

Newscast

Region 4 of The American Iris Society

Vol. 41, No. 1

MARCH 1999

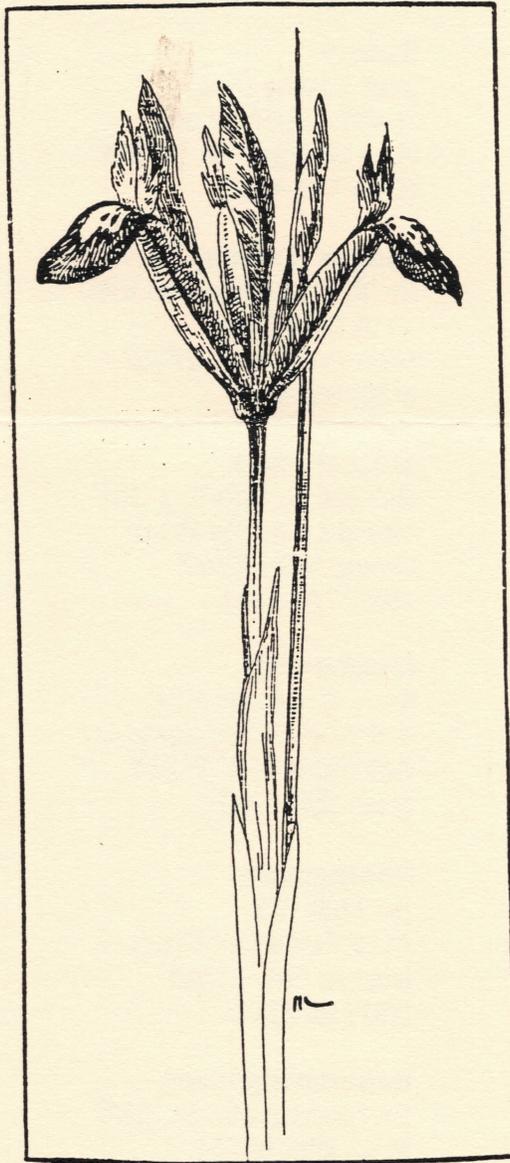


FIG. 37.—*Iris reticulata*

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Membership Secretary **Marilyn Harlow, P.O. Box 55, Freedom, CA 95019-0055**

Communications regarding **American Iris Society membership, dues and change of address** should be addressed to **Marilyn Harlow**.

Region 4 is comprised of the states of **Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia**.

NEWSCAST is free to AIS members in Region 4. Subscription rate for those not in Region 4 is \$5.00 per year. Checks made to Region 4, American Iris Society should be sent to the Region 4 Treasurer.

Permission is granted to reprint any material appearing in NEWSCAST provided that proper credit is given.

The Purposes of The American Iris Society, and Region 4, shall be to develop the science of horticulture and any activities related to the study, propagation and culture of the genus Iris; to stimulate and foster interest in horticultural pursuits, conservation and protection of these plants; to cooperate with other organizations, public and private, in the scientific and horticultural education of all those interested in learning any phase of the genus Iris, by any and all means which may be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors. These shall include but are not limited to:

- a) encouragement and support of scientific research, including those pertaining to the solution of diseases related to but not necessarily exclusive to the genus Iris, and investigation and conservation of the genus in the wild;
- b) collection, compilation, and publication of data concerning the history, classification, breeding and culture of Irises; and,
- c) education of the public through exhibitions, public display gardens, published standards for judging, and local, area, regional, and national meetings open to the public.

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RVP's MESSAGE

The year 1999 is a year that beckons us to strive to do our best: for our families, church and country. As we progress to the 21st Century, whatever our decisions and accomplishments are today will REFLECT what paths will be taken tomorrow. It is my earnest hope that each and every member of Region 4 will take a little time each day to reflect on their everyday lives and therefore be ready to meet the challenges of the future.

This past fall was great for our area gardeners, as many of us had more time to winterize our gardens. It is a relief to be able to read and sew a little while doing the year-end farm books, check the lambing supplies, shovel and sand the walks (we have just finished with another bout of ice/snow/rain again) and to catch up on correspondence. With the advent of e-mail, it has become easier to keep in touch with others on a more frequent basis. My e-mail address is: digger@anent.com.

One item that needs our constant attention is the dispensation of checks that are received from members regarding their renewals and/or new members that are given to local membership chairs, etc. Sometimes it has made a difference in an Accredited (Garden) Judge's status if checks are not sent to our national AIS Membership Chairman Marilyn Harlow in a timely manner. Also, if your elected officers do not send their renewals in on time, that act can jeopardize the affiliate status with AIS. Another area of attention is, when anyone who handles funds (Treasurer, Convention Chairman, etc.), that person needs to send acknowledgements to the check writer as to the receipt of said check also in a timely manner. I know that without these conscientious people our Societies cannot function smoothly. I am pretty certain that in Region 4, we have NOT had any such problems. Just passing along these concerns for everyone's consideration in the future.

The invitation has been given and other pertinent information laid out in the December issue of *NEWSCAST* for the upcoming AIS Region 4 Meeting to be held in Winchester, VA, on May 21 and 22. More details appear in this issue. Chairmen Don and Ginny Spoon are busy setting up the committees for the activities that have been planned. I think you will be pleased with their efforts.

A full scale flower show is planned under the chairmanship of Clarence Mahan. There will be classes for all classes of iris bloom. Make plans now to bring some stalks. Clarence also will be in charge of our annual spring auction to be held after the program on Saturday evening. Proceeds will be applied to the 2003 National AIS Convention account.

