

For Iris Lovers in the Cold Zones



# Aurora

Newsletter of the Can-West Iris Society

Autumn, 2017

Volume 11, Issue 3

## Update From the Organizing Committee

What a year it has been for CWIS! Thank you to all members and friends who made 2017 one of the best ever.

This is the time of year to rest our weary gardening muscles; the time for gardeners to plan for the next growing season, what to add, what has worked, what hasn't and what to do about it. Here's hoping for a lot more snow coming soon to protect the garden and all the plants in it including, of course, all those new irises added last summer. What's on your list?

And because it was such a good year and because 2018 is our 15th anniversary year, CWIS is going on the road! If there is enough interest shown, plans are in the works to hold three garden parties across the prairies. One in Saskatchewan (probably in the Regina area) and one in Alberta (probably in the Edmonton area) next July as well as one in Manitoba (Winnipeg area) in August. But to go forward, we need to hear from you. Would you attend an event in your area? We need to hear from you! Just drop us a note with your thoughts. Please respond as soon as possible to BJ Jackson at the address noted below.

We are also pleased to announce that Sandy Ives and Maureen Mark are now 100% confirmed as guest judges for the 2018 show. If you remember, Sandy and Maureen came out for our very first show in 2008. Please mark your calendars for Sunday, June 3rd!

In the following pages you will find the 2017 AIS awards on page 3. News from the CWIS library appears on page 6 and information regarding the 2018 AIS convention in Louisiana on page 7. The 2017 Rebloom Report starts on page 8 followed by the long awaited and anticipated Top Performers on page 11. But this year there is a twist. After 10 years of nagging for your best of the best, the article is, instead, a retrospective of all previous top performers lists. It is a fascinating read and as well as outlining which were the most popular irises over the years, it also looks at who created them. We hope you find the article interesting and informative as we have been told this list is a big influence on what members

look for to add to their iris collections. Next year we will go back to normal so please keep records on what did well and why it was a top performer in your garden as the season progresses.

Finally, the OC would like to extend our congratulations to member Sandy Proulx for attaining apprentice judge status in the AIS this past fall. Sandy has worked very hard over the last few years to get the training required, both in the garden and in the classroom. She was elevated in status in November at the fall AIS board meeting. Way to go Sandy P!

As usual, you can contact us with comments and suggestions as follows:

B. J. Jackson, [jacksonb@mts.net](mailto:jacksonb@mts.net)

Jennifer Bishop, [Jennifer@dataways.com](mailto:Jennifer@dataways.com)

Deborah Petrie, [martyaddict@gmail.com](mailto:martyaddict@gmail.com)

Eleanor Hutchison, [eleanore@mymts.net](mailto:eleanore@mymts.net)

**Merry Christmas**  
**and a**  
**Happy New Year**



## American Iris Society 2017 Awards

### **THE DYKES MEDAL**

All iris classes, originated in US or Canada  
**MONTMARTRE - TB (Keith Keppel)**



### **THE KNOWLTON MEDAL**

Border Bearded  
**BALLERINA PINK (Paul Black)**



### **THE HANS AND JACOB SASS MEDAL**

Intermediate Bearded  
**RED HOT CHILI (Michael Sutton)**



**THE WILLIAMSON-WHITE MEDAL**  
**Miniature Tall Bearded**  
**TIC TAC TOE (Thomas Johnson)**



**THE COOK-DOUGLAS MEDAL**  
**Standard Dwarf Bearded (photo: MIS)\***  
**BRIGHT BLUE EYES (Michael Sutton)**



**THE CAPARNE-WELCH MEDAL**  
**Miniature Dwarf Bearded**  
**CUTE AS A BUTTON (Paul Black)**



**THE FOUNDERS OF SIGNA MEDAL**  
**Species**  
**RUTH WILDER (Walter Hoover)**



**The full listing of all 2017  
AIS Awards is available at:  
<http://wiki.irises.org/Main/InfoAwards2017>**

*\*MIS = Median Iris Society*

*All photos in this issue are courtesy of the  
Iris Encyclopedai or BJ's garden unless otherwise indicated.  
<http://wiki.irises.org>*



