"



Ontario, California, April 16 - 21
"Cali-Zona Gold"



Dallas, Texas, April 15 - 20
"Dallas 2013"



Dallas, Texas, April 5 - 10
"Deja Vu"



Portland, Oregon, May 18 - 23
"Iris in Wonderland"



Newark, New Jersey, May 23 - 28
"Going East in 2016"



De Moines, Iowa, May 23 - 27
"Rhythm of the Prairie"



New Orleans, Louisiana, April 9 - 14
"Fleur de Gras"



San Ramon, California, April 23 - 27
"The Sun Sets on Rainbows"



Las Cruces, New Mexico, April 11 - 16
"Iris Enchantment"







FOREWORD

An AIS National Spring Convention is a feast to the eyes, and a joy to the soul; it is to be in iris heaven accompanied by iris loving friends. So, we hope that by issuing this handbook we can inspire countless gardeners to continue this timeless tradition.

This handbook is intended as a guideline for groups who plan to host a convention of The American Iris Society. The plans are for a standard six-day convention. The AIS does not dictate that a convention be six days long. A shorter time period may be used, but the host group should work carefully with the AIS Board of Directors to be sure that all required meetings can be scheduled.

A huge “thank you” should go to Paul Gossett, who spent lots and lots of time, first describing the “convention liaison” job to me, and then putting together the prior edition of this handbook (2004) with help from other dedicated AIS members of the time.

With many thanks for their help to:

- ❖  Claire Schneider
- ❖  Gary White
- ❖  Jody Nolin
- ❖  Bonnie Nichols
- ❖  Howie Dash
- ❖  Jill Bonino

ANDI RIVAROLA

(perennial, temporary convention liaison)

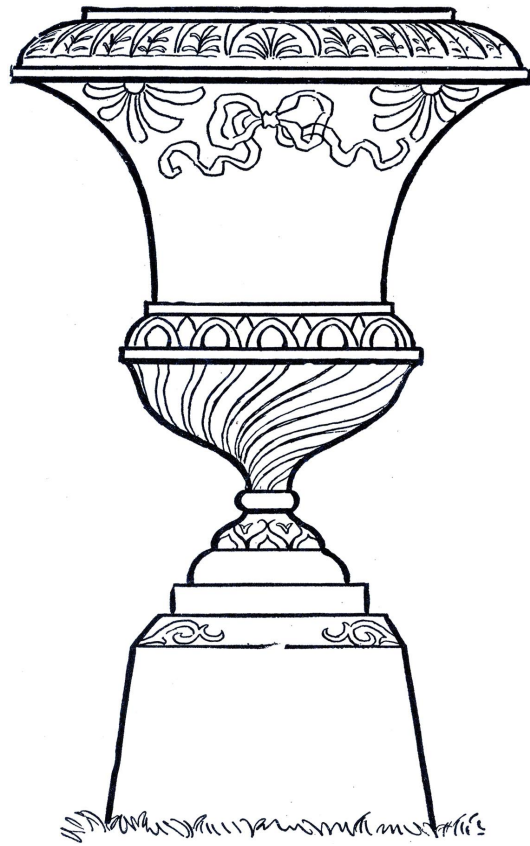


TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Foreword - page 2](#)

SECTION 1 : Spring Convention

(If you're seeing this handbook online, please note that each chapter below is clickable and linked directly to the page corresponding to it.)

[Chapter 1. Hosting an AIS National Convention - page 5](#)

[Chapter 2. Organizing the Work](#)

[Chapter 3. Convention Awards](#)

[Chapter 4. Hotel Facilities](#)

[Chapter 5. Guest Irises & Convention Gardens](#)

[Chapter 6. Scheduling Meetings & Events](#)

[Chapter 7. Expenses & Financing](#)

[Chapter 8. Registration](#)

[Chapter 9. Transportation](#)

[Chapter 10. Publicity](#)

[Chapter 11. Other Convention Considerations](#)

[Chapter 12. Closing Remarks](#)

SECTION 2 : Fall Board Meeting

[Hosting a Fall Board Meeting](#)

About the Fall In-Person Meeting

Meeting Location & Hotel

Notices & Reservation Forms

Some Optional Items

Reminders

SECTION 3 : [Expanded Table of Contents](#)

Section 1

Chapter 1 - Hosting an AIS Convention

Hosting a convention of The American Iris Society is a very exciting experience. Every group which undertakes this task probably is apprehensive about its ability to do so with success. There is no way to guarantee a successful convention. All the best-laid plans can be upset by the weather and other uncontrollable factors. If a group has done all in its power to make the convention a success, the best advice is to relax and enjoy the fun, regardless of the number of things which happen to upset the plans.

The group hosting a convention can be made up of one or more sub-groups, like a Region and an Affiliate or multiple Affiliates. Each sub-group will have specific responsibilities to support the convention.

The following information is provided as a guide for planning an AIS convention. The information is very basic, and each host group will add innovations which will make its convention unique.

Form a Convention Committee and assign people to chair the different positions on the committee. This committee should be made up of people who can work on their own and will get the job done they have agreed to perform.

One person should not and cannot take care of everything. Delegate and have a back up for each of the key committee members such as tour gardens, buses, lunches, etc.

As you can see by the cover of this handbook, the convention logo plays a significant role in the identity of each convention. A committee member should be assigned the duty of designing a logo.

Contracts for AIS Conventions

When negotiating and signing a contract with the hotel, bus companies, portable toilets, caterers, restaurants or any other service or supplier for the sponsored activity, make sure that the sponsoring and responsible party on the contract is the host society or region, not The American Iris Society. Make sure to communicate with the AIS convention liaison to get their thoughts and comments about the contract. And, that the AIS attorney has reviewed the contracts thoroughly before signing. The contract should also be sent to the AIS Insurance Chair for review.

The Feasibility Study

When someone mentions the idea that a club or region should extend an invitation to host an AIS convention, the usual response is: "We can't do it." Instead of accepting that response as the final word, the group should conduct a study to see if a convention is feasible. The study

should cover available hotels, suitable tour gardens, sites for luncheons, accessibility of the headquarters city, availability of tour buses, and number of willing workers.

After forming a Feasibility Committee, the first step might be a visit to the local Chamber of Commerce or Convention and Visitors Bureau. They will be anxious to help in any way possible because the AIS Convention is a plum for their city. They can give you information on airlines, restaurants, and points of interest and can provide other items such as brochures, badges, maps, and photographs to use in pre-convention publicity. Most importantly, they have statistics on local hotels listing the number of available rooms, number and sizes of conference rooms, and data on prices. This can save you many steps when selecting your headquarters hotel.

Locating a Headquarters Hotel

In locating a headquarters hotel, the Feasibility Committee should consider the following items:

1. Is the number of available rooms adequate for convention needs? Assume that the number of rooms needed will be half the number of estimated attendance. Are nearby hotels available for the overflow? Can a hotel be found which will give reasonable rates?
2. Often Board members and attendees come in the day before the first scheduled day of the convention and also may stay over an extra day for various reasons. Make sure to block an adequate number of rooms on days before and after the convention. Then inform the hotel that some people may stay extra days.
3. Are meeting rooms adequate for your needs? You will need rooms for the following meetings:
 - AIS Board of Directors--This room should have a large table and chairs for directors and officers and chairs for other guests. The room should be set up in conference style for the Board members and theater style for the guests. The guest chairs could also be placed along the walls.
 - Section Meetings--At least two large rooms will be needed. They should be set up in theater style. Section meetings are scheduled for one hour with as little overlap as possible, so that two rooms, used on an alternating basis, should be sufficient. (This is necessary, as time is needed to set up for the next meeting.)
 - Judges Training Sessions - The preferred scheduling features two sessions, each 1.5 hours each. Traditionally, Awards & Ballot or Ethics are taught in one of the two sessions. Room size should accommodate at least 50% of the registration. For example, if 250 people are expected, 125 will probably attend the judging schools. The room accomodation should include microphone, projector, and screen (or laptop with HDMI connection to a large sized monitor).
 - Miscellaneous Meetings — Smaller meeting rooms will be needed for meetings of RVPs, judges training chairs, Bus Captains, First Time Convention attendees, Affiliate representatives, and other groups. These are usually scheduled when the section meetings are not in progress. One small room should be held in reserve for impromptu meetings.
 - Youth Reception — This can be scheduled in a small area large enough for 25 to 40 people to sit and talk. A table from which punch and cookies can be served will be needed. Some tables and chairs should be in the room, but they need not be formally arranged. Check

with the AIS Youth Chairperson for assistance.

- Silent Auction—This activity needs a room that can be locked because of the items that will be for sale in the room. This room will need approximately 15 to 20 eight foot tables, or more. An AIS convention official will be in charge of the auction, so they will need to be contacted to see how many items they anticipate having at the auction. Work with this person also as to the arrangement of the tables. The room needs to be a good sized room to allow people to walk around the tables to view the items. The most important thing is that the room can be locked when not in use.

4. Is a banquet room available which will comfortably seat the number of people expected at the convention? Check with others who have used the hotel in the past to see how efficient the employees are at serving the meal.

5. Is there a place which is safe for loading and unloading the buses? An area with heavy traffic is not the best place for loading buses.

6. Can conventioners get to and from the airport easily? Exorbitant transportation fares can often offset any savings in room costs. Does the hotel have a courtesy van?

7. Are additional eating places available within walking distance of the hotel? Eating in the hotel dining room can become monotonous, not to mention expensive. Most iris-people like to get away from the hotel for at least one meal during a convention.

8. Look at the lobby area. Is there a place for the registration desk? Is there a place for the people to sit and greet arriving friends? Look for all the things that you enjoyed at previous conventions. A checklist might be prepared in advance and used in evaluating possible hotels and their staff.

Regarding meetings, with the advent of Zoom online meetings during the 2020 pandemic, these types of meetings are encouraged because they are practical and can be held before the Convention. If AIS groups meet outside of the Convention, the costs associated with meetings will be reduced in most cases, and more members may be able to participate.

The hotel needs to be large enough to be able to handle at least 250+ people for a sit down dinner, have plenty of meeting rooms to handle the meetings schedule for a convention, and have enough guest rooms to accommodate up to 300 people.

Check to see if the host town has any incentives for having a convention in their city. Ask for grant money. Ask for discount coupons you can share with attendees.

Luncheon Sites

Lunch is needed for both garden tour days and non-garden tour days. For non-garden tour days the hotel and local restaurants are considerations. There are a number of options that should be explored for garden tour days.

In considering restaurants for luncheon sites, remember that it is not necessary for the entire convention to be served at the same time or at the same site on a particular day. It is a good idea to check with the restaurant managers to see if they are interested in serving such a large

group. Some restaurants are not willing to serve a large group because it deprives their regular customers of service. It is also a good idea to go to the restaurant and sample the food, check out the menu, and see what kind of service they provide.

Other possibilities are box lunches distributed in a garden or public park, luncheons served by church women, or catered luncheons in large halls.

Locate facilities that are near to the tour gardens with good food, good location, willing to negotiate a menu, not too expensive, and has the space and facility to handle at least 100 people at a time seated.

If using a caterer, they must be willing to be flexible. 3 buses may show up at the same time, and are the tables clean? Are there adequate restrooms at the facility? Extra food is helpful if someone changes their mind or cannot eat something as prepared. Always look for a fair price that includes service fees, etc.

Be aware of the Lenten season and dietary needs such as gluten free, vegan, or people that have severe food allergy restrictions. Have a plan for their food.

Selecting the Gardens

If a hotel is located that meets all the convention requirements and if suitable luncheon sites are available, the Feasibility Committee still has a big job to complete. The most important part of planning is to find suitable gardens for tours.

The best way to select the gardens is to visit them and talk with the owners. Consider these things:

1. Is the garden large enough to accommodate the visitors?
2. Is the owner willing to alter the garden plan to make room for guest plants or to provide pathways if none are now available?
3. Can the garden be fitted into tours? For example, if plans call for dividing the crowds among four gardens, each garden must be large enough for 25 percent of the people to be there at one time. The garden must also fit into the time frame for the day's travels. A garden that is so distant that it requires excessive travel time should probably be eliminated from the tour.
4. How well are irises growing in the garden?
5. Is the owner willing and able to bear any extra expenses that might be incurred in a tour?
6. Is parking space available for buses?
7. Are entrances and exits available so that guests can get to the garden without long walks, stairs to climb, going through the home or having to contend with people going in the opposite direction?
8. Are the irises being grown new enough to have appeal to the people who have paid to make the visit? If not, will the addition of guest irises be sufficient to make the garden acceptable? Is the owner willing to update the iris planting?

Pathways in gardens should be wide enough to allow people to meet and have room to pass. Paths which are five feet wide are usually acceptable.

Iris plantings should be spaced in a manner that will not require all the people to be in the same area at the same time. A large garden is of little importance if the irises are all planted in one

corner in a small space. A small garden has the same problem, not providing an opportunity for everyone to see the irises in the time allowed. There may be a problem of having too many gardens available. Keep in mind that too many gardens on tour will rush the visitors and lessen their enjoyment. The committee must choose the best gardens available for convention needs.

Perhaps there will be a shortage of gardens. In that case, the committee will need to look for a public facility at which to make an iris garden. In addition to finding the site, the committee must find workers to tend the garden. Any public planting should be in an area where the irises are as safe as possible from any form of vandalism.

Master plantings can be made and visited more than once. This approach can provide the needed garden stops for the tours. It also offers the opportunity for seeing the irises more than once, giving the visitors a chance to judge how well they perform and to see a plant that is in bud on the day of the first visit in bloom on a later day.

The tour gardens must be large enough to accommodate at least 2 bus loads of people at one time (that is around 100 people). Have a back up garden or two. You may have a garden drop out due to illness, moving, etc.

Make sure the gardens carry insurance. They will have AIS insurance; however, it never hurts to have the garden owner coverage also. AIS insurance certificates should be requested in advance of the garden tours. A copy of the certificate should be provided to the garden owner. If there are accidents on the bus, tour gardens, hotel, or restaurant, the Convention Chair and the Insurance Chair should be notified immediately.

Finding Transportation

After finding gardens, restaurants, and a hotel, the task of finding transportation is the next major problem. Contact transportation companies (you can secure names and addresses and perhaps recommendations from the Chamber of Commerce or Tourist Bureau) to see if buses will be available on the days needed. If possible, get a commitment in writing. They won't quote prices three or more years in advance, but you can try to get them to pledge a certain number of buses with options for more. Be sure the company has enough buses to replace a bus that breaks down or has agreements with other companies to provide this service when a bus breaks down at a distance from the home garage. Without such service or agreement, there could be much time lost from the tours for some unhappy passengers. At least one bus should be an ADA compliant bus. Ask the bus company if they have a handicap bus with electric lift. The convention registrar should notify the convention chair and transportation chair (if applicable) if a convention registrant has special bus needs.

Locate a bus company with buses that are equipped to carry at least 50 people per bus. It is important to locate a bus company willing to work with the convention committee for the least expensive cost and has a good reputation for transporting in the bus industry.

It is easier to cancel a bus or two than to add. Each bus should have a working restroom and microphone. Before leaving each day, it is a good idea to have the bus driver provide emergency information such as how to open windows and the emergency exits. Check and double check the bus company history and insurance.

Extending the Invitation and Selecting a Date

Once the local group has voted to host an AIS convention and it is known that gardens, workers, a hotel, and transportation are available, a letter of invitation should be sent to the AIS Convention Liaison. This will be presented to the AIS Board of Directors. The Board will then vote on acceptance of the invitation at the next scheduled meeting.

At the time the invitation is made, only a tentative date for the convention is needed. As a matter of fact, only the year is necessary at this point. The selection of the exact dates may be made after acceptance of the invitation. The AIS has no policy regarding the day of the week on which a convention begins or ends. Consideration for those who must get back to a job might dictate scheduling the convention so that it does not involve parts of two work weeks.

However, the most important factor in scheduling is the normal peak bloom period. When those dates are determined, it is better to set the convention a few days later rather than earlier.

Selection of the dates is entirely at the discretion of the local hosting group.

Chapter 2 - Organization

The duties of each convention are divided so that workers are not duplicating efforts of another committee member or allowing a job to go undone. Make sure that duties are spelled out so that each person understands their list of responsibilities. The Feasibility Committee ceases to exist once an invitation has been accepted. It is replaced by the Convention Committee. The tasks need not be assigned as explained in the following paragraphs. This is a guide, but it does include the things which must be done by the committee members.

Convention Chair

This person should be familiar with AIS conventions and what is expected to take place. They should be able to delegate duties and to see that they are performed. They should guide the committee so that unneeded extravagances are avoided and necessary arrangements are completed. They should know at all times what each committee member is doing. It is the General Chair's job to correspond with the AIS Convention Liaison and to be sure that AIS rules are followed.

The person who serves as general chair must realize that it is their duty to maintain harmony if at all possible. The general chair is the mediator in disagreements and must use tact so that workers will continue to do their jobs. The general chair also must realize that on occasion, there will be decisions that require a negative response which might not be popular.

The Convention Chair usually serves as the Master of Ceremonies at the banquets. The MC extends the invitation at the Awards Banquet the year before the convention. The MC will be called on to answer endless questions and will be needed in a dozen places at once. Because of these demands, it is a good idea for the convention chair to be someone who does not have a garden on tour.

The Convention Chair should contact the AIS Editor and AIS Webmaster in putting the Registration Form in the bulletin and on the website.

It is a good idea to choose another member of the Convention Committee to serve as Assistant Chair or Co Chair in case the first elected chair is unable to perform because of illness or other mishap.