It is with sadness that a formal announcement has been received from the Blue Ridge Iris Society. In a recent note from BRIS treasurer Millie Trent, she states that member participation was so low that the 'faithful few' decided to terminate the BRIS affiliation with The American Iris

Society and disband. A final check in the amount of \$ 997.34 was drawn and will be deposited in the Region 4 special 2003 Convention account as requested.

The Blue Ridge Iris Society in the past has contributed much to it's members, Region IV, and to the national Society. Their presence as an affiliated Society will be missed, but I am confident that individuals from the southwestern part of Virginia will continue to participate in Region 4 affairs.

If you have questions about Region 4 or The American Iris Society, please call on me. If I don't have an answer, I will try to get one for you.

Walter and I hope to see you in Winchester. Do have a pleasant gardening season.

Sara

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REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee, Lois Rose (VA), Chairman; Glenn Grigg (NC); Mary Brown (MD); and Margaret Stone (WV), presents the following slate of officers for 2000.

Regional Vice President	Sara Marley
Assistant Regional Vice President	Glenn Grigg
Secretary	Carrie Winter
Treasurer	J. Owings Rebert

=====

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR IRIS EXHIBITION JUDGES

William T. Bledsoe

(With apologies to English scholars of King James' time)

1. Thou shalt make thyself knowledgeable in irises, their habits of growth, and their demeanor.
2. Thou shalt have no other rules before thee, save those of AIS alone.
3. Shirk not thy responsibilities by making excuses when thou art invited to judge.
4. Clothe thou thyself in suitable raiment before standing in judgement, and let not the faces of the men suffer neglect by the razor. For it is written that proper attire and a pleasing countenance can help to inspire confidence in the ability of the judge.
5. Base thy decision on sound objective reasons, lest inquisitors may embarrass thee.
6. Thou shalt display no trace of arrogance. If thou dost seek to impress upon thy hearers that thou knowest all things, surely thy detractors can topple thee from thy self-assumed pedestal.
7. Show thy fairness and impartiality to each entry which dost vie for honors.
8. Thy shall be tactful and considerate with those who seek thy services. Be not critical of thy fellow judges, lest thou shouldst draw attention to thine own shortcomings.
9. Be thou decisive and prompt to make judgment once thou hast given proper consideration.
10. Thou shalt not tarry after thou hast completed thy judgements, lest the pride thou dost take in thine own decisions shall be pierced by the shafts of criticism from disappointed exhibitors.

(Reprinted from the Region 24 Newsletter, Spring 1997)

TREASURER'S REPORT

October 1, 1998 through February 1, 1999

Balance on October 1, 1998 (Checking only) \$ 8,944.79

Receipts

Fall Regional Auction	\$ 2,307.00
Donation: Carolina Mountains Society	\$ 100.00
Donation: Central Virginia Society	\$ 180.00
Donation: Fredericksburg Area Society	\$ 1,000.00
Donation: Eastern North Carolina Society	\$ 200.00
Donation: Francis Scott Key Society	\$ 700.00
Donation: Chesapeake & Potomac Society	\$ 800.00
Disbandment: Blue Ridge Society	\$ 997.34
Interest on Account	\$ 44.94
Out-of-Region NEWSCAST subscription	\$ 3.00
Due Fall Auction Receipts	\$ 40.00
Credit Return: Automated Mailing (Fall NEWSCAST)	\$ 16.38
	=====
	\$ 6,388.67

Expenditures

Certificate of Deposit "2003 National"	\$ 2,307.00
Give for Retiring RVP	\$ 31.50
Reimbursement to FSK: Silent Auction proceeds	
Spring '98 Convention	\$ 463.00
Stoneburner - Final mailings Fall NEWSCAST	\$ 99.85
Epperson - December NEWSCAST	
Printing and Mailing	\$ 842.04
	=====
	\$ 3,743.39

Net balance on February 1, 1999 \$ 11,590.06

Certificate of Deposit Assets

No. 1: Toward "2003 National Convention"	\$ 2,000.00
No. 2: Toward "Newscast culture issue"	\$ 600.00
No. 3: Toward "2003 National Convention"	\$ 2,307.00
	=====
	\$ 4,907.00

Complete Current Net Assets on February 1, 1999 \$ 16,497.06

Submitted by J. Owings Rebert, Treasurer

done some good remounting in many areas. Many of you will have noted that it climbed into second place in the Region 4 voting of the Symposium.

Here in Durham, I BLESS was the superstar of the year. It was in bloom in mid-March when Mike and Anne Lowe brought Keith Keppel to visit. That night came a severe frost and also the following two nights. All open iris flowers were annihilated. But I BLESS recovered will and bloomed in May. Then it rebloomed steadily from the second week of September until the end of November. I BLESS is an IB with large white flowers with hints of yellow.

Another good IB, often mentioned on the web, is LOW HO SILVER. This is still holding its well-branched stalks in place despite much serious freezing. An SDB worthy of mention if Mitch Jameson's "88." This variety sends up a cloud of rebloom stalks all at one time - early October this year. All three of the above are seedlings of BABY BLESSED.

Clarence Mahan rebloomed HALSTON, an IB with a complicated parentage from Eric Tanksley-Clarke introduced in 1995. He also mentioned with excitement a seedling that will be named for his daughter. This is a blue-violet on the blue side, with lots of ruffling and heavily diamond-dusted, from the cross (I DO X SUKY). His best named performers were QUEEN DOROTHY and SUNNY DISPOSITION, with good rebloom on REDELTA, VIOLET MUSIC, and UNCHAINED MELODY.

Joan Roberts reports that CLARENCE was the outstanding rebloomer in her garden. Others that gave excellent performances were SEA FLUFF and REDELTA from the late Raymond G. Smith, AUTUMN TRYST and CAMEO BLUSH from John Weiler, UNCHAINED MELODY and VIOLET MUSIC from Clarence Mahan, and OCTOBER SPLENDOR from Gary Sides, as well as RENOWN and LADY ESSEX from Avonbank.

