

## Report to the AIS from the American Iris Society Foundation April, 2012

### Grants and Scholarships:

Within the past year, the American Iris Society Foundation has funded or agreed to fund nine projects.

Dr. Carol Wilson, at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, is conducting a study titled “Does Data Based on Nuclear Sequence and Pollen Morphology Agree with the Sectional Classification of Subgenus *Iris* Based on Chloroplast Sequence Data?” This is a two year study and the Foundation Board voted to approve funding in the amount of \$10,285, divided over the two year study period. The first payment of her grant was made last summer and the remainder of the grant will be paid this spring. We expect an interim report of her progress in the next few months.

Dr. John Kaufmann, a weed specialist in Michigan, is working on identifying herbicides that may be sprayed over irises and effective against broadleaf weeds. Iris plots of Tall Bearded, Dwarf Bearded, Spuria, Siberian, and Japanese irises were planted, grown, sprayed, and evaluated. Sixteen different herbicides were evaluated for safety to iris. The first payment on this \$5,000 grant was made last summer and the first progress report of the study was received at that time. Dr. Kaufmann has completed his study and his final report has been received. The second and final payment is being sent to Dr. Kaufmann within the week.

Bob Pries was granted \$500 for a pilot study to digitize and archive about 1000 iris photos. A photographic record of digitized photos would be displayed on the Iris Wiki. A request for payment is expected by the end of this fiscal year.

Sunni Taylor, a graduate student of Dr. Noland Martin’s at Texas State University San Marcos, is conducting a study that began last spring: “Divergence in Sympatry: Mechanical Pollinator Isolation as a Mechanism for Hybrid Speciation”. From the study outline: “This preliminary study is essential to our understanding of the reproductive ecology of *I. nelsonii* and the ecological divergence between *I. nelsonii* and its most closely related progenitor, *I. fulva*.” The primary pollinator of *Iris fulva* is the ruby-throated hummingbird, but the primary pollinator of *Iris nelsonii* has not been published, though it shares the “hummingbird-pollination syndrome” with *I. fulva*. The grant of \$2,718 was approved by the Foundation trustees last winter. Foundation funding for this grant has been completed. We await a report of findings at the end of the study.

A proposal from the AIS to provide archived AIS Bulletins online was received in early August. This is an AIS Library project and would involve purchasing a software package that will allow publishing individual Bulletins as part of a library including current, future, and historical archived copies. The project would include publishing online all the historic bulletins recently scanned (approximately 320), other bulletins that have current electronic versions, and all future bulletins. The amount of the grant request (including cost of software, a website to host it, a lifetime unlimited license, a onetime

maintenance update, and five years hosting) was for a total of \$3,949. This project was reviewed by the AIS Foundation trustees and the trustees voted to approve the grant request. Funding for this project was completed in December 2011.

A grant proposal from the AIS was received for the final phase of the AIS Library Bulletin scanning project. This scanning/digitizing project involves scanning AIS Bulletins issued from 2001 through 2009 and for the 1939 and 1949 AIS Checklists. The project was approved by AIS Foundation trustees and the AIS was awarded \$2,100 to complete this work. Funds have already been made available to the AIS.

A new study to be conducted by Sheng-Wei Ho is entitled “Transmission distortion of *Iris nelsonii* and *Iris fulva*”. Sheng-Wei Ho is a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Noland Martin at Texas State University San Marcos. Dr Martin noted that “The goal of this study is to develop a genetic linkage map to use as a resource for ultimately mapping a variety of traits that differentiate *Iris fulva* and *Iris nelsonii*. This map will not only be used by Sheng-Wei Ho, but also by later students to do the actual field work using the mapping population that he’s developed.” This Foundation grant of \$7021 has been voted and approved by the AIS Foundation trustees and payment of the first installment is pending.

A new grant request was made by Dr. Nina Alexeeva in St. Petersburg, Russia. This funding request is for upgrading the Iris section of the Komarov Botanical Institute website, and translation into English. The grant application was reviewed by the Foundation Board and the Trustees voted to fund Dr. Alexeeva’s website modernization project in the amount of \$5,000. This money will be forwarded for this use within the next month. Dr. Alexeeva’s work is well respected internationally. The Foundation has supported and funded some of her research in the past.

In addition, within the past year, the Foundation completed funding for the AIS Bulletin scanning/digitizing project, directed by John Jones. That project is completed and the AIS Foundation has completed its \$