Guest Iris Chair

This person receives all guest irises, distributes them to tour garden owners, keeps records of their location and performance, sends reports to hybridizers, helps in making the iris listing for the convention booklet, and makes arrangements for the return of guest irises.

The guest iris chair will be swamped with plants when the guest irises begin to arrive, so they will need a cool area in which to keep the plants until they can be distributed to the gardeners.

This job requires record keeping and an abundance of correspondence. Boxes of irises will arrive

almost daily, so someone needs to be present to receive them. This means that the guest iris chair will need to set aside much of their time for this task for several weeks. By setting a specific period of time in which guest irises will be received, the chair can be freed from this restriction to some degree.

The guest iris chair must be a person who will stick by the rules in distributing the plants among the tour gardens. Anyone who could be persuaded to favor one gardener over the others would be unacceptable for this job.

Registrations Chair

While most jobs are completed over a long period of time, this one is done primarily during the final weeks before convention time and during convention week itself. Files must be maintained for every person who registers, and letters of acknowledgment must be sent, too. The registrar will be involved in preparing the information packet for each registrant.

Thousands of dollars in registrations will be received by the Registrar, and some refunds will be made. The registrar may be authorized to sign checks for the refunds and make deposits. The registrar should keep detailed and accurate records and be able to account for every penny received and paid out. It may be convenient for the registrar to serve also as finance chair.

As registrations arrive, the Registrar will be asked many questions about partial registrations, probable temperatures during the tour days, points of interest which might be visited before or after the tours, and other things outside the realm of the job description. All of these will require a letter, email, or in the case of last-minute questions, a phone call.

The Registrar should supervise the preparation of name tags for all those in attendance. These become a part of the convention packet and may be used as a "ticket" for entry into luncheon sites, buses, special exhibits, or any other AIS sponsored activity during the convention.

When the convention opens, the Registrar is in charge of the registration desk, where the convention packets are distributed. That is the hub of activity and the registrar will again be asked a multitude of questions. The registration desk is open for long hours, and the Registrar is in charge of all activities there. This includes the storing of materials each day at closing time.

Transportation Chair

This person deals with the bus companies, finalizes tour plans, sets the timetable, and secures bus captains.

Once a contract has been made with the bus company, the Transportation Chair still must be in contact to be sure exactly enough buses are secured. Too many buses will increase costs needlessly, but too few will create chaos at tour time.

The transportation chair should check all routes for time, road problems, and adequate parking. Once the destination is reached, a detailed map should be prepared for each bus captain and bus driver. From reading this map, each captain should be able to reach every garden on time and without difficulty.

Selection of bus captains is usually a matter of finding volunteers. The more knowledge these

people have of the gardens, their owners, the route to the gardens, and the history of the area being toured, the better. If the bus captain knows these things, questions can be answered and the likelihood of the bus getting lost en route is lessened. Bus captains should have the cell phone number of the transportation chair in order to report a problem or delay in travel. Likewise, the transportation chair should have the cell phone numbers of all the bus captains.

The transportation chair should plan methods of loading and unloading the buses at every stop. These plans will get the attendees to meals on time, to gardens in time to get the maximum viewing time, and back to the hotel in plenty of time for the evening's activities. Without expert work on the part of this chair, tour days become a hectic, disorganized time with many unhappy guests. A dry run for bus captains is a good idea, if possible.

Bus captains are a key component of the convention. Have at least 2 per bus and several back ups. Pick outgoing people that can provide fun for the travelers. Bus booklets with local information, trivia, word search are great ways to pass the time. Bus Captains should have a cell phone (mobile device) that has GPS. Bus captains should know where the closest emergency medical centers are and have their phone numbers.

Buses should carry bottles of water. Snacks are helpful in case someone has an emergency need. Each bus should have trash bags and emergency bags in case someone becomes ill.

Bus raffles are fun; however, pick items that are easy to pack in a bag. It would be more appropriate to raffle iris rhizomes than large living plants. Plant coupons and vouchers are well received; however, postage can be very expensive. Will someone pay \$10 postage for a 3-5 year old introduction? The person donating the plant should not be responsible for postage.

A suggestion might be to reserve the first 4 rows of each bus for passengers who have mobility issues or have a need to have a front row seat because of illnesses.

This chair must work closely with the person scheduling luncheons. If the conventioners are dining at two different places, the number at each place must be known.

Secretary

A secretary should be elected at the first meeting so that records of all decisions and plans can be maintained. The secretary might be asked to answer inquiries about the convention and might serve in some other office as well. Exact minutes of meetings are of immeasurable importance.

Copies of the minutes should be made for the convention chair, and a copy might be sent to the AIS convention liaison. Any committee member unable to attend a meeting should also receive a copy, and they should be available to all members on request.

Finance Chair

This person is in charge of fundraising, preparing a budget for the convention, and keeping a record of all income and expenditures. Reports on the financial condition of the convention fund should be made at every meeting, and a final accounting of all receipts and disbursements should be made after the convention is ended. The budget should include all estimated sources of income (such as registration fees, Geek Dinner, Silent Auction, Boutique, donations) and all

estimated expenses.

The finance chair usually deposits all funds for the convention in an account separate from all other funds of the sponsoring organization. The Convention checking account should have at least 2 people who can sign checks, usually the Finance Chair and the Convention Chair, should one or the other be unavailable when checks need to be written.

It is this chair's duty to provide the information which will enable the committee to determine the registration fee for the convention. The chair also makes payments for convention expenses. A finance chair who does not keep the committee informed of the amount of money on hand, the amount needed immediately to make payments, and the expected costs in the future is forcing this committee to work in the dark. Such action could result in a shortage of cash and could cause the registration fee to be set at an inaccurate figure.

The convention committee should consider having *a la carte* registration, in addition to the full registration fee for people who don't want to attend all the events. The *a la carte* registration form should include a basic registration fee to cover fixed costs, in addition to costs for meals and garden tours.

The convention committee will work on a budget to determine the registration from the cost of hotel expenses, bus company expenses, porta-pottie expenses, garden labels/markers, convention booklet, shipping back guest plants, lunches, optional tour expenses, brochures/buttons, registration supplies, and any other expenses required for the convention.

Convention registrants now often wish to pay their registration online with either PayPal or a credit card (Square). The finance chair is responsible for setting up these electronic systems specifically for the convention. After the convention is over, these services can be stopped. Following the convention, the finance chair will be responsible for preparing and filing a timely Form 990 with the IRS for the year of the convention for the host entity (club affiliate, section, or Region). Registration and other income usually exceed \$50,000 which is the maximum income a tax exempt organization may make in one year to avoid filing a Form 990. This is not the 990N postcard. It is the full income tax return. This return must be filed for the next 5 taxable years for the host organization.

Program and Meeting Chair

The scheduling of all meetings is done by this person. It is the duty of this chair to contact all AIS sections to determine their needs for scheduled meetings. The chair must work closely with the hotel in arranging meeting room setups, space required for all events (including registration desk and space for overnight storage of convention packets), banquet menus, breakfast service, and all other items concerning the use of the hotel.

Of utmost importance are the provisions for the Awards Banquet. If digital presentations will be shown, audio-visual equipment should be arranged, or if music is to be performed, special attention should be given to having the room set up for the enjoyment of all the guests. The program and meeting chair should contact the AIS awards chair to determine the set up, table, podium and AV equipment that is needed for the Awards Banquet.

Special seating arrangements are made by the Program and Meeting chair, including the seating at the head table for the two banquets. A suggestion is to have award recipients seated near the podium.

The scheduling of board meetings, section meetings, judge's training sessions, and all other meetings is done through correspondence with the proper AIS officials.

Items such as cookies and beverages, such as coffee and water at the AIS Board meetings, water at all meetings, and any special events the committee may schedule are duties of this person. Other tasks include aiding the president or their spouse in hosting any gathering and scheduling events for youth members.

It is also the responsibility of the program and meeting chair to provide attendance sheets for the judges' training sessions. Ask the person conducting the judges training if they need help getting their tests online, or papers printed.

The job of programs and meetings may be divided into two parts with the duties split. Just be sure all tasks are done.

Hospitality Chair

Hospitality covers many areas - from items to be placed in the "goody" bags to convention souvenirs at the banquets and providing floral arrangements for the lobby, banquets, or for the rooms of special guests.

Among the special things that might be done would be setting up a table at the airport for greeting guests and scheduling tours for those who would like to see special points of interest in the host city.

The hospitality chair is the one who rolls out the red carpet and does all the seemingly little things which make a convention memorable. Among these would be helping garden owners to secure refreshments for tour day.

Publicity Chair

Nothing aids a convention more than good publicity. Articles in magazines and local newspapers will bring inquiries and increase interest in the convention. It is the articles in regional and national AIS publications, however, that really bring the guests to town. All of these publicity releases are the duty of the publicity chair. There are many ways to promote a convention. Including, a video of convention gardens, hotel and optional tour sites shown via an online webinar that can be subsequently posted on the AIS YouTube channel. The local newspaper or TV station could be invited to interview the convention chair. The reach of social media will certainly draw many interested persons. It has been suggested that people new to iris be invited to attend and encouraged to attend by offering a reduced convention fee. Special items, such as buttons for distribution at the convention immediately preceding the one being planned, are to be secured by the Publicity chair.

A very important part of this job is informing the general public, but doing so in a way which encourages them to come see the irises on a day other than the tour days. The gardens will already be filled with convention people, and there simply is not room for a large crowd of extra guests. Gardeners generally prefer that the general public visit AFTER the convention. The publicity chair should keep a file (or scrapbook) of all convention articles that are published

so that they may be retained as a record of the convention.

Awards Chair

The duties of the convention awards chair are most demanding in a period between the final bus tour and the Awards Banquet. During that time the winners of the President's Cup, the Franklin Cook Cup, the Ben Hager Cup, the Zurbrigg-Mahan Cup and the Richardson Award must be determined. The convention awards chair is in charge of getting the ballots counted for this purpose. After the final tally, the AIS awards chair is notified of the winners' names. Of course, notifying the AIS awards chair must be done before the start of the banquet. After the convention, the awards chair should have the trophies engraved and forward them to the chair of the next convention. The favorite guest iris ballots should be counted and a list of winners should be sent to the AIS awards chair and the AIS Bulletin editor. Arrange for a competent photographer to record the award ceremony.

Convention Garden Chair

This person heads the committee that makes final decisions on which gardens will be on tour. As convention time approaches, this chair should visit all gardens to see that everything possible is being done to get the garden ready for visitors. Any unsightly areas should be noted and suggestions for eliminating them should be made.

The Garden committee should visit every garden on at least four occasions:

- Before selections are made,
- A couple of times during the bloom season, the year before the convention,
- Between bloom seasons to assess the overall growth of the iris,
- Just prior to the convention.

The purpose of these visits is to learn of any problems the gardener may have and to guide them in making the garden as attractive and safe as possible for the tours.

The tour garden chair should work closely with the hospitality chair to make sure gardens have sufficient refreshments and seating and that workers are available to help serve refreshments. Usually, the tour garden owners are asked to find volunteers to serve refreshments. Refreshments are the responsibility of the hospitality chair.

Plant markers for guest irises could be the responsibility of the tour garden chair. This includes the responsibility for seeing that all guest plants are labeled according to specifications made by the convention committee. .

If it becomes necessary to point out problems in a host garden, the tour garden chair should do this tactfully and offer suggestions and corrections in as positive a manner as possible.

Convention Booklet Chair

One of the nicest souvenirs of a convention is the convention booklet. The chair of this committee prepares the material, obtains printing cost estimates, and makes or finds a cover design. Information regarding guest irises and the host gardens is obtained from the guest iris chair. Information about the programs, meetings and judges training sessions is obtained from the program and meeting chair.

Booklets from previous conventions will help in determining the size of the booklet that must be printed and will, therefore, help in figuring cost estimates. It is suggested to include two copies of the ballot(s) and place them near the back of the booklet. Convention attendees like to keep a copy of their voting, which they can easily do on the second copy. A statement about how to cast the ballots and which irises are eligible for the awards must be in the booklet. These rules are found in the Handbook for Judges and Show Officials.

To receive credit for judges' training sessions at the convention, each judge must fill out attendance sheets and take a test. These are available at each session from the AIS chair of judges and judges' training.

Locate a printing company that is easy to work with, not too terribly expensive, and has experience in printing convention booklets. Inquire about binding options: spiral and stapled.

Summary

Assignment of the above jobs is important work. The general chair is the person who finds suitable people for these tasks. Once a committee chair has been appointed, that chair should find others to help with the work of the convention committee. Ten or twelve dedicated people can put on a convention by themselves, but it is much easier if others, who are willing to work, can be found. More detailed job descriptions are given later.

Chapter 3 - Convention Awards

The American Iris Society's national meeting, popularly known as the AIS national convention, is held annually in the spring of the year. Everyone attending the national meeting who has paid the convention's registration fees is entitled to cast ballots to honor outstanding irises seen in the convention's official tour gardens. The privilege is extended to all registrants without regard to status as an AIS member.

Although all the awards for The American Iris Society are presented at a convention, the local committee is responsible only for determining the winner of the President's Cup, the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup, the Gerald Richardson Award, the Zurbrigg-Mahan, the Ben Hager Cups, and the Favorite Guest Irises. All awards will be presented by The American Iris Society and the awards chair for AIS will be in charge of their presentation. The convention awards chair will need to work closely with the AIS awards chair in setting up the awards ceremony.

The President's Cup is the most important award as far as local hybridizers are concerned. Any officially introduced iris seen growing and blooming in the convention gardens is eligible for this award as long as it was introduced by a hybridizer who resides in the region where the convention is being held. Should the garden of a hybridizer from an adjoining region be on tour, the irises introduced by that hybridizer will be eligible for the President's Cup. Eligible irises need not be official guests, nor do they need to be listed in the Convention Booklet.

All introduced irises seen growing and blooming in the convention gardens are eligible for the Franklin Cook Cup except for those that are eligible for the President's Cup. These irises need not be guests, nor do they need to be listed in the Convention Booklet.

Only official guest irises are eligible to be selected as one of the "Favorite Guest Irises" These irises must be listed in the Convention Booklet. They may be originated by hybridizers within or outside the host region. Numbered seedlings are not eligible for selection as a Favorite Guest Iris.

Ballots & Ballot Box

Ballots for the President's Cup, the Franklin Cook, the Ben Hager Cup, the Zurbrigg-Mahan Cup, and the Gerald Richardson Award are given to each person who registers for the convention. If possible, these ballots should be attached to the convention booklet to decrease the risks of their being lost. Each person registering also receives a ballot for voting for guest irises.

Registrants may vote for one iris for the President's Cup and one for the Franklin Cook Cup. Fifteen choices may be listed on the Favorite Guest Iris Ballot. The votes for the two cups must be turned in during the convention. A deadline for receiving these ballots should be set and listed on the ballot itself.

Ballot boxes - one for each cup and one for the Favorite Guest Irises - should be placed in the hotel lobby on the final day of tours. A deadline for voting should be set for a time after the buses return to the hotel. The deadline should be early enough to allow time for counting the ballots and reporting to the AIS Awards Chair before the Awards Banquet. The ballots should not

be collected until all garden visits have been completed. The counting committee should not divulge the winners to anyone except the AIS Awards Chair so that the announcement will provide an exciting climax for the Awards Banquet.

Immediately after the preceding convention, the cups will be mailed to the General Chair. They will have been engraved with the names of the winners from that convention. This same policy is followed by the Awards Chair the following year - names of the winners are engraved on the cups and they are mailed to the General Chair of the next convention. Be sure that the boxes containing the cups are insured.

When the deadline for casting ballots for Favorite Guest Irises has passed, the awards chair should prepare a list of the 25 irises receiving the most votes and mail it to the AIS Bulletin editor and to the AIS awards chair. (A longer list of favorite guests might be given to the regional bulletin editor for local publication.)

All convention awards and others which are to be presented should be placed at the awards table just prior to the beginning of the banquet by the awards chair. After the banquet has ended, pictures will be made of the winners. When this has been completed, the awards chair should take the President's Cup, the Franklin Cook Cup, and any other cups which are not to be retained by the winners and store them in a safe place.

The Franklin Cook Memorial Cup

The Franklin Cook Memorial Cup is awarded annually during The American Iris Society's national meeting. All introduced irises seen growing and in bloom in the official tour gardens of the meeting are eligible for the Cook Memorial Cup, except irises that originated in the host region for that year's national meeting or originated by a hybridizer whose garden is included on the official garden tour, regardless of its location. Irises considered may or may not be official guest irises.

[For the convention ballots, introduced irises will include all irises properly registered and offered for sale prior to or in the Spring AIS Bulletin of the year of that national meeting.]

Each registrant may vote for only one variety and the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup is awarded to the iris receiving the greatest number of votes.

The President's Cup

The President's Cup is awarded annually during The American Iris Society's national meeting. Eligibility is restricted to introduced irises that originated within the host region for that year's national meeting or originated by a hybridizer whose garden is included on the meeting's official convention tour, regardless of its location. Irises must have been seen growing and in bloom in the meeting's official tour gardens, but need not be official guest irises.

Each convention registrant may vote for one variety, and The President's Cup is awarded to the iris with the largest number of votes. In case of a tie, there can be multiple winners.

The Ben Hager Cup

The Ben R. Hager Cup is awarded annually during the American Iris Society's national convention. Eligibility is restricted to introduced median iris (e.g., SDB, IB, BB, MTB) seen growing and in bloom in the convention's official tour gardens, but need not be an official guest iris.

Each convention registrant may vote for one variety and the Ben R. Hager Cup is awarded to the iris with the most votes. In case of a tie, there can be multiple winners.