Lois Rose reports a lot of SDB rebloom on REFINED, DARK CRYSTAL, and JEWEL BABY November and the IBs TAWNY, I BLESS, and LOW HO SILVER. Her I BLESS was in continuous bloom from 4/18 to 5/15 and 9/1 to 11/21. IMMORTALITY bloomed from 8/20 to 11/21! Other stalks performing: BUCKWHEAT, GARDEN GRACE, PERFUME COUNTER, and BORN AGAIN.

Don and Ginny Spoon has over 250 different rebloomers in bloom this fall. These included stalks on CANARY DELIGHT, FRANCES IVA and TU TU TURQUOISE. FAITHFUL AND TRUE, from (Winter Olympics seedling X Chaste White) has given outstanding amounts of rebloom. It is a clear white without any blue cast.

A final note, SUNNY EPISODE, a yellow Louisiana, gave a lovely fall stalk that I took to Richmond and there were three more stalks on this in December that were stopped by the cold. This is the first time I have had rebloom on a Louisiana variety.

Best wishes for lots of good rebloom in 1999. Do bring your rebloom stalks to the Fall Meeting on October 29-30 here in the Golden Triangle of North Carolina.

IRISES AND THEIR COMPANIONS: SOME THOUGHTS FOR NOVICES

Anner M. Whitehead

While many people prefer to grow their irises in special beds devoid of other ornamental vegetation, many of us will want to incorporate different flowers into our iris gardens, or integrate our irises into our larger garden design. Provided some realities are borne in mind, this is not only possible, it is desirable, both for aesthetic purposes and for the health of the irises.

The basic literature on irises tends to suggest that many of them, particularly the bearded ones, are best grown in isolation to ensure that their cultural requirements are well met. These requirements involve sun, soil, water, nutrients and drainage, and, however your irises are grown, they must be met to assure success. However, the presence of other flowers in an iris planting does not necessarily cause problems if these are well chosen. Indeed, irises grown in combination with appropriate companions may have fewer problems, and less severe problems, than those grown in isolation. Mixed beds are usually healthier than monocultures because diseases and pests cannot sweep through them as easily, and because all of the plants do not affect the soil in the same ways.

Just as there are different kinds of irises with different needs, so must there be different kinds of companion plants. These may include shrubs and trees, as well as short lived and perennial plants, and even bulbs. They may range from the formal to the informal, and from the demure to the extravagant, and may be horticultural favorites, natives, or exotics, as your fancy leads you. It is, after all, your garden. Your intent may simply be to complement the irises, or to provide additional interest and color throughout the season, or lend structure to the garden throughout the year. But whatever aesthetic effect you seek, the chief criterion in selecting your companion plants must be cultural compatibility with the irises.

Bearded irises of all sizes require sun and adequate water, superior drainage, and a neutral to slightly alkaline soil which is not too rich, especially in nitrogen. They also need good ventilation and periodic division. They tolerate mulches poorly since mulch holds moisture close to the rhizome and blocks the sun which the rhizome needs to ripen well, and their roots run wide and close to the surface. Thus they do not enjoy weeds, nor crowding, nor do they enjoy aphids and slugs. It follows that heavy feeders, plants requiring a mulch or heavy seasonal watering, plants with leaves that will overgrow or shade their companions or harbor pests, plants that also have extensive shallow root systems, or resent root disturbance, or which are vigorous increasers, or plants which produce large numbers of unwanted seedlings, or fruit, or other detritus, are not the best choices to grow with them.

Companion plants tend to be used with bearded irises in four ways. In more formal schemes, they may be used to border the planting. Or for a cottage effect some few may be allowed to seed freely throughout it. They may be dotted throughout an iris border, or the entire bed may consist of groups of "drifts" of different perennials and annuals, including your irises. The latter scheme tends to work better than the third since the plant groups are larger and so may receive more specialized consideration.

To border a planting, whether all irises or mixed, do consider the pansy, and its diminutive cousin the viola, both of which offer a wide range of complementary colors and a tidy mounding habit which is an attractive foil to the vertical leaves of the irises. Coral bells also show this habit and their foliage, now available in a wide variety of mottled and silvered forms, is interesting. Dianthus, gray velvet lamb's ears, dark green germander, and other drought tolerant herbs or perennials are also effective, especially the prostrate veronicas, phloxes, and campanulas. Candytuft is a classic choice, especially with stones, although the white can be very assertive. Miniature ivies, including variegated sorts, are very fine in combination with brick edging. Always remember that with spreading plants, care must be taken that they do not encroach, nor harbor slugs. As the season progresses, spent edging plants may be replaced by lively or restrained annuals such as portulaca, dusty miller, creeping verbena, or ageratum.

Allowing a delicate flower to colonize a bearded iris bed works well when these are managed carefully and excess seedlings and dead foliage promptly removed. Good choices here are columbines, flax, nigella, annual poppies, tall verbena *bonariensis*, cosmos, European toadflax, and, where the irises are well apart, larkspur or cornflowers. Beardless irises in moister locations may coexist nicely with blue forget-me-nets, or some primulas.

