

Minutes of the AIS Board of Directors Videoconference, Wednesday, Mar 24, 2021

Present:

Jody Nolin (6) - President, Affiliate Chair

Andi Rivarola (15) - 1st VP, Convention Liaison (temporary), Public Relations Social Media,
Strategic Planning

Bonnie Jean Nichols (17) – 2nd VP, Judges, RVP 17

Michelle Snyder (15) – Secretary, Insurance

Jill Bonino (15) – Treasurer, Foundation Liaison

Cheryl Deaton (15) - Director, Youth

Claire Schneider (15) – Director, Recording Secretary

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

Howie Dash (23) – Director, RVP Counselor

Janis Shackelford (15) – Director, Policy, RVP 15

Lorene Crone (7) – Director, Electronic Services

Mike Reed (17) - Director, Awards (incoming)

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

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

Scarlett Ayres (23) - Director, AIS 2021 Convention Co-Chair

Susan Driver (7) – Director, Calendars

Wayne Messer (21) - Director, Exhibition Show Reports, News & Notes, RVP 21

Jean Richter (14) - RVP 14, RVP Representative

Gerry Snyder (15)

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

Lois Rose (4) - Exhibition Schedules

Eva Berry (23) - RVP 23

Christine Dickinson (14)

Carol Cullen (14)

Jeannette Graham (11)

Brock Heilman (6)

Debbie Hughes (18)

The meeting was called to order on Zoom at 5:05 pm PDT.

A quorum was present.

Motion 1: To approve the amended minutes of a regular AIS Board of Directors meeting, February 24, 2021. Motion by Janis Shackelford and seconded by Cheryl Deaton. Motion carried.

Motion 2: To approve the minutes of March 2, 2021, a special Handbook revision meeting. Motion by Bonnie Nichols and seconded by Howie Dash. Motion carried.

Motion 3: To approve the minutes of March 9, 2021, a special Handbook revision meeting. Motion by Bonnie Nichols and seconded by Doug Chyz. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Electronic reports were posted online for Gardens, General Counsel, Policy, President, and Secretary. All of these reports contained information only. There were no reports from 1st VP, 2nd VP, Immediate Past President, Recording Secretary, Registrar, and Strategic Planning. An update to the Motions Index was also posted online. Last-minute reports were received from Youth, and Convention Liaison, both as information only.

Discussion: Howie Dash gave an update on the Las Cruces Convention. An addendum has been signed for the hotel contract. A paragraph has been added to the contract to say that if any government restrictions (due to COVID) are in place at the time of the convention, the number of required hotel rooms will be reduced. Scarlett Ayres and Howie have been keeping the convention gardens in top form.

The General Counsel report by Dale Strauss describes a concern regarding the new banking laws. Some of the regions, sections and affiliate clubs have suddenly discovered that they have lost their tax-exempt status because financial documents were lost or misplaced when handed down from treasurer to new treasurer. Dale is working to solve this problem.

On page 2 of the General Counsel report, there is a procedure for requesting opinions and input. For general matters, opinions would be requested from the AIS president, VP and treasurer. It was recommended that the secretary be included. Jody Nolin will send this recommendation to Dale.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Judges Handbook update - Bonnie Nichols

Progress is being made on the Handbook. The chapters on Louisiana, Container-Grown Irises, PCN and Artistic Design will be reviewed by the AIS Board on March 30th. There are five or

six more chapters to revise. Coming up will be decisions on the format of the Handbook. The plan is to make available a printed copy of the Handbook that will fit into a loose-leaf notebook. Print-on-demand means that the Handbook would be printed AFTER someone places an order. John Ludi volunteered to assist with establishing the format of the Handbook for printing.

2. Judges Training in 2021 - Bonnie Nichols

Some states, Texas for example, have scheduled spring shows for this year. There will be a protocol for using online judges training sessions that will include watching the program and taking a test. Questions remain, however. Will these JT sessions be available through the AIS website or on YouTube? Lorene Crone is working on this. It was reported that programs could be stored in YouTube and be made invisible until a passcode link is issued. This might be a way to monitor the JT sessions.

Garden training sessions are being offered in Region 14. Groups can be limited in size to follow COVID social distance restrictions. A suggestion was to use a cell phone or other device to videotape a garden training session that could be shared with judges who are unable to participate in person. Tests could be made available to complete the JT session. Hours of garden training completed this year will count but are not required.

Motion 4: That required judges training hours be waived for the time period of 8-1-2020 through 7-31-2021. Advancements of Student to Apprentice and Apprentice to Judge is possible if the required hours are achieved during this time period. In addition, an Apprentice Judge would have an extra year to complete their requirements. Garden/Exhibition Judges would have an extra year to complete their hours of refresher courses. For the G/E Judges, advancing to Master Judge status will occur automatically if the number of years of required service is met. We will start a fresh AIS Judges year on 8-1-2021. Fresh with anticipation for resuming life-as-we-knew-it before COVID-19 and a fresh revised Handbook.