The Zurbrigg-Mahan Cup

This cup is awarded to the seedling at the AIS national convention that receives the most votes by convention registrants. The seedling may be of any type and registered but not introduced. Each convention registrant may vote for one seedling and the Zurbrigg-Mahan Cup is awarded to the iris with the most votes.

The Richardson Award

The Richardson Award is given to the host of the garden with the best integrated planting of irises and companion plants. It is only awarded to non-commercial gardens. If your convention has no non-commercial gardens, it will not be awarded. Any convention attendee may vote for this award. The garden with the most votes wins the Richardson Award.

Favorite Guest Irises

The annual meeting's ballot for favorite guest irises allows each registrant the privilege of voting for up to fifteen(15) guest irises he/she considers outstanding. Eligibility is restricted to registered irises, introduced or not introduced, which are official convention guest irises. They must be listed in the meeting's program book and must have been seen growing and in bloom on the meeting's official garden tour. The meeting's official list of Favorite Guest Irises(usually 25) is made up of the varieties receiving the highest number of votes.

Chapter 4 - Hotel Facilities

One person should be assigned to work with the headquarters hotel. It is difficult to know what has been done or needs to be done unless one person coordinates all plans with the hotel management. Hotels are notorious for changing personnel, so get as much of the agreement in writing as possible to avoid having something omitted when new employees take over the account.

Be sure to find out about the cost of meeting rooms. Hotels usually provide these free of charge for conventions if the size of the group is large enough. An AIS convention certainly qualifies in that respect. The committee person who works with the hotel should provide the staff with a detailed plan on what meeting rooms are to be set up and how this is to be done. If meetings are set up in two rooms on an alternating basis, the staff can have time to prepare room B while room A is in use and vice versa. Do not expect to schedule a meeting in a room at 9:00 AM and another in the same room at 10:00 AM. This creates problems for the attendees, hotel staff and for the committee too, because invariably, meetings run over their allotted time.

A must for the AIS Board meeting room is bottled water. Coffee and tea is much appreciated, too. In all meeting rooms there should be water available. See the section on Scheduling Meetings for more details on the needs of meeting rooms.

It is recommended that a copy machine be made available to be used for printing committee reports to be handed out to all the attendees of the Board Meeting. Printing costs and paper usage can be much reduced or eliminated if committee reports are available electronically to all board members and committee chairs.

A room near the registration desk should be set aside for storing supplies, records, etc. The Registration Committee should have access to this room at all times. It can serve as that committee's headquarters, because an area for storage will be needed after the registration desk has closed for the day.

Does the hotel have a doctor on call? Many emergencies occur when large numbers of people are together. If not, find the location of the nearest hospital or urgent care facility. Provide the names and phone numbers of those facilities in the convention booklet.

Complimentary Services

It is customary to provide a complimentary suite for the AIS president. This is sometimes used by small groups for meetings, but the convention committee should not schedule meetings there. Hotels booked for conventions often give complimentary rooms and suites, usually one room for each 50 guest rooms reserved. Thus, the presidential suite is not a cost to the convention committee.

Since there will probably be other complimentary rooms available to the committee, a plan for their use should be made. These rooms might be used by the committee members, by visiting dignitaries officially representing an overseas iris society such as the British Iris Society, or for people who have been particularly helpful to the convention committee in its planning. There is

no policy on the use of complimentary rooms other than the one regarding the AIS president.

By all means, ask what services the hotel will make available, what items they provide (microphones, projectors, screens, pianos) and what the convention committee must do. Ask for a hotel phone number to report last-minute needs or problems that arise during the meetings. Time is of the essence, and a delay can be avoided by knowing in advance what is to be done in such cases. No matter how carefully plans are made, some small problems will arise.

AV and other Equipment

One issue that has come up of late is the high costs of Audio Visual Services (A/V). Make sure these are planned in advance, and ask the hotel if you can bring your own equipment to lower the costs. Some hotels will allow this, others will not. It's up to your group to bring this up and try your best at supplementing these meetings with screens, projectors, laptops and even microphones. Make sure you read the A/V quotes carefully.

Hotel Dining

Breakfast is a hectic time at an AIS convention. The dining room is never ready for so many people wanting breakfast in such a short time. If a buffet line can be set up, part of this problem can be eliminated. Warn the hotel about the demand on their staff at breakfast time. Other demanding times will be lunch time on the section meeting day and dinner on the night of judges' training sessions. Most hotels will have a hostess to seat people in the dining room. If they can be convinced to dispense with that during peak periods, things will go more smoothly. Iris people enjoy joining friends who may already be seated. Suggest that the hotel employ extra help during the very busy times in the dining room.

Room Rates

Room rates cannot be established until the final year of planning. Bargain for the best possible rates, because many AIS members are on limited incomes and will need low rates. Find out everything about what is provided for certain rates. If four people share a room, does the hotel provide roll-away beds, cots, or no additional beds? The committee will be asked to answer questions about the accommodations. Sometimes convention planners are forced to use the city's largest and most expensive hotel when there is an attendance as large as the AIS meeting. However, it is not necessary to dazzle your visitors with the fanciest hotel just to make a good impression. Most convention guests will be happy with a clean, moderately priced hotel if one is available that can also handle the convention.

Most hotels use online reservation; include information about online reservation on the convention registration form. Since large numbers of people leave on the same day, early check-out is usually appreciated. Find out the hotel's policy on early check-out.

- Is there a charge for local calls and what is the charge?
- Is airport transportation available? If so, how many vans does the hotel have? How often do they go to the airport?
- Are there any other conventions or meetings at the hotel at the same time as the AIS Convention?

- Is there a daily setup charge on the meeting rooms?

The hotel staff is important to the success of the convention, so the person or persons working on meetings, registrations, and banquets should establish a good rapport with the staff. Hotels are happy to host such large conventions, and most will do their best. If the committee has been friendly and courteous, their best becomes even better.

Chapter 5 - Guest Irises & Convention Gardens

Although most people come under the spell of AIS conventions and AIS people once they have attended their first convention, it is still the irises themselves that are the drawing card. The gardens in which they are grown become very important parts of the convention. In fact, if there were no gardens, there really would be no convention!

The convention gardens must accommodate more people in one day than would normally visit most of them in ten years. The number of people is a problem in most gardens, but because the guest irises will be the focal point, more problems can arise.

In Preparation

The duties of the guest iris chair begin in earnest three years before the convention date when the first guest plants arrive. Immediately, an inventory of the iris and their condition should be made. Always of the utmost importance is the prompt acknowledgment of irises received to the contributor. This can be in the form of an email, a postcard or a short thank you note.

The guest iris chair needs to have access to a computer to maintain a spreadsheet in order to keep track of guest irises.

The spreadsheet will act as one large ledger.

A template of a spreadsheet to track guest irises is available to all.

We should also mention that the guest chair should let the hybridizers know the status of their iris after the second year, at least. And notify them of deaths.

The responsibility for both accuracy in reporting and for good convention bloom originates with the hybridizer or contributor.

Garden Markers

A uniform plan for marking irises in the garden should be adopted. There are many different types of markers available, and no particular one is suggested here. Be sure that the name of the iris and the hybridizer are on the label. Be sure that the marking is legible. Be sure that some method of identification of irises eligible for the President's Cup is adopted. (Irises from hybridizers within the host region are eligible.) All gardens must follow this plan for marking. The garden owner need not change the labeling on irises he already grows, but he should be sure that these irises are labeled so that the names can be read. Irises which are already being grown that are eligible for the President's Cup should be labeled according to the plan adopted for guest irises in this category.

Ask that iris contributors do the following things:

1. Contribute rhizomes of good growing size and in a dry, healthy condition. These should be recent introductions, seedlings that are going to be introduced, or seedlings that are being considered for introduction.
2. Mark the name or seedling number clearly on each plant. It is best if this is done by attaching a tag rather than writing on the fan. The marking on the fan is sometimes not legible.
3. Submit a packing list with the shipment and attach a tag to each rhizome with the following information:
 - a. Name or seedling number.
 - b. Type of iris.
 - c. Description of iris.
 - d. Name of hybridizer and the name of the contributor if different from the hybridizer.

Three years prior to the convention, the beardless guest plants will arrive. Because in most areas beardless irises require fall planting, this early planting is necessary in order to assure two good years of growth before the convention. Submit a "Request for Beardless Guest Irises" to the editor of the AIS Bulletin before the summer issue deadline (Usually about June 10). Check the Bulletin to learn the deadlines which are in effect.

Two years prior to the convention, submit a "Request for Bearded Guest Irises" to the Bulletin editor for publication in the Spring issue. Examples of these invitations may be found in past issues of the Bulletin. It is of the utmost importance that this material reaches the editor before the deadline. The convention committee may limit the number of rhizomes of each variety and number of varieties submitted from a hybridizer.

Arrival of Guest Plants

Once guest plants begin to arrive, the guest iris chair will need to have an established procedure for distributing these plants to the host gardens for planting. If a master planting is made, one plant of each variety will be set aside for that garden. To avoid being accused of favoring one garden over the others, the following policy might be used:

1. Unpack the irises and sort each package alphabetically. If they are numbered seedlings, arrange them with the lowest number first.
2. List all gardens alphabetically and assign guest plants alphabetically to each garden in regular rotation. If three rhizomes of a variety named 'Ace' are included, one rhizome goes to the master planting and the other two to the first gardens on the alphabetical list.
3. Record the shipment alphabetically and numerically in the receipts ledger under columns with these type of headings:
 - A. Date Received
 - B. Received From
 - C. Type of Iris
 - D. Number of Plants

E. Name or Seedling Number

F. Garden Assignment

4. Complete a list of iris assignments by garden.
5. Advise host garden owners to pick up the guest irises.
6. When a host gardener arrives to pick up their guest iris, have each one check the plants in the box against the copy of the assignment record to verify that nothing is missing or unlisted on the form. This is very important to keep from misplacing a plant.
7. Advise host gardeners to maintain a file online, or a file folder for the copies of the assignment record that they receive.

These records, which have now been established for each hybridizer, each contributor, and each host gardener, may now be used for filing any correspondence with any of them. All records pertaining to any one individual can then be easily located.

The guest plants will also be evaluated without anyone having to buy one. In other words, the irises can be seen performing in local climates without an expenditure by anyone.

For the local hybridizer, this is a chance to let others see the work he has been doing. How often does this person have so many judges see his seedlings? It also gives the local hybridizer a chance to win an award of national significance. Winning the President's Cup can be the thing which launches the hybridizer's irises on the path to further awards.

The wonderful letters which will be received after the convention will make every one of those hours of work worthwhile. Nothing matches the exhilarating feeling one feels when the people visit the garden and give it praise, or when they discover a seedling and give it their approval. It is something one has to experience to understand.

Most of the hybridizers will donate some rhizomes to the local group. Sometimes these are designated as belonging to the tour garden owner, but more than likely they will be for the club or region that is serving as host. A convention should never be planned on the basis that free rhizomes will be received. They should be considered a welcome bonus when the convention has ended.

The Board of Directors strongly recommends that "Guest Irises donated to the region or society that hosts conventions be sold only within the host region" and not over the Internet at greatly reduced prices.

Suggestions for Convention Garden Owners

To ensure that all visitors can see the guest irises, these suggestions are made:

1. Strive for wide pathways, five feet wide if possible. If pathways are not wide enough for two people to pass when they meet, then viewing is difficult. Wide pathways are necessary for those visitors using walkers or other mobility devices.
2. Plant guest irises in beds separate from your regular plantings. Remember that a guest iris is like a guest in one's home and is worthy of special attention. Planting them in separate beds also makes it easier to keep tabs on their progress and performance. If

creating a new iris bed for bearded irises, there is no need to fertilize as the ground should have all the nutrients and minerals needed to grow the irises for two years.

3. Have irises planted in different sections of the garden so visitors will not all be in the same place trying to see the flowers. Imagine 200 people in a garden at once with the irises planted in one corner. It really makes no difference how big the garden is if the irises are all growing in one small area.
4. Be sure guest irises are labeled clearly and that the label shows the hybridizer's name and class of iris. Some groups like to have the year of introduction, but this often results in errors, so many conventions do not list the year of introduction.
5. Plant guest irises at least two feet apart. By following this uniform pattern for planting, each plant will have the same opportunity to show how well it can perform. By the second year, it will have grown to a size that will fill the spot adequately.
6. Most people attending the convention do so to see the guest irises which are the newest cultivars available. Many like to take pictures to share with others who did not attend the convention. If enough space is available, plant the guest irises in beds that may be viewed from both sides with pathways on both sides. In that case, the irises would be able to be planted 3 or 4 deep. Avoid planting more than 2 deep against walls or fences.
7. Be sure that all irises growing in the garden, which are iris introductions by the region's hybridizers, are labeled in a way that will indicate their eligibility for the President's Cup.
8. Be careful not to over fertilize. This practice increases the risk of soft rot.
9. If leaf spot is normally a problem in your garden, be sure to spray with a preventive spray early in the year. Not only will the irises look better, but people will also rate the gardener a good iris grower. Other techniques or treatments that are needed for making the irises look better and the garden more attractive should be used.
10. Find someone to help with the serving of refreshments so that the host will be free to visit with guests.
11. Do not "expect" the hybridizers to give rhizomes of the irises when the convention is ended. Care for them as if they were personal property, but be aware that not a single rhizome may be retained.
12. Always follow the Code of Ethics to the letter. Use of pollen or the setting of seed pods is not allowed on guest irises.
13. When a guest iris fails to live, no other iris should be planted in that spot. A plant that does not survive the first year may be replaced the second year by another rhizome of the same variety. If so, that second rhizome should be planted where the original was growing. A vacant spot with a marker will mean that the plant did not survive and was not replaced.
14. Keep a record of the guest irises received and where they are planted. When the convention has ended, the gardener must account for every plant sent before the convention.
15. Digging the guest plants for return is a very difficult job. What was one rhizome in the beginning may be 25 rhizomes after the convention. The gardener is not allowed to keep a single toe of the iris without the consent of the hybridizer. Do not destroy plants unless instructed to do so. Just because there seem to be too many rhizomes doesn't mean the hybridizer will not want all of them back. All of this is spelled out in the Code of Ethics.
16. Be prepared to have visitors in the garden the year before the convention as well as the convention year. When the guest irises were planted in the garden, the welcome mat had to be put out, too.

Some kind of temporary markers should be used the first year. The Convention Committee should determine whether these temporary markers will be provided by the committee or if the gardener will be responsible for securing them. If the committee provides the markers, they can be resold after the convention. The markers for the convention year should be placed in the garden just before the convention.

Most committees do not consider fertilizer as an expense to be reimbursed, since it is a personal benefit to the owner's garden. It is felt that the owner will be amply repaid in other ways.

It is best to have the convention markers of a uniform style. The committee might purchase markers and even label them to guarantee that all are the same. However, it is usually easier to provide the markers and let the gardeners do the labeling themselves. A guide on the method used should be provided by the Convention Committee.

Code of Ethics

The following Code of Ethics was adopted for use at some conventions in the past. It is to be observed by the Guest Iris Committee and the owners of the tour gardens.

All requests for guest irises, all correspondence, announcements, or advertising shall contain the following statement of the Code of Ethics.

1. All guest rhizomes and their increase shall remain the property of the contributor or hybridizer. In July, after the convention, all will be returned or disposed of according to the wishes of the contributor or hybridizer. None will be distributed, traded, or sold.
2. Using pollen or setting seed on a guest iris will not be permitted.
3. Owners of tour gardens growing guest irises shall not be held responsible for losses beyond their control, such as losses due to bad weather, pests, or vandalism.
4. All guest irises will be planted at least two feet apart in well-tended beds. It might be a good idea to plant Louisiana's three feet apart, to prevent them from growing into one another.
5. No consideration will be given to any rhizome that is sent directly to any garden.
6. Tour garden owners and the Guest Iris Committee will be guided at all times by the wishes of the contributor of guest irises.
7. The Board of Directors strongly recommends that "Guest Irises donated to the region or society that hosts conventions be sold only within the host region" and not over the Internet at greatly reduced prices.
8. Guidelines from the office of the National Convention Liaison Chair shall be consulted.

Duties, Obligations and Rules for Convention Garden Owners

1. ABIDE BY THE CODE OF ETHICS AS SET FORTH BY THE CONVENTION COMMITTEE.
2. Keep gardens and guest iris beds clean.
3. Spray plants when necessary and maintain proper care to ensure health and vigor of guest plants.

4. Beds containing guest irises can have no other irises in them.
5. Guest irises in border or center beds must all be either on the first row or on the first and second rows from a pathway.
6. Pathways should be about five feet wide.
7. Be able to supply the following information to the Convention Committee.
 - a. Number of visitors the garden can accommodate at any given hour.
 - b. Number of irises growing in the garden other than guest irises.
 - c. Number of guest irises (spaced no less than two feet apart) the garden can accommodate.
 - d. List of irises that have been introduced in the past three years that are growing in the garden.
8. Furnish the Guest Iris Committee:
 - a. A report on any losses of guest plants.
 - b. Reports on progress as requested.
9. Attend periodic meetings with the Tour Garden and Guest Iris Committees.
10. Use some type of temporary markers on guest iris plantings prior to the convention.
11. Provide the Guest Iris Chair with a map showing where each guest iris is planted.
12. No guest iris may be cut for any show, either before the convention, during the convention, or after the Convention.
13. It is suggested that after the convention, the gardener is to dig, trim, wash, dry, label, and return all guest irises and their increases according to the directions of the Guest Iris Chair.

These rules apply to guest irises only. What is done with the irises already being grown in the garden is up to the gardener.

