

Minutes of the AIS Board of Directors Videoconference, Wednesday, Mar 25, 2020

Present:

Jody Nolin (6) - president, Affiliations Liaison

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

Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) – 2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Judges, RVP 17

Michelle Snyder (15) – Secretary, Insurance

Jill Bonino (15) – Treasurer, Foundation Liaison

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

John Jones (14) – Registrar/Recorder

Claire Schneider (15) – Director, Recording Secretary

Doug Chyz (4) - Director, RVP 4

Gerry Snyder (15) – Director, Awards

Howie Dash (23) – Director, RVP Counselor

Janis Shackelford (15) – Director, Policy

John Ludi (13) – Director, Publication Sales Director

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

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

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

Bob Hollingworth (8) – Scientific Advisory

Bryce Williamson (15) – Electronic Services

Jim Morris (18) – 2020 Centennial Publicationm Obituary Editor

Lois Rose (4) – Exhibition Schedules

Riley Probst (14) – Symposium

Scarlett Ayers (23) – RVP 23

Mike Reed (17) – asst RVP 17

Marcia Connolly (1) – RVP 1

Eva Barry (23) – RVP 23

Jeanette Graham (11)

The meeting was called to order on Zoom at 5:02 PM PST.

A quorum was present.

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

**Motion 1:** to accept the minutes of the February 25, videoconference.

Motion by Janis Shackelford and seconded by Jill Bonino. Passed unanimously.

## 2. Convention cancellation repercussions

### A. Spring reports, nominating committee & awards.

Michelle Snyder, in charge of the spring reports, expects to receive all reports by the first week in May. The reports must be sent to Michelle's email, not through AISTalk. In addition Michelle will expect to receive the slate of candidates for new directors and their bios from the Nominating Committee by the first week in May.

Because the Spring Board Meeting has been cancelled, Jody will arrange a schedule for the presentation of reports over subsequent teleconferences.

The next AIS Board teleconference will be April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The May 27<sup>th</sup> teleconference will be the official spring board meeting.

Howie Dash will arrange for the RVPs to meet before the May 27<sup>th</sup> teleconference in order to select a new RVP secretary, a new RVP rep to the Board and a person to serve on the next AIS Nominating Committee. The Section and Cooperating Committee also will need to meet to select a person to serve on the next AIS Nominating Committee. Phyllis Wilburn will arrange for the Section meeting.

**Motion 2:** that the 2020 AIS awards ballot be cancelled.

Motion by Gerry Snyder and seconded by Michelle Snyder. Passed unanimously.

Discussion: With the cancellation of most affiliate and regional spring shows and garden tours, it will be nearly impossible for people to get out and see the irises. Because few people grow all of the irises listed on the ballot and unable to see them in gardens, how can the judges make informed decisions to vote the ballot? It seems like there is no choice except to cancel this year's AIS ballot. What about those irises up for an award this year? Would it be possible to move them all to the next ballot as if this year had never happened? However that would mean many more irises competing for awards. A suggestion was to allow more votes in each category or to allow twice as many HM awards on the next ballot. Gerry will study the issue of how best to deal with the next ballot and report to the Board at a later time.

### B. Updated financial accounting for Centennial – Jill Bonino

Because the 2020 Convention has been cancelled, the financial balance sheet has been turned upside down. Refunds have been sent to all 229 registrants. Financially the convention balance sheet is in good shape due to the contributions from the Gerald Richardson estate and other donors. Jill recommended that, in appreciation, the names of all who donated to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund be published in the next issue of Irises. AIS will receive a full refund of the deposit from Royal Coachman which had been contracted to provide the bus transportation. Jill expects to receive a full refund of the deposit to Highlawn Pavilion. The cost of publishing the

third and fourth supplements to the Bulletin is based on the cost of the first two supplements, about \$14,000. The order to Natalie & Sons for the two thousand Centennial Medals was cancelled in July 2019 because the samples were unacceptable. The pursuit of a refund for those medals has been arduous with the next step being to enlist the guidance of the AIS general counsel (i.e. attorney). If it turns out there is no refund from Natalie & Sons, then the cost of each medal will be \$7.20. There are enough funds remaining in the 2020 Convention account to support a small international competition at Presby Iris Garden next year, if the Board so approves.

### C. Is the 2021 Convention in jeopardy from COVID-19?

Howie Dash reported that, although two of the public gardens for the 2021 Convention are closed, the guest irises are being watered. The main problem is keeping up with the weeding. Everything is fine with the two member gardens and the two commercial gardens (Blue J Iris and Calvin's Flower Farm). One concern has to do with publicity. With the cancellation of the 2020 Convention, promotion of the 2021 Convention disappeared. Howie is planning to send a digital brochure to all the RVPs to promote the 2021 Convention. He is working on a Powerpoint that could be loaded onto the AIS website and into Google drive. The plan is to have the registration form for the 2021 Convention available in July. Scarlett has created a website for the 2021 Convention and will put it online soon.

