

Minutes of the AIS Board of Directors Videoconference, Wednesday, Sept 23, 2020

Present:

Jody Nolin (6) - President, Affiliate Chair
Andi Rivarola (15) - 1st VP, Convention Liaison (temporary), Public Relations Social Media,
Public Relations 2020 Convention, Strategic Planning
Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) – 2nd VP, Judges, RVP 17
Michelle Snyder (15) – Secretary, Insurance
Jill Bonino (15) – Treasurer, Foundation Liaison
Gary White (21) - Immediate Past President, Honorary Awards, Finance

John Jones (14) - Registrar/Recorder

Claire Schneider (15) – Director, Recording Secretary
Doug Chyz (4) - Director, Public Relations & Marketing, RVP 4
Gerry Snyder (15) – Director, Awards
Howie Dash (23) – Director, RVP Counselor
Janis Shackelford (15) – Director, Policy
John Ludi (13) – Director, Publication Sales Director
Lorene Crone (7) – Director, Asst. Electronic Services
Neil Houghton (2) - Director, Image Coordinator, Iris Program Resources Digital
Phyllis Wilburn (14) – Director, Section & Cooperating Society Liaison
Susan Driver (7) – Director, Calendars
Wayne Messer (21) - Director, Exhibition Show Reports, News & Notes, RVP 21

Bob Hollingworth (8) - Scientific Advisory
Bob Pries (4) - Encyclopedia Manager, Gardens, Public Relations & Marketing
Cheryl Deaton (15) - Photo Contest, Youth
Jean Richter (14) - RVP 14, RVP Representative
Lois Rose (4) - Exhibition Schedules
Mike Reed (17) - asst RVP 17
Marcia Connolly (1) - RVP 1
Kathryn E Mohr (2) - RVP 2
Sue Brown (15) - RVP 15
Linda Baumgartner (20) - RVP 20
Christine Dickinson (14)
Kevin Vaughn (13)
Carolyn Schaffner (2)
Aleta MacFarlane (14)
Michele Bersillon

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

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

Motion 1: to accept the minutes of the August 26, 2020, teleconference with one correction. The pixel size is 256, not 250.
Motion by Michelle Snyder and seconded by Gerry Snyder. Passed unanimously.

REPORTS

2. Membership update - Pam Messer (absent)

This report was marked “for information only.”

Cards reminding members that it is time to renew are sent out, but reminders for e-memberships are not being sent out. Pam and Jill Bonino are working on this.

3. Registrar update - John Jones

John reported an update on the number of registrations and name reservations. The AIS website has been updated with this information.

OLD BUSINESS

4. Virtual Shows - Bonnie Nichols

The group has met and discussed how the show schedule for a virtual show would be different for large and small affiliates. Bonnie will present an update at the October teleconference.

5. Webinar update - Andi Rivarola

Two public webinars are coming up, one in October and one in November. Please spread the word. The invitation will be sent out the Friday before the actual webinar. For more information or to request an invitation, send an email to AISwebinars@gmail.com

6. Membership update - Andi Rivarola

The results of a second survey were posted in AISTalk. Only about half of AIS members have ever attended a national convention. About 90% of members think AIS is doing a good job.

7. COVID-19 impact on bylaws - Gary White

Dale Strauss, the AIS counsel, has produced a document with advice for affiliates and regions on how to deal with the restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The document also contains a sample amendment for by-laws and rules for conducting an electronic meeting. It was decided to send the document or a link to the document to RVPs and to presidents of affiliates and sections. In addition, a link to the document will be placed in News & Notes. The AIS Board thanks Dale Strauss for his work on this issue.

8. 2021 Awards - Wayne Messer, Gerry Snyder and Andi Rivarola

The group presumes that the circumstances prior to the 2020 AIS Ballot will be different than those prior to the 2021 Ballot. At this time, there are preventative actions and safeguards that are known to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. If these preventative measures are followed, then visits to gardens should be safe.

Gerry explained eligibility for AM and HM awards for the 2021 Ballot.