By using the Code of Ethics and the guidelines for tour garden owners, there can be no question about the duties and responsibilities of the tour garden owners and the treatment of guest irises. Following these regulations strictly will avoid many potential problems. Prospective tour garden owners should be provided with these rules before their gardens are approved for the tours.

Just as soon as possible after the first year guest irises have been planted, each host gardener should provide the guest iris chair with a map showing where each guest plant has been planted in his garden.

One year prior to the convention a request for additional bearded guest iris plants should be posted in the spring issue of the AIS Bulletin if the convention committee feels that space is available for more plants. Be sure this appears in the spring issue. Set a deadline for the arrival

of these plants.

Host gardeners should report any losses of guest iris that were received the past summer. Record the losses on the spreadsheet and send an email to the hybridizer/contributor.

Upon receipt of any replacement plants, make proper notations on the spreadsheet.

Host gardeners should be advised that any plant that dies is not replaced except by a duplicate plant from the hybridizer. A vacant spot remains in the garden where a guest plant does not survive and is not replaced by any other variety. Small annual flowers may be used to fill the spot. The marker should remain in place.

One Year Before the Convention

As the year of the convention arrives, a new kind of activity takes place. This is the time when the guest iris chair must work with the convention booklet committee to see that names of irises are recorded correctly in the convention booklet. It is the duty of the hybridizer to notify the guest iris chair when a seedling has been named and/or introduced. If no notification has been received, the seedling number is listed in the booklet. The AIS registrar is sometimes willing to provide the names of irises when a seedling number is given a name. It is a good policy to list in the convention booklet only the irises that are on the lists of the guest iris chair. The convention committee can also consult the registrations and introductions booklet.

Various methods of listing guest plants in the convention booklet have been used but the most popular method seems to be the one which has guest plants listed by hybridizer in each garden. Host gardeners could be asked to submit such a list to the guest iris chair to help in getting the proper information recorded. Some convention booklets have merely listed the hybridizers in alphabetical order with their contributions listed below their name. Some notation is then made about the gardens in which each particular plant may be seen.

Make sure that all hybridizers have indicated what their instructions are for disposal or return of the guest plants.

Make notation on the master iris guest list. Host garden owners need to know exactly what is to be done with the plants in their gardens.

If you do not receive information from the hybridizer and you have tried to contact them by other means, the general rule should be "no response, no return, the iris will be destroyed".

After the Convention

Once the convention has ended, the obligations of the guest iris chair changes again. One of the biggest tasks is the return of the guest irises. Be prepared for at least two days of work and sometimes more.

1. Check with UPS and the Post Office in advance to obtain mailing regulations.
2. Pre address mailing labels.
3. Arrange for a large receiving station and notify host gardeners of the date on which the plants are to be returned. This receiving station should be cool and comfortable, because packing and sorting the returned guest plants is a difficult task.
4. Inform the host gardeners that it is their responsibility to return irises clearly marked and

in a clean, dry, healthy, shipping condition. Be sure to emphasize that all parts of the plant are to be returned to the shipping station on the exact date specified. Remind the host gardeners not to wait until the last minute to dig and wash the rhizomes.

5. Set up a receiving desk.
6. Check in the irises that are returned.
7. Separate the guest plants according to the name of the hybridizer/contributor. Place the plants for various hybridizers in a "stall" of their own.
8. Be sure that the following supplies are on hand: boxes which have been perforated for air - many boxes of various sizes; Post Office approved wrapping tape; packing material excelsior or styrofoam packing material is preferred); marking devices. scissors, and inspection stickers.
9. The convention committee should thoroughly discuss whose garden license they will use to ship guests plants.

For beardless irises, the digging dates and shipping dates will be later in the year, and a similar process will be adhered to in returning beardless guest irises.

Once the shipping has been completed, there should be no more problems if the Post Office and UPS do their jobs. Once the guest plants have been returned to their owners, the convention work has ended at last.

The use of computers makes some of the above statements obsolete. However, the information on records is still valid, regardless of the method of preparation. Find someone on the convention committee to set up a database to record iris identity, origin and culture data and to make any updated name identification changes. This would make it easy to download fields needed for convention booklets.

Note: The Convention Committee may require hybridizers who want their irises returned, to reimburse the convention committee for shipping costs. If the Convention Committee chooses to go that route, it should be stated clearly in the initial request for rhizomes in *IRISES, the Bulletin of The American Iris Society*.

(Example of Guest Iris Assignment Record, for those who'd like to use it)

OKLAHOMA '99 CONVENTION

GUEST IRIS ASSIGNMENT RECORD

Date _____

Address: Guest Iris Chair: _____

Name _____

Address City, State, Zip Telephone Telephone _____

No. Variety Name or Seedling No. Type Hybridizer Remarks

(Example of Guest Iris Receipt and Disposal Form, for those who would like to use it)

OKLAHOMA '99 CONVENTION

1997 GUEST IRIS RECEIPT RECORD

1999 GUEST IRIS DISPOSAL REQUEST

Date Received: _____

Contributor _____

Guest Iris Chair:

Address _____

Name, City, State, Zip Address, City, State, Zip, Telephone

No. Variety Name or Seedling No. Type Garden Assignment Remarks or Disposal

Chapter 6 - Scheduling Meetings & Events

The Convention Committee is obligated to provide meeting space for the AIS Board of Directors and section meetings of at least one hour each. In addition, meeting space is to be provided for judges training sessions, RVP meeting, section representatives meeting, an affiliated societies meeting, and regional judges training chairs. Small meeting rooms should be available for the AIS Foundation Trustees and for other small committees. Some sections will request time and space for board meetings, and these should be provided. These board meetings can be fitted into the schedule after the requirements for other meetings have been met.

The RVP meeting, the meeting of section representatives, and the AIS Affiliated Societies meeting can be held before the AIS Board meeting. If these groups have a proposal to present to the Board, they might need a chance to discuss it before its presentation. Please encourage them to hold their meetings in advance via Zoom throughout the year.

The Youth Reception is a vital part of the convention to those youth members in attendance. Work with the AIS youth chair to determine what is needed.

Two nights are to be used for judges' training sessions.

In the early days of convention planning, it should be ascertained just what rooms will be available for the various meetings at the hotel. By working with someone at the hotel, it can be determined which rooms are suitable for each of the functions. Once this has been decided, then the scheduling can begin.

As soon as the preceding convention is over, a letter or email should be sent to each section president and to the chairs of all standing committees asking for information regarding their meeting room and AV equipment needs. Find out how many people are expected to attend each meeting, what the needs are for the meeting (projector, screen, public address system, head table). Be sure to emphasize that meetings are allotted only one hour. Some may ask for more time, and if it fits into the convention schedule, fine. Otherwise, be honest, their request for extra time does not fit into the schedule. Arrange all section meeting rooms in theater style with podium and public address system.

If at all possible, schedule each section at a time when no other section is meeting. This may not be possible, and if it is not, make every effort to schedule as few as possible at the same time. Not more than two section meetings should ever be scheduled for the same time. When they are scheduled to meet simultaneously, be sure that these two sections are not the primary interest of one large group of the membership. In other words, schedule two sections which are least likely to conflict interest-wise with each other. As one example, Siberian and Miniature Dwarf irises do well in the same area of the country, so these two section meetings should NOT be held at the same time. However, the Siberian meeting might well occur at the same time as the Aril Society meeting.

Board of Directors Meeting

Consult with the AIS president regarding the needs of the AIS Board of Directors meeting. Ask how much time they need for their meeting, what is a good starting time, how many seats in the audience to expect, how many side tables for hand-out papers, etc. The preferred style for the room is an open horseshoe (see attached diagram) for the members of the Board with chairs for approximately 25 to 30 people. Additional chairs should be in the room for spectators, and these can be arranged in lecture style at the open end of the horseshoe. Be sure that plenty of space is available in the Board meeting room because the number of guests can be quite large.

The AIS secretary will provide the tent cards (name tags that sit on the table) for all the Board members.

Because the Board meeting is recorded, there needs to be a microphone system set up as illustrated in the AIS Board Meeting Setup page in the back of this book. Three microphones on the open horseshoe table for members of the Board and one microphone on a stand for the audience members.

A motion secretary will record all the motions made during the Board meeting. The motions are projected onto a screen so that everyone in the room can see the motion. The motion secretary will need a computer, projector and screen. See the Board meeting room diagram for placement of the motion secretary's screen.

Some people will attend the AIS Board of Directors meeting via Zoom. A computer and Zoom liaison will be needed. The liaison will relay questions from the Zoom audience to the Board and vice versa. It is important to have a sound check before the Board meeting to make sure that Zoom attendees can hear the meeting. It is recommended that the AIS president, secretary, and VPs be at the sound check. They can make last minute suggestions about the room arrangement, refreshments, and AV setup.

Coffee is usually provided at the Board meeting along with bottled water. Ask the AIS president if there will be a mid-session break in the meeting and if refreshments should be provided.

It is strongly suggested that the program and meeting chair have the direct phone number of the hotel AV or electronics specialist. Invariably, problems come up such as a lost Internet connection, burned out light in a projector, microphone not working, etc.

Because of the ease of Zoom meetings, it is possible that other groups, sections, and AIS committees will not meet during the spring convention. Thus, it is important to ask each group, section and committee chair if they plan to meet during the convention and if so, what are their needs.

Other Meetings

It is suggested that meetings other than the AIS Board of Directors meeting be scheduled for only one hour. If a group requests more time and there is space in the schedule, go ahead and grant their request. If the schedule is tight, be honest and suggest that they meet via Zoom. Keep in mind that extra time before any meeting will be needed for people to set up and find seats. At the end of their meeting, time will be needed to pack up and leave. Hence, write the schedule with an extra 30 minutes between meetings to allow for the transition to the subsequent meeting.

The RVP Board of Counselors can meet in the same room as the AIS Board of Directors. It is set up in a conference style for 25 to 30 people. Additional seating in theater style is provided for guests. Bottled water should be available in this room. A Board member must be present at this meeting, so scheduling must not conflict with the Board of Directors meeting.

The Section Representatives meeting is set up in conference style for 10 to 15 people. Be sure that bottled water is available. A Board member must attend this meeting, so scheduling must not conflict with the Board of Directors meeting. This group has lately met over Zoom.

The meeting of the AIS judges training chair with the RVPs and the regional judges training chairs may be held in the same room in which the RVP meeting was held. The same setup is provided for this meeting as was used for the RVP's. This is sometimes a large group, so be sure the room is large enough to hold at least 50 people.

If needed, other committee meetings are set up in conference style. Sometimes there will be no request for these particular meetings, but if requested, allow space for 20 at the Membership Committee meeting, for 10 to 12 for the AIS Foundation Trustees, and 20 at the various section board meetings.

Again, section and committee groups have been meeting via Zoom and these groups may or may not need meeting time or space at a spring convention. Before you go to all the work of setting up rooms and working out a schedule, check with each chair and president about which meetings should be on the schedule.

Youth Meeting

If Youth meetings are scheduled, the first should be prior to the Welcome Dinner so the youth may get acquainted. Later in the convention, perhaps on day four, some special sightseeing tour or party could be scheduled. Someone who loves working with young people should be in charge of this event, and the AIS Chair of Youth should be involved in the planning.

Silent Auction

The Silent Auction has become a popular part of our conventions and it is a fun way to raise funds for the support of AIS or the hosting organization. Many people have iris treasures they could donate and it is a great way for hybridizers to get their new introductions seen in different parts of the country. The silent auction chair should be selected in advance, and it should be an AIS official or an official of the local convention committee. The silent auction chair looks for iris artifacts, iris books and new or recent iris introductions. Solicit other iris-themed items, irises or other rare and unusual plants. Place a want-ad in News & Notes, your local and regional newsletter and the various iris-related Facebook pages asking for donations. You never know what will show up.

Local donations can really add to the success because it is easy for people to go out in the garden and pot up a few plants to donate, which can be brought to the convention in the car or van. These plants in pots could be hosta, daylilies, roses, and any other plants.

In recent years, the AIS regions have each contributed a basket of local artifacts for the silent auction. For example, a basket from Region 15 (Southern California and Arizona) contained a jar of cactus jelly, an Arizona Diamondback t-shirt, a bottle of wine from Ramona, a bottle of olive oil from Temecula, a travel book of the Grand Canyon, a tin of California poppy seeds, and Mickey Mouse ears from Disneyland. There are 20 regions in AIS, which potentially would make 20 very nice silent auction items. It is always a lot of fun to look at the contents of all these baskets from around the country.

The AIS silent auction room will need to be set up in a room that can be locked because of all of the valuable items that would be in the room. A suggestion would be to limit the number of people who will have a key to this room. Work with the AIS silent auction chair in the setup of the room and their requirements.

Judge's Training Sessions

Consult with the AIS chair of judges about the needs of the training sessions. Find out how many in-class sessions and how many garden sessions need to be added to the convention schedule. Discuss with the AIS chair of judges about which gardens would be most appropriate for the garden training sessions. Likewise, ask what time would be most appropriate for the in-class training sessions. Find out an approximate number of attendees to the in-class judges training sessions so a room with enough space for everyone can be arranged. The AIS chair of judges will secure qualified instructors. The rooms for in-class sessions should be set up in theater style with a podium, water for the instructor, and screens and projectors, if requested. It is important that a public address system be set up in each of the rooms. The AIS chair of judges must be present to start each of the three sessions. Signs should be prepared for the doors of each session so that people will know which one is to be held in that room. Attendance sign-in sheets for each training session will be provided by the AIS chair of judges. At some point after the training session, the AIS chair of judges or the instructor will give participation information from the attendance sign-in sheet to the appropriate regional judges chair. This could simply mean a scanned copy sent via email to the regional judges chairs.

Geek Dinner

The program and meeting chair should consult with the Geek Dinner chair about the needs of the Geek Dinner. Take notes about the plan for the date, venue, room set-up and meal. The AIS Geek Dinner chair will collect the money from the individuals attending the dinner and will pay the hotel for the meal. The Geek Dinner meal should NOT be included in the registration fee.

Sample Schedule

Contact the AIS convention liaison to report that a tentative schedule of all events for the convention is available. Ask if someone from your Convention Committee can attend an upcoming Board of Directors Zoom meeting to give a convention report. Or, give the update to the AIS convention liaison who can then report to the AIS Board of Directors. If there is

uncertainty about something that has been scheduled or something that has not been scheduled, ask that the Board give a directive.

The following schedule gives an idea of how meetings discussed above might be scheduled. If there is a Boutique, schedule it as the host group prefers.

Day One

8:00 Registration

Optional Tour

Day Two

8:00 AM Registration

8:00 AM AIS Board of Directors Meeting

12:30 PM RVP Board of Counselors Meeting

1:00 PM Section Representatives Meeting

2:00 PM Judges' Training Chairpersons Meeting

2:00 PM Section Board Meetings starting

4:30 PM AIS Affiliated Societies Meeting

7:30 PM AIS Board of Directors Meeting

8:00 PM AIS Foundation Meeting

Day Three

8:00 AM Registration

8:30 AM Society for Pacific Coast Irises

9:30 AM Society for Japanese Irises

10:30 AM Dwarf Iris Society

11:30 AM Society for Siberian Irises

12:30 AM Reblooming Iris Society

1:00 PM Spuria Iris Society

2:00 PM Louisiana Iris Society of America

3:00 PM Median Iris Society

4:00 PM Aril Society International

5:00 PM SIGNA (Species Iris Group)

5:00 pm Bus Captains Meeting

5:30 PM Youth Reception

6:30 PM Wine and Cheese Party (Courtesy of Hotel, if offered) or

No Host Reception - Cash Bar

7:30 PM Welcome Dinner

AIS Silent Auction after dinner

Day Four

7:00 AM Registration

7:30 AM Buses Depart for Gardens and Luncheon

5:00 PM Buses Return to Hotel

5:00 PM Registration

6:00 PM AIS Silent Auction (Bids Close)

6:30 PM Judges' Training Session #1

8:30 PM Judges' Training Session #2

Day Five

7:00 AM Registration

7:30 AM Buses Depart for Gardens and Luncheon

5:00 PM Buses Return to Hotel

5:00 PM Registration

5:00 PM Geek Dinner

7:00 PM Judges' Training Session #3

9:00 PM Past, Present, & Future Convention Chairpersons Meeting

9:00 PM Irises & Computers Meeting

Day Six

7:00 AM Registration

7:30 AM Buses Depart for Gardens and Luncheon

5:00 PM Buses Return to Hotel

6:00 PM Deadline For Ballots

6:30 PM Registration

6:30 PM No-Host Social Hour

7:30 PM Awards Banquet

Only a final copy of the schedule, previously reviewed by the convention liaison, should be sent to the *AIS Bulletin* editor in time to be included in the convention announcement pages of the winter issue prior to the convention. To add to the excitement of the up-coming convention, include a list of the gardens to be visited.

The Welcome Dinner

The Welcome Dinner is optional, but it has become such a part of the convention that most people look forward to it with great anticipation.

If a local committee is decorating the tables, there are several things to keep in mind. First, be sure that the decorations are located near the convention hotel so that it will not be difficult to get them to the preparation area. Second, be sure that scheduling allows time to arrange the decorations before the banquet begins. If a section meeting has kept the room occupied, be sure that it is available in time for the decorations to be put in place after the hotel staff has set up the tables.

This banquet may be set up in several ways, but a sit-down dinner has been common in recent years. A buffet line sometimes takes too long, but this has also been used at some conventions.

A head table is usually set up at the Welcome Dinner where local dignitaries, the AIS president and guest, along with the RVP of the host region (if present) and a guest are seated. The convention chair is seated on one side of the podium and the AIS president is seated on the opposite side. The guest speaker of the evening, if present, should be seated near the podium, usually on the side with the convention chair. Any special seating arrangements that the

committee wants may be taken care of by way of place-cards at tables near the head table. If a convention photographer is present, be sure that person has a reserved seat near the front. The *AIS Bulletin* photographer may also request that some people be seated near the front to take pictures for AIS publications.

