

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY CONVENTION HANDBOOK

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FOREWORD

This booklet 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 society's Board of Directors to be sure that all required meetings can be scheduled.

Information in this booklet is prepared from the records and experiences of six convention committees: "Convention Wichita '71," "Oklahoma '80," and "Down to the Sea in '83", "A Capitol Idea '96", "OKC Is The Place To Be '99", and "Destiny Dallas : 2000 '00". It may not answer all possible questions, but it is hoped that it will be a valuable aid.

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.

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Section 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 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.

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.

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 busses, 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, photographs to use in pre-convention publicity, etc. Most important, they have statistics on local hotels listing 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 the day before

and inform the hotel that some people may stay over.

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 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. That is tough as need time to set up for next meeting.

- Judges' Training Sessions--The preferred scheduling features three sessions. Two scheduled (one after the other) the evening of the first day of garden tours and the third session on the evening of the second day of garden tours. This requires one room which holds a number of people totaling about 50 percent of the registration. For example, if 600 are expected, 300 will probably attend the judging schools. Therefore, the room should be set up for at least a minimum of 200 people.

- Miscellaneous Meetings--Smaller meeting rooms will be needed for meetings of RVP's, Judges' Training Chairmen, AIS Foundation, sections' Boards of Directors, 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.

- Robin Reception--This should be scheduled in an area large enough for 75 to 100 people to mill about greeting others. A table from which punch and cookies can be served will be needed. Some chairs should be in the room, but they need not be formally arranged.

- 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 AIS Youth Chairperson for assistance.

- Silent Auction--This needs a room that can be locked because of the items that will be on sale in the room. This room will need approximately 15 to 20 eight foot tables, or more. An AIS 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 as 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 busses? An area with heavy traffic is not the best place for loading busses.

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

7. Are additional eating places available within a short 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 check list might be prepared in advance and used in evaluating possible hotels and their staffs.

RESTAURANTS FOR LUNCHEONS

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.

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 tour plans? 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 garden?
6. Is parking space available for busses?
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. This is as bad as a too small garden would be for 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.

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 busses 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 busses with options for more. Be sure the company has enough busses 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 in each group traveling together should be equipped with toilet facilities.

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.

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 his 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.

GENERAL CHAIRMAN

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

The person who serves as General Chairman must realize that it is his duty to maintain harmony if at all possible. He is the mediator in disagreements and must use tact so that workers will continue to do their jobs. He also must realize that he is in a difficult position because he must say NO on occasion, and that will not be popular.

The General Chairman usually serves as the Master of Ceremonies at the banquets. He extends the invitation at the Awards Banquet the year before the convention. He 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 General Chairman to be someone who does not have a garden on tour.

The General Chairman should contact the AIS Bulletin Editor and AIS Web Site Master in putting the Registration Form in the bulletin and on the web site.

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

GUEST IRIS CHAIRMAN

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 Chairman will be swamped with plants when the guest irises begin to arrive, so he 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 Chairman will not be able to call his time his own for several weeks. By setting a specific period of time in which guest irises will be received, the chairman can be freed from this restriction to some degree.

The Guest Iris Chairman 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 CHAIRMAN

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 should be authorized to sign checks for the refunds and to 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 Chairman.

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 his job description. All of these will require a letter, 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, busses, 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 CHAIRMAN

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 Chairman still must be in contact to be sure exactly enough busses are secured. Too many busses will increase costs needlessly, but too few will create chaos at tour time.

The Transportation Chairman should check all routes for time, road problems, and for parking. Once the destination is reached, he should prepare a detailed map 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.

The Transportation Chairman should plan methods of loading and unloading the busses at every stop. It is his plans that get the conventioners 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 chairman tour days become a hectic, disorganized time with many unhappy guests. A dry run for bus captains is a good idea, if possible.

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

This chairman 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 Chairman, 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 CHAIRMAN

This person is in charge of fund raising, 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 Finance Chairman usually deposits all funds for the convention in an account separate from all other funds of the sponsoring organization.

It is this chairman's duty to provide the information which will enable the committee to determine the registration fee for the convention. He also makes payments for convention expenses. A Finance Chairman 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 his 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.

PROGRAM AND MEETING CHAIRMAN

The scheduling of all meetings is done by this person. It is his duty to contact all AIS Sections to determine their needs for scheduled meetings. He 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 slides will be shown, special effects are needed, 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 Chairman should contact the AIS Awards Chairman to determine that person's requirements.

Special seating arrangements are made by the Program and Meeting Chairman, including the seating at the head table for the two banquets.

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 punch at the Robin Reception, 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 his wife in hosting any gathering and scheduling events for youth members.

It is also the responsibility of the Program and Meeting Chairman to provide proof of attendance cards for judges' training sessions and help get test papers printed, if needed. This job may be divided into two parts and the duties split. Just be sure all tasks are done.

HOSPITALITY CHAIRMAN

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 Chairman 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 four days.

PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN

Nothing aids a convention more than good publicity. Articles in magazines and newspapers will bring inquiries and increase interest in the convention. It is the articles in region and national AIS publications, however, that really bring the guests to town. All of these publicity releases are the duty of the Publicity Chairman. He might also provide or secure slides of people, places, and irises that will be in the convention. This set of slides can then be used as publicity for the convention. Special items, such as buttons for distribution at the convention immediately preceding his own, are to be secured by the Publicity Chairman.

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 Chairman 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 CHAIRMAN

The duties of the Awards Chairman 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 and the Franklin Cook Cup must be determined. The Awards Chairman is in charge of getting the ballots counted for this purpose. Making sure the awards are in place and notifying the AIS Awards Chairman of the winners' names also must be done in the time between the tours and the start of the banquet. After the convention, the Awards Chairman should have the trophies engraved and forward them to the Chairman of the next convention. The Favorite Guest Iris Ballots should be counted and a list of winners should be sent to the AIS Awards Chairman and the AIS Bulletin editor. This should be done immediately after the deadline for casting those ballots has passed. The deadline for this ballot is a couple of weeks after the convention.

