

Minutes of the March 23, 2022, AIS Board of Directors Zoom Meeting
Approved without corrections, April 11, 2022

Present:

Andi Rivarola (15) - President, Convention Liaison (temporary), Public Relations, Social Media,
Strategic Planning, Membership Development

Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) - 1st VP, Judges, Handbook Revision, RVP 17

Howie Dash (23) - 2nd VP, RVP Counselor, Audit Comm, AIS 2022 Convention Co-chair

Claire Schneider (15) - Secretary, Recording Secretary

Jill Bonino (15) – Treasurer, Foundation Liaison

Jody Nolin (6) - Immediate Past President, Honorary Awards, Affiliate Chair

John Ludi (13) – Publication Sales Director, RVP 13

Pam Messer (21) – Membership

Bill Dumont (13) - Director

Cheryl Deaton (15) - Director, Youth

Doug Chyz (5), Director, Public Relations & Marketing

Janis Shackelford (15) – Director, Registrar/Recorder, Policy, RVP 15

Jean Richter (14) - Director

Linda Wilkie (21) - Director

Lorene Crone (7) – Director, Electronic Services

Mike Reed (17) – Director, Awards

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

Scarlett Ayres (23) – Director, AIS 2022 Convention Co-chair

Susan Driver (7) – Director, Calendars, Photo Contest

Wayne Messer (21) - Director, News & Notes, Electronic Services Website, RVP 21

Linda Baumgartner (20) - RVP 20, RVP Representative

Adam Cordes (6) - Exhibitions Show Reports

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

Gary White (21) - Finance, Webinars

Gerry Snyder (15)

Michelle Snyder (15) - Insurance

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

Charlotte Brennand (12) - RVP 12

Carol Cullen (14)

Christine Dickinson (14)

Debbie Strauss (17)

Heather Haley (4)

Jean Kaufmann (6) - RVP 6

Jeannette Graham (11)

Kate Brewitt (2)

Terry Laurin (2)

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm PDT.

1. Minutes from previous Zoom Meeting - Claire Schneider

Motion 1: to approve the minutes from the February 23, 2022, Board Zoom Meeting.

Two corrections: spelling of “El Paso” and the status of the judges training in Las Cruces.

Motion by Janis Shackelford and seconded by Phyllis Wilburn. Motion approved.

2. SPRING REPORTS

Electronic Services – Wayne Messer

An electronic report was posted. Wayne described the statistics for visits to the website. Plugins and new tools have been added to the website. He stressed that changes, additions, and improvements come from the suggestions and comments of users. Security training from KnowBe4 is in the works. There have been problems transferring registrar information and tools to Janis. Wayne is working on this. Because of all the changes lately, Wayne suggested there be a report to the Board from Electronic Services at least every three months.

Encyclopedia – Bob Pries

An electronic report was posted. Bob had colorful statistics in his report to show the surge in visits to the Encyclopedia during the height of the COVID pandemic. He mentioned that traditionally May is the month with the largest number of Encyclopedia visits. But that there was a doubling of visits associated with the height of the COVID pandemic, with China being the source of the most visitors. Bob showed a ‘new normal’ of visits per month between 40 and 50 thousand, with a yearly total around 300,000.

Recent Encyclopedia projects include having a more complete list of bulbous iris, resurrecting the Exhibition Toolbox for iris shows, maintaining an updated list of iris shows, increasing the number of catalogs and newsletters available online, adding all the new iris registrations, and creating a workable data base of all awards previously given to irises.

Image Coordinator – Neil Houghton

An electronic report was posted. There has been a dramatic increase in compliance with the submission of images with the registration of an iris. Neil has been reminding non-compliant hybridizers to submit high-resolution photos to the registrar or to Neil. Submitting a photo to the *Iris Encyclopedia* does not fulfill the photo requirement for registration. Neil gave an online class on February 17, instructing hybridizers all about images. He plans to present a similar program at the convention in Las Cruces.

Iris Programs (digital resources) – Neil Houghton

An electronic report was posted, information only. Neil has seen an increase in the request for digital programs. He plans to rewrite the list of available programs for the AIS website as well as review each program for accuracy and timeliness. Neil is working with Scarlet Ayers and Mike Wisland on the Video Interview Project. A station for conducting more video interviews

will be available at the convention in Las Cruces. Neil encouraged everyone and anyone to volunteer for an interview. Neil also asked for submission of videos about growing iris. These could be posted on the AIS YouTube channel.

Iris Program (speakers) – Hooker Nichols (absent)

An electronic report was posted, information only. There were only two requests for speakers in 2022.

Membership Development – Andi Rivarola

The Membership Drive is ongoing. The drive was extended to June 30 to allow for spring shows held in June to recruit new members through the Membership Drive.

News & Notes – Wayne Messer

An electronic report was posted. Wayne’s headline was, “The 100th regular issue of *News & Notes* was recently sent!” Wayne’s report was very interactive, asking questions such as how to encourage more submissions from the sections and cooperating societies, how and when to announce awards and information about conventions, and what other groups could be targeted to receive *News & Notes*. He reminded everyone that each job in AIS should have at least one backup person and with that comment, he requested someone step up as apprentice for *News & Notes*. Well done, Wayne.

