

Public_Relations_Committee_Fall_2006

The public relations committee got off to a slow start after the spring convention due to canine responsibilities of its chairman. But a group of members has been and is still being organized with various talents that should bring new dimensions to our work. Members of the committee are; Bill Burleson, Jack Finney, Ernie Henson, Terry Johnson, Bob Keup, Kelly Norris, Will Plotner, Joan Roberts, Ann Violette, and George Waters

New Members Packets

Ann Violette sends welcome packets to new members as they join, enclosing BASIC IRIS CULTURE, and brochures from sections that provide them. Ann is recovering from heart surgery. Only about \$800 was spent on mailings this year, Ann projects this may increase to \$1500 this coming year.

Display Screens

The AIS display is sent to various flower shows. Ernie Henson is in charge of the Eastern display and Will Plotner is in charge of the Western Display. The committee is identifying Flower Shows to target and trying to arrange for local workers who will take on this task of manning them and we will supply them with needed materials.

Flowers Shows

It is planned that we will create new materials for the working of Flower Shows. A pamphlet, explaining how to set-up and work flower shows, will be created. We are looking into a different form of display screen that is easier to set up, lighter to carry and would have a greater impact at a large regional flower show. This new screen may cost \$1500.

Convention Surveys

The convention survey results will be presented as a separate item. A new survey will be created for Oklahoma and input for suggested questions will be solicited.

Garden Writers Initiative

Myself and committee member Kelly Norris are both GWA members and AIS is now an Allied Member with ability to contact all 2000 garden writers. Allied membership costs \$275. Our personal memberships were not paid by AIS.

The creation of the website has been slow for several reasons. I wanted to become a GWA member first and explore other organizations press sites. I also requested, from each of our sections and cooperating societies that have medals awarded each year, a liaison from their group, who could review relevant content and help gather materials. In two months I have had no responses and I have been so busy I have not nagged for their input. The first aspect of the press release site that will be worked upon is announcements of awards and medals and I have interviewed All-American Selections for strategies to release these winners to the press. I explained last spring that I expected progress would be slow at first so I purposefully did not submit the AIS's GWA membership until September, so that we would have as much work already started as possible. It is still expected that there will be a press release site up and running by early spring and we should be able to announce next years award winners with appropriate background information and downloadable, printable photos. Many other types of press releases will be developed after the awards are in place.

Interaction with Other Plant Societies

Several plant societies were contacted shortly after Spring 2006 convention. We are studying mutual problems and working on possible exchanges.

Promotional Pieces

The classic George Waters pamphlet, Irises for Everyone, is to be reworked and new pictures found of modern irises. George and Kelly Norris and myself, have agreed to accomplish this revision.

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Advertising

Major journals: Several gardening journals have been contacted to see what they can do for us. There are two large articles that I have leads on that may allow an AIS ad next to a upcoming article on Iris. Done well this type of ad promotion has been proven to generate hundreds of responses. These deals are still being negotiated, but if they can be completed they would be worth to AIS much more than their cost which would be \$1500-\$2000.

Adwords: An exploratory program with Google combining research with advertising was initiated in August. As of the fall board meeting will have run 3 months. A summation will be brought to the meeting in order to report the latest results. So far, in 52 days, the program has sent 423 people to the AIS website at a cost of 28¢ per person. It also provides some indication of what type of Iris information people are searching for on the web.

To continue and complete the above tasks the PR committee is proposing a budget of between \$4000-\$6000.

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Addendum:

Because the Public Relations has taken on some new tasks, a copy of the old position description is attached and some modifications are included in red. These modifications are consistent with the Basic Function of Public Relations.

American Iris Society, Position Description:

Position Title: Public Relations and Marketing Chairman

Basic Function:

To generate, implement and coordinate programs to promote all aspects of The American Iris Society to AIS membership and the general gardening public.

Reporting Relationship:

He/She is appointed by the AIS President and responsible to the Board of Directors.

Specific Responsibility and Authority:

1. To solicit and coordinate the publication of articles in support of all aspects of the Genus Iris, **and as part maintain a membership in the Garden Writers Association.**
2. To encourage the use of the AIS display screen at local chapter/affiliate shows.
3. To encourage the use of the AIS banners at local chapter/affiliate shows.
4. To encourage local chapters/affiliates to construct and maintain a booth promoting Iris and Iris culture at large (regional and national) flower shows and exhibitions.
5. To utilize excess Bulletins of The American Iris Society and copies of out-of date AIS calendars to generate interest in iris and iris culture.
- 6. To conduct periodic surveys of AIS members to better understand their needs and opinions**
- 7. To administer the advertising of the American Iris Society to the outside world.**
8. To provide a report to the Board of Directors at the regularly scheduled meetings