

The Lincoln Iris Society's

Rainbow Messenger

A More or Less Monthly Publication for Anyone who Loves Irises!

Edited by David & Marjorie Lionberger

Lincoln, Nebraska

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President's Message

David Lionberger

We received a nice array of gifts this month from Velda Coffey, a long-time member of the Lincoln Iris Society. These included a twenty year collection of the LIS Newsletter, several years of AIS Bulletins, coffee mugs, etc. I have decided to keep the newsletters for LIS archives and will look through the magazines for copies that should also be saved. The other items will be door prizes at this month's meeting. Although I have not had the pleasure of knowing Velda, many LIS members will recall her as an active member with many contributions of her talents and time. While looking through the newsletters, I found where Velda won a contest in 1999 to name our newsletter. Her winning entry was "The Rainbow Messenger" which remains to this day! Thank you for your thoughtfulness Velda, and our best wishes to you.

President's Quote

"The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible."

George Burns

DUES REVIEW

The LIS Bylaws direct that our dues should be reviewed and set for the upcoming year at our September meeting. I apologize for neglecting to have this item on the agenda last month. We will include dues review at our October meeting. Please give this some thought and be prepared to discuss and submit your opinion.

Meeting

Date: Monday, October 30, 2017

Time: 6:30 p.m. Annual Business Meeting

**Location: St. Andrews Lutheran Church
1015 Lancaster Lane Lincoln, NE**

**Program: Hybridizing Iris for Space Age
and Broken Color**

Presented By: David Toth

**Hosts: Sally Schrader and
Eunice Cernohlavek**

Questions about Iris or LIS

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American Iris Society Region 21
Bulletin and Directory

Region 21 members received the 2017 Fall/Winter Regional Bulletin and Directory recently. Our grateful 'thank you' is extended to Wayne and Pam Messer for providing this interesting and useful information. Producing and sending such a quality pair of booklets requires much forethought, research, and many hours of compiling and editing. I certainly enjoyed the historical items as well as all the other information included and I find the directory a handy tool which is always in my briefcase within easy reach. Region 21 is fortunate to have members such as Wayne and Pam Messer who are willing and generous with their time and talents.

Youth Coloring Contest

LIS Youth Chairman David Toth sends a reminder to our youth members that the coloring contest entry deadline is November 1st. All information pertaining to the contest is available on the AIS Youth website.

Articles from November 2004
Rainbow Messenger

When looking through some of the old LIS Newsletters Velda Coffey gave us, I found an article titled "Magdalene Pfister Appreciation Garden". This interesting article written by Linda Rader gives the past history of the garden and I have included it in this month's issue for the benefit of our newer members as well as to refresh the memories of longtime members. I am also including an article containing information pertaining to LIS standing committees. I am confident this is the work of Linda Rader and is very timely as we will soon be passing the committee sign-up sheet around and asking for volunteers for 2018. As these committees are fundamental to the success of LIS functions and business, please look the list over carefully and consider serving on one or more for next year. Thank You!

Magdalene Pfister Iris Garden,
the next chapter....

Jenny Cich

The smaller garden along the parking area of Hardin Hall remained intact for more than a decade. It was tended to by both UNL Landscaping Services and a committee of various LIS members. Over time and the passing from one caretaker to another the garden, although nicely established, had its issues:

misplaced maps, rearranged markers, grass, lack of negative space between the varieties and overgrown clumps.

Fast forward to 2014 when a series of events culminated in a rejuvenation of the garden and cooperation between UNL Landscaping Services and the Lincoln Iris Society. The Lincoln Iris Society was approached by the late Magdalene Pfister's siblings, brother John Pfister and sister/LIS member Melinda Holcombe to prepare and submit a proposal to UNL Landscaping Services for the maintenance of the Magdalene Pfister Iris Garden. John Pfister also worked in tandem with the University of Nebraska Foundation to revisit the parties payable from the Magdalene Pfister Iris Garden Fund. Coupled with John's efforts, UNL noted the need to relocate the garden due to construction at the existing garden's location. These items jumpstarted the current LIS MP Garden Committee into action. Proposals were written and rewritten, multiple meetings were held, agreements were struck, garden plans were drawn up, and irises were sourced with planting commencing at the new location in September of 2014. The new location of the garden, now on its third growing season, is in the Maxwell Arboretum on UNL's East Campus. It is located on the east side of the C.Y. Thompson Library near the vine arbor. This new location continues to host the charming pink iris Magdalene, along with a myriad of other iris. The focus of the garden is on Nebraska Iris hybridizers. The garden hosts only named varieties and is divided into 4 areas based on color palettes:

