

AIS Tall Bearded Iris Symposium Report

Fall 2009

For many years the Symposium ballot was an insert in the Bulletin, listing the names of the eligible cultivars with an area before the name to place an X. The table below summarizes the parallel evolution of the ballot and the materials furnished to the RVP's to help them tally their regional subtotals.

| Ballot format | Tallying aids for RVP's |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Bulletin insert with names | Spare ballots |
| (same) | Tally sheets |
| Bulletin insert with names, numbers | Tally sheets, number-based program |
| Bound list with names, numbers | Tally sheets, number-based program |
| Bound list with names, numbers | Tally sheets, lists, online data entry system |

The 2008 ballot for the 2009 Symposium specified that the votes sent to the RVP's should be the numbers of the iris. This system was reviled by the membership, and did not win any popularity contests with the RVP's. Many folks just plain do not like numbers.

Therefore, although the listing format remained unchanged, the instructions were modified the next year to allow members to send numbers, names, or both. This made things easier for the numerophobes, but made the number-based tallying program I had made available to the RVP's pretty much useless.

Since I had been working on an on-line voting system for the Judges' Ballot, I decided to see if I could use the same technology to let the RVP's tally their results on-line. It would be both an aid to them and a real-world test of many of the pieces of the system proposed to be used for the Judges. The tallying program was prepared, and announced to the RVP's, although with less testing than I would have liked.

The results were, in general, very favorable. Sixteen RVP's at least attempted to use the system. Of these, one, R10, did so only to try to find a way to report the normal absence of ballots. Another, R15, had problems significant enough to force her to use other means. A third, R14, had problems but was able to complete the tallying on line. Both of the last two also reported other problems with their systems.

So, thirteen of the fifteen RVP's with results to report did so with no significant problems, and several very favorable reports were received. A couple of the better typists commented that the system could not keep up with them (as each iris name or number is entered, it is saved in my PC and the display is updated), and I will look at adding another entry mode allowing all the data from one ballot to be entered, and then sent to my PC and checked. There was only s/w change I had to make after the tallying started—the algorithm I used to allow name entry with either lower case or upper case got messed up by 'MATT McNAMES' and I had to modify it.

The process of finishing up the results for this year is at about the normal state for this time of year, and details will be presented at the meeting.