Motion by Bonnie Nichols and seconded by Neil Houghton. Motion passed.

This motion does not restrict anyone from taking and receiving credit for a JT session. It does give a waiver to those who cannot take JT sessions during this time. A concern was expressed that some judges might be confused about how many hours are required to meet their specific judge hurdle. It was recommended that we make this as easy as possible because this is an exceptional time. Bonnie explained that decisions about individual judges will be made when necessary.

Bonnie will send her memo to all the JT chairs and post a notice in the Bulletin.

3. JT Presentations - Andi Rivarola

Currently programs are being posted on the AIS YouTube. Tests associated with a JT program are open book. Therefore, why not make the JT sessions open to everyone? But should all of the programs and resources be available to everyone? If these items are available to all, what is the benefit for paying for an AIS membership. A comparison was made to PBS: anyone can watch PBS programs on TV for free. The purchase of a PBS membership is a way for a person to support a worthwhile cause.

4. Condition of AIS Convention Trophies - Mike Reed

Mike's objective was to find replacements for the President's Cup, the Franklin Cup, and the Ben R. Hager Cup. His recommendations: the award must be worthy (i.e. more than a paper certificate), must be available for purchase online, fit in the winner's suitcase, cost around \$100, be pre-engraved, and have the same design on all three awards. The awards would be ordered in advance of the convention and shipped to convention chair or designee so the winner can be photographed with the trophy. The name of the winner would not be on the award at the time of the convention. Mike showed examples of cup awards and prices.

Discussion: A suggestion was to have a set of dummy trophies (e.g., Styrofoam or plastic) that could be used as props in the photograph of winner and trophy. After the convention, a nice award with appropriate engraving would be sent to the winner. After the convention, a personalized mini-brass tag could be sent to the winner with the winner's name and iris which could be attached to the trophy, whether it be a cup or plaque. A suggestion was to use a photo-plaque with an engraving of the details of the award (e.g., name of award, name of convention, date) on one side and a photograph of the clump of winning iris on the other side. A trophy of sorts could be presented at the convention and the winner informed that they would be receiving a personalized photo-plaque later. The photo-plaque seems more personal for the winner because it would include a photo of the winning iris and the winner's name. Trophy cups are dust collectors, not very personal and unwanted at the Goodwill.

Discussion about the photograph for the photo-plaque: A photo of the iris or iris clump could be requested from the winner. A photograph could be downloaded from the wiki or requested from one of the prolific AIS photographers. Current registration policy requires a photograph which could be used for the photo-plaque.

Mike will investigate further: prices, potential of a photo-plaque as award, examples of engraving, sources of photos to affix on the plaque and how the photo would be attached to the plaque. In addition, Mike will survey a few hybridizers for their opinion on trophies.

NEW BUSINESS

5. WordPress Membership site software - Wayne Messer

The current process to become an e-member involves a cascade of emails between Paypal, the membership secretary and the new member. The current system is cumbersome and rigid and is an expense. Wayne explained the benefits of replacing the current membership sign-up system with WordPress Membership software. New members would be able to create their own user id and password and have access to a password recovery or reset option. New members would have instant access to the AIS resources available to e-members such as the *Bulletin*, Iris Registry, and catalogs. In addition, the software could be programmed to allow access to various features within the website, AIS You-tube channel, and wiki-Iris Encyclopedia to designated visitors only. For example, access to judges training webinar recordings. A discussion ensued about the need to identify resources that would be available to members only, making membership more desirable. The possibility of a PBS model for membership was suggested, encouraging members to donate to make everything available publicly. (The previous blue text was added by Wayne Messer).

Wayne recommends that AIS purchase a test version of WordPress Membership software and try it out in “a sandbox,” a practice area for software. The cost of a test version is \$149. Because the Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS) is already using this software, Wayne will request a meeting with them, asking for a demonstration of how the software works and their opinion of it. Wayne also will investigate whether or not AIS would need the services of a consultant with this new software. The cost to purchase an appropriately sized version of the WordPress membership software for AIS with consulting services might be as much as \$2500.

Other benefits of the WordPress Membership: it keeps track of the number of times a member has logged in and when they signed in, it works with PayPal and Constant Contact, and it could manage registration for courses and JT sessions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next AIS Handbook Review meeting will be March 30 at 5 pm PDT. Another AIS Handbook Review meeting is planned for April 13th at 5 PM PDT.

The next AIS regular board meeting will be April 28.

Reports scheduled for the April 28th meeting:

(Please write “information only” or “action required” on your report. Also, it is helpful to include your name on the report.)

Advertising Editor
Affiliations Liaison
Bulletin Editor
Calendars
Electronic Services
Encyclopedia
Image Coordinator

Iris Programs (speakers)
Iris Programs (digital resources)
Membership Development
News & Notes
Photo Contest
Public Relations & Marketing
Social Media

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 PM PDT.

Respectively submitted,
Claire Schneider