

AIS 100th Anniversary Book Project - 3/26/18 Report
Nancy McDonald, Editor

This book will tell the story of the American Iris Society from its formation to the present via the interwoven stories of irises and people. We will use the techniques of narrative nonfiction, defined on the website *Writers and Editors* as “fact-based storytelling that makes people want to keep reading.”

This book is not intended to be an exhaustive history of the AIS. A detailed history along the lines of the AIS *Bulletin* 50th and 75th anniversary issues and the 50th anniversary *Medianite* would be several hundred pages long, would take years to compile, and would be expensive to produce. Those publications are immensely valuable; we are not denigrating them in any way. Perhaps someday the AIS will wish to spend the time and money to publish such a volume—but that book is not this book.

The 100th anniversary book will tell the AIS story almost as a biography, via interleaved and interconnected full-length chapters and shorter vignettes. The challenge will be to weave together pieces written by different people into a flowing whole, while maintaining excitement and passion throughout.

We need ideas and stories, lots of them, but we can’t publish everything. As with all good biographies, the art lies in knowing what to leave out. We will need to decide what’s truly important in the interwoven iris-and-AIS story. For that reason, contributions are subject to excerpting and revision to harmonize with the themes of the book.

Remember, this is NOT a book about irises per se—it’s about the great tapestry that is the AIS. Which of the tens of thousands of irises produced (and possibly introduced) are pivotal in iris history, and how do they relate to the AIS? What were the key events, and how do they connect with one another? Which AIS members changed the course of iris history in sensational or subtle ways? What challenges and quagmires has the AIS encountered, what mistakes were made, and which have been overcome? What do we hope for the future of the AIS and irises?

With luck and hard work, we will produce a vibrant book of interest to more than just the hard-core iris lover. Our goal is a good read, factual certainly, definitely not “lite,” full of fascinating anecdotes about people and their irises.

The book will be just under 200 pages long, measuring about 7.5" by 10". It will be lavishly illustrated, showing the people and their irises. We plan at least one printing in hardcover, and possibly one or more printing in the less expensive softcover, though still with high-quality binding. We plan to submit the completed book to the printer by January 1, 2020 at the latest.

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Timeline and Milestones:

As soon as possible: Outline largely complete and topics ready to assign to writers. ***This is proving to be the most difficult and complex part of the whole project; working on it. It's difficult to recruit writers before I know what and how much we're asking them to write.***

- **December 2018** - Writers' deadline for first drafts; will need copyediting, fact checking, and work to see that they segue properly into one another. This is a rather soft date and will have to vary for some writers. It is very much for FIRST drafts, and in some cases I may just ask writer for an outline by then.

- **December 2018** - Decisions made about kind of paper, type of cover, book length, and other physical traits that will affect the cost of production.

- **Ongoing:** Illustrations found, approved, and processed for printing.

- **July 2019** - Front cover art, title, and press releases ready to go; price decided (will need to consult with printer as no doubt there have been paper cost increases, etc.). **MUCH publicity needs to happen now; publicity person needs to research recipients in advance.**

- **October 1, 2019** at the latest: Pre-sales begin. **Make it EASY for people to spend money.**

- **January 1, 2020** - Book goes to the printer, fully ready.

Many people have already volunteered to help in some way and we can certainly use more help with ideas and writing.