9. Request for Quote (RFQ) - John Jones & Lorene Crone

A RFQ is being drafted for an online registration system and will be sent out for bids in the near future.

10. Fall Reports - Michelle Snyder

All the scheduled spring reports have been presented except for Judges and Judges Training. Because the spring reports were presented over several months, ending in October, Michelle proposed that the next set of reports be presented at the AIS Convention in Las Cruces (April 2021). In other words, there won't be any fall reports in 2020. In the event the Las Cruces Convention is canceled or goes virtual, Michelle will use the same schedule of reports that was used in the spring of 2020.

A discussion commenced about when a decision will be made about the Las Cruces convention, whether it will convene, be converted into a series of virtual meetings or be postponed.

NEW BUSINESS

11. Hybridizers Manifesto - Kevin Vaughn

1. Hybridizers need their names approved QUICKLY. That is we need to hear by email within two weeks of the receipt of the registration as to whether the names are accepted. We have many instances where catalogs have been delayed or the names have been changed subsequent to submission of the registration. This is embarrassing for both the hybridizer and the nursery.

Comments: Yes, there can be delays in the registration process. One issue is that from September to January there can be a backlog of registrations, as many as 400. During this same time period, the requests to reserve a name are being submitted. Deadlines for publishing the R&Is also delay registration process. An automated online registration system will include the ability to make a payment. There is a list of approved names for irises on the AIS website which could be checked before a registration is submitted. About half of the registrations come from overseas and those names have not always been checked. The registrar is using an external proof-reading service which has sped up the registration process.

If there is a problem regarding a name that needs to be addressed immediately, the registrar would expect to receive an email describing the problem so it can be dealt with.

2. As soon as the names of iris are approved, the names and the hybridizer involved should be sent to the image coordinator so that he knows that the names are approved and he is ready for the receipt of the files.

Comments: The image coordinator does have access to the registration data base where information about names of iris and hybridizer is stored. There was an explanation of the different places registration information and reserved names can be accessed. An automated online registration system will facilitate the entry of names and dates and might help with checking for duplicate names. However, it might not pick up all similar names (e.g. homonyms, misspelled names). The registration process is labor intensive, especially when it comes to reviewing the descriptions of the cultivar being registered. Ultimately, someone must oversee the registrations, making judgments about acceptable names and descriptions of cultivars.

3. Names should not be rejected capriciously, including rules that are in fact not rules of ISHS but are quirks of the registrar and are not uniformly enforced. A committee of hybridizers should be consulted for any potential rejection so that the rulings may be appealed.

Comments: The registrar makes judgments about names. The registrar does listen to appeals and after re-evaluating, sometimes reinstates a particular name. Again, if there is a problem regarding a name, the registrar would expect to receive an email describing the problem so it can be dealt with. One suggestion was to create an official appeal process, perhaps with an appeal committee that includes a hybridizer or two. In any year, approximately thirty names are rejected, usually because the name is too similar to a name already in use. Another suggestion was to create an advisory panel composed of a former registrar, a hybridizer and an AIS board member. Hybridizers or anyone could consult with this committee about names, classification and descriptions of iris either before an iris is registered or after for advice on the appeal process. It was emphasized that the registrar should be contacted first.

Jody Nolin emphasized that communication between registrar and registrant is important to the process. If a hybridizer has a question or issue, an email or letter sent to the registrar might solve the problem quickly. And if not, the question or issue could be passed on to an advisory panel. Currently, communication with hybridizers is made through Constant Contact, News & Notes, the AIS website and even snail mail.

4. A list of reserved names should be prepared so that hybridizers can avoid submitting request for names already reserved and/ or registered but not yet in the R&I.

Comment: This issue has been resolved.

5. Hybridizers pay for each registration. This is a SERVICE to us. If this becomes onerous, we fear that people will name plants and just ignore the registration process. This has happened in other genera and weakens the impact of the whole registration process. Already a number of Pacific Coast Native irises are being marketed without registration.

6. Cards should be sent to each hybridizer well in advance of the publication of the R&I so that corrections may be made.