When bearded irises and larger companions are combined, great care must be taken to ensure that the irises are not overwhelmed. Three classic choices are peonies, tall phlox, and hardy chrysanthemums. Many gardeners also use daylilies, although these can require supplemental water and their foliage can become exuberant and harbor aphids. Lupines may pose the same problems. But many perennials will mingle effortlessly, and clear blues such as those of echinops, nepeta, or Russian sage are always welcome in the garden. Here one may also use seasonal bulbs or tubers, such as daffodils, although the dying foliage of these may be unsightly. Oriental lilies, dahlias, and the autumn blooming sternbergias and colchicums will continue the display. Shrubs are often the backbone of the mixed bed, providing complementary foliage effects and winter interest. Gray things, such as lavender, artemisias, and elaeagnus bring out the best in the many colors of the iris blooms, and variegated euonymus is effective with all types of irises with variegated foliage. Old roses, especially the Albas and Damasks, are superb companions for bearded irises, as are heathers and heaths. Some aesthetic cautions may be borne in mind when selecting your shrubs. Things with very bright emerald spring growth, things with very shiny foliage, and thing with too much bloom at the same time as the irises will tend to detract from them, and golden and red foliage may also be difficult to use well.

Beardless irises are also complemented by, and, in their turn, complement many garden plants. The woodland irises such as *cristata*, *tectorum*, and *foetidissima* enjoy bright shade and moist, loamy, soils. Thus they mingle well with like-minded perennials such as hostas, ferns, trilliums, toadlilies, and pulmonarias, and shrubs such as rhododendrons and daphne. Slugs should be anticipated.

Currently there is a tendency to see the Siberian irises as less formal plants than the bearded irises and to use them accordingly, mixing them with ornamental grasses, flowering herbs, butterfly bushes, daylilies, geums, asclepias, baptisia and the like. Irises can easily get lost in the visual abundance of companion plants and here, as in all garden planning, a little restraint often pays off. Siberian irises must have sun and good drainage, but they appreciate a moister situation than bearded irises with acid soil that is deeply cultivated, and a light mulch that does not cover the crown. The foliage is slender and grassy, and the plants do not require frequent

REGION FOUR, IT'S TIME TO SHINE IN 99

Don Spoon

I was rereading the January 1998 issue of the *AIS Bulletin* and was surprised to see the low ranking of Region 4 for percentage of members who voted in the 1998 Tall Bearded Symposium. We ranked 17th for the 1998 Symposium with only 12.8% (14.14% for the 1999 Symposium) of Region 4 members choosing to cast their vote. That gave Region 12 at the top (86%) over six times the clout of Region 4. Isn't this a pitiful situation for Region 4? The Symposium is the people's choice. It goes to the iris cultivars that are most widely grown, are the most dependable and long lived, and, of course, the most beautiful. Our Region 4 results bear little resemblance to the national results. Do you know what this means? It means that our choice for the iris cultivars that do the best in our region are drastically under supported. They are being dropped off or moved way down on the Symposium. Unfortunately, the poor voting record is true for most of the eastern regions. Isn't this an unfortunate situation? What can we do about it? We could talk up the importance of the Symposium. The C & P Chapter gives all the other societies a challenge. We are aiming for 90% of our members voting the Symposium. Region 4 should give an award to the Society/Affiliate that has the highest percentage of its members voting for the Symposium. **Let's make Region 4 Number 1 in percentage voting the Symposium!** Think, "I will vote and send in the next AIS Tall Bearded Symposium."

What about the judges situation in Region 4? Compared to other Regions, such as 12, we have about half as many judges. Irisdom has its "Lords and Ladies", the judges, the only ones who can vote the ballot for all of the AIS awards. The rest of us can only vote for the AIS Tall Bearded Symposium, or for other iris classes through symposia for AIS sections of which you are a member. It is relatively easy to become and stay a judge. It only takes the desire and meeting the requirements. Then you can judge shows and vote for Exhibition Certificates and meet the challenge of being a fair, knowledgeable judge.

We need more judges in Region 4, if for no other reason, so more of our members can vote the ballot for the AIS awards. The quota for number of judges is 15% of the Region's total membership, and we are far from that number. Dr. Roy Epperson is doing an excellent job helping each of us meet the requirements. Region 4 members need to take advantage of all the great judges' training that is available, especially at our regional meetings. Nearly all of the societies in Region 4 have increased their judges' training programs. My experience is that judges' training is not only educational, but also very interesting and fun. Become a judge and move **Region 4 to the fore with more judges.**

Rich Randall did a fantastic job as Region 4 membership chairman. Region 4 affiliate societies in the 1997 AIS membership competition took 7 of the top 10 slots, with C&P number one. In C&P, Mac Shawe and others have worked diligently to encourage new members to join, even funded free new youth memberships. Mary Brown has stepped forward to lead our Region 4 membership drive. Let's give her our support. If only one in four Region 4 members brought in just one new member, our numbers would make **Region 4 Number 1 in membership in the AIS.** It is a goal worthy of our best efforts.

REGION 4 SPRING MEETING 1999

May 21 and 22, 1999

Holiday Inn, Winchester, Virginia

FRIDAY, May 21

9:30 am - 1:00 pm	Registration and Check-in
10:00 am - noon	Show entries received
Noon	Lunch on your own
12:30 - 2:30 pm	Judging of Show
2:00 - 4:30 pm	Executive Board Meeting
5:30 - 6:00 pm	Social Hour at Show location
6:00 pm	Buffet Dinner (featuring baked salmon and chicken breast)
7:30 - 9:30 pm	Hybridizers Panel (Innerst, Mahan, Spoon, Zurbrigg)

SATURDAY, May 22

Breakfast on your own

8:00 am	Buses depart for Castillo garden
9:00 - 10:30 am	Castillo garden
11:00 am	Marley garden
Noon	Lunch in Marley garden
1:00 pm	Depart for Spoon garden
2:30 - 4:30 pm	Garden judges' training (Epperson, Sparling, Warner)
5:00 pm	Depart for Holiday Inn
6:00 pm	Social Hour
6:30 pm	Banquet (Buffet featuring seamship round of beef, seafood and pasta)

7:30 pm Awards and Guest Speaker: Sterling Innerst
9:00 pm until ?? Regional Auction

* * * * *

Registration Form is enclosed following page 23.