This is the night for the host group to do its bragging about the city, state, or local club. Sometimes a representative of the city or state will be asked to give a welcome to the visitors. Whatever the group decides to do, the welcome speech should be brief. People are anxious to visit and not very interested in long welcome speeches.

The Welcome Dinner is the traditional time for the roll call of regions. This has become a highlight of every convention. It is so popular that convention guests even asked that it be repeated at the Awards Banquet at a recent convention. Roll call begins with Region 1. The states in Region 1 are announced and all members from this region stand to be recognized. Pride is added if the RVP of Region 1 is present and introduced. Next, Region 2, then Region 3, and so on.

The only part AIS has on the program of the Welcome Dinner is that the AIS president is asked to give a welcome to the guests at the convention. After that, it is up to the local group to do their things.

Remember that any decorations or equipment that must be removed by the local committee must be removed immediately after the Welcome Dinner ends. Be sure that someone is available to handle this chore.

The Awards Banquet

The Awards Banquet is strictly an AIS affair. This is the night when awards of the Society are presented. Although the convention chair is in charge of the program, most of that program is presented by AIS officials.

The AIS president and VPs may be seated at the head table for the evening. Other AIS officers and Board members may be seated at tables near the head table. If a representative of the British Iris Society (BIS) is present, that person should be seated at the head table as a matter of courtesy. The BIS representative usually gives greetings and often is involved in the presentation of the Dykes Medal to the evening's recipient.

This same courtesy should be extended to officials of other foreign iris societies. If there is not enough room at the head table to seat them, they should be seated close to the head table and introduced individually during the welcome address.

Some convention planners find that there is not enough room at the head table to include guests of the AIS officers. In this case, it is all right to have these people seated at tables near the head table. Convention committee chairs are usually seated at these front tables, too. Previously announced award winners should be seated near the front table in order to speed up the process of the awards presentation. However, the people who have won the President's Cup, the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup, and the Richardson Award cannot be seated near the front of the room because these winners are not identified until the official announcement during the Banquet.

In seating the AIS officers at the head table, the usual procedure is to seat the president and guest at one side of the podium with the convention chair on the other side. The other officers are seated according to their years of service to the Board. (The AIS secretary or convention liaison can provide tenure information.) By seating the members according to their years of service, a little prestige is added for those who have given many years to AIS.

All persons who are to be seated at the head table of the Awards Banquet should receive notification that they are to be seated there. This can be done by enclosing a note in their convention registration packet.

Ask the AIS awards chair and others who work on the awards presentation what items or tables are needed for the award ceremony. Coordinate with the AIS awards chair the location and placement of all trophies, medals, etc. The convention awards chair is responsible for notifying the AIS awards chair of the winners of the convention cups as soon as the ballots have been counted.

The awards are placed on tables set up for that purpose. The convention awards chair is also responsible for seeing that awards which are not retained by the winners are placed in a safe location after the Awards Banquet has ended.

Any seats reserved for award winners will need to be marked with place cards bearing the names of those people. Award winners should have notes included in their registration packets to inform them that they are to be seated near the front of the room at the Awards Banquet. This is important because people hate to go to the front of the room to see if their names appear on a card. It would be most embarrassing for a person to look for his name and not find it. Also, people who are acting as ushers in charge of seating VIPs will not know all of the award recipients. They would be embarrassed if they failed to recognize someone who should be seated up front, so be sure everyone with a special place is notified in advance. The Convention Committee may prefer to reserve sufficient tables for these people and not use place cards, thus allowing the people to choose their own table companions.

Near the end of the award ceremony, a representative from the next AIS convention is asked to give an invitation to their convention. This representative is seated at the head table if space is available. If not, a special place should be reserved near the head table for this person. The preferred method is to seat this person at the head table.

If table decorations are to be provided by a local group, remember that time must be allowed for placing these decorations between the time the buses return to the hotel and the time the banquet begins. If they are to be removed after the banquet, someone must be available immediately after the closing to start taking these items from the tables so that the hotel staff can begin the task of cleaning up.

Many conventions in the past have scheduled no host social hours before the Awards Banquet. This practice is up to the local group, and there is no official policy regarding its scheduling. Some plans now call for a "President's Reception" after the Awards Banquet. This gives people an opportunity to congratulate the award winners, to meet and greet members of the AIS Board, and

to bid friends goodbye. Neither type of social plan has precedence over the other. Whether or not to schedule a no-host social hour and President's Reception is up to the Convention Committee. In this age of COVID, please allow the banquet attendees to enter the banquet room during the no-host social hour. This eliminates the crowding of people outside of the banquet room.

A word of caution in the matter of serving alcoholic beverages. Many people do not use them, and it is best not to include their cost in the registration fee. Those who want to have a drink are usually willing to pay, and those who do not drink prefer not to pay for the drinks of others. If the hotel or some local business is willing to provide wine or other drinks to the committee for use during the convention, that makes the whole situation much nicer.

The type of awards ceremony is up to the Convention Committee, but the actual presentations are handled by AIS. If the Convention Committee plans to show slides of the winning irises, use a spotlight, or provide a musical fanfare, these arrangements are made in cooperation with the AIS Awards Chair and the hotel staff.

Chapter 7 - Expenses & Financing the Convention

To host a convention, the local club or section must be prepared to raise some money. With today's escalating prices, the Convention Committee may want to do as much as possible to set a low registration fee. Whatever is done to achieve this goal must be determined by the local members.

If a group has \$8,000 to \$10,000 on hand, this should be sufficient to launch the convention. Although registration fees and sales of guest plants after the convention will, hopefully, cover the costs, there will be expenses before any of these monies arrive. There will be forms to print, supplies to purchase, garden markers to buy, postage, printing, etc., and they must be provided before any registrations will arrive. Other expenditures might involve advertising buttons, table decorations, and convention favors.

It is possible that restaurants or the hotel will require deposits, and it is very likely that the bus company will require a substantial deposit. All this means that the original sum will probably be sufficient for a start, but more funds will be needed.

It is the duty of the finance chair to prepare a budget and to come up with fund-raising ideas. Every group will have different needs and different ways of meeting those needs. The ideas here are suggestions which may or may not fit the local needs.

To prepare a budget, the finance chair must work closely with all the other convention committee chairs. Each of them will present an estimate of needs, and from this information a budget is made.

Some items to be considered by the various committees are as follows:

- Convention chair: Stationery, envelopes, postage, telephone.

- Guest Iris Committee: Temporary and permanent markers for the gardens, printing, postage, and shipping costs.

- Registrations Committee: Stationery and envelopes, printing, postage, manila envelopes for convention packets, record book, receipts, name tags, telephone.

- Transportation Committee: Bus rental, printing or copying, gasoline for checking tour routes, postage, signs for buses, whistles.

- Publicity Committee: Printing, postage, advertising buttons, photographs.

- Hospitality Committee: Refreshments for gardens, napkins, cups, paper plates; convention favors, banquet decorations, vases/flowers for lobby and registration desk; manila envelopes or plastic bags for "goody bags", and postage.

- Program and Meeting Committee: Postage, banquets.

- Convention Booklet Committee: Printing of booklet, incidental photographs (if used).
- Other: Restroom facilities, show supplies (optional).

Rental fees might be incurred for musical instruments, projectors, screens, or even public garden space. If there is a public garden, there will be costs of gardening supplies used there. All costs of maintaining a public garden should be paid out of convention funds.

The Convention Committee and the local club must decide in advance which items will be charged as a part of the registration fee and which items will be paid from local funds. Guests expect that transportation, meals, shipping costs, and printing will make up the registration fee. The committee should be very careful not to add to the registration fee by planning things that are not enjoyed by the entire convention delegation. To make the registration fee as low as possible, the local group may want to raise funds to pay for particular items among the scheduled events. The cost of special events, such as an optional tour, which are not part of the ordinary convention schedule, should not be added to the registration fee.

Money to finance special projects, pay portions of convention costs, or just to provide cash for payments of early expenses may be raised in many ways, and the local group may have ideas that will work only for them. Sales of iris artifacts, rhizomes, baked goods, etc., might help to raise needed funds. Some groups have made money selling recipes of special food items which are members' specialties. Chances on quilts, afghans, etc. bring in substantial amounts, especially if the quilt has an iris design. All types of small items may be sold through a garage or yard sale or at a flea market. In 2011 there was a raffle for 2 full registrations including hotel but not airfare at \$20 a ticket. The Convention was in Victoria, Canada.

Donations from area clubs or individuals may bring in additional funds. Substantial donations might warrant a listing in the Convention Booklet, and all donations should bring recognition for the donors. The finance chair should write a letter of thanks to anyone who makes a donation.

Any financial help, whether it be donations of cash, labor, or supplies, will help in setting a reasonable registration fee. Such donations might enable the group to add "something special". Whatever the plans, set goals and do what must be done to reach them. Most groups have five years in which to raise funds. This is plenty of time in which to raise enough to meet the needs of the convention.

There will possibly be some income after the convention. If the host group buys garden markers, these may be sold after the convention. This would not increase the income actually, but it would offset the expense of garden markers.

Leftover supplies such as napkins, cups, convention booklets, and even pictures can be sold to offset some costs. There will probably be iris rhizomes donated to the hosting group for resale. A substantial amount is earned from these. Other than the resale of markers, all of these are based on speculation, so it is not a good idea to rely on this income in determining registration fees.

Some Tips on Expenses

Transportation

Charges for buses are to be included in the registration fee. Whistles or other items used by bus captains probably should not be a part of the registration charges. Riders on the buses look forward to winning a prize. Instead of purchasing items, ask your local members for donations of rhizomes of recently registered irises. Other fun bus prizes are iris-themed handmade items such as potholders and watch caps. Send a request to a few hybridizers asking for the donation of a gift certificate for one recent rhizome.

Banquets

Charges for meals should be included in the registration fee. Allow registrants to choose to attend banquets, making them optional on the registration form. Extra items (such as floral arrangements at the head tables) might be paid for by the hosts.

Meeting Room Expenses

Charges for the meeting should be included in the registration fee. This would include projectors, projector screens, etc. It could also include coffee and bottled water in the meeting room for the Board of Directors. However, these refreshments could be one of the local group's contributions.

Decorations

These may be charged in the registration fee, but the local group might be able to pay for them especially if they are elaborate and add greatly to the cost of the convention. Rentals or loans might eliminate some of the costs to a great extent.

Wine and Cheese Parties

When these are a gift from the hotel, there are no problems. If it is an event sponsored by the local club, they should pay the costs or turn the event into a "pay your own way" event for those who are interested.

Garden Refreshments

This is usually the responsibility of the Convention Committee. It has become a custom to serve something in every garden, and most Convention Committees strive to find a way to pay for what is served. If other clubs in the area are willing to help with cash donations or food donations, this will help considerably in filling the needs. It may help to enlist the help of all club or region members to bake and freeze breads (date-nut, cranberry, banana, etc.) during the winter preceding the convention. The convention garden host is usually very busy in the garden at convention time, and having the refreshments made well in advance or supplied by others is a tremendous help. Morning refreshments may include hot tea and coffee, fruit juices, and doughnuts, with cookies, breads, and punch reserved for afternoon. Costs for paper cups, plates, and napkins could be included in the registration fee or might be donated by a local or nearby club. Sometimes a business will provide cups free of charge. Fast food outlets are most likely to help.

Convention Mementos

Sometimes this gets out of hand and the cost is excessive. Some people think the souvenirs are great, while others think they are a waste of money and wish they didn't have to pack the memento they received. Most committees try to get this item without cost to the convention guests. The cost could be added to the registration fee. But, it should be remembered that the memento is something that the guest would want to buy anyway. Try to pay for these from local funds and consider them as gifts.

Shipping Charges for Guest Irises

Usually this would be a part of the registration fee, because the people who come to the convention expect to see irises and don't mind paying the dollar or two extra that would be needed for this expense. Some recent conventions have asked the hybridizers to pay for the postage on returned guest plants.

There are two points of view on this subject. One group feels that the hybridizers benefit greatly from having their irises seen and that they should pay the postage to have them returned. The hybridizers themselves disagree to some extent on this policy. Some say they will send fewer things and will send nothing that they must have back. They contend that they would rather have the stock destroyed than to pay postage to get back a rhizome that might not even be their own iris. Returned irises are sometimes misnamed. Some say they will eliminate the practice of giving rhizomes to the hosting club.

On the other hand, some hybridizers feel it is worth the extra bother and cost to have their irises seen at a convention because of the added income from sales they make as a result.

For the time being, this will have to be a question that the local group decides for itself. To pay the postage or not to pay the postage will be the question. Probably a dollar or two more on each registration fee would pay all the costs of returning guest plants. Not requiring hybridizers to pay return postage has been standard procedure for years. Limiting the number of guest plants the local group will accept reduces the number of plants which have to be returned and therefore reduces the postage costs.

Garden Maintenance Costs

The cost of fertilizer, fumigants, garden additions, water, and pathway covers or grass seed should not be charged to those who are attending the convention. These things add value to the owner's garden, and other people should not be expected to pay for such improvement. Usually host gardeners receive some free iris rhizomes and these should amply repay them for the expenses incurred in improving their gardens.

All costs for maintenance of an iris planting in a public garden should, however, be the responsibility of the Convention Committee.

Distribution of Extra Funds

Distribution of funds after the convention is often more of a hassle than the entire convention. A decision should be made early regarding what is to be done with any remaining funds when the expenses have all been paid. The amount is often substantial, so an early decision eliminates

arguments when it becomes apparent how much is available.

A large amount of money will bring many demands from special-interest groups, but if the decision has already been made regarding disbursements, the Convention Committee should stick to its earlier decision. Donations to AIS, to AIS Sections, and to the host region are areas which are usually selected to receive portions of the money. Donations to AIS may be earmarked for special purposes but should not carry a stipulation that merely ties the money up. One suggestion is to earmark leftover funds as a "start up" fund for the next AIS convention. In any case, have a purpose in mind and give the money to AIS for that particular fund.

Chapter 8 - Registration

Pre-Convention Activities

The committee handling registrations for the convention has a tremendously important task. It would be difficult to over emphasize its importance. A guest's entire attitude toward a convention may be colored by his first contact with the convention, which will be through the Registration Committee. This committee not only handles the receiving of fees but actually functions as a welcoming committee. It becomes necessary for this committee to be guided by positive attitudes of cheerfulness, willingness, and helpfulness.

This committee will find itself looking for parking spaces for campers and house-trailers and rooms for guests bringing their dogs. They will mail city maps, local entertainment schedules, and provide recreation information. They will send information concerning local bus schedules, facts about taxi or Uber service, and the best way to get to the convention hotel from the local airport and everywhere in the United States. The committee will be consulted about local eating places and suitable clothing. It will reassure guests that it is safe for them to arrive in the host city in the middle of the night.

Welcome Bag

The Registration Committee will prepare convention materials for every person who registers for the convention, all of which will be included in a packet or welcome bag. The welcome bag itself could be hand-sewn of material of an iris or garden theme. It could be one of those themed shopping bags from a grocery store. In some cases, a large manila folder is used. Whatever bag or packet is chosen, it must be large enough to hold the convention booklet, and other items such as a name tag, small packet of tissues, small tablet, pen, a couple of candies, local map, list of things to do in the area, restaurant guide, etc.

In cooperation with the Hospitality Committee, the Registration Committee may prepare a list or map of nearby eating places, or sites of interest. This can be a part of the welcome bag or included in the official packet.

The registration form usually contains a space for the attendee to choose a meal entre for the Welcome Dinner and the Awards Banquet. Tickets with each meal option are printed and the appropriate ticket is placed in the name tag sleeve. For example, if an attendee chose chicken divan for one meal and beef stroganoff for the other meal, then the sleeve of the attendee's name tag would contain a ticket for chicken divan and a ticket for beef stroganoff. Some Convention Committees choose to include the meal tickets in the convention booklet. If the tickets are a part of the convention booklet, the Registration Committee will need to print these booklets so that tickets may be removed or voided when a partial registration is received with the omission of one of the meals.

Once the welcome bags have been assembled, they need to be organized for distribution. If packets or welcome bags are arranged by registration number, then they are placed in the proper numerical sequence in boxes in an upright position. The range of numbers included in each box

should be written clearly on the front of the box. Some committees prefer to arrange the packets or welcome bags alphabetically. If numbers are used, an alphabetic master list showing each registration number must be prepared. Guests can remember their names but not always their numbers! Prepare extra packets for those who will register late.

Whatever method is used for arranging the packets, be sure they can be located quickly when the guests arrive. These people will be full of anticipation and excitement, but they will also be tired and anxious to get to their rooms or sit and visit with friends. Don't make them wait!

Name Tags

When preparing the name tags, use large fonts. The tag should include the guest's name, city, state, and AIS region. The registration number may also appear on the tag. This same number can be used on the official convention packet. The type of name tag used is sometimes a topic for discussion. Some tags come as a plastic sleeve with a pin or clip on the back. Other tags use a cord that goes around the neck. Some people prefer not to use tags which are attached by a pin because of potential damage to clothing.

Processing Registrations

Long before dealing with problems of distribution or filling the official packet, the registrar will be faced with processing the registrations. Fees will begin arriving shortly after the winter AIS Bulletin has been delivered. Processing registrations will be much easier if the registrant has included an email address. Be sure to emphasize on the registration form that the email address should be printed clearly.