CONVENTION AWARDS AND HONORS

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 and AIS member.

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 originated with 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 April 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 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 registrant may vote for one variety, and The President's Cup is awarded to the iris with the largest number of votes.

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.

TOUR GARDEN CHAIRMAN

This person heads the committee that makes final decisions on which gardens will be on tour. As convention time approaches, this chairman 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 Tour Garden committee should visit every garden on at least four occasions:

- Before selections are made,
- During bloom time the year before the convention,
- Between bloom seasons, and 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 Chairman should work closely with the Hospitality Chairman to make sure gardens are provided with the refreshments needed and that workers are available to help serve these refreshments. Usually, the tour garden owners are asked to find the workers to do the serving. Refreshments are the responsibility of the Hospitality Chairman.

Plant markers for guest irises could be the responsibility of the Tour Garden Chairman. This includes the responsibility for seeing that all guest plants are labeled according to specifications made by the Convention Committee.

Because this chairman must point out the bad points in gardens, he must be a person who can do so tactfully and make helpful suggestions for improving the garden.

CONVENTION BOOKLET CHAIRMAN

One of the nicest souvenirs of a convention is the Convention Booklet. The chairman of this committee prepares the material, gets printing cost estimates, and makes or finds a cover design. Information regarding guest irises and their assignment is obtained from the Guest Iris Chairman, and information on the program is obtained from the Program and Meeting Chairman.

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. The tickets for meals and busses, and the ballots for voting may be a part of the convention booklet. A statement about how to cast the ballots and what is 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 certificates of attendance and take a test. These are available at each session from the AIS Chairman of Judges and Judges' Training. The Program Booklet Chairman could be assigned the job of preparing these certificates (if the Program and Meeting Chairman has not been asked to do so) and seeing that they are given to the Judges' Training Chairman.

SUMMARY

Assignment of the above jobs is important work. The General Chairman is the person who finds suitable people for these tasks. Once a committee chairman has been appointed, that chairman should find others to help him with the work of his 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.

Headquarters

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 registration is big 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 hotel staff and for the committee too, because the first meeting will invariably run over its allotted time.

A must for the AIS Board meeting room is water and glasses at the tables. Coffee is much appreciated, too. In all meeting rooms there should be water available. See the section on scheduling meetings for more details on meeting room needs and plans.

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.

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.

It is a custom to provide a complimentary suite for the AIS President. This is sometimes used by small groups for meetings, but the committee should not schedule meetings there. The hotel gives complimentary rooms and suites for rooms rented at the hotel, 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 BIS, 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, find out what things the hotel will do, what items they provide (microphones, projectors, screens, pianos) and what the committee must do. Find out where to go 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.

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 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 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. Many convention planners are forced to use the city's largest and most expensive hotel for a convention as large as the AIS meeting, but 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.

Does the hotel have a doctor on call? Many emergencies occur when large numbers of people are together.

Learn what policy the hotel has on cashing personal checks, the use of credit cards, cashing traveler's checks, and payment in advance. 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 meetings 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.

Guest Irises

The duties of the Guest Iris Chairman begin in earnest three years before the convention date. The first guest plants arrive then, and the recording and reporting begin with those first plants. Always of the utmost importance are prompt acknowledgments of irises received.

The Guest Iris Chairman should have the following supplies on hand to begin the work:

1. One large receipts ledger.
2. 500 Guest Iris Receipt and Disposal Forms NCR sets of four with each page a different color.
3. 1000 Guest Iris Assignment Record Forms NCR sets of four with each page a different color.
4. 100 file folders.

The responsibility for both accuracy in reporting and for good convention bloom originates with the hybridizer or contributor. Ask that 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 his deadline for the July issue (April 15). 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 April 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 dead line. The committee may limit the number of rhizomes of each variety and number of varieties submitted from a hybridizer.

Once guest plants begin to arrive, the Guest Iris Chairman 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 headings:

- A. Date Received
- B. Received From
- C. Type of Iris
- D. Number of Plants
- E. Name or Seedling Number
- F. Garden Assignment

Under column B, list the name of the hybridizer. The name of the contributor is listed also if two people are involved. Column F is used for listing the name(s) of the garden(s) to which the plant was assigned.

4. Complete the Guest Iris Receipt and Disposal form from the information recorded in the Receipts Ledger. Mail the fourth copy promptly to the hybridizer and file the remaining three copies under the name of the hybridizer in your files. In cases where a contributor submits guest plants for a hybridizer, it is wise to maintain a cross reference file. Since guest irises are a must for a convention, be sure to notify the hybridizer where his/her guests will be planted. A card with "your irises arrived" is not enough.

5. Complete the Guest Iris Assignment Record and put the fourth copy into the box with each gardener's guest plants.

6. Advise tour garden owners to pick up the irises.

7. When gardeners arrive to pick up plants, have each one check the plants in the box against the copy of the Assignment Record which is enclosed to verify that nothing is missing or unlisted on the form. This is very important to keep from misplacing a plant.

8. Advise gardeners to maintain a file for the copies of the Assignment Record that they receive.

9. Once the gardeners have verified the listing, file the two remaining copies of the Assignment Record under the name of the gardener.

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

Just as soon as possible after the first year guest irises have been planted, each host gardener should provide the Guest Iris Chairman 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 appear in the April AIS Bulletin if the committee feels that space is available for more plants. Be sure this appears in the April issue. Set a deadline for the arrival of these plants.

Tour garden owners should report any losses from plants received the past summer. Record the losses on the proper

Receipt and Disposal form and mail the third copy of that form to the hybridizer/contributor. Record the losses on copies of the Assignment Record in the tour garden owner's file.

Upon receipt of any replacement plants, make proper notations on file copies of both Receipt and Disposal and Assignment Record forms.

Tour garden owners 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.

As the year of the convention arrives, a new kind of activity takes place. This is the time when the Guest Iris Chairman 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 Chairman 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 only irises which go through the Guest Iris Chairman in the Convention Booklet. The committee can also consult the Registrations and Introductions booklet.

Various methods of listing guest plants have been used at past conventions, but the most popular method seems to be the one which has guest plants listed by hybridizer in each garden. Tour garden owners could be asked to submit such a list to the Guest Iris Chairman to help in getting the proper information recorded. Some conventions 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.

Six weeks before the convention date, mail the second copy of the Receipt and Disposal Form to all hybridizers/contributors. Request that they indicate on that form what their instructions are for disposal or return of the guest plants.

When the hybridizers return the Disposal Form, make notation on the Guest Iris Assignment Forms, then give each tour garden owner the second copy of that form as digging time approaches. By having this form, they will know what is to be done with the plants in their gardens.

If you do not receive a Disposal Form back from the hybridizer and you have tried to contact them by other means, the general rule should be NO WORD, NO RETURN, NO DISTRIBUTION=DESTROY.

Once the convention has ended, the obligations of the Guest Iris Chairman change 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 secure mailing regulations.
2. Pre address mailing labels.
3. Arrange for a large receiving station and notify 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 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 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 committee should thoroughly discuss whose garden license they will use to ship guests plants.

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 day of computers makes some of the above statements obsolete. However, the information on records is still valid, regardless of the method of preparation. If someone on the committee is computer literate, a data base could be setup to record data and make any updated changes. This would make it easy to download just fields needed for convention booklet.

Example of Guest Iris Assignment Record

OKLAHOMA '99 CONVENTION

GUEST IRIS ASSIGNMENT RECORD

To: _____

Date _____

Address: _____

Guest Iris Chairman:
Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Telephone

Telephone _____

No.	Variety Name or Seedling No.	Type	Hybridizer	Remarks
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Example of Guest Iris Receipt and Disposal Form

OKLAHOMA '99 CONVENTION
1997 GUEST IRIS RECEIPT RECORD
1999 GUEST IRIS DISPOSAL REQUEST

Contributor

Date Received: _____

Address

Guest Iris Chairman:

City, State, Zip

Name
Address

City, State, Zip
Telephone

No	Variety Name or Seedling No.	Type	Garden Assignment	Remarks or Disposal
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Scheduling the Meetings

The Convention Committee is obligated to provide meeting space for the AIS Board of Directors and eleven section

meetings of 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 meetings for the RVP's and Judges' Training Chairmen. Small meeting rooms should be available for the AIS Foundation Trustees and for 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 must be held between the first-day AIS Board meeting and the second-day meeting. In case these groups have a proposal to present to the Board, they need a chance to discuss it before its presentation.

Two other events are requirements for any convention. The Robin Reception is a very vital part of the convention to those people who belong to robins. (Be sure to check with the hotel to find out if it is permitted to bring in food such as cookies and punch. This can save money over having the hotel cater the reception, but some municipal laws forbid a hotel to allow the serving of any food not prepared by the hotel staff.) Also, the Youth Reception is a vital part of the convention to those youth members in attendance. Work with the AIS Youth Chairperson to determine what is needed.

Two nights are to be used for the three 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 should be sent to each section president and to the chairmen of all standing committees asking for needed information. 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). It may be necessary to write to some of these people more than once in order to get the needed information, but it is their responsibility to tell the Program and Meeting Chairman what will be needed. Be sure to specify that sections are allotted only one hour. Some may ask for more time, but it just is not possible to schedule all the events that are required if more than one hour is used by the sections. 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 sections 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.

The AIS Board of Directors meeting is held on day one and two of the convention. It usually begins in the afternoon of the first day, and should be the only thing scheduled for that day, and is concluded late at night, with a dinner break that evening. A second session is scheduled on the following day, and the room should be available for the Board all of that day. The preferred style for the room is an open horseshoe 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. Need to have a microphone system set up as illustrated in the AIS Board Meeting Setup page in the back of this book. Coffee is usually provided at each meeting. Ice water is a must. Be sure that plenty of space is available in this meeting room because the number of guests is quite large at some sessions. All RVP's, Committee

chairmen, and section representatives will attend the meeting, and the meeting is always open to AIS members, many of whom elect to attend.

The RVP Board of Counselors meeting is set up in conference style for 25 to 30 people. Additional seating in theater style is provided for guests. Ice water should be available in this room. This meeting could be held in the same room as the Board meeting, since the Board is not in session when the RVP's meet. Allow one and one-half hours for this meeting. A Board member must attend 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. Allow one and one-half hours and be sure that ice water is available. A Board member must attend this meeting, so scheduling must not conflict with the Board of Directors meeting.

The meeting of the AIS Judges' Training Chairman with the RVP's and the Regional Judges' Training Chairmen 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.

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

Silent Auction

The AIS Silent Auction has become a popular part of our conventions and it is a fun way to raise funds for the support of AIS. 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 AIS Silent Auction Chairman is looking for iris artifacts, iris books and new or recent iris introductions. However, if you would like to donate any other irises or other plants that are rare or unusual. that would work fine also. Just drop The Silent Auction Chairman a note and let us know what you have.

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.

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

Judge's Training Sessions

Two judges' training sessions are usually held on the first evening after the garden tours begin. The third judges' training session is held on the second evening after the garden tours. The AIS Chairman of Judges will secure qualified instructors. This person decides on the areas to be covered by the training school, is responsible for selecting the instructors, and provides the Program and Meeting Chairman with the information necessary for setting up the rooms. These rooms are to be set up in theater style with a podium, ice 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 chairman 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

first evening after the garden tours begin. The third evening after the garden tours. The AIS Chairman of person decides on the areas to be covered by the instructors, and provides the Program and Meeting setting up the rooms. These rooms are to be set up in theater style with a podium, ice 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 chairman 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 certificates are prepared by the Convention Committee for use by the Chairman of Judges' Training in each session. Specific information is needed on these cards, so the following plan should be used.

AIS CONVENTION, (CITY, STATE)
Judges' Training Attendance

NAME _____ REGION _____

This certifies participation in Judges' Training at (City, State, Month, Day, Year). Please check one box in each column below.

Session	Status of Participant
(Tall Bearded)	Master, Emeritus, Garden Judge
(Medians)	Trainee or Apprentice
(Louisianas)	Observer

This certificate must be turned in at the door to earn credit for attendance.

NOTE: Items in parentheses are variables and will change each year.

Robin Reception

The Robin Reception is held in a large room in which chairs are available for those who become weary of standing. Cookies and punch are usually provided at these meetings, and a registration desk is usually available. The Convention Committee is responsible for seeing that the refreshments are provided for this gathering. (Members of the host region's Regional Robins are often willing to provide them.) This reception is very popular with those people who belong to robins because it gives them the opportunity to meet people to whom they write letters but may never have met in person. The Robin Reception is usually scheduled on the first night of the convention - the night before the Welcome Dinner.

Two months prior to the convention, all arrangements are confirmed with the person who is in charge of each specific meeting. At that time this person is provided with the location of the meeting, the time, and the things that will be available in the room. Remind this person once again that the meeting must not be allowed to run longer than the allotted time.

Most hotels have public address systems to be used at no charge. Some hotels will have audiovisual equipment available that can be rented. If it becomes necessary to rent such equipment, be sure to shop around to get the best price and the best service. Committee members will not have time to go after this equipment or to return it, so delivery by the rental company is a real plus. If audio-visual equipment can be kept in one room, the problem of moving it is eliminated. Try to schedule all meetings for which audio-visual equipment has been requested in that particular room. Try to have extra projector lamps, slide trays, extension cords, etc., available so that there will be no delays from equipment failure. This will aid the groups in keeping their meetings within the time allowed.

If the hotel uses its banquet area for meeting rooms, don't forget to allow time after the last session for the hotel staff to prepare the room for the banquet. Often, a hotel divides the large banquet room into smaller meeting rooms. They cannot be expected to have meetings running until 6:00 PM and then serve the banquet meal in the same room at 7:00 PM.

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 Chairman of Youth should be involved in the planning.

Geek Dinner

Coordinate the Geek Dinner and the Irises & Computers Meeting with the AIS Electronic Services Chairperson. The AIS Electronic Services Chairperson will collect the money from the individuals attending the dinner and will pay the hotel for the meal. The Program and Meeting Chairman needs to work with the AIS Electronic Services Chairperson and the hotel to see that all the needs are met for the dinner. This meal is not to be included in the registration fee.

A tentative schedule of all events of the convention should be made available for the AIS Board of Directors to study at the November Board meeting preceding the convention. Send a copy of the tentative schedule to the Convention Liaison. 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

10:00 AM Registration

1:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting

Day Two

10:00 AM Registration

8:00 AM AIS Board of Directors Meeting

12:30 PM RVP Board of Counselors Meeting

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)

5:30 PM Youth Reception

6:00 PM Robin 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 Busses Depart for Gardens and Luncheon
5:00 PM Busses 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 Busses Depart for Gardens and Luncheon
5:00 PM Busses 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 Busses Depart for Gardens and Luncheon
5:00 PM Busses 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

A copy of this tentative schedule may be included in the convention announcement pages in the January AIS Bulletin the year of the convention. It will probably be possible to include the gardens to be visited each day.

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 going to do the decorating of the tables, there are several things to keep in mind. First, be sure that the decorations are located nearby 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, and this table is used for local dignitaries on this night. The AIS President and his wife are seated at the head table, but others who are seated there are local people. If the RVP of the host region is not from the local club, it is customary to have that person and spouse seated at the head table. The convention's General Chairman is seated on one side of the podium and the AIS President is seated on the opposite side. If there is a speaker for the evening, he should be seated near the podium, usually on the side with the General Chairman.

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 the group has a convention photographer, 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 keynote should be brevity. People are anxious to be free for visiting and do not want to be bored by long 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. This is when the various regions are called out by number and states, and members of these regions stand to be recognized. It adds a little pride if the RVP of that region is named, too.

The only part AIS has on the program 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 General Chairman of the convention is in charge of the program, most of that program is presented by AIS officials.

The AIS Officers may be seated at the head table for the evening. Officers who are not Board members and AIS Board Members may be seated in row of tables just at the front of the head table. If a representative of the BIS is present, that person should be seated at the head table as a matter of courtesy. The representative usually gives greetings from the BIS and often is involved in the presentation of the Dykes Medal to the most recent recipient.

This same courtesy should be extended to officials of other foreign iris societies, but if there is no room at the head table to seat them there, they should be seated close to the head table and introduced individually to all people present.

Some convention planners find that there is not enough room at the head table to include the spouses of the AIS Officers. In this case, it is all right to have these people seated at tables near the front of the room rather than at the

head table. Committee chairmen are usually seated at these front tables too. Award winners should be seated in this special area in order to speed up the process of the awards presentation. The people who win the President's Cup and the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup cannot be purposely seated near the front of the room because the winners of these cups are not identified until the official announcement.

In seating the AIS Officers at the head table, the usual procedure is to seat the President and his spouse at one side of the podium, the General Chairman of the convention on the other side, then the other officers are seated according to their years of service to the Board. (The AIS Secretary or Convention Liaison can provide tenure information.)

Some groups prefer to try seating a gentleman and then a lady, but this is not always possible. 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 should receive notification that they are to be seated there. This can be done by enclosing a note in their convention registration packet.

Arrangements need to be made with the AIS Awards Chairman and others who will be working on the awards presentation so that all items needed for the ceremony will be available. The convention's Awards Chairman is responsible for seeing that all trophies, medals, etc., are in place. This person is also responsible for notifying the AIS Awards Chairman 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 local Awards Chairman 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 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.

A representative from the next AIS convention is asked to give an invitation to that convention near the end of the program. 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 the local group, remember that time must be allowed for placing these decorations between the time the busses 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 the members of the Board if they have not already done so, and to bid friends goodbye. Neither type of social plan has precedence over the other - indeed, both may be endorsed - so whatever the local group plans, it is their decision entirely. If neither plan is adopted, this too is acceptable.

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 Chairman and the hotel staff.

Financing the Convention

To host a convention, the local club must be prepared to raise some money. With today's escalating prices, the local group 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 \$2000 to \$3000 on hand, this should be sufficient to launch the convention. Although registration fees 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 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 Chairman 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 Chairman must work closely with all the other committee chairmen. 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:

- General Chairman: Stationery, envelopes, postage, telephone.
- Guest Iris Committee: Temporary and permanent markers for the gardens, printing, postage, shipping costs, stationery and envelopes, ledger, and file folders.
- 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 busses, 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 which are not part of the ordinary convention schedule but are a local plan to add to the festivities, 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.

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 Chairman 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 committee.

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 busses 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.

BANQUETS

Charges for meals should be included in the registration fee. Extra items (such as floral arrangements at the head tables) might be paid for by the hosts.

MEETING ROOM EXPENSES

Charges for these rooms should be included in the registration fee. This would include projectors, projector screens, etc. It could also include coffee in the meeting room for the Board of Directors, but this item 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. ETC,

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, etc.) during the winter preceding the convention. The garden owner 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.

ROBIN RECEPTION

This is an area in which refreshments are provided, usually cookies and punch, and the Convention Committee is to provide them. The cost may be added into the registration fee or the local club may pick up the tab. Members of the regional robins may supply the refreshments as their contribution to the convention. The cost is usually minimal.

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 thing 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 this should be something that the guest would want to buy for himself if he is going to have to pay for it. 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 often 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, 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 committee should stick to its earlier decision. Donations to AIS and to the host region are two 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. Have a purpose in mind and

give the money to AIS for that particular fund.

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. It will mail city maps, show schedules, and provide recreation information. It will send information concerning local bus schedules, facts about taxi service, and the best way to get to the headquarters from everywhere in the United States. The committee will be consulted about local eating places and suitable wearing apparel. It will reassure guests that it is safe for them to arrive in the host city in the middle of the night.

The Registration Committee will prepare a packet for every person who registers for the convention. In some cases the "goody bag" and the official convention materials are included in one packet. Only those official items will be dealt with in this discussion.

The first needed item will be manila envelopes that are large enough to hold the Convention Booklet, the conventioneer's name tag, and anything else the Convention Committee deems of official nature. These envelopes may be labeled with the registrants name, number, or both.

A typewriter which types large letters or a computer should be used for preparing the name tags. For off-the-street registrations, one can usually be rented from the Chamber of Commerce or from the hotel. The name tags are often color coded, with one color for the AIS Board and officers, another color for AIS committee chairmen, another for the Convention Committee, another for RVP's, and still another for everyone else. Other methods of identifying these people may be used, or you may prefer to use no designation at all. The tag should include the guests name, city, state, and AIS region. The registration number may also appear on the tag. This same number appears on the official convention packet. The type of name tag used is sometimes a topic for discussion. Some people prefer not to use tags which are attached by a pin, but others feel the adhesive-backed type is even more objectionable. Those with pin attached seem to best serve the needs in an AIS convention, where the name tag will be worn for up to five days. Also, name tags worn around the neck work well.

In cooperation with the Hospitality Committee, the Registration Committee may prepare a list or map of nearby eating places, churches (if the convention includes a Sunday), or sites of interest. This can be a part of the "goody bag" or may be included in the official packet.

The official Convention Booklet and tickets for events will be in the official convention packet. If tickets are a part of the booklet, the Registration Committee will need these booklets so that tickets may be removed or voided when a partial registration is received.

Notes to those attendees who are to be seated at the head table or in a reserved section should be prepared and inserted in the packet.

Once the Convention Booklet, tickets, map, and notes have been enclosed in the packet, the job is complete. It is then

filed according to the plans for distribution. If packets 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 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!

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 January AIS Bulletin has been delivered. Upon receipt of the registration fee, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Write a receipt for the money received and send the original copy to the registrant.
2. Along with the receipt, enclose a form letter of welcome. This letter should contain information on the normal weather for convention time and any information regarding airlines, hotel transportation, etc. A record of the acknowledgment should be maintained. It might be necessary to add notes to some of these letters in case specific questions need to be answered for the registrant.
3. Enter information on ledger sheet.
4. Make an index card.
5. Mail acknowledgment, receipt, and hotel card (if used) to the registrant.
6. File index card alphabetically.
7. Deposit fee in convention account and notify the Treasurer.

Another file might be maintained for correspondence with registrants. The index card file is a cross-reference for information in the ledger and can be used for preparing name tags or locating packets when guests arrive.

The ledger contains vital information on 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 the ones this guest will attend. Columns for events should be headed as follows: Welcome Dinner, Tour Day One, Luncheon One, Tour Day Two, Luncheon Two, 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 of irisarians) will prefer to attend only the Welcome Dinner and the Awards Banquet. Tickets might be provided which are not a part of the Convention Booklet so that these people receive the tickets only. By having such

tickets, the cost of printing additional Convention Booklets can be eliminated.

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. This slip should be made in triplicate - one copy for the bank, one for the Registrar, and one for the Treasurer. When a deposit is made, the Treasurers copy should be given promptly to that official.

It is important that records be maintained on the number registered from each region. A list of AIS officers and directors, RVP's, and committee chairmen 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 there include a typewriter with large type, a conventional typewriter or a computer, pens, pencils, paper, a money box, change, masking tape, scotch tape, scissors, stapler, a phone, all registration supplies, and the extra packets. The hotel can provide the phone connection.

It is best to move everything to the hotel the day before the registration desk is to open. The desk should be open at 10:00AM on Day One of the convention of which the Board of Directors meeting is the only event scheduled - day one of the 6-day event. The registration desk should be in an area that is easily accessible and that has plenty of space. The number of people needed to man the desk varies from day to day, but the majority of guests will arrive on days one and two. The Chamber of Commerce will provide workers, 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.

An AIS policy does not allow sales items unless such sales are for the benefit of AIS. People may want to sell items, but this is to be done in private rooms only. Hotels do not like any sales to be conducted in the lobby. Because of the AIS policy and the hotel regulations, there is no need to provide space for those with items to sell. When inquiries are received, the Registrar should explain that no sales are allowed. However, a Bulletin Board might be set up for notices of rooms where iris artifacts are for sale.