* * * * *

HOLIDAY INN - WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA 540-667-3300

1017 Millwood Pike, Winchester, Virginia 22602
Route 50 East Exit off Interstate 81

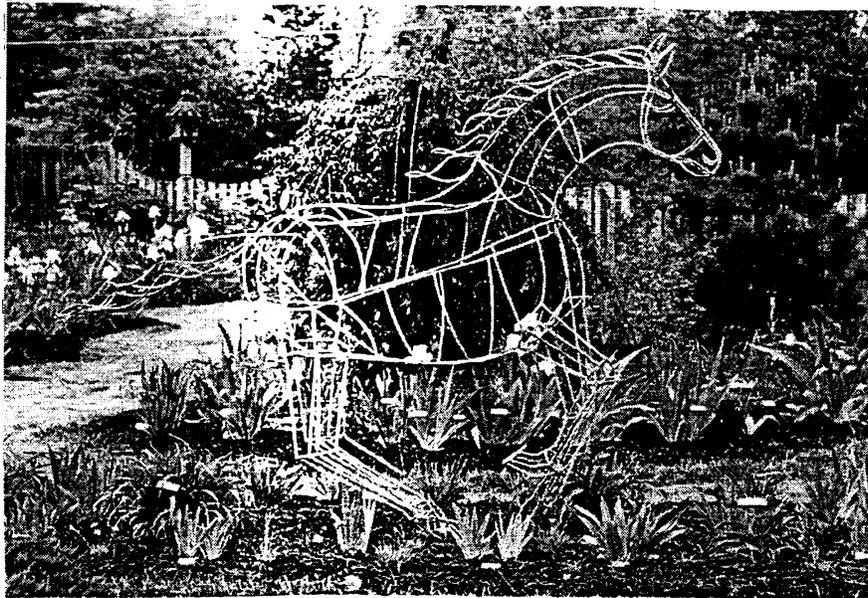
FAX: 540-722-2730

Rate: only **\$59.00** (single or double) plus tax

Please call the hotel directly and use the three letter code of RIS to speed the reservation process, or refer to the Iris Society.

The hotel will hold the block of rooms at this low rate until May 8, 1999.

REMEMBER : Entries are accepted for the accredited iris show from 10:00 am to noon on **Friday, May 21.**



A Scene from Winterberry Gardens

SPRING CONVENTION GARDENS

THE CASTILLO GARDEN in Hamilton, VA

Glenna Castillo

On one of the loveliest days in May, four years ago, a small notice in a local paper enticed us to visit Sara and Walter Marley's Rainbow Iris Garden, north of Hillsboro in Loudoun County, VA. As we had just begun landscaping a rural property we had moved to, after living in the interior of crowded cities for 20 years, we thought we might buy a few irises, and we did. Then we went back and bought a few more. Then we bought some more. By July, we had planted 73 rhizomes and, to our astonishment and the delight that can be known only to former city dwellers, we has AN IRIS GARDEN!

Saturday morning, May 22, we look forward to being hosts at the first garden to be visited by AIS members on the 1999 Region 4 Spring Tour. We now have 350 irises planted in seven beds. The majority are tall bearded irises but there also are other bearded varieties and Japanese, Siberian and Louisiana irises and a single guest *I. setosa*.

As you approach our home from the point where the buses will unload, you will encounter first a 110 foot long bed of bearded irises in three rows skirting the driveway. Beyond them, past the three newly planted Yoshino cherry trees, on a slight downgrade, are three (of what eventually may be six) other bearded beds. Pink peonies, Japanese spirea, lavender and a few daylilies are planted among the 177 TB irises and 70 bearded irises of other types.

The oldest introduced iris we have dates from 1813 and the newest from 1998. Many have won awards, and many others that we value have not. There are 19 award winners from 1998 among the bearded irises. AMERICAN CLASSIC, APRICOT DROPS, BALTIC STAR, BETTY DUNN, BLUE SUEDE SHOES, CONJURATION, CONTINUITY, DISCOVERED GOLD, EPICENTER, FIRESTORM, LARK ASCENDING, LEMON WHIP, LUNAR FROST, OLD BLACK MAGIC, REMINISCENCE, ROBIN GOODFELLOW, TIGER HONEY, YAKINA BLUE and ZANDRIA.

We have 12 guest seedlings from four Region 4 hybridizers, among which the Tour members may consider voting for the Alice Bouldin Best Seedling Award. These will be marked with chartreuse flags. Although the garden contains 57 introduced irises from 13 Region 4 hybridizers, only 51 of them will be marked with blue flags and may be considered for the D.C. Nearpass Best in Region Award. The other six -- CELESTIAL DREAM, I DO, LITTLE JOHN, PETITE MONET, SHAKER'S PRAYER, and TRUMPET CONCERTO -- already have won the award. Any introduced iris *other than those six and the 51 marked with blue flags* may be considered for the B.Y. Morrison Out-of-Region Award.

Past the three bearded beds, down the hill toward the creek that bounds our property, a few Louisiana iris clumps grow in front of the maple and willow grove, and we have begun to plant daylilies off to the ar left near the back of the property. Hollies, azaleas and about 500 multi-colored tulips are planted in a circle behind the house. The trees forming a row between the bearded beds and the circle -- mulberry, elderberry, native dogwood and oak -- marked a fence line years ago when the property was farmland. (When we moved in, they were shrouded in wild

rose, poison ivy, and other noxious vines, which we tore out with considerable pain and suffering.) A large variety of birds can be seen at the feeders here, and we hope that bluebirds will nest along the creek again this year. We occasionally see deer, foxes, and ring necked pheasants, as well as a well-padded grandfather groundhog who lives in an underground apartment by our creek.

