

# Public Relations & Marketing Committee

## Fall 2012

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Since spring the Public Relations & Marketing AIS Committee has been very active. Most work has been done by differing subgroups so we're including their reports here as separate topics.

1. Social Media (Andi Rivarola).
2. Voucher Program (Andi Rivarola & Susan Grigg)
3. Constant Contact
4. Grants & Initiatives
5. Iris Encyclopedia

### Social Media;

The **AIS Facebook Page** is very popular – a place for mainly non-AIS members to discover irises and AIS activities. Currently the AIS Facebook page has over **7,000 followers**.

The **Google Plus** account has nearly **1,700 followers** and there's an active community of gardeners and nature lovers who regularly contributes to it.

**AIS Blog – World of Irises** is doing really well with nearly **80,000 page/views** since its inception on **March 2011**. The blog is able to offer much variety: by climate experience; by iris type; by gender experience; and from the serious scientist knowledge, the hybridizer to the every Joe/Jane.

Decided to not pursue **Twitter** as much, but the account is still active and posting regularly.

### Voucher Program

With ten participating nurseries the Membership Voucher Program is ready to begin on January 1, 2013. We anticipate that once the Program begins, more nurseries will want to be included. A voucher will be included in new member packets, and sent also to members who upgrade their memberships. E-members are also included in the Program. The voucher needs to be submitted to a participating nursery (minimum order placements vary by nursery). E-members and others ordering online can provide a voucher number to the nursery via email in order to get the voucher credit.

### Constant Contact: Electronic News & Notes

Why?

1. Bob Pries was asked by the Daylily Society if we would like to exchange Ads on their electronic Newsletter. We do not have an Electronic Newsletter.

2. Kelly Norris informed us that there is a great deal of information that comes forth that is not appropriate to the bulletin, too long-too short, too early-too late, etc. He noted that a monthly newscast linking to iris topics could be very helpful. He also noted the younger generation likes constant communication.
3. The concern has been registered in several ways that members are not alerted when new information is presented on the website. Notifications of when the new electronic bulletin is available for E-members or when the awards results are up for all members could save a lot of grumbling.

Conclusion: An active method added to the present passive methods of notifying members of Society events, actions, and proposals would be desirable.

How? Constant Contact provides a service to help with large mailing lists. By using their service messages do not wind up in spam boxes but are actually seen by members who want them. They maintain a list of interested members and send the mailing to them. At any time a member can opt in or out of the list. The E-News & Notes also allows us to conduct surveys. Estimated yearly cost is \$300.

### **Grants & Initiatives:**

The \$100,000/year free grant from Google has yet to work. But Google has offered in addition another grant for fundraising. Google has several questions we need to answer:

1. Google asks: what is our story? What is it that we do that the world would want to support?
2. What are our goals?
3. What are we presently doing?
4. Can we explain to the world why we are of value and why they should support us?

Solutions:

1. Development of some MARKETABLE purposes.
2. Analysis of what we do already and frame that into a valued contribution to society
3. Initiate new goals.
4. Communicate goals and values to affiliates since they carry out the work of the organization and get their feedback so they are invested in the process.

Addendum will hopefully be ready by meeting providing a sample fundraising campaign.

### **Iris Encyclopedia:**

More than perhaps any other initiative the Encyclopedia carries out our stated purpose. What are its cost (so far about \$200) and its value? It is the most visible tool that is seen by the world, here and abroad, garden writers and horticulturalists, gardeners and scientists.

The Encyclopedia is still under construction and in a sense will always be. By this board meeting it will have over 50,000 pages. That amounts to more descriptions than the Iris Register. It has 425 registered users (contributors). Over 70% of all irises are listed and that could be complete by next year. The dream

of many irisarians of the millennial checklist will be a reality. Betsy Higgins has finished entering all TBs, IBs and Abs from the 1949 checklist.

## **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

So far \$2600 has been received for the Anniversary Fund

### **Actions:**

1. Create "iris of the year"
2. Approve News & Notes
3. Propose sending a complete set of Decennial checklists and latest R & Is to Betsy Higgins.
4. Create Membership Drive & Contest