Pale pink/white, Striking, Pastels (peach, pink and lavender) and Regal colors (blue, gold and cream).

UNL Landscaping Services has provided the markers to identify each variety by name along with the type and hybridizer of the variety. Members of the Lincoln Iris Society manage the deadheading, spring and fall clean up and the sourcing and planting of new varieties added to the garden. We will also be continuing the division and resetting of iris clumps to maintain the health of the garden. The extra iris will continue to be made available at our annual plant sale.

The presence of multiple classes of bearded iris and several types of beardless iris along with peonies and other perennials makes this a destination garden within the Maxwell Arboretum. Next spring treat yourself to an item from the UNL Dairy Store then take the easy stroll down the paths and see the Magdalene Pfister Iris Garden for yourself.

Magdalene Pfister Appreciation Iris Garden

There are many ways to honor a person's life, work or simply the gift they present to others by just being themselves. One of the best is to set aside a space in the landscape to plant a tree, design a reflecting pool or create a garden in honor of a life well lived. The most cheerful is the flower garden. The Lincoln Iris Society was lucky enough to be involved in creating such a garden to honor Magdalene Pfister, a long-time Home Economics Specialist with the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service.

Magdalene, one of eight children, grew up in Pawnee



Magdalene Pfister —family photo

County in southeastern Nebraska. After graduation from the University of Nebraska in 1942, she taught high school home economics for several years and then joined the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service in 1951. Except for a brief leave of absence to earn a Master's Degree at Cornell University, she devoted nearly 30 years to the Extension Service.

In the late 1970's Magdalene became ill and was no longer able to work. Two of her colleagues Leon Rottman and Addie Scheve were traveling the state on extension business in 1979. During the many hours of discussions in the car, they expressed their concern and held good thoughts for the health of their co-worker. The talks grew into a wish to do something to show Magdalene how much they cared about her and to honor her devotion and many years with the Extension Service. They considered planting an oak or German Linden tree at the University and even composed a few verses of poetry to accompany it. They also thought about wildflowers or roses, but settled on an iris garden. Both Addie & Leon had more success in growing iris.

Addie and her mother Lena Freudenburg had been partners for many years raising and hybridizing irises in Battle Creek, Nebraska. After her mother's passing, Addie continued as owner of Freudenburg Iris Gardens. Lena had been working nine years or so on a pink iris. Addie's decision to introduce the iris and name it Magdalene was the final motivation to move forward with the iris appreciation garden. An interesting note is that Mrs. Freudenburg used the name Lena, a shortened variation of the more formal German or Russian name Magdalene. Thus one favorite Magdalene, who was then no longer living, had developed an iris now named Magdalene to honor another favorite Magdalene.

Making the iris garden become a reality was fraught with the usual obstacles encountered within the bureaucracy of the University. A direct call to then Chancellor Roy A. Young (1976-1980) expedited matters and permission was granted to proceed with plans for the garden. It turns out the Chancellor was an iris fancier himself and highly in favor of a special garden devoted to irises.

Choosing the site for the appreciation garden was just as complicated. The spot of choice was outside Magdalene's office on the mall adjacent to the Economics Building on East Campus. Alas, long periods of fertilizer application and an automatic sprinkler system made growing conditions unsuitable for irises. A site near the C.Y. Thompson library was considered, but they settled on a terraced area near the East Campus Dormitories. A ten year contract (1980-1990) was set between the University Department of Buildings and

Grounds and the Lincoln Iris Society. Allan Ensminger represented the Lincoln Iris Society and Wilbur (Bud) Dasenbrock represented the University. In 1990 and then again in 2000 the contract between the Iris Society and the University was renewed to continue the planting and maintenance of the garden.