**THE RANDOLPH PERRY MEDAL**  
Inter-species hybrid (SPEC-X)  
**OKAGAMI** (Hiroshi Shimizu)



**THE MORGAN-WOOD MEDAL**  
Siberian  
**JUDY, JUDY, JUDY** (Robert Hollingworth)

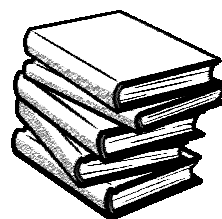
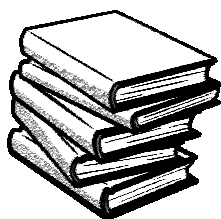
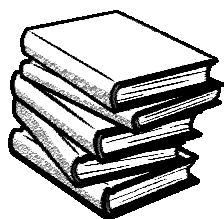


**THE ERIC NIES MEDAL**  
Spuria  
**LINE DANCING** (B. Charles Jenkins)



## **New CWIS Librarian**

We are pleased to inform the membership that Mary Kurtz has taken over the responsibilities as librarian for our group. Mary has a lot of ideas for making borrowing and accessing the treasure trove of materials the library contains easier. so watch for further information in an upcoming newsletter.



If you have signed out any books or journals in the last few years and haven't returned them or been contacted about them recently, please contact Mary at [mjkurtz@mymts.net](mailto:mjkurtz@mymts.net).

## **Membership Expired in 2017?**

If you haven't renewed yet, this will be the last newsletter you receive. The membership year runs from August 1 to July 31. Membership dues are just \$5 per year for however many years you wish to sign up. This hasn't changed since our very first year and there are no plans for an increase anytime soon. Should you be unsure of your current membership status, please contact BJ Jackson at [jacksonb@mts.net](mailto:jacksonb@mts.net).

## **The Winter Garden**

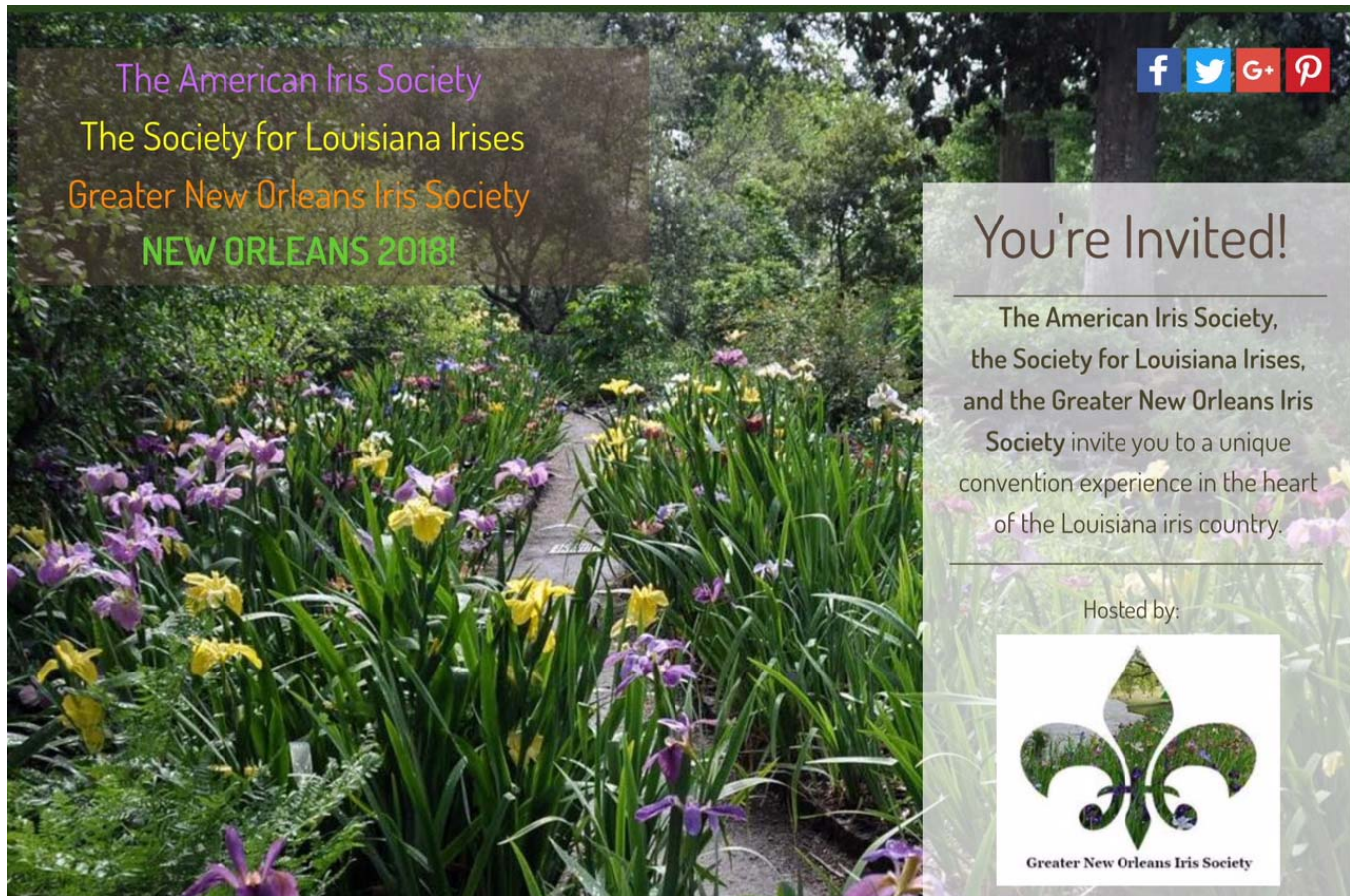
Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year. For gardening begins in January with the dream.