Photo Contest – Susan Driver

An electronic report was posted, information only. The 2022 photo contest will run from May 1 to August 1, 2022. The entry form and information sheet about the contest were sent to the editor of *Irises: The Bulletin*, to *News & Notes* and will be posted on *Facebook*. Susan is recruiting judges. She also presented a sample of the 2022 Photo Contest entry form.

Public Relations & Marketing – Doug Chyz

An electronic report was posted, information only. The PR & MKTG group is in the discovery phase: discussing purpose and goals of AIS and how to inform and engage the public about AIS. One project already started is posting updated information about iris shows to the AIS website and social media platforms (e.g., *Facebook*, affiliate websites). The information about the iris show also contains a direct link to the sponsoring affiliate. A sample press release about an upcoming iris show has been sent to all the affiliate presidents. The objective is that these presidents will edit the press release to describe their own iris show and submit to local news outlets. Doug pointed out that there are 18,000 members in “Iris Lovers” group in *Facebook* but only 3,000 members in AIS. His objective is to show the other 15,000 followers in “Iris Lovers” where they can attend a local iris show.

Doug has plans to create another sample press release specific to iris sales and to publicize affiliate iris sales. However, a system for creating and updating the dates of affiliate iris sales

needs to be established. One way to publicize affiliate iris sales is to purchase ad space on *Facebook*. He recommended that a system of direct communication be set up with affiliate presidents, similar to the system of communication for RVPs.

Social Media – Andi Rivarola

An electronic report was posted, for information only. A recent check of the “AIS” *Facebook* page showed 15,370 likes, the majority of whom are women (78.3%). The “Iris Lovers” group *Facebook* has 18,500 members, again, the majority are women. Social media is a great way to inspire interest with irises and perhaps non-members will see the value of joining a local affiliate and/or AIS.

Blog Report - Heather Haley

The *World of Irises* blog under the auspices of the American Iris Society has continued to grow. Since October 2020, 90 blog posts were added and 476,000 pages were viewed. At present, nine authors post on a weekly schedule with three others making unscheduled contributions. The site currently has 229 subscribers. To boost readership, Heather posts links of the weekly blogs into the “AIS” *Facebook* page and “Iris Lovers” group on *Facebook*, knowing that 15,500 and 18,500 people might read that week’s post. Heather plans to recruit more bloggers to write about experiences with irises and using the blog to promote iris and AIS.

OLD BUSINESS

3. Convention 2022, Las Cruces, update - Howie Dash & Scarlett Ayres

So far, 261 have registered for the convention, most have full registrations. Five buses will be needed to transport everyone to the gardens. Howie requested volunteers for bus captains. Parking and Wi-Fi are free at the Hotel Encanto. A reminder that attendees make reservations for the shuttle transport, both directions, to insure that a seat is available, especially on the last day of the convention. The mask mandate on public transportation will remain until April 18th, thus all convention attendees will need to wear a mask during transit. Public relations have been great. The local media has been interested in the convention. They have written about the 100th anniversary of AIS and there are plans for a reporter to attend some of the garden tours. At this time, there are about 30 reservations for the Geek Dinner. The judges training on Thursday 8 to 9:30 pm will be “Species” by Jody Nolin and Saturday 3:30 to 5 pm “Arils & Arilbreds”. If there is a judge who needs “Awards and Ballots” at the convention, Bonnie will make that program available. The lunch on the optional tour will be with the Rio Grande Winery. The White Sands Missile Range now requires personal information about their tourists. Scarlett has collected this information and sent to their security to be processed before the actual tour.

4. Clarification of motion regarding Membership Drive - Claire Schneider

Motion 3 at the August 25, 2021, Board of Directors Zoom meeting was:

That the AIS Board approves the 5-year plan as outlined by the AIS Membership Development Committee, with a budget expense cap of \$13,110 for year 2022. For subsequent years, a detailed budget will be proposed in advance.

During the discussion of Motion 3, it was suggested that sections and cooperating societies be included in the Membership drive. The motion did not include anything about sections and cooperating societies.

5. Artistic Design Judge guidelines update - Dawn Boyer (absent)

Following up on the discussion at the February 23 meeting, Dawn edited her two proposals and will make those available at the next discussion of the design judge proposal. She will be making a presentation on Design at the convention in Las Cruces.

6. KnowBe4 program update - Andi Rivarola

There is a major pothole at the entrance of the gate to the KnowBe4 program. Andi is working with the KnowBe4 people and will give us an update later. In the meantime, the due date for the homework assignment has been pushed back.

7. Online Registration update - Andi Rivarola

The objective is to create and install an online registration program. A small group discussed a proposal including the objectives, timeline, support, and cost. This is very preliminary. A meeting with a Daylily Society demonstrated a registration system where the registrar mostly oversees and presses a button. Having such a system for AIS would certainly speed up the registration process.

8. R&I update - Janis Shackelford

The *2021 R&I* has been completed and is ready for print. It contains only the registrations and introductions. Addresses of gardens and hybridizers have been omitted.

Janis will make every effort to have the *2021 R&Is* available at the Convention in Las Cruces.

The *Checklist* is available for download from the Storefront. Contact John Ludi to purchase.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER ISSUES

The next Board of Directors Meeting will be April 11, 2022, in Las Cruces. Yee Haw!!

Please contact Bonnie Nichols if you are available to conduct a garden training at the 2022 Convention at Las Cruces.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 pm PDT.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Schneider