There was considerable support for the garden. The Pfister family provided funds for an endowment for maintenance. Lincoln Iris Society members, hybridizers and Extension Club members across the state were generous in sharing iris from their personal collections. There were Schreiner and Sass irises, donations from nine growers within the state and many unidentified rhizomes contributed by extension club women who had known Magdalene. Selections for the garden were made from this group and the rest were planted in other places on campus. The soil on the terraces was heavy clay with rocks, bricks and cement pieces. These were removed, the



Magdalene (center), Allan Ensminger (right foreground) at dedication ceremony. —photo by John DeFrain

soil improved and the garden was planted.

On August 7th, 1980 at 3:00 PM, the Magdalene Pfister Appreciation Iris Garden was dedicated. Magdalene was able to attend the festivities and enjoy a reception held in her honor following the ceremony. The program for the dedication included mu-

sic by a brass quintet, along with an **Introduction: To Magdalene, With Love** by Addie Scheve, a **Rite of Dedication** by Howard W. Ottoson Assistant Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska, an **Acknowl-**



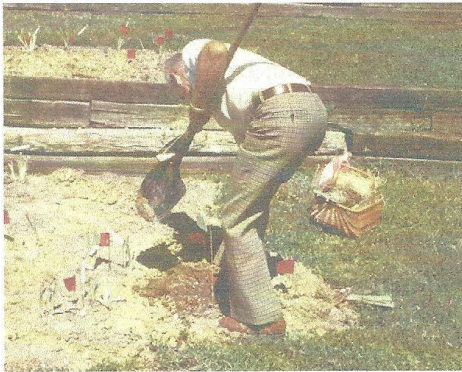
Magdalene chatting with Elizabeth Grant at the reception. —photo by John DeFrain

edgement to the Lincoln Iris Society and University Grounds Staff by Bobbie Sward, Assistant Director, Cooperative Extension Service.

Heartfelt words of praise were presented to Magdalene Pfister by Addie Scheve, 1978/79 President, Nebraska Council of Home Extension Clubs, Betty Kime, Cherry County Extension Agent and John C. Woodward, Associate Dean, College of Home Economics.

As part of the dedication, Allan Ensminger, then President of the Lincoln Iris Society planted the iris registered as 'Magdalene'.

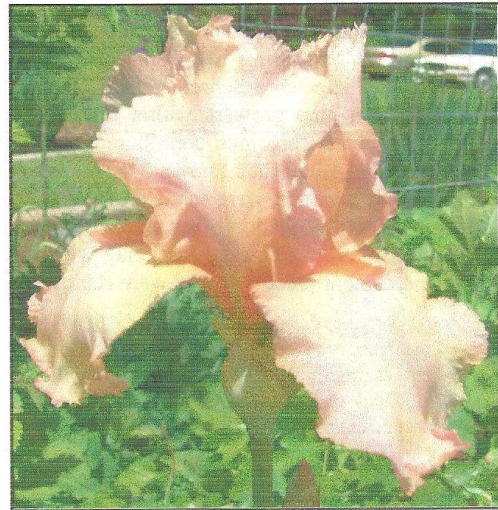
The garden still stands on the University of Nebraska East Campus to honor Magdalene's contribution to UNL, the friendship of her colleagues and her



Allan Ensminger planting the iris 'Magdalene'.
—photo by John DeFrain

dedication to those people of Nebraska touched through her work. As with all gardens, this one has grown and changed over the years. Steps were added to the terraces, a sign was installed, iris markers put in place and then lost. Over the years irises were added and removed and rhizomes were dug to thin and rejuvenate the clumps. The extras contributed to the annual LIS sales. In the year 2000, due to dwindling resources and energy both at the university and in the Lincoln Iris Society, a decision was made to decrease the size of the garden. The area around the sign was retained and all un-named iris were removed. They were replaced by approximately 160 newer varieties acquired either through donation from personal collections of Lincoln Iris Society members or through purchase. The university provided markers.