Upon receipt of the registration form and fee, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Send an email to the registrant acknowledging receipt of their registration, payment, choice of meal *entrees*, and food allergies. For those people without an email account, a written acknowledgement of their registration must be mailed. A record of the acknowledgement, whether by email or snail mail, should be maintained.
2. Along with the email or written letter of acknowledgement, consider including information that describes the normal weather for the convention time, any information regarding airlines, hotel transportation, special access issues with the gardens, etc.
3. Enter the registrant's information into an electronic spreadsheet or on the ledger sheet.
4. Deposit the registration fee in a convention account and notify the treasurer.

Of concern are food allergies. There should be a space on the registration form to write any food allergies. It is important to collect the names of attendees and their specific food allergies. Copies of this list should go to the persons in charge of banquets and luncheons. It would be helpful to include on this list, the address and phone number of the nearest urgent care facility in case there is an allergic event.

Another file might be maintained for keeping track of correspondence with registrants. The electronic spreadsheet and ledger will contain information about the number of guests to expect

for each event. It should contain columns for the registration number, date received, name, cash received, and a notation under each scheduled event to indicate which ones this guest will attend. Columns for events should be headed as needed: Welcome Dinner, Optional Tour, Garden Tour Day One, Luncheon One. Garden Tour Day Two, Luncheon Two, Garden Tour Day Three, Luncheon Three, Awards Banquet. A column for placing a check mark can be added for use when the welcome letter and receipt are mailed.

There will be some late registrations, some partial registrations, and some cancellations. All these are handled by the Registration Committee. The Convention Committee determines the policy to be followed regarding refunds on cancellations. Most committees allow full refund up until the time firm figures must be given to the hotel, bus company, and restaurants. A policy must be established regarding partial registration fees. Because of the extra work involved, the fee charged is usually slightly higher than the actual cost of the events attended. Some people (usually spouses and guests of irisarians) will prefer to attend only the Welcome Dinner and the Awards Banquet. One way to handle this is to provide tickets for each meal.

Recent conventions have instituted a policy of reduced rates for youth members. If such a rate is established, there is no difference in the number of items in a youth packet and an adult packet. Special "goodies" might be included that are of interest to young people, however.

Most Convention Committees now set three registration deadlines. An early registration fee is set with an increase going into effect approximately six weeks before the convention begins. A second increase goes into effect approximately two or three weeks before the convention. These changes in rates are used to encourage early registration. This makes for easier planning, since the committee will have a good idea of the number of guests to expect. When registration fees are received, checks should be promptly stamped "For Deposit Only". Checks should be listed by name of the individual on the deposit slip. Scan and save an electronic copy of all the checks, the deposit slip, and the deposit receipt from the bank. Email this information to the registrar and to the treasurer. It is recommended that a deposit of checks be made at least once a week, if not more often. The deposit slip and deposit receipt should be emailed or paper mailed promptly to the treasurer. It is important that records be maintained on the number registered from each region. A list of AIS officers and directors, RVPs, and committee chairs who register should also be available. A member with access to a computer is an asset here.

The committee should outline beforehand a sound "refund policy". This "refund policy" should be included in any publicity that is done. Such as when the registration information is sent to the AIS Bulletin Editor.

The Registration Desk

Once the preliminary registration period has ended, the next step is opening the registration desk at the hotel. Supplies needed at the desk include a computer, pens, pencils, paper, a money box, change, masking tape, scotch tape, scissors, stapler, a cell phone, all registration supplies, and the extra welcome bags or convention packets.

It is best to move everything to the hotel the day before the registration desk is to open. The desk should be open at 8:00 a.m. on Day One of the convention. The registration desk should be in an

area that is easily accessible and that has plenty of space. The number of people needed to work the desk varies from day to day, but the majority of guests will arrive on days one and two. The local Chamber of Commerce can provide volunteers, but if iris society members can be found, they are usually more efficient.

Be sure to keep an eye on the money box. It is best to remove excess money from the box hourly. Not all people at the hotel are guests or even hotel employees, so be sure to keep all valuable items in an area where they can be watched. Be sure they are locked safely away when the desk closes. This is one reason why a special room for the Registration Committee is a necessity.

The registration desk is open for long hours, and the registrar is asked many questions. This desk is the focal point for convention hospitality, so a friendly attitude, a pleasant smile, and a tireless crew should always be available.

The registration desk will have to answer questions, serve as a lost and found station, and handle emergencies. Even when the registration desk is closed, the registrar will be contacted by late arrivals or by those who have misplaced a ticket or a Convention booklet. Without a well-organized staff at the registration desk, many guests will not feel welcome. The registrar may possibly be the single most important member of the Convention Committee.

Chapter 9 - Transportation

The biggest expense of a convention is for the buses used for the garden tours. It is the duty of the transportation chair to contact and collect price quotes from bus lines. Be prepared to describe the tour routes and potential number of passengers. Explain that some passengers will have mobility issues and that at least half of the buses need to have a “kneeling step” or a small, portable foot stool. Commercial bus lines will usually not sign agreements until convention time approaches, but early and repeated contacts will help to assure availability when the big week arrives.

Contacting the Chamber of Commerce can be quite helpful. That group will do all it can to ensure that the convention is a success, and they can have an influence on the bus lines.

The transportation chair should have a firm commitment from the bus company at least six months before the convention. The registration fee cannot be determined until the cost of buses is known. Try to have one individual at the bus company with whom all contact is made. A friend on the inside is a real asset.

You might ask that a representative from the bus company be present on the first day of tours.

Transport Considerations

After the convention gardens have been selected and grouped by day and the luncheon sites have been chosen, the transportation chair should travel the routes the buses will follow in order to know how long it takes to get from hotel to garden, garden to garden, from garden to lunch, and from garden to hotel. This information will be vital because guests must arrive for lunch on time and must have sufficient time to visit the scheduled gardens.

The transportation chair must determine if adequate parking for buses and private vehicles is available, if roads can handle the buses, and if loading zones are safe and within easy walking distance of the garden.

Access to the convention gardens for wheelchairs and walkers should be addressed. City Hall and the bus company will be helpful in determining whether a road or bridge is suitable for the bus traffic. It is often necessary to unload the buses at a garden then send the buses elsewhere to park. Sometimes a permit is needed for buses to go into some residential neighborhoods. Again, contact City Hall. The bus lines will be able to get the necessary permits, but they must be made aware of the routes and of any potential problems.

Loading the buses each morning can be a wild time. Without a plan, you might see throngs of people trying to board one bus. One solution is to have attendees sign up for a specific bus when picking up their welcome bag or convention packet. On the registration desk, have one sign-up sheet for each bus. The sign-up sheet should have only as many spaces for names as there are seats on the bus. Assign a name to each bus and if known, have the top spaces of the sign-up sheet filled with the names of the bus captains. Remind each registrant to remember the name of their bus.

Bus Captains

The transportation chair should be at the loading zone 30 minutes before the buses arrive to address any problems. It is recommended to have two bus captains per bus. The bus captain is the convention host for the people on his bus. The bus captain needs to know the schedule of destinations, something about the garden to be visited, and about points of interest along the way. The best bus captains are enthusiastic about the area, the gardens, and the job. Every bus captain can become even better if provided with maps to the gardens and information on points of interest and the people whose gardens will be on tour. The transportation chair should prepare detailed maps for the bus captain and the bus driver. This should consist of a map showing streets, mileage, etc. In addition, a written guide on how to reach each garden should be prepared. Anything that is necessary to keep the bus on the right route is included. For example: "Go three miles east from exit 10, then turn left. There will be a big red barn on the left when the turn is made. Proceed two miles until you reach an intersection which is just past a large wooden bridge. Turn right and continue one-half mile to a large, white farmhouse. Enter the driveway and park behind the house".

In addition, the bus captain should receive a list of passengers who should be on the bus along with a placard with the name or number of the bus. Roll call should be taken before departing the hotel, at the convention gardens, and at lunch stops. Of course, this is easier to do when the bus has a microphone and speakers. Another method is to check off names on the list as people enter the bus. The bus captain should also receive a sheet containing information about points of interest along the route. Bus captains, please use a microphone to describe these points to the passengers. People sitting in the back of the bus are interested, too, but usually cannot hear unamplified voices from the front of the bus.

Some Convention Committees organize bus prizes. If your convention is doing bus prizes, then each passenger on the bus should be given a double-stub ticket. The passenger keeps one half and the other half goes into a jar or paper bag which is held by the bus captain. During the journeys of the day, the bus captain can draw tickets and distribute a bus prize to the winner. Some conventions have enough prizes for each passenger to win one. Even a dozen bus prizes will make the trip exciting. If your convention is doing bus prizes, then the transportation chair should give the bus captains a roll of double-stub tickets and a collection of bus prizes.

The bus captain must know the exact time when a bus is to leave a garden. The bus should be loaded and ready to go at that time. Bus captains should have a signaling device, such as a whistle, to call passengers when it is time to board the bus. Boarding time is at least five minutes before departure time. and probably more than that.

Each bus should be given a name or a number. Names could be of flowers or local points of interest. Passengers should be informed of the bus name or number so they will know which bus to board after a garden tour or lunch.

Bus captains should be told that the route is to be followed strictly. Unscheduled stops and detours could have an adverse effect on some guests and certainly on the schedule. The plans call for visits to iris gardens so no stops should be made otherwise. In today's society, one never

knows whether insurance would be in effect should something happen to a bus which was off the scheduled route. In addition, there are judges' training sessions to attend, deadlines for ballots, and appointments to be kept. The best advice is to follow the schedule so guests can be back to the hotel on time.

The transportation chair should schedule a meeting for the bus captains on the day before the first convention garden tour and each day of a garden tour. At the first meeting, the transportation chair will go over the schedule, lunch accommodations, issues at any of the gardens, restroom facilities, bus driver tipping rules, etc. It is recommended that a list of nearby medical facilities be distributed that includes addresses and phone numbers. Each bus captain should receive a list of their passengers, a placard with either a bus name or number, detailed instructions on how to reach each destination, a description of the local points of interest, and double-stub tickets and prizes (if this is part of the program). It is important that cell phone numbers be shared by all: transportation chair and bus captains. At the end of each day of garden tours, the bus captains should meet again for debriefing. Captains can share what went well and discuss solutions for problems encountered during the day. The transportation chair can update the schedule, emphasize potential garden hazards, etc.

Some recent conventions have designated one bus as an impaired mobility bus. This bus must be a "kneeling bus" where the entry steps can be lowered or have some other arrangement to assist with boarding. The first 4, 5 or more rows of seats on the bus could be reserved for those people with mobility issues. Extra time will be needed for these folks to board the bus and for wheelchairs and walkers to be stowed. Thus, the bus captain should plan to call his riders to the bus ten to fifteen minutes before departure.

The transportation chair's job is one that requires business skill in dealing with the bus lines, organizational skill in planning routes and preparing maps, and instructional skill in getting vital information to the bus captains. This job, when well done, makes a convention a success.

Chapter 10 - Publicity

Convention Publicity

The Publicity Committee is vital to the success of the convention. Its work can do much to assure a large attendance and to create interest among the local membership so that volunteers can be recruited. The Publicity Committee should consist of two or three members, all of whom are somewhat familiar with publicity procedures. The publicity chair should be a well-organized person with creative writing ability. The chair should be able to construct a convention website or find a service that can. The chair should be familiar with the local media as well as social media. To place convention information in the AIS Bulletin, the chair should be aware of the guidelines for AIS *Bulletin* publicity. If needed, the AIS electronic services chair should be consulted. The convention website will need to be updated regularly. As soon as the convention has been scheduled, the publicity chair should prepare a timetable for completion of the work assigned. Advance preparation is the key to success. It is not possible to write a good story about the convention without fully understanding what is being done; and to know what is being done requires advance preparation. If part of the work is done before the deadline arrives, then completion of the article becomes a much easier task.

Immediately after appointment, the publicity chair and committee should begin collecting background information on convention personnel, convention gardens, interesting facts about the convention city, event and program details, and other items which might be used to write about the convention. In addition, photographs should be collected of the convention gardens, gardeners, convention volunteers, and significant local sites. Enlist the help of a good photographer, who might be a member of your club, to take pictures of the convention gardens and iris in bloom. A good picture can create a lot of interest in your convention. Newspapers will usually want to take their own pictures. Consider creating a short video of your convention plans. The pictures and video could be sent to iris clubs around the country to be used in a program that promotes the convention. Ask that your short video be posted on the AIS YouTube Channel. It is especially important to get pictures of the convention gardens during the bloom season before the convention. Distinguished visitors, such as the banquet speaker, notable hybridizers, and convention committee chairs, can usually supply a glossy photograph, if needed.

Most cities have a radio station that will do a short story about an important local event. Often you can find an AM station with a Saturday morning garden show that will be happy to conduct an interview about your upcoming convention. Keep in mind that you will be talking to the general public so do not be surprised during the interview to hear a question such as, "Are all irises purple?" Most of these radio interviews are conducted by phone, which is easy to do. As soon as the convention has been scheduled, a publicity release should be prepared for local and regional distribution. This should provide details on dates, headquarters, the host group and contact information. It should stress the importance of this convention, this is a NATIONAL convention! Locally, an invitation to assist with the convention could be a part of the article. Willing workers often will not volunteer until they know they will be welcome. The same information should go on the convention website.

All press releases should be double spaced and the name of the organization must be listed. In

addition, contact information of the publicity chair and a link to the convention website should be included. If photos accompany the material, they should be clearly marked in a manner that will identify them as part of the article. The photographer should be given credit for the picture.

Most conventions select a theme or slogan early in the planning period. This phrase will identify the convention and can be used as an advertising promotion technique. This phrase will be used over and over in publicity. Slogans which have been used in the past are: Golden State '78, Memphis Iris Heaven '77, Denver Rendezvous '82, Down to the Sea in '83 (Boston), Rocky Mountain Date '98, Iris-istible Victoria 2011, Cali-Zona 2012, Iris in Wonderland 2015, etc. Sometimes it is not possible to make a rhyming phrase, as in Convention Wichita '71 and Oklahoma '80, A Capitol Idea '96, Yes Six AIS 1997, OKC Is The Place To Be '99. The place and the year are important for advertising purposes, and these phrases help keep the convention fresh in the minds of the members.

Social media nowadays is crucial for publicizing any convention. If possible, find a member of the publicity committee who regularly uses social media. This social media person should verify often to make sure their convention information is up-to-date and accurate and should have an extensive collection of photos. The social media person should regularly post photographs of the convention gardens, irises, previous banquets, etc., on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Use as many Facebook and Twitter accounts with an iris or garden theme as you can find. Post information about the convention on your local Craig's list.

Buttons or ribbons or ball-point pens bearing the advertising slogan are usually distributed one year before the convention. The slogan might also appear on stationery used by the Convention Committee or on a rubber stamp that can be used on envelopes of letters sent from the convention city or region. These would be letters that go to AIS people but that are not convention mail per se. Do not plan to do any advertising at the national meetings until one year before your convention. If this custom is followed, every convention has its year in the spotlight. Publicity should be separated into three classifications: local, regional, and national. It is not possible to make an exact listing of the type of material to be used because each locale will be a different situation. There is also a big difference in what can be expected in newspapers in major cities and what can be done in smaller cities. The Publicity Committee should determine what best fits their needs and not try to do all the things which might be suggested.

Local Publicity

As soon as the convention is scheduled, positive statements about it should begin to appear in the club's publications. The slogan might appear on show schedules, newsletters, the yearbook, or any other club release.

Early articles about the convention should stress the fun of serving as a host club, explain the duties of hosting, discuss guest irises and what they are, and give general information on local gardens that will be on tour. This should be done two years before the convention.

Post this information on the convention website, and a link to it on social media.

The local garden editor should be contacted during bloom time so that pictures can be taken for later use.

Any event on the convention schedule can be the source of many publicity stories. The local Chamber of Commerce may have a publication in which such stories may appear. Newspapers in communities where tour gardens are located will be happy to use publicity on the convention, especially if it happens to be a small town. The publicity chair should request names and addresses of local newspapers from each garden host. Check with the Chamber of Commerce and local members about other publications that might be distributed in the area, then check to see if they will promote the convention. Retirement centers, lake resorts, and newly developed communities often have publications that can be used to advertise the convention, especially if a member of the club happens to live in one of those areas.

In the two months preceding the convention, intensive social media and newspaper publicity should be planned. It is often difficult to get coverage in big city papers, and next to impossible unless contacts with the garden editors are made well in advance to set up the coverage. Notify local TV and radio stations. Sometimes they will give coverage of the convention, especially if they realize that guests are present from many states and from other countries.

Interviews with distinguished visitors may be requested, and the publicity chair should arrange these meetings and be present at them as a courtesy to all parties. Among those who might become the subject of an interview are the AIS president, the Dykes Medal winner for that year, foreign visitors, the representative of the British Iris Society, the winner of the Hybridizer's Medal, the winner of the Distinguished Service Medal, and any special guest from outside the AIS who might be appearing as a speaker or in some other capacity.

The Awards Banquet is a primary source of pertinent convention news. The publicity chair should have a news release written to cover the major awards, what they are, and who won them. Always list the city and state for any person named. Any award that is not announced until the banquet can be added to the report at the last minute. This should involve only the President's Cup, the Ben Hager Award, the Zurbrigg-Mahan Seedling Cup, the Franklin Cook Cup and the Richardson Award.