~Josephine Nuese

There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues.

~Hal Borland





## Convention Dates: April 8 - 14, 2018

[The American Iris Society](#) and the [Society for Louisiana Irises](#) together will hold its national convention in New Orleans. There is much to enjoy around the City, both botanical and otherwise. New Orleans was a major site in Louisiana where native irises were once found in masses. Development has eliminated the original stands except for some still found in the wetlands outside the city itself.

In the years since Hurricane Katrina, however, a major expansion of Louisiana iris plantings has occurred in public and private gardens. New Orleans is once again a great place to see Louisiana irises. The Convention tour gardens will display a wide range of modern cultivars and an unsurpassed array of species forms and natural hybrids.

Everything you need to know is available from the convention website at <http://www.2018irisconvention.org/>



# Rebloom in 2017

It was a good year for rebloom across CWIS members gardens from BC to Manitoba. And, for the first time there are more than just bearded iris on the list! My thanks to all those who sent in their rebloom reports this year. Below are just a sampling of the beauties that surprised their caretakers in late summer and early fall. They included:

- Donna Reble in Rockhaven SK - MTB Pretty Pony (Jean Witt, 2003), IB Many Mahalos (J. Terry Aitken, 2003), IB I'll Be Back (J. Terry Aitken, 2004), SDB Autumn Jester (Chuck Chapman, 2000) and MDB Forever Violet (Chuck Chapman, 2002).



*SDB Autumn Jester*



*IB Many Mahalos*



*MTB Pretty Pony*

- Len Giesbrecht in Winnipeg MB - SPEC I. spuria halophila (blue form)





- El Hutchison in Ste. Anne MB - (SIB Coronation Anthem (Robert Hollingworth, 1990)



- Audrey Peniuk, Winnipeg MB and Jodi Lockyear, Leduc AB - (SP-X Eternal Summer (Chuck Chapman, 2012)



- Allison Day, Libau MB - SDB What Again (Allan Ensminger, 1990)



- Andrea Karpinsky, Kelowna BC - SDB Autumn Jester (Chuck Chapman, 2000),  
TB Clarence (Lloyd Zurbrigg, 1990), TB Immortality (Lloyd Zurbrigg, 1990)

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- Marrianne Unruh, Falkland BC - TB Ringo (George Shoop, 1979), SDB Forever Blue  
Chapman, 1996)

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# **Top Performers**

## **A 10 Year Retrospective**

*(Compiled by BJ Jackson)*

When I got the idea of doing this piece, I had no idea what I had got myself into! Between the first year when the first top performers appeared in the autumn issue in 2007 and the autumn issue of 2016, CWIS members submitted an astounding 422 iris in their lists. Of those, a total of 312 different varieties were included in all classes from the smallest of the MDBs, the Medians, the Tall Bearded, and an Arilbred (AB). Also appearing was an increasing number of the non-bearded classes including Siberians, Spuria, Species-X and Species.