As the terrain downhill from the house is quite uneven, the safest and most comfortable way to proceed from the bearded iris beds is to cross the gravel driveway toward the front of the house, pass the yellow and white narcissi under the elderberry trees and follow the six-foot wide brick walk, lined with andromedas, boxwood, hollies, chrysanthemums, pink and white azaleas and blue and white rhododendron. The clumps of Whitespire birch and a Japanese red maple in front of the house were planted by us during the past five years.

Two beds of Siberian irises and one of Japanese irises are located at the end of the walk. Ten red flags mark Japanese and *I. setosa* Guest Irises being grown for the 1999 and 2000 Chesapeake and Potomac Iris Society Sale and Auction. Located near the 56 Siberian irises and 43 Japanese irises are a Japanese red laceleaf maple, a contorted filbert ("Harry Lauder's Walking Stick"), double lilies of the valley, maroon and white mountain laurels, coreopsis, and crape myrtles. Cattails in the upper swale and a blue Colorado spruce, which was our first Christmas tree in this house, mark the edge of our property.

Tour members are invited also to visit the Bonsai Pavilion, which is adjacent to the Japanese iris bed and leads to the back deck of the house. The collection numbers about 45 potted trees in a variety of styles, including several forest plantings. Among the most interesting trees in the collection are a *Ginkgo biloba* at least 45 years of age and probably older, grown for most of its life by a Japanese gardener in Maryland and restyled during a bonsai symposium last spring by Japanese master Susunu Nakamura, a *Thuja occidentalis* (American arborvitae) some 50 to 75 years old, naturally stunted and styled as a bonsai by the harsh winds near Georgian Bay, Canada, where it was collected about five years ago, and a 30-year-old holly which originally grew in our Capitol Hill back yard. It was cut down in 1985 to make room for a small greenhouse and its 13-inch stump was replanted. Two years later it was dug up and transplanted in a five-gallon pot to begin its training as a bonsai. Other trees in the collection include Korean hornbeams, several kinds of Japanese maples including a mountain maple forest, and American beech forest made from seedlings collected near the Potomac in Maryland, and several evergreen varieties. The lanterns at the entrance to the pavilion from the rear deck are painted with Japanese *kanji* phonetically spelling Castillo and a Chinese ideogram for Castle.

The back deck can be reached also by the smaller brick pathway alongside the garage. At it pleases you, we hope you will partake of refreshments from either side of the house.

Glenna and Ed are looking forward to your very good company and the tremendous fun we all have on Regional Tours. Advice, comments, criticism and critiques will be most welcome. We delight in the prospect of having so many irisarians in our garden.

SPRING CONVENTION GARDENS

A Welcome to RAINBOW IRIS GARDEN

Sara Marley

At the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, just south of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, you will find the gardens of Walter and Sara Marley. In August of 1991, new beds and lawns were formulated to replace the ragweed growing around the re-erected log 'tavern' and its new addition. That month became the focus of moving 300+ cultivars of irises, a multitude of perennials, and household goods (in that order.) The Marley's has assumed management of Stoneleigh Knoll Farm, owned by Monroe and Mary Leigh.

Now, as visitors approach the driveway, they see a pond in the foreground casually surrounded with Japanese, Louisianas, psuedacorus and versicolor irises. Farther up the drive are several beds planted with bearded and beardless irises and an assortment of daylilies, mums, and other perennials and shrubs.

FEED BACK, I DO, TOUCH OF SPRING, CLARENCE, LADY EMMA, HOT and other reblooming irises, entice the visitor to wander across the expanse of green grass around the front to the far side and rear of the house.

Interspersed throughout the garden are over 200 varieties of historic irises. MTB LORELEY (Goos/Kolnerman 1909), GIBSON GIRL (Gibson '46) reblooms here, COLOR CARNIVAL (DeForest '49), BAYBERRY CANDLE (DeForest '69), STEPPING OUT (Schreiner '64), and RAVENWOOD are some of our favorites.

The garden is of free-form design to enhance the 25' x 30', 2- 1.2 story log structure that was originally build near the Cumberland Gap in southwestern Virginia in 1805. It was dismantled, moved and re-set at this site in 1989. A lot of trading has transpired with nurseries and individuals, resulting in a complete landscape scheme around the house foundations and other parts of the garden. Not all came by trading though as the Marley's have supported the local, regional and national sales and have received many plants as gifts.

LITTLE JOHN (Spoon '98), Nearpass Award winner in 1998, has been grown here since before being introduced. Latest gifts have been TB MIDNIGHT OIL (Keppel '98) and ABBEY ROAD (Silverberg '94) which received an HM in 1998 from the International Iris Competition held in Florence, Italy.

As you round the rear corner of the house, you will notice that there is a double row of beardless irises planted on the other side of the 3-board fence. This bed contains only Siberian, Japanese and Spuria irises. A gift of 6 spurias from Dave Niswonger in the fall of 1997, bloomed in May of 1998 and were outstanding, particularly ADRIATIC BLUE. More spurias were purchased or received as guests this past fall, so it is with great anticipation that we look forward to seeing them in bloom in Spring.

The Marley's inventory of irises at last count was over 1,000 cultivars, complemented by over

75 varieties of daylilies. It has enabled Sara and Walter to generate a small income from sales which is used to attend AIS activities, buy new additions to the garden and to take other trips.