Regional Publicity

The region's newsletter can be used for informing people throughout the region of the plans for the convention. There is only so much that can be written, so caution should be used in writing the early articles to avoid repeats later when convention news becomes so very important. Sometimes the use of the convention slogan as a filler is enough for early issues of the region publication. In the final two years before the convention, articles should be planned covering all phases of convention planning and leading up to an article on the convention schedule. Other regions will be anxious to publish news of the convention. During the last year before the convention date, there will be an abundance of requests for articles and information. It will be difficult to send individual articles to each region, so a general news release should be prepared for sending to other regions. This should also be sent to section and cooperating society presidents or editors and to AIS officers and directors. The convention information should be sent so that it arrives anytime in the year that precedes the convention. The material should include a link to the convention website, details of the program schedule, hotel rates and reservation information, the registration fee, what the fee covers, where to send the fee, and any special information regarding deadlines for reduced rates, etc.

National Publicity

The national publicity should begin the year before, at the convention. Make sure to connect with the AIS social media chair to help spread the word via national social media accounts. Buttons bearing the convention slogan are usually distributed, but other ideas may be used. It is traditional that the official invitation to your convention is presented at the Awards Banquet in the year that precedes your convention. Usually your convention chair delivers this invitation.

National garden magazines will ordinarily not publish convention news, but they will list dates in their Calendar of Events section if the information is sent to them in plenty of time. The most important preconvention publicity is that which appears in the AIS *Bulletin*. Guest iris information by the guest iris chair will have already given notice of the convention. It is in the final year before the convention when the Publicity Committee's work really begins. It is customary for one convention to end before publicity for the next one begins. Conventions should be featured in articles in the four issues of the AIS *Bulletin* preceding the convention. An AIS guideline suggests a maximum of twelve *Bulletin* pages for pre convention publicity, so careful planning is necessary.

The following guide will help in planning articles. Remember that material must reach the *Bulletin* editor three months before the month of publication for the *Bulletin*.

- Summer issue of the *Bulletin*: An article on general features of the convention and the convention city.
- Fall issue of the *Bulletin*: Articles on tour gardens and varietal comments.
- Winter issue of the *Bulletin*: The most important pre convention publicity - an announcement of full details on registration fees, procedures and deadlines, hotel rates, reservation information, and a brief summary of each day's program highlights.
- Spring issue of the *Bulletin*: A condensed version of the announcements in the winter issue.

By reading previous issues of the AIS *Bulletin*, the Publicity Committee will have a good idea of procedures to follow.

The last work for the Publicity Committee is to contact the AIS *Bulletin* editor concerning coverage of the convention itself. The editor usually chooses writers for articles about the convention gardens but will be glad to have suggestions from the local committee. Send your request to the editor at least one month before the convention begins.

If the local groups want additional photographs, arrangements should be made by the Publicity Committee. The local group should expect to pay the registration fee for the person chosen to take the pictures. Details should be completed before the convention begins regarding the number of pictures wanted, cost, and photo size.

A word of caution should be given regarding photographers at the banquets. Too many can create chaos. Seating of those who are to take pictures should be handled as tactfully as possible, with only official photographers being seated in prominent positions. If too many photographers are taking pictures, confusion results, and some winners may not be photographed at all.

When the convention has ended, copies of all publicity, of the Convention Booklet, and perhaps of photographs from the convention should be sent to the chair of the AIS Public Relations Committee and the AIS Historical Committee. A file or scrapbook of all such material should be kept for the local group as a reminder of this memorable event. Create a space on your convention website for photographs to be posted. Ask the AIS electronic chair to set up a space on the AIS website for convention photos.

Whenever possible, events, gardens, gardeners, awards, etc., of the convention should be video recorded to use as a publicity tool or as an educational piece for other regions or clubs.

Chapter 11 - Other Convention Considerations

The Convention Booklet

A complete and accurate convention booklet is of the utmost importance. The cover design can be planned well in advance. The host organization might consider holding a contest for the cover, an art design, photo or other illustration. The Chamber of Commerce often can be helpful in providing cover designs or material that promotes the city or state. The Convention Booklet can be organized in many different forms, but its primary function is to list the events, their locations and times, the guest irises, and whatever other information that needs to be conveyed to the guests.

Quotations or bids from two or three printers should be requested for comparison of both typeset and camera ready copy. It is not possible to give an accurate count of the number of pages in the booklet until the last year, when all guest irises have been planted. However, checking previous convention booklets can give an idea of the number of pages needed. Use this estimate in dealing with the printers during the early stages of the planning. Having the printer do all the work is more expensive than having the typing done in advance, but some groups prefer not to be bothered with any of this work. A suggestion is to type the convention booklet into an electronic document. Having an electronic copy makes it easy to edit. Save the final draft as a pdf document which can be emailed to the printer.

The format of the convention booklet varies from year to year, but it is customary to include a welcome statement, a list of AIS officers and directors, the local Convention Committee, the schedule of events with location and time, acknowledgements, and the list of guest irises in each garden. The list of iris should include its class e.g., BB, SIB, LA, etc.

Various methods have been used for listing the guest irises. Most people seem to prefer the method which has a section in the booklet for each garden with an alphabetical list of the hybridizers who have irises in that garden. Under each hybridizer's name will be the alphabetical list of irises contributed to that particular garden. Another method which has been used, and which takes less space, is to list all guest irises in a table. The irises are grouped with their hybridizer. Hybridizers and their irises are in alphabetical order. Each garden will have one column in the table. Irises will have a check mark in the column of each garden in which that iris is being grown. Whichever method of listing the irises is used, there must be plenty of checking and double checking during the editing stages to see that everything is listed correctly. This will require much work by the guest iris chair. It is suggested that several people proofread the booklet before the final draft is sent to the printer.

Convention visitors do appreciate space in the booklet to write comments or make a note about taking a photograph of a guest iris. The instructions for balloting for the Franklin Cook Cup, the President's Cup, the Ben Hager Award, the Zurbrigg-Mahan Seedling Cup, the Top 15 Favorite Guest Irises, and the Richardson Award are included in the booklet. Ballots for voting these awards are usually included in the booklet. Convention attendees appreciate having two copies of the ballot in their booklet. One copy that they can remove and one to keep for their record.

If someone has a partial registration, tickets for events for which this person has not registered

should be removed from the booklet or voided in some way. One of the possible problems with the convention booklet is that some people seem to lose the booklet no matter how often they are urged to be careful about such a thing. Losses might be reduced if there is a specific space on the cover of the convention booklet for people to write their name. Have a supply of tickets or duplicate booklets on hand to give to those people. Some Convention Committees number the tickets and the convention booklet to correspond with the registrant's convention registration number.

Tickets for optional tours, bus trips, luncheons, and banquets can become very important parts of the convention. Some restaurants will require persons who are being served to present them with a ticket for lunch. These restaurants may then use the tickets when they present the bill for lunches served. Should there be a shortage of buses (hopefully, this won't happen!), then the tickets and their numbers become even more important. At one convention, those with high registration numbers had to wait to be sure that there would be a seat available on the bus for them. All kinds of situations may arise that will bring up a need for guests to have their tickets with them. Whatever plan the committee adopts should be announced to the convention guests so that they will know what procedure to follow.

The style of booklet varies from convention to convention. Most booklets have been bound at one side, but some have been loose-leaf types which were fitted into a notebook featuring an iris on the cover. Other booklets have had a spiral binding, which seemed to be most popular with those attending the convention. The choice of booklet form is up to the sponsoring group and will be determined by cost and availability.

The cover of the booklet falls into the same category. Covers are as varied as the cities in which conventions are held. Check that the print on the cover is water-resistant, whenever possible. If the cover happens to get wet and the ink runs, hands and clothing could become the same color as the booklet, making for very unhappy guests. The best advice is to do your own thing with the format, color, cover, and shape of the convention booklet. Just be sure it has all the required information and let everything else about it reflect the flavor of the convention.

Many guests would appreciate a list of mailing addresses of host gardeners so notes of thanks may be written after the convention is over. Check with all gardeners for their permission before listing their addresses.

Hospitality

Some duties of the Hospitality Committee are covered in other sections of this booklet. So much that is done in the area of hospitality is up to the hosting group that writing rules is almost impossible. It should be kept in mind, however, that the things which are done to make guests remember the convention are up to the local committee. Little personal touches will be remembered by those in attendance for a long time. Make the most of the opportunities to show hospitality.

One thing to keep in mind is the fact that hospitality is something that is done for the guest by the host. Don't let imagination get out of hand to the extent that the guests end up paying for the hospitality. IF the group thinks the idea of presenting a potted plant to every guest is a good idea, then raise the funds for this outside the registration fee. Don't make the guest pay for a potted plant. If it is decided to give one, that's fine, but don't include its cost as a part of the registration

fee. If the committee wants to make the Convention Booklet glitter with rhinestones, let this, too, be a thing the Convention Committee pays for out of local funds. The guests will be just as happy with a booklet that does not glitter, especially if it means the cost of registration is going to be higher because of it.

Souvenirs have become a part of the AIS convention in recent years. Most people like the idea of having a memento to take home with them. But finding something suitable that features an iris is becoming more and more difficult. Some of the photo printing services have two for one sales or even free items such as bags and refrigerator magnets. Enameled pins are a favorite, but they can be expensive. Check websites often to catch their sales. Let local members use their imaginations and come up with a clever memento of the convention, but keep in mind that such an item is not a requirement. Again, don't have a souvenir that costs so much that the registration fee is inflated to pay for it.

AIS officers, directors, and perhaps committee chairmen are commonly given special souvenirs by the Convention Committee in addition to any given to all attendees. These items have ranged from paperweights to statuettes to tie tacks or lapel pins. The cost of these items should be kept low and should not be included as part of the registration fee. They are presented as personal thank you gifts from the Convention Committee to honor those who serve AIS so well. The committee may choose not to give such gifts.

Garden refreshments have become commonplace at recent conventions. Originally, the refreshments were not served in all gardens, but today's conventions have something to eat and drink in every garden. The early morning stops offer coffee, bottled water, tea, juice, and doughnuts or fruit breads. That early morning coffee seems to be a must for some convention guests. Although coffee is served in gardens throughout the day, the early morning is when it is most in demand. By the time the afternoon stops are made, something cooler to drink is often more popular. Whatever decision is made regarding the serving of coffee, punch, and cookies, bottled water must be available at every stop. Many gardens have been featuring crackers, cheeses, etc. as an alternative to sweets at every stop.

The method of getting these refreshments into the garden varies. Sometimes the hosting organization buys the needed supplies - cups, napkins, etc. - and has them distributed to the various gardens. At other times, the local gardener buys the supplies and bills the Convention Committee later. Sometimes a combination of these two plans is followed. As for the refreshments themselves, various plans are followed here, too. Sometimes a caterer provides the needed goodies. At other times, these things are provided through the courtesy of local iris clubs or iris club members from across the host region. Most sponsoring groups try to find the least expensive method of providing snacks in the gardens so that the registration fee can be held to a low figure. There is no rule that says refreshments must be served in all gardens, but it is felt that the early morning stops must have something that will awaken the weary convention guest, like coffee. Bottled water is considered a must, especially as the afternoon temperatures climb.

The welcome bag has become a big part of every convention. Although it is something that is not absolutely necessary, most committees want to provide guests with items that have been secured from local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce. These may be a part of the convention registration packet or they may be a separate item that is presented to each registrant. In some

cases, it might be better to have the welcome bag as a separate item from the convention packet so that it can be prepared in the months preceding the convention and then placed in an out-of-the-way spot until the convention begins.

The hotel will often provide the AIS president with a complimentary gift such as a basket of fruit or other items. The local committee can add a personal welcome such as a bouquet of irises or a bottle of wine. A note of welcome to the convention adds a personal touch and gives the president a feeling of good will toward the local group. If the hotel does not provide the basket of fruit, this might be done by the local Convention Committee. Some committees have provided the president with a selection of products for which the city or state is famous. Along this line might be such things as pecans and peanuts from the south, apples from the northwest, or cheeses from the upper midwest. Whatever the committee feels would be an appropriate welcome gift is fine, yet nothing is required at all.

The lobby area of the hotel can be decorated with bouquets of irises or other plant materials, but be sure that the hotel approves of their placement. The hotel staff knows more about the hotel than anyone else, so if they say that an area cannot accommodate a bouquet, take their word for it. Some committees have presented the office staff at the host hotel with a bouquet of irises the week before the convention arrives. This is a gesture that will win favor from them and will probably assure that they do their best work during convention week.

Guests often tire of eating in the hotel dining room, and it sometimes is too crowded to handle the crowds anyway. A list of nearby eating places should be prepared for inclusion in the convention packet. A map of the local eateries would be helpful. Most of the guests will not have transportation other than walking, so try to keep the distance to these establishments under a mile. If there are areas of interest nearby, these may be included with the list of eating establishments. Be sure to include fast-food places that serve a very early breakfast if any are located close by.

As soon as the convention has ended, the hospitality chair should write letters of thanks to those people who were especially helpful in the presentation of a fine convention. Be sure to write to those businesses that provided items to be given to the guests. A short note to a hotel employee who went out of the way to provide outstanding service would be thoughtful.

At some conventions, a welcome table is set up at the local airport. Sometimes the local committee is too small to provide this service or the airport is too spread out for the table to be seen by all arriving registrants. If possible, the welcome table is a thoughtful thing to do. Another special touch is providing rides to the airport for the visiting dignitaries or for those who need special assistance because of health problems or because their planes leave at unusual hours. Again, there may not be anyone on the committee available to perform such a service, but if it can be done, the guests will leave with a fond memory of the convention.

Luncheons

The lunches on the days of garden tours may be a part of the hospitality chair's duties. Early in the convention planning, restaurants should be contacted about the possibility of serving lunch to the convention guests. Some of these places will not be interested, because it would interfere with

service to their regular customers. Others will be happy to have a guaranteed luncheon crowd. Some restaurants which are not normally open at the noon hour may be willing to open if the number of guests is sufficient to make it worthwhile to do so.

It may be necessary to stagger the arrival of the buses so that a particular eating establishment can handle the crowd. This requires working with the transportation chair so that the buses do not arrive too early or too late. Restaurants that feature a buffet line can serve the crowd more quickly than those which serve the meal themselves. However, it should be kept in mind that standing in line may be difficult for some of the guests. The lines should be kept as short as possible.

If one restaurant cannot handle the entire crowd, then check into the possibility of having guests served at two or three different places. Be sure to check carefully with each restaurant to learn their needs and requirements in serving such a large crowd. They want to present their restaurant in the best possible light, so do everything possible to help them.

If it is not possible to find restaurants which are willing or able to serve the noon lunches, another source would be church or civic groups. They are often willing to serve lunch. Many of these groups are experienced at handling large crowds and will often provide a less expensive meal than the restaurants.

Still another possibility is the serving of box lunches. If these are served, it sometimes requires a little extra effort on the part of the committee, since someone may have to pick up the lunches and have them at the luncheon site at the proper time. If the plan is to serve box lunches, be prepared to provide beverages. Ice chests of bottled water or cans of soft drinks can be set up. A small coffee station will be used by some of the guests. Depending on the schedule, the box lunch meal could be served on the bus during the travel from one garden to another or picnic tables under canopies could be set up at one of the gardens.

At one convention a very fine meal consisted of sandwiches, drinks, chips, etc., which were served in one of the gardens. Having lunch at one of the gardens is a bonus for the guests who enjoy the extra time browsing through the flowers. Box lunches served in public areas such as state or city parks also work out well.

When planning the menu for the lunches, keep in mind that a huge meal is not needed by most people when they are on a garden tour. On the other hand, a dainty meal may not be sufficient. Try to select menus that are neither too heavy nor too light. Also try to select menus which are not duplicates of what has already been served or will be served at the banquets. If the restaurant people are aware of the needs, they usually can come up with something that will fill the bill perfectly. Luncheons served family style enable each individual to sate his appetite whether large or small.

An important consideration is the list of food allergies collected from the registration forms. Make sure that whichever restaurant, box lunch, church group or other group providing food will be able to prepare and serve an alternative food item for those people who have specific food allergies.

Restaurants can give a firm price six months in advance of the convention, especially when they know that the information is needed in order to set the registration fee. Most will be unable to give a price earlier than that time. A figure that is very close to the number of meals needed should be given to the hotel and restaurants about one week in advance. Keep in touch with the registrar so that the exact number of people who have registered is known at all times. A guaranteed number will probably have to be given to the restaurants three days before the meal is to be served.

Some restaurants will bill for the actual number of lunches served. Some will bill for the guarantee they have been given if the number of meals actually served is smaller. The hotel is most likely to bill according to the guarantee. Most restaurants will be prepared to serve 10% more than the number given them in the estimate. Don't overestimate the number. Be as accurate as possible. It is a good idea to specify that the tickets should be collected to verify the amount due. Keep in mind that a church group or a civic organization usually prepares the meal especially for the convention group, so be prepared to pay them for the guaranteed number that was given to them. They can't make up for their losses with a later meal, because there won't be such a thing.

Even though some people register for all convention events, some will not attend everything, and that includes meals. Rarely is a convention held that the number guaranteed and the number eating is the same or even close. There is nothing that can be done about this. If a guaranteed number has been given, pay the amount for that number. If the restaurant has agreed to serve the meal and charge for the number served, don't be surprised if they insist on more money than the number of meals served would cost. If the number is much smaller than they were told it would be, they will probably need more money to break even. For example, if they have been told there will be 300 for the meal and only 175 show up, they cannot be expected to suffer the loss that would result from having prepared all those uneaten meals.

Remember to count on meals served to your bus drivers along with those for convention guests.

Restroom facilities at the luncheon locations are an item that needs to be taken into consideration. At a recent convention the restrooms were served by private water wells. The wells ran dry as a result of heavy demand, so be sure that the facilities are capable of handling the demand. If not, a stop at another area with restroom facilities might be in order before the luncheon stop.