CWIS members certainly do grow a lot of iris! In fact, the only classes not included were the Pacific Coast Natives (PCN) which we cannot grow as well as the true Arils (AR) which are not reliable in our cold zone gardens. One Japanese iris has appeared on the list but that variety was not registered and for the purpose of this article, I stuck to only registered varieties from the AIS Registry.

Once I had those numbers and varieties down pat, I then thought to myself, who are the people that hybridized these irises? Oh my. There were so many of them! There were, however, several hybridizers who's work appeared over and over once the data had been analyzed. I thought this information would be valuable to members, particularly those who are just starting out with growing iris or looking for recommendations on whose work does well in the cold zones.

My next problem was how to present the data gleaned from this marathon. After much fiddling about and false starts I decided that in order to get this job done before the AIS centennial in 2020, I would present it just the way I had analyzed it.

To start with, the hybridizing efforts of 120 individual hybridizers have been showcased by members in the 10 years of submitting top performers. Of those, several stand out just by the numbers as well as the varieties they created.

Topping the hybridizers' list is Canada's own Chuck Chapman. Not too far behind in numbers are the results of the work of Paul Black, Schreiner's and Barry Blyth. Rounding out this impressive list are Marky Smith, J. Terry Aitken, Allan Ensminger, O. David Niswonger, Ken Fisher, Ben Hager, Bennett Jones, Keith Keppel, Hiroshi Shimizu, Thomas Johnson and Linda Miller.



Following are the numbers from each classification followed by the top 25 varieties.

There were:

MDB - 23	SDB - 89	MTB - 25
IB - 43	BB - 12	AB - 1
TB - 96	SIB - 14	SPEC - 8
SPU - 4	SP-X - 7	

Total number of different varieties - 312

Grand total of all submissions - 422

Seventy irises appeared more than once during the 10 year period. Only one, SDB Forever Blue appeared in each of the lists.

## **Top 25 Varieties**

### **MDBs**

MDB Forever Violet (Chuck Chapman, 2002)

### **SDBs**

Autumn Jester (Chuck Chapman, 2000)

Blueberry Tart (Chuck Chapman, 2002)

Cherry Garden (Bennett Jones, 1966)

Forever Blue (Chuck Chapman, 1996)

Hoodlum (Keith Keppell, 1996)

Mikey Likes It (J. Terry Aitken, 2003)

Party Animal (Chuck Chapman, 2000)

Royal Overtime (Chuck Chapman, 2000)

### **SIB**

Dreaming Yellow (Currier McEwen, 1969)

### **MTBs**

Ace (Lynda Miller, 1999)

Bumblebee Deelite (J. & G Norrick, 1986)

Little Bay Denoc (Frank A. Williams, 1978)

### **IBs**

Blue Eyed Blond (Allan Ensminger, 1989)

Mini Big Horn (Robert Annand, 1998)

### **BBs**

Eramosa Miss (Chuck Chapman, 1998)

### **TBs**

Brussels (Thomas Johnson, 2003)

Churchill Downs (Ken Mohr, 1988)

Copatonic (Barry Blyth, 1994)

Daughter of Stars (Donald Spoon, 2000)

Eagle's Flight (Schreiner's, 1985)

Henna Stitches (James Gibson, 1960)

Jesse's Song (Bryce Williamson, 1979)

Silverado (Schreiner, 1987)

Vision in Pink (V. Wood, 1986)

From the newest varieties on the cutting edge of modern iris breeding to the historic and the hybridizing pioneers and everything in between all are well represented both in the previous 10 years of the CWIS top performers and by extension, in CWIS members' gardens.

And that's a wrap!

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## **Additional Top Performers Trivia**

The oldest variety submitted as a top performer is TB Queen of May (Salter, pre-1859)

The newest variety submitted as a top performer is SDB Oh Canada (Thomas Johnson, 2015)

There were 93 historic (30 years old or more) submitted. Broken down by registration dates, these are the numbers for each decade, give or take a year or so:

Pre 1950 - 12

1970s - 27

2000s - 86

1950s - 3

1980s - 46

2010s - 13

1960s - 12

1990s - 72



***TB***  
***Queen of May***



***SDB***  
***Oh Canada***