This garden is the designated 'Display' garden of the area for: HIPS, the Japanese, Reblooming and Median Iris Societies. The spring of '96 was late, cold and rainy. Lost of medians were in evidence. The spring of '98 was warm early on with more than enough moisture so that later blooming varieties of bearded, the Siberians, some Japanese and the Spurias were in bloom 10 days earlier than normal. Whatever the weather on May 22, 1999, Rainbow Iris Garden will have 'something for everyone.'

SPRING CONVENTION GARDENS

WINTERBERRY GARDENS

Don and Ginny Spoon

Don and Ginny first met as members of the C&P Iris Society in 1991. In 1994 they married and combined their two large iris collections at Cross Junction, Virginia, located atop an Allegheny mountain ridge. There in northernmost Virginia, zone 6, their iris collection has grown to over 4,000 iris cultivars, including over 750 rebloomers, and over 12,000 seedlings by both Don and Ginny, including many rebloomers and space agers. The cool nights induce bloom in the MDBs and SDBs and rebloom from July until November in over 250 cultivars, as well as many seedlings.

There are many newer iris introductions (1994-1999) from hybridizers including Keith Keppel, Paul Black, Allan Ensminger, George Sutton, Terry Aitken, Brad Kasperek, Barry Blyth, Walter Moores, Schreiners, Rick Ernst, Bill Maryott, Chuck Chapman, Abe Feuerstein, Jim Hedgecock, Ben Hager, Joe Ghio, Vernon Wood, James McWhirter, Larry Lauer, Frederick Kerr, Darlene Pinegar, Dave Niswonger, and many others.

Although C&P had only one year to prepare for this Regional meeting, and no time to call for guest irises, some guests were received. George Sutton was kind enough to send guests last year and they include: SAs AARON'S ROD ('98), APOLLO ONE ('97), HOOKEM HORNS ('97), HONEY SCOOP ('97), and ALABASTER UNICORN ('96); TBs ALIEN MIST ('98), POWDER BLUE CADILLAC ('97), and CAPTIVATING ('98), and IB AGATHA CHRISTIE ('98). They also have many more of George's irises in the garden including GOLDEN IMMORTAL, which rebloomed last fall and won Best Specimen of Show at the '98 C&P Fall Show. Jim Hedgecock has also sent both guest seedlings and named varieties which will be in bloom. Both Amberway and Rae McBride sent several reblooming SDB seedlings to guest. Although it may be too late in the season to see these SDB seedlings in bloom, you are welcome to come in early spring (mid-to-late April) to enjoy the SDBs and other medians, or visit later for the rebloomers.

Many Region 4 hybridizers are represented including a complete collection of the available introductions of the late Dr. D. C. "Charlie" Nearpass. Don was able to save about 250 of the Nearpass reselect seedlings, including 10 that have rebloomed, and year-old seedlings, as well as his last seedpods from which seedlings now grow in the garden. Other Region 4 hybridizers

represented are: Lloyd Zurbrigg, Katharine Steele, Clarence Mahan, Dick Sparling, Carol Warner, Bill Ackerman, Libby Cross, Darrell Weikle, Jane McKnew, William Phillips, Owings Rebert, B.J. Brown, Loleta Powell, Griff Crump, Don Spoon, and youth member Ryan Carter.

Don and Ginny grow many kinds of irises including Miniature Dwarfs, Medians, Ensatas, Species, Siberians, Historics, Spurias, Louisianas, and bulbous irises. They also have many different perennials, such as foxgloves, lupines, dianthus, roses, and over 1,000 varieties of daylilies interplanted among the irises. They have many flowering trees and shrubs, and collections of boxwoods and dwarf conifers. On each side of the front gate are two *Prunus autumnalis* cherry trees which bloom both in the spring and autumn. Two life-size bronze statues of a mare and her colt are the focal point in the front yard. There were made by son-in-law, Tomas Fernandez. A scalloped board fence borders the garden on the south and east, forest trees on the north and west.

The pink flags designate those irises which have rebloomed in this garden; the green flags are for seedlings which Don and Ginny are evaluating; and, the yellow flags designate the Region 4 hybridizers' irises. The guest irises have blue flags. Naturally, the 'iris flags' come in all colors.



A Scene from Winterberry Gardens

REGION 4 TO THE FORE WITH MORE JUDGES

E. Roy Epperson, JT Chair, Region 4

Is Don Spoon correct in his article above saying that Region 4 needs more judges? **YES, YES, YES !!!** Region 4 for 1999 has a quota of 105 judges. By AIS criteria only Apprentice and Accredited (Garden) judges are counted as quota judges. Present and past-RVPs are excluded from the count. Therefore, for 1999 Region 4 has 28 quota judges [20 Accredited (Garden) and 8 Apprentices.] There are also 5 Master/Active and 4 Emeritus judges in Region 4. The total number of judges is 39 (this includes RVP Marley and past-RVP Lowe).

We need to understand that no Region should strive to meet its quota. Region 4, however, is in real need of more judges. All of the official AIS awards (except the Exhibition Certificate for seedlings) are garden awards and so those persons wanting to become accredited judges need to be growers of iris of all types that prosper in their growing area.

AIS judges are designated Apprentice, Accredited (Garden), Master/Active, Master/Retired or Emeritus. Emeritus status is by vote of the AIS Board of Directors. The "entry-level" judge is that of Apprentice.

To be appointed as an Apprentice Judge, the student must complete the following:

1. MAKE application for entry into the judges' training program.
2. COMPLETE three (3) years of continuous AIS membership.
3. Successfully COMPLETE a minimum of two training sessions for a total of ten (10) hours.

The Region 4 Board has defined these ten (10) hours as follows:

- a) Four (4) hours of structured classroom training on Bearded Irises.
 - b) Two (2) hours of structured classroom training on Beardless Irises.
 - c) One (1) hour of structured garden training on Bearded Irises.
 - d) One (1) hour of structured garden training on Beardless Irises.
 - e) Two (2) hours of structured training on Judging at an Iris Show.
4. RECEIVE the recommendations of five (5) accredited judges.