Magdalene, the iris that is namesake for Magdalene Pfister, is planted prominently in front of the sign marking the site of the garden. This beautiful flower was developed by Lena Freudenburg and introduced by her daughter, Addie Scheve, in the Freudenburg Iris Gardens catalog of 1981. 'Magdalene', the iris, is tall bearded, standing 28" in height. The color is a laced Venetian pink with green gold on the hafts and orange-red beards. It's parents were 'Pink Bonny' (another Freudenburg iris) and 'Irish



Lullaby' (a Steve Moldovan pink). The flower blooms midseason and is fragrant. This beautiful pink iris can still be found in several Lincoln gardens as well as in the university garden hon-



Lincoln Iris Society **Standing Committees**

Here is a list of the Standing Committees and a description of the primary duties and responsibilities of these committees. Please review and decide which of these you are interested in serving on for the next year. Don't be shy. If something looks interesting, but you're not sure about it, just ask.

Annual Shows: Arrange for space, tables, etc. for show. Transport flower vases, trophy stands, signs and set up display area, put up directional signs. Arrange for judges, handle entry registration, and provide entry cards, ribbons and other misc. supplies. Place irises in categories on tables. Assist judges, by 'clerking', resolve name problems by referring to AIS Registration and Introduction books. Tally and record awards after judging. Greet visitors, distribute sale fliers. Answer questions and talk with visitor. Dismantle displays at end of show, cleanup.

Auction & Sale: Arrange for space for sale. Set up tables, make, place directional signs & labels. Contribute named irises from your garden for sale. On day of sale, arrange plants on tables in categories. Work counting/pricing at cashier's tables. Work registration and tallying table during auction. Hand out bags and answer customers' questions. Auctioneer and Auctioneer helpers also needed for Auction portion of sale. Present appropriate short programs or demonstrations on iris culture, planting, etc. as planned. Do cleanup at end of sale.

Courtesy: Be contact for personal news of LIS membership. Send get well, thank you cards, etc., when appropriate.

Hospitality: Recruit volunteers (2 each month) to provide refreshments for October-April meetings and be prepared to sub if someone cannot make a meeting.

Librarian: Collect and keep photos, journals, publications and other archives of the Lincoln Iris Society. Keep records of loaned items, and purchase new publications for the library per wishes of the society.

Meeting Closers: Be last people to leave meeting place. Check & clean area, pick up any left items, sweep, vacuum, wipe tables, kitchen surfaces, if needed. Replace furniture to original location. Make sure lights are on/off as required and building is locked. The Chairperson is the liaison to the church representative.

Membership: Maintain current information (names, address, phone, email, etc.) on the members of LIS. Provide membership list to group. Generate monthly address labels for newsletter, meeting or other notices as needed or as directed by President. Promote recruitment and retention of new members.

Program: Vice President is chair of committee, but needs others to help plan monthly programs and arrange for presenters from within or outside LIS. We need at least 3-4 people. Most of the programs should be on the subject of irises, but some other programs may be used occasionally. It is also sometimes useful to have an impromptu discussion of iris culture or experiences, or a panel discussion on some aspect of growing irises.

Publicity: Prepare and distribute announcements of LIS events: meetings, shows, sales, etc. to radio, TV, print media and other outlets. Prepare and post signs on the day of the show, sale to direct visitors and customers. Devise imaginative ways of promoting interest in the iris and the Lincoln Iris Society.

Regional/National: Liaison to the American Iris Society and Region 21 of the American Iris Society for official business, news, upcoming events and activities.

Magdalene Pfister Appreciation Iris Garden: Liaison to University of Nebraska Landscape Services; provide iris culture advice as needed. Assist University with planting, maintenance, etc. Keep plant records for garden. Re-plant iris in garden when needed.

Youth Program: Recruit and mentor young people interested in growing and learning about iris. Keep club apprised of youth status and activities.