Locate companies near the tour gardens willing to provide clean and safe portable toilets at a reasonable rental fee. At least one wheelchair accessible toilet should be available at each site. Toilets need to be serviced every day. Plus have someone from the committee double check they are clean and have hand sanitizer and toilet paper. Be prepared with alternative plans in case weather ruins plans to eat in a park or garden. The buses might be used, but if possible, sites should be chosen that have covered picnic areas. If the weather is sunny, the guests may prefer to eat in unsheltered areas, but be sure there is a place for them to go if the weather is not sunny (or so hot that a shady place to eat is desired).

It is a good idea to sample the food served by any restaurant under consideration before agreeing

to schedule a luncheon there. It is better to discover that the specialty of the house is not so special before the guests arrive to sample it themselves. If it is not up to par, keep looking for another site.

Convention Insurance

Insurance for hotel activities:

Insurance for the convention is purchased by AIS. AIS may incur additional insurance costs for the convention, such as adding the hotel to the policy. The hotel may want a copy of a certificate showing they are named on the policy for the period of the convention. Any questions concerning convention insurance should be addressed to the AIS insurance chair. Their contact information is normally included in every issue of *IRISES*, the Bulletin of The American Iris Society.

Insurance for garden activities:

It would be helpful if gardens carry their own insurance, even though they will have AIS insurance. It never hurts for the garden owner to have coverage also. AIS insurance certificates should be requested in advance of the garden tours. A copy of the certificate should be provided to the garden owner.

AIS does not provide coverage for any incident that may occur while the visitors to the convention are actually on a bus. The convention chair, or whoever is in charge of the buses, should check with the bus company to make sure there is a waiver or certificate of insurance in place that indemnifies any injury that might occur while the passengers are on the bus. If there are accidents on the bus, tour gardens, hotel, or restaurant, the convention chair and the AIS insurance chair should be notified immediately.

Restroom Facilities

It is often heard that having restrooms on the buses is all that is ever needed, but this isn't true. If at all possible, restroom facilities should be available in every garden. Sometimes city regulations will prohibit having portable facilities, but sometimes these restrictions will be lifted when the need is explained. Some tour garden owners allow people to use the restrooms in their homes, but this is an inconvenience, not to mention expensive. In addition, the plumbing in most homes is not equipped for this. Restrooms of some type are often needed in gardens after long bus rides. Stops for lunch also require restroom facilities. If the tour gardens are located close together, it might not be necessary to have facilities in every garden. Otherwise, plan to have restrooms of some kind at every stop. All restroom facilities should have a hand washing station and be handicap accessible.

Gifts and Favors

Some controversy exists here because some people feel that favors should be eliminated. Others treasure the little gifts they receive at conventions. Everyone tries to come up with something different and unique, but that is becoming more difficult each year. Convention after convention has given gifts, and finding something that is inexpensive enough for the committee to afford and also charming enough to find favor with the guests is a very difficult job. If a local member is talented and creative, that person might be able to suggest something that would be appropriate. If this person is willing to prepare or supervise the preparation of the item, rejoice!

Try to remember that most of the guests are going to have to take their souvenir home on an airplane. With all the other things they have accumulated on the trip, there may not be room for anything very large in the luggage. Gifts need not have an iris motif, but these are favored. Try not to let the cost get out of hand. The committee may want to pay for the favors with local money and not add to the cost of the registration. If the cost is added to the fee, be sure that it is not excessive. Remember, some of the people don't want a souvenir in the first place and will not be happy if they think they paid extra for something they don't want. These mementos should be gifts.

One convention recently invited guests to help themselves to the seashells used in the individual table centerpieces at the Awards Banquet. Those who chose to do so took home a memento of the host region, and it didn't cost the committee a cent, just a pleasant day at the beach picking up pretty shells.

An Iris Show

Some Convention Committees choose to have an iris show in conjunction with the convention. This is a fine idea, but it should be planned carefully with possible problems in mind. First, the tour garden owners are not going to enter the show because they want as many blossoms in the garden as possible. Second, the show will be jammed with visitors during the time it is open. Third, finding judges is not as easy as one might expect. Fourth, keeping apprentices from crashing the judging is sometimes a problem. Be sure to establish firm rules regarding who can and cannot be on the floor when judging takes place. Fifth, who is the sponsor of this show? Is the sponsor the Convention Committee or is it the local club? Who is paying for the medals? Are awards other than show ribbons going to be awarded?

The show can be a beautiful addition to the iris convention but it does add extra work. Finding a spot close to the convention headquarters is another problem that must be solved. If the show is at a distant point, some arrangements must be made for taking the visitors to see it.

If the convention has a show, it is an extra opportunity for judges or soon to be judges get extra tutoring and JT.

Who May Attend a Convention?

Anyone who pays the registration fee is welcome at an AIS convention. One need not be a member of AIS to attend, but of course, only members can vote if official society business is conducted. This would be a rare occurrence, so for all practical purposes the rule is: Anyone may attend the AIS convention, and anyone may vote for the awards presented if the registration fee is paid.

Special Youth Events

Many conventions are now adding special events for the youth members. These should be under the supervision of someone on the local level, and the national chair of youths should be involved in the events. Some conventions have also given special rates for youth members. This is not a rule, so each group may set its own policy.

Medical Aid

It is a good idea to have the local hospital alerted that the convention will be in town and to know that one will be available to handle emergencies. Usually the hotel will have a doctor who will be available when needed, but when the tours go into other cities, that doctor will not be

available. Each bus captain should have the names, addresses and phone numbers of urgent care facilities in the areas of each convention garden. By all means, in the event of any emergency, someone should dial 9-1-1 and be able to give the address of the location of the emergency.

AIS Board Meeting Update

Two months before the convention, an official of the convention should provide the AIS secretary with full details about the Board meeting. This information should include the room name and times scheduled for the Board meetings. Times and sites for other meetings may also be included. The secretary or AIS president may request a change in time for the meeting to accommodate arrivals of some members.

Why a Convention?

In every group there will be those people who think there is no need for a convention. Some will oppose the idea vigorously. There are many rewards for having a convention. and these might be used to convince doubters. Having a convention is a chance for the group to show off a state or city and to let the other AIS members know how great the host city is. It provides the opportunity for people to see the newest irises without having to travel a long distance.

Bus Prizes & Give Away Plants

Drawing numbers for bus prizes adds fun and excitement to the bus ride. The prizes can be hand-made items such as potholders, cloth shopping bags, or small garden tools, bags of seeds, anything. Ask members in your hosting club for donations of recently registered iris rhizomes. Try requesting a dozen rhizomes from one of the big-name hybridizers. Be sure to mention that the rhizomes will be used as bus prizes. Because most of the convention attendees are traveling by aircraft, it is important to keep these prizes small and lightweight. Again, bus prizes and give-away plants are optional.

Boutique & Vendors

The boutique and vendors are not necessary, but if included in the convention, request a secure room from the hotel for them. For the vendors, make sure there is a contract that outlines who is responsible for breakage and/or theft. It might be necessary to consult the AIS legal counsel about the wording of this contract. The boutique is a place for people to sell their crafts or items, and in many instances it may pay to have the boutique and silent auction in the same room. The boutique is a big undertaking, and the host club/regions should discuss how many people it will take to be successful. Is someone willing to spend long hours setting up, selling merchandise, and taking down the boutique? One person cannot handle it by themselves. Be prepared for breakage and theft. And, how will shipping requests be handled?

When space is available, vendors may request permission to set up a table of merchandise. The Convention Committee should approve those vendors whose products support the theme of irises, and gardens and the convention and decline vendors of non-iris-related merchandise. Vendors may be required to conduct their transactions through the convention's boutique.

Chapter 12 - Closing Remarks

It is not possible to answer every question about a convention, but this booklet should help local groups decide what can and cannot be done in their area. Members of The American Iris Society Board of Directors are always willing to answer questions. The AIS convention liaison and those who have served on convention committees in the past also can provide information and guidance.

If a hotel, gardens, and transportation are available, a convention can be held. A small number of dedicated people can handle the tremendous task of putting on a convention. It isn't easy, but it is worth every effort.

Section 2

Fall In-Person Board Meeting

The in-person fall board meeting is currently held once every three years, when a new president is elected. Keep in mind that the only requirement for a fall board meeting is a meeting room in a hotel that provides clean sleeping rooms at a reasonable rate and has restaurant facilities in the hotel or nearby. It would be appreciated by attendees if the hotel had a late serving cafe or bar. After any meeting, Board members appreciate the opportunity to socialize. While it is true that hospitality varies from meeting to meeting, it should be clearly understood that the hosting club or society is under no obligation to provide meals or entertainment for anyone attending a fall board meeting.

About the Fall In-Person Meeting

During the first weekend of November every third year, when a new AIS president is elected, the Board of Directors holds the annual business meeting. Consult with the AIS president and secretary regarding the amount of time needed for the fall meeting and which day or days to meet.

Overall attendance will run between 25 and 70, with about 35 to 40 of the attendees staying in the hotel with many of those being “doubles” – spouses, or folks sharing a room. Expect many of the Board members to arrive the day before the meeting.

It is important that the meeting room be large enough so that there is no crowding. This was especially important during the pandemic, when social distancing was required. The preferred style for the room’s table set-up is an open horseshoe for approximately 25 to 30 people. Additional chairs should be arranged in lecture style at the open end of the horseshoe for guests. See the diagram in the back of this Handbook.

The AIS secretary will provide the tent cards (name tags that sit on the table) for all the Board members.

Because the Board meeting is recorded, there needs to be a microphone system set up as illustrated in the AIS Board Meeting Setup page in the back of this book. Three microphones on the open horseshoe table for members of the Board and one microphone on a stand for the audience members.

A motion secretary will record all the motions made during the Board meeting. The motions are projected onto a screen so that everyone in the room can see the motion. The motion secretary will need a computer, projector and screen. See the Board meeting room diagram for placement of the motion secretary’s screen.

Some people will attend the AIS Board of Directors meeting via Zoom. A computer and Zoom liaison will be needed. The liaison will relay questions from the Zoom audience to the Board and vice versa. It is important to have a sound check before the Board meeting to make sure that Zoom attendees can hear the meeting. It is recommended that the AIS president, secretary, and

VPs be at the sound check. They can make last minute suggestions about the room arrangement, refreshments, and AV setup.

Coffee, tea and bottled water should be available. Consult the AIS president or secretary about the need for other refreshments.

Meeting Location & Hotel

An ideal location would be a major airline hub city, easily accessible by air and auto transportation. Since most of the directors and officers will fly to the meeting site, booking a hotel near the airport will be most appreciated. The distance from airport to hotel and start time of the first meeting may well determine what flight a board member chooses. This should be considered when blocking off sleeping rooms for the meeting. Try to avoid the very expensive hotels so that room rates will be reasonable. Check to see if the hotel will provide the meeting room and A.V. equipment free of charge whenever possible. The hosting organization may be responsible for providing the meeting room, so having it provided free of charge is a plus. Also, a hotel with transportation to and from the airport is very much appreciated!

Notices & Reservation Forms

The hosting group's chair will need to inform the AIS secretary of the details of the meeting so a registration form can be created. The information necessary would be the details of the hotel (hotel name, address, phone number, online reservation link, etc), room rates, reservation deadlines, and transportation information. Try to include an approximation of the time and distance between the airport and meeting hotel. This information should reach the AIS secretary by mid September or earlier. AIS officers, directors, committee chairs and RVPs will receive the registration form for the meeting from the AIS secretary no later than the end of September. This should leave enough time for attendees to make room and plane reservations comfortably.

Make sure notice of the in-person fall meeting reaches the editor of *Iris: The Bulletin* in time to be included in the summer issue.

It will be the responsibility of the AIS secretary to keep the local host group up to date about the number of attendees, any food allergies of attendees, and the schedule of the meeting.

Some Optional Items

Name Tags:

The AIS secretary will provide the tent cards (name tags that sit on the table) for all the Board members. It is helpful for audience members, guests and new Board members to see name tags being worn by the attendees. Some tags come as a plastic sleeve with a pin or clip on the back. Other tags use a cord that goes around the neck. Some people prefer not to use tags which are attached by a pin because of potential damage to clothing. Providing name tags is an option for the hosting group. If the hosting group does not wish to provide name tags, the AIS secretary will make arrangements for the name tags to be on hand.

Snacks & Goodies:

Bottled water, coffee and tea should be available during the meeting. It is optional to provide

other refreshments such as pastries, fruit, bagels, juices, sandwiches, etc.

Transportation:

If the meeting hotel does not provide shuttle service to the airport, it would be especially nice for transportation to the airport to be arranged. This enables the guests to get to the terminal without fretting about a taxi or an unreliable limousine service. Providing this transportation is optional.

Group Dinners:

To keep costs down, some hosts of the fall meeting leave all meals up to the attendees. In this case, a map and list of nearby restaurants is included in the welcome bag. If the host club/society wants to provide a dinner, they should meet with the hotel convention representative to choose meal options. In this case, provide information about the meal choices to the AIS secretary so it can be included on the registration form. The secretary will forward attendance numbers, meal choices, and food allergy information to the host club/society no later than two weeks before the meeting.

Other Activities:

A judges training session or regional meeting is often held in conjunction with the Board meeting.

A list of local interesting places to visit with their addresses and website links could be included in the welcome bag. For example, an interesting or unusual botanic garden, a specialty nursery (e.g., orchids, succulents, cactus), a museum of the local culture, a historic house or mansion, inlet or bay boat tours, an animal preserve, etc. An optional tour could be organized for the day before or after the fall meeting.

Welcome Bags:

The welcome bag should contain a name tag, pencil or pen, small pad of paper, meeting schedule, a list of local sites and activities, and a list with addresses and prices of nearby restaurants. Because it will carry only a few items, the welcome bag for the fall meeting could be as simple as a large manila envelope. An option would be for a creative member of the host club/society to come up with a cute, hand-sewn bag that will give attendees a big welcoming smile.

Reminders

1. The options listed above are optional.
2. Because much of the work performed at fall board meetings is now completed in the monthly Zoom meetings, the in-person fall Board meeting usually is finished by mid-afternoon on Saturday. It would be thoughtful of the host club/society to have suggestions for entertainment for Saturday evening. However, the host club/society is not expected to pay for or provide any entertainment. The Board meeting itself might be entertainment enough.

3. Some clubs/societies like to host this meeting because it gives their members a chance to see the Board in action and to become better acquainted with the Board. For those clubs this guideline is provided.

NOTE: Members of the Board are aware of the effort that goes into providing the prearranged set up which allows the AIS Board to go to work immediately upon arrival. The effort is truly appreciated.

When negotiating and signing a contract with the hotel, bus companies, portable toilets, caterers, restaurants or any other service or supplier for the sponsored activity, make sure that the sponsoring and responsible party on the contract is the host society or region, not The American Iris Society.

Section 3

Expanded Table of Content

Foreword

Section 1 : Spring Convention

Chapter 1. About Hosting an AIS National Convention

- Contracts
- Feasibility Study
- Locating a Headquarters Hotel
- Restaurants for Luncheons
- Selecting the Gardens
- Finding Transportation
- Extending the Invitation to the AIS Board of Directors

Chapter 2. Organization

- Convention Chair
- Guest Iris Chair
- Registrations Chair
- Transportation Chair
- Secretary
- Finance Chair
- Program & Meeting Chair
- Hospitality Chair
- Publicity Chair
- Awards Chair
- Convention Garden Chair
- Convention Booklet Chair
- Summary

Chapter 3. Convention Awards and Honors

- Ballots & Ballot Box
- The Franklin Cook Memorial Cup
- The President's Cup
- The Ben Hager Cup
- The Zurbrigg-Mahan Cup
- The Richardson Award
- Favorite Guest Irises

Chapter 4. Hotel Facilities

- Contract Considerations
- Complimentary Services
- AV & Other Equipment
- Hotel Dining
- Room Rates

Chapter 5. Guest Irises & Convention Gardens

- In Preparation
- Garden Markers
- Contributors Do the Following
- Arrival of Guest Plants
- Suggestions for Convention Garden Owners
- Code of Ethics
- Duties, Obligations & Rules for Convention Garden Owners
- One Year Before the Convention
- After the Convention

Chapter 6. Scheduling Meetings & Events

- Board of Directors Meeting
- Other Meetings
- Youth Meeting
- Silent Auction
- Judges Training Sessions
- Geek Dinner
- Sample Schedule
- Welcome Dinner
- Awards Banquet

Chapter 7. Expenses & Financing

- Transportation
- Banquets
- Meeting Room
- Decorations
- Parties
- Garden Refreshments
- Convention Mementos
- Shipping Charges for Guest Irises
- Garden Maintenance
- Distribution of Extra Funds

Chapter 8. Registration

Pre-Convention Activities
Welcome Bag
Name Tags
Processing Registrations
The Registration Desk

Chapter 9. Transportation
Transport Considerations
Bus Captains

Chapter 10. Publicity
Convention Publicity
Local Publicity
Regional Publicity
National Publicity

Chapter 11. Other Convention Considerations
The Convention Booklet
Hospitality
Luncheons
Convention Insurance
Gifts & Favors
An Iris Show
Who May Attend a Convention?
Special Youth Events
Medical Aid
AIS Board Meeting Update
Bus Give Away Plants
Boutique
Silent Auction

12. Closing Remarks

Section 2 : Fall In-Person Meeting

About the Fall In-Person Meeting

Meeting Location & Hotel

Notices & Reservation Forms

Some Optional Items

Reminders

Copyright 2022 by The American Iris Society, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without permission, in writing, by The American Iris Society, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review for inclusion in a magazine or newspaper.

AIS Board Meeting Diagram