The Region 4 JT Chair maintains training records for all student judges and all accredited judges. When a student judge has successfully completed the requirements above, then the JT Chair recommends you to the RVP, who in turn recommends you to the AIS Chairman of Judges, who in turn recommends you to the AIS Board of Directors at its regular fall meeting.

NEW MEMBERS OF REGION 4

CAROLINA MOUNTAINS IRIS SOCIETY

Gail T. Wilson, 87 Kenilworth Road, NC 28803-2542

CHESAPEAKE & POTOMAC IRIS SOCIETY

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Lester W. Denton, 630 Dalrymple Road, Sunderland, MD 20689-9502
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John Rutkowski, 8800 Fort Foote Terrace, Ft. Washington, MD 20744
David and Dale Williams, 5806 Huron Place, Alexandria, VA 22310-2137

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA IRIS SOCIETY

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FRANCIS SCOTT KEY IRIS SOCIETY

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James W. Neat, 8982 Fort Smallwood Road, Pasadena, MD 21122-2328
Diane W. O'Connor, 3710 Deer Chase Court, Abingdon, MD 21009-1188

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Charles Arnold, 115 David Terrace, Charlottesville, VA 22903-3723
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Dot Rich, 24 Hull Drive, Hampton, VA 23661-1222
Steve J. Urick, 41 Hidalgo Drive, Hampton, VA 23669-1115

KOMMENTS FROM KIRKLEE and THE EDITOR

Please, please!! If you have a change of address for your AIS membership, notify Marilyn Harlow immediately! Also, notify your Chapter Membership Chairman and Mary Brown, the Region 4 Membership Chairman. In the mailing of the December *NEWSCAST*, twenty (20) copies were returned due to change of address. I used the printed labels supplied by Marilyn Harlow. Even though we mail Bulk Rate, USPS returns First Class and then I must send the correctly addressed copy First Class. That now costs \$ 1.56 per copy. This is an unnecessary expense for the Region 4 treasury.

Southern Living, February 1999, has an article entitled "Minor Bulbs" (pages 89-90). The large illustration for this article is a woodland planting of *I. reticulata*. I was surprised to find these referred to as "netted iris." Upon reflection, however, that is what "reticulated" means. In my garden these bulbous irises along with *I. danfordiae* are wonderful late-January to mid-February harbingers of spring. *I. danfordiae* is really spectacular when its brilliant yellow is surrounded by a blanket of snow. These irises are relatively inexpensive and will give you a great deal of joy when they bloom.

The cover is a reproduction of a sketch of *I. reticulata* that appeared in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1406 entitled GARDEN IRISES, authored by B.Y. Morrison. The pamphlet was published in Washington, DC, in 1935 and was available for sale PRICE 5 CENTS. Concerning reticulatas, he wrote: "The Reticulata group can be given only passing mention because it is practically not available for the average grower. However, there are scattered over the country many isolated gardens in which old clumps remain and delight the owners in early spring with their richly colored flowers. They are reported to prefer an alkaline soil of a light rather than a heavy nature."

You will also enjoy growing the so-called "Snake's Head Iris." This is sometimes called *I. tuberosa* but it is not an iris. It is *Hermodactylus tuberosus*, a bulbous plant with foliage similar to *I. reticulata*. The bloom has three falls that are almost black with a velvety finish (texture) and the three standards are leaf green. It is a striking bloom and the plant in my garden is quite invasive. It has migrated through the fence into my neighbor's yard.

Colonial Williamsburg has prepared and sells a PC screensaver that moves through twenty (20) scenes of Colonial Williamsburg. The last scene is labeled "House with Iris Garden" and shows lavender tall bearded iris in full bloom against a white fence. It would be most interesting to identify the historic variety that is in bloom here.

The August 1999 issue of *NEWSCAST* will focus on the history of Region 4 as our Region was created in 1959 so this is our Fortieth year of existence. Volume I, No. 1 of *NEWSCAST* was dated August 4, 1959. If my records are correct, I am the only charter member of Region 4 remaining with continuous membership in AIS. It seems more than coincidental that I will be Guest Editor for this Fortieth Anniversary edition!

Roy

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AIS REGION 4 SPRING 1999 MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

(Please print or type)



Name (1): _____ Chapter (1): _____

Name Preference for Name Tag (1): _____ Training (1): G

Name (2): _____ Chapter (2): _____

Name Preference for Name Tag (2): _____ Training (2): G

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number: () - _____ Home Work

Please check G(arden) Training Box above to be considered for judges training.

	<i>Number of persons</i>		<i>Total</i>
Full Registration:	_____	X \$80 per person = \$	_____
Partial Registration:			
Friday Evening Dinner only:	_____	X \$25 per person = \$	_____
Saturday Evening Dinner only:	_____	X \$25 per person = \$	_____
Bus Tour of Gardens only:	_____	X \$40 per person = \$	_____
<i>After May 1, Registration will be \$100 per person.</i>			Total: = \$ _____

Flower Show: *Please check if you expect to bring entries:* **Approx. Number:** _____
Try to bring as many as you can!

Auction Contribution: *Please check if you plan to bring plants:*
Please bring irises (or daylilies, hostas, etc.) for the Region!

List cultivar names being offered if possible: _____

If you have other materials of interest to bring, please indicate: _____

Please make all checks payable to:
Chesapeake and Potomac Iris Society (C&P IS)

Mail registration to:
Joseph F. Metzger, Jr.
11927 Beaver Dam Road
Union Bridge, MD 21791

Information:
(410) 775-7737

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