Comments: Yellow cards are mailed but few corrections are ever sent back to the registrar. Perhaps cards could be sent out electronically.

7. The large monetary contribution from Gerald Richardson's estate and the monies from sale of the Melrose Gardens property could be used in part to create or buy the automated registration system of the American Daylily Society. All of the people making these bequests were hybridizers of long standing. In their system, a hybridizer can register a daylily in minutes, including submission of a photo and pay for the registration via PayPal. The site is fully searchable so that uses of parents, colors and sizes of plants could be obtained. It is much more user friendly than the Iris Wiki and could replace that in the future, saving the AIS money for duplicate programs. We would also propose that AIS Foundation have a separate fund area to be used to maintain and update this program.

Comments: A conversation between the American Daylily Society and AIS is happening now to find out about their online registration program including cost, ease of use, time required to master, etc. Kevin Vaughn was enthusiastic about the Daylily Society's program.

8. Canceling the awards voting in 2020 we feel has disrupted the awards process in dramatic ways. Other societies have continued to vote despite this. Even the American Iris Society voted during World War 2!! The irises up for the top awards and AMs have been in circulation for 8-11 years and a judge should have had ample opportunity to see these irises. We propose that the judges be allowed to vote for all medal candidates and all AMs. This would happen during the winter months so that a new ballot is constructed for 2021 voting of all awards.

Comment: If there were a ballot in the fall of 2020, the list of irises eligible for the AM and Dykes awards would be the same for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 ballots. If the board were to approve a ballot for this fall, a suggestion was to reduce the list of irises to those eligible for the Dykes and for special awards. Doing so would produce winners for 2020 and 2021, even though the pool of winners for 2020 would be short. A special meeting of the board of directors was scheduled for September 29th to continue the discussion of reinstating a 2020 AIS Ballot.

9. Other issue: A concern that a deceased hybridizer, whose iris is registered by someone else, is not listed as the hybridizer of that iris. For example, Kevin Vaughn registered an iris that had been hybridized by Gene Webb. The suggestion was that such an iris should be registered as G. Webb by Vaughn so that Webb receives credit for the iris.

Comments: It was explained that the person who registers the iris, regardless of who hybridized it, is the person who gets credit for registering the iris. The name of the hybridizer, if deceased, is included in the description. During this discussion, two hybridizers said they would be uncomfortable being given credit as registrant for an iris hybridized by someone else. The registrar suggested that the guidelines for registering an iris be examined for a possible change, specifically the top line on the registration form.

An ad hoc committee consisting of John Jones, Kevin Vaughn, Howie Dash, Gary White and Neil Houghton will bring a recommendation regarding the registration of an iris for a deceased hybridizer to a future AIS Board meeting. In addition, a recommendation regarding registration of an iris by a person other than a living hybridizer will be presented.

It was suggested that a hybridizer liaison be appointed who would sit permanently on the AIS Board of Directors to provide advice and counsel for matters such as registration of irises and awards. Jody Nolin will investigate the process of adding a liaison and Kevin Vaughn will recruit a hybridizer to be liaison.

NEW BUSINESS (continued)

12. Photo Contest

Anita Moran will resign from the Photo Contest some time in the future. She has sent out the photos to be judged. Applications for Photo Contest coordinator should be sent to Jody Nolin.

13. Registrar update - John Jones

For health reasons, there might be some delay in the registration process over the next few months.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A special meeting of the board of directors was scheduled for September 29th to continue the discussion of reinstating a 2020 AIS Ballot. (see #8 in the Hybridizer's Manifesto, above)
- The next AIS teleconference will be October 28th. Please have all agenda topics to Jody the week before.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PDT.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Schneider

October 28 teleconference agenda:

Approval of September 23, 2020 minutes & September 29, 2020 minutes - Claire Schneider

Membership Report - Pam Messer

Registration Report - John Jones

Judges & Judges Training - Bonnie Nichols

Virtual Shows - Bonnie Nichols

Registration of iris by someone other than hybridizer - John Jones

Confirm the date of the November teleconference. Last year, because of Thanksgiving, the November teleconference was moved to the first Wednesday in December.