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.

Transportation

The biggest expense of a convention is for the busses used for the garden tours. It is the duty of the Transportation Chairman to contact bus lines to secure the busses. 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 may 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 Chairman 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 busses is known. Try to have an individual at the bus company with whom all contact is made. A friend on the inside is a real asset.

When the tour gardens have been selected and grouped by day and the luncheon sites have been chosen, the Transportation Chairman should travel the routes the busses will follow. By doing this, he will know how long it takes to get from garden to garden, from hotel 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 Chairman must determine if adequate parking is available, if roads can handle the busses, and if loading zones are safe and within easy walking distance of the garden. 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 busses at a garden then send the busses elsewhere to park. Sometimes a permit is needed for busses to go to some residential neighborhoods. Again, contact City Hall. The bus lines will be able to get needed permits, but they must be made aware of the routes and of any potential problems.

Loading the busses each morning is a wild time. For some reason, throngs of people try to board one bus. The Transportation Chairman should be on hand to assure guests that they won't get left behind and to get early departing busses loaded first.

Finding capable bus captains is not as easy as it appears. The bus captain is the convention host for the people on his bus. The captain needs to know where he is going, 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 Chairman prepares detailed maps for the 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 driveway and park behind the house.. In addition, the bus captain receives a sheet containing items of information on points of interest along the route which can be relayed to the passengers.

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 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.

Busses usually are given a name, but if not, each bus does have a number. 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. 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. The best advice is to follow the plans to the letter.

No bus captain should ever fail to visit a scheduled garden. The people have worked for years on that garden, and it is not fair to skip that stop. Again, follow the instructions regarding routes and stops.

Bus captains should be instructed that no collection of money should be made on the busses. The drivers are being paid, and any tips will be handled by the Convention Committee in its agreement with the bus company. It is not fair for one driver to receive a bonus that others do not receive. Some people resent being asked to contribute to such a fund.

One of the duties of the Transportation Chairman is to see that any name tags for busses are prepared. These can be presented to the bus captains at a meeting held the night before the tours begin. At this time the captains will be presented with the packets and will receive instructions on their duties. They should be reminded to give one set of directions to the bus driver.

It is imperative that busses return to the hotel as scheduled. With judges' training sessions to attend, ballots to be voted on time the final day, and appointments to be kept, the guests expect to be back to the hotel on time.

Some recent conventions have designated one bus as a handicapped bus. This is an idea which has met with favor, or you might want to reserve the first 4 rows of seats for those people that have handicaps..

The Transportation Chairman'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.

Suggestion would be to have two bus captains per bus in case one of them fails to make the bus. Also, you might furnish each bus with a cell phone, map of the closest hospitals along with telephone number, and garden owners

telephone numbers.

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

The Convention Booklet

A complete and accurate Convention Booklet is of the utmost importance. The cover design can be planned well in advance. The Chamber of Commerce often can be helpful in providing cover designs or material that promotes the city or state. The Convention Booklet takes many different forms, but its primary function is to list the events, their locations, their times, the guest irises, and whatever 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, but 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.

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. Various methods have been used for listing the guest irises. Most people seem to prefer the method which lists each garden with the hybridizers who have irises in that garden listed alphabetically. Under each hybridizers name will be the list of irises he has growing in that particular garden. Another method which has been used, and which takes less space, is to list all guest irises in tabular form. The hybridizers are listed in alphabetical order. Their irises are listed under their names and a check mark is placed under the name of each garden in which that iris is being grown. Whichever method is used, there must be plenty of checking and double checking to see that everything is listed that should be. This will require much work with the Guest Iris Chairman, and it will require thorough proofreading.

Convention visitors do appreciate room in the booklet to make comments or perhaps to check that they have taken a slide of a guest iris, and it is helpful to indicate in the iris listing the type of Iris, i.e., BB, SIB, LA, etc.

Usually the tickets required for all events are bound or inserted into the Convention Booklet and perforated for easy removal. The instructions for balloting for the Franklin Cook Cup, the President's Cup, and the Favorite Guest Irises are included in the booklet. Ballots for voting these awards are usually included in the booklet, too.

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. 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.

The tickets for 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 busses (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, and still others have taken another route and have featured a spiral notebook type booklet. This latter format seemed to meet with favor from those attending the convention. The choice of booklet form is up to the sponsoring group and will be determined by cost and availability.

Cover choice falls into the same category. Covers are as varied as the cities in which conventions are held. Check whether the cover color will run if it becomes wet - if the cover turns hands and clothing the same color as the booklet, the guests won't be pleased. 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.

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 more interest among local membership so that workers can be recruited. The Publicity Committee should consist of two or three members, all of whom are somewhat familiar with publicity procedures. The Publicity Chairman should be a well-organized person with creative writing ability, a knowledge of how to contact the local media, and a familiarity with AIS guidelines for AIS Bulletin publicity.

As soon as the convention has been scheduled the Publicity Chairman 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 chairman and his committee should begin to collect background information on convention personnel, information on tour gardens, interesting facts about the convention city, program details, and other items which might be used to write about the area that will be visited. In addition photographs should be collected of gardens, gardeners, convention workers, and significant local sites. These photographs should be black and white glossies with good contrast. Color slides might also be of value, but for publication purposes, black and white glossies are much better. Newspapers will usually want to make their own color transparencies. The slides could be used to send to iris clubs around the country for use as a program. It is especially important to get pictures of the gardens to be toured during the bloom season before the convention. If you have a good photographer as a member of your club, try to enlist his help in getting these pictures. A good picture can create a lot of interest in your convention. Distinguished visitors who will be attending the convention or local convention personnel, such as the General Chairman, can usually supply a glossy photograph, if needed.

As soon as the convention has been scheduled, a publicity release should be prepared for local and regional distribution. This should give details on dates, headquarters, and the host group. It should stress the importance of the convention. Locally, an invitation to assist in presenting the convention could be a part of the article. Willing workers often will not volunteer until they know they will be welcome.