Another concern is what will happen to all the gardens, markers and financial deposits if the 2021 Convention is cancelled? There was no response to this question.

The three guest gardens for the 2020 Convention are not open to the public. In order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, New Jersey has a stay at home order and has closed all non-essential businesses. However, perhaps someone could obtain permission through Nancy Skjei-Lawes to photograph the irises in the Presby garden. It would only be one photographer, not a gathering of people.

### 3. Centennial event replacement activities

There should be a party of some kind to celebrate the Centennial and especially an event where the costumes could be worn. Howie Dash reported that a Centennial event could be held at the 2021 Convention at the Double Eagle Restaurant. This restaurant can handle up to 400 people, but it is a series of rooms, not one large room and transportation to that restaurant would be needed. A suggestion was made to make the last night of the 2021 Convention, traditionally the Awards Banquet, a Centennial Party. Perhaps the program could be a slide show of AIS' first 100 years. Howie needs details about this party and all other renewed or rescheduled Centennial activities before July of 2020 so that they can be included in the registration packet for the 2021 Convention. This discussion will continue at the April 22 teleconference.

Jill Bonino proposed a mini-judging event be held in New Jersey in May of 2021 (not to conflict with 2021 convention in Las Cruces) to replace the cancelled International Competition. American judges would evaluate the blooms and awards could be presented at a small dinner-banquet. The clumps are in good shape and next year they should be really spectacular. Jill and Kathy Chilton will present more information later about this mini-event.

How did AIS handle the cancelled convention in 1945? What adjustments were made?

Because there is an approved schedule for future AIS Conventions, it would not be appropriate to return to New Jersey anytime soon for an AIS convention. A tremendous amount of work went into preparing for the 2020 Convention, all without the assistance of any affiliate clubs. A standing ovation goes to Andi Rivarola, Gary White, Jill Bonino, Howie Dash and all the others who worked on the Centennial Convention.

4. Ways that AIS can mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A. Some of the meetings that are held at the national conventions could be handled in a ZOOM meeting. For example, the meetings of the RVPs, Section and Cooperating Societies and any region could be hosted on the AIS ZOOM platform. Clubs and other committees also are welcome to use the AIS ZOOM platform. Send the date and time of your meetings to Jody Nolin so they can be booked on ZOOM.

B. Members could be kept up to date with AIS news in extra issues of News & Notes. Some clubs have replaced their cancelled Spring Show with a virtual show. It would be helpful if details on how to stage a virtual show could be distributed either in News & Notes or on the AIS website. Bonnie Nichols will write up a how-to for holding a virtual show. A list of all the cancelled Spring Shows and other events is being compiled and posted on the website.

C. Motion 3. To forego the requirements for judges for 2020 for judges training.  
Motion by Neil Houghton and seconded by Janis Shackelford.

Discussion: Apprentice and candidate judges who have the hours should be promoted to their next level and not have to wait a year. The motion doesn't clarify if the requirements for judges would be completely cancelled or if the requirements would be postponed to the following year. The garden judging hours are difficult to complete this year because most regional garden tours have been cancelled. What about the judges trainings that already have been given this year? Do they count for this year or next year? Could the motion be amended to state that any hours of training completed since August 1<sup>st</sup> be counted in this year? For those judges who are unable to complete their annual requirements, their standing as judge at whatever level will not be affected.

Bonnie Nichols, the Judges Chair, has all the papers and logs of all judges. She can handle the judges case by case regarding promotions and training requirements postponed one year. Bonnie will write an article about this updated plan for the judges program for publication in News & Notes and to be sent to the regional judges chairs.

**Motion 3 is withdrawn** by Neil Houghton.

D. Online judges training will never take the place of training in-person. But there is a need for some sort of online judges training. Bonnie Nichols will be attending a class on how to deliver an online training session and will report to us later with suggestions and maybe a proposal.

5. Status of the website and Thirsty – Bryce Williamson.

Bryce sent the information regarding the problem with the website to Randall. Thirsty did send a code snippet with instructions on where it goes. Someone needs to implement it.

6. 2022 and 2023 Conventions

Bonnie Nichols is collecting quotes for hotels for the 2022 Convention. But the search has stalled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The request for guest irises has been submitted and the plan is to plant the irises in August. John Ludi reported that a hotel for the 2023 Convention has been confirmed, the same one used at previous conventions. The announcement for the guest plants has been submitted.

7. Judges Handbook

Mr. Strohman has sent information about bulbous iris. Al Elliot has written about English Boxes. Bob Hollingworth will look for the notes on the Siberian irises or ask the author of the Siberian notes to resend those notes to Bonnie Nichols. Jim Wilson from Louisville, Kentucky might have information on Siberians.

8. News & Notes

There is a page that lists all the cancelled AIS events. Wayne Messer would love to publish your articles and updates in News & Notes.

Next videoconference will be Wednesday, April 22, 2020, 5 PM PDT.

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Claire Schneider