Any material that is submitted for publication should be typewritten on plain paper, 8 1/2 x 11 inches. All press releases should be double spaced and the name of the organization must be listed. In addition, the name, address, and phone number of the Publicity Chairman 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, and Destiny Dallas : 2000. 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.

Buttons or ribbons or ball-point pens bearing the advertising slogan are usually distributed one year before the convention at that year's event. 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 the 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 the 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.

The year before the convention can be as hectic as convention time. There will be many people visiting the gardens. It might be a good idea to schedule a special event, such as a tour, so that garden owners don't have to contend with a steady stream of visitors throughout the season. The local garden editor should be contacted during bloom time so that pictures can be made for later use.

Any event scheduled 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 our gardens are located will be happy to use publicity on the convention, especially if it happens to be a small town. The Publicity Chairman 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 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 Chairman 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 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 Chairman 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 and the Franklin Cook Cup.

REGIONAL PUBLICITY

The region's newsletter can be used for informing people throughout the region of the plans for the convention. There's 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 presidents or editors and to AIS officers and directors. This should be sent so that it arrives before January 1 of the convention year. The material should include 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 publicity nationally should begin the year before at the convention. Buttons bearing the convention slogan are usually distributed, but other ideas may be used. It is traditional that the official invitation is extended at the Awards Banquet of that convention. Usually the General Chairman delivers this invitation.

National magazines will ordinarily not publish convention news, but they will list dates in their Calendar of Events section if the material 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 Chairman will have already given notice of the convention, but the final year before the convention is when the Publicity Committee's work really begins. It is customary for one convention to end before publicity for the next one begins. Conventions scheduled from May through mid June should be featured in articles in the July, October, January, and April issues just prior to convention time. Earlier conventions will require some adjustment in timing. 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 editor three months before the month of publication for the Bulletin.

- July Bulletin: An article on general features of the convention and the convention city.
- October Bulletin: Articles on tour gardens and varietal comments.
- January 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.
- April Bulletin: A condensed version of the January announcements.

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 before the convention date 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.

Black and white photographs from the convention will probably also be provided for by the Bulletin editor. 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 chairman 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.

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 registrations 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 such a treasure to take home with them. but finding something suitable that features an iris is becoming more and more difficult. 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 or 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, 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 from his few hours of sleep the previous night. Water is considered a must, especially as the afternoon temperatures climb.

The "Goody Bag" has also 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. Many chairmen feel that it is better to have the goody bag as a separate item so that it may be stuffed during the winter months preceding the convention and then placed in an out-of-the-way spot until the convention begins. This enables the Registrar to work on the convention packet without having to meet with the

Hospitality Chairman who has worked on the goody bag. Do keep in mind that most of the guests will have arrived by plane, and sometimes packing all those items from the goody bag makes the guest decide that it wasn't so "goody" after all.

The hotel will often provide the AIS President with a basket of fruit since he will be residing in one of their suites, but the local committee can add a personal welcome. A bouquet of irises is often placed in the President's suite. A note of welcome to the particular city and state 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 gift is fine, and 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.

The display of median pictures which has been a part of AIS conventions for many years will need to be placed in an area which is approved by the hotel. If a hallway or separate room is available for these posters, the Hospitality Chairman should be responsible for seeing that they are in place and will receive the proper care and protection.

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. Most of the guests will not have transportation other than walking, so try to keep the distance to these establishments in mind when listing them. Imagine walking a mile in the dark in a strange city, and let that be the guide for determining if an eating place is too far away to be listed, no matter how delicious the food there may be. 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 Chairman 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 too spread out for the table to be seen by all arriving registrants - but it 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 three days of garden tours may be a part of the Hospitality Chairman'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 busses so that a particular eating establishment can handle the crowd. This requires working with the Transportation Chairman so that the busses 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 a 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.

At one convention a very fine meal consisted of sandwiches, drinks, chips, etc., which were served in one of the gardens. If other methods cannot be worked out and if there is a garden which can handle the crowd, then by all means consider this type of meal. 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.

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. These places 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 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.

Don't forget to count in meals to be 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.

Be prepared with alternative plans in case weather ruins plans to eat in a park or garden. The busses 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.

Tour 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!

Tour 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 arise.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TOUR 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.
2. Plant guest irises in beds separate from the 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 planting of guest irises of the new irises available. Many like to take pictures to share with others that did not attend the convention. If at all possible, plant the irises no more than 2 deep so that people taking pictures will not have to get in the bed to take a picture. If enough space is available plant the guest irises in beds that may be viewed from both sides with pathways on both sides, thus it might be able to plant 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 introductions of 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 the 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. Any other sprays 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 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.

Code of Ethics

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 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 Chairman shall be consulted.

DUTIES, OBLIGATIONS AND RULES FOR TOUR 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 Chairman 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 Chairman.

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.

The Convention Awards

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, and the Favorite Guest Irises. All awards will be presented by the American Iris Society and the Chairman of Awards for AIS will be in charge of their presentation. The Convention Awards Chairman will need to work closely with the AIS Awards Chairman 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

An iris is eligible as an introduced variety if it was registered and introduced prior to or in the April AIS Bulletin of the convention year. The Awards Chairman will need to check the January and April Bulletins to be sure that varieties are eligible for listing as a Favorite Guest Iris or for one of the cups. The Registrations and Introductions booklet should also be consulted.

Ballots for the President's Cup and the Franklin Cook Cup 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, but the ballot for the Favorite Guest Irises may be mailed to the Convention Awards Chairman or other designated person after the convention has ended. 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 busses return to the hotel. The deadline should be early enough to allow time for counting the ballots and reporting to the AIS Awards Chairman 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 Chairman 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 Chairman. They will have been engraved with the names of the winners from that convention. This same policy is followed by the Awards Chairman the following year - names of the winners are engraved on the cups and they are mailed to the General Chairman 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 Chairman 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 Chairman. (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 Committee Chairman. After the banquet has ended, pictures will be made of the winners. when this has been completed, the Awards Chairman 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.

Other Areas of Importance

CONVENTION INSURANCE

Insurance for the convention is purchased by AIS and the premium is paid by the Convention Committee from the registration fees. AIS will incur any additional costs for the convention, such as adding the hotel to the policy. The hotel wants 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 Chairperson. When the AIS Insurance Chairperson receives premium payment from the convention committee, he/she will forward the check and paperwork onto the AIS Secretary who will deposit the check and then send onto the AIS Treasurer their part of the transaction for the treasurer records.

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.

RESTROOM FACILITIES

It is often heard that having restrooms on the busses 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 urgently 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.

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 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.

THE 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.

THE ROBIN RECEPTION

This is NOT an optional event. Every convention should schedule a time for the robin members to get together. Punch and cookies are served at this meeting, and they are to be a part of the convention costs. AIS does not provide the refreshments because this is a duty of the local Convention Committee. Work closely with the national robin director on this. Nothing is really required except a room and the refreshments.

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 Chairman 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 a doctor 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 at any time he is needed, but when the tours go into other cities, that doctor will not be available. In that case, someone in the city being visited should check to see that a doctor can be contacted in case there is a need. Also, contact the closest hospital and inform them of the convention.

AIS BOARD MEETING

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 site and time for the Board meetings on both days. Times and sites for other meetings may also be included. The Secretary may request a change in time for opening the Day One session to accommodate arrivals of some members.

WHY HAVE 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. These 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.

BUS GIVE AWAY PLANTS

This is not necessary, but if it is done, discuss who pays for postage the club, hybridizer, or recipient.

BOUTIQUE

This is not necessary, but you will need to let the hotel know that you need a secure room. Also, if you have vendors make sure that a contract outlines who is responsible for breakage and/or theft. This may be a big undertaking discuss how many people it will take to man the sales at the boutique.

Closing Remarks

It is not possible to answer every question that will arise during the presentation of a convention, but this booklet should help local groups decide what can and cannot be done in their area. Members of the AIS Board of Directors are always willing to answer questions, and those who have served on Convention Committees in the past can provide many answers along the way.

If a hotel, the gardens, and the 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

HOSTING A FALL BOARD MEETING

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 eating facilities in the hotel or nearby. An on the premiss late serving cafe or bar for after meeting socializing would be appreciated.

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 MEETING

Overall attendance will run between 40 to 70, with about 35 to 40 of those who attend actually staying in the hotel, and, many of those will be “doubles” – husband and wife, or folks sharing a room. Often Board members fly in the day before the first scheduled session because of a number of variable factors.

During the first full weekend of November, the Board of Directors holds the annual business meeting. The first session begins following dinner on Friday night. Sessions are also scheduled for Saturday morning, afternoon, and evening. A meeting room should be set aside for a possible Sunday morning session which is necessary on occasion. This final session is usually over by Noon.

Because of the amount of time spent in meetings, it is important that the meeting room be large enough so that there is no crowding. 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. There will be a need to have a microphone system set up as illustrated in the AIS Board Meeting Setup page in the back of this book.

Water and glasses should be available in each session. Coffee is appreciated for each of the morning sessions in particular.

It is recommended that a copy machine is available in the hotel or very nearby to be used for printing committee reports to be handed out to all the attendees of the Board Meeting.

MEETING SITES AND LOCATIONS

An ideal site 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, meeting at a hotel that is near the airport will be most appreciated. The distances from airport to hotel may well determine what flight a Board member may choose to make the scheduled first meeting session. 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 free of charge. The hosting organization is 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 would be nice.

NOTICES AND RESERVATION INFORMATION

All officers, directors, committee chairmen, and RVP's receive notice of the meeting from the AIS Secretary. The hosting group's chairman of the meeting should provide the AIS Secretary with the necessary meeting information in ample time for notices to be sent to those whose attendance is anticipated, and with enough lead time for those attending to make room and plane reservations comfortably.

Information about the meeting should reach the AIS Secretary by mid September or earlier. The information provided must be: the name of the hotel, room rates, reservation cards, reservation deadlines, and transportation information. The time involved in getting from the airport to the hotel should be provided under transportation. Reservation responses to the AIS Secretary's notice must be handled by someone locally. A count of those who will be attending may be important for several reasons.

OPTIONS:

Name Tags:

Providing name tags is an option for the hosting group, however, name tags are important to all meetings of the AIS Board. If the hosting group does not wish to provide name tags for those attending, the AIS Secretary should be informed when the meeting information is sent to her so that she may make arrangement for the name tags to be on hand.

Snacks & Goodies:

It is up to the club/society, if they want to arrange for pastries, etc. to be available during the meeting along with the

coffee.

Transportation:

One other courtesy, which is sometimes provided, is transportation to the airport on Sunday. This enables the guests to get to the terminal without fretting about a taxi or an unreliable limousine service.

Group Dinners:

If the club/society wants to provide a dinner, suggestions would be a potluck dinner, a catered dinner, a buffet dinner, or dinner on your own with a dessert and coffee afterward. When an attendance count is needed for a particular meal, a form to be returned to the local group should be included with the meeting information sent to the AIS Secretary.

Local Activities:

A judging school or region meeting is often held in conjunction with the Board meeting. The local group usually does this to help offset the cost for hosting the Board and to assure that enough rooms are reserved to guarantee a free meeting room.

REMINDER:

1. The options listed above are indeed optional.
2. Because the Board is in session for most of the weekend, there is little time for entertainment. The hosting group should not expect the directors to attend any local functions during this very concentrated work session.
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.

A BIG THANK YOU to those clubs or societies for hosting the AIS Fall Board Meeting.

APOLOGY

Your authors and editors wish to apologize for the chauvinistic language used in this document. We are quite aware of the fact that there are many dedicated, enthusiastic, and invaluable women in AIS who hold important positions in the society and have served on Convention Committees. Our excuse for mentioning always "he" "him," "his" and "host" when referring herein to convention workers is because continually writing "he/she" "him/her," "his/hers," and "host/hostess" would have added an extra page or two to the booklet (besides making it very awkward reading). Please believe us when we say that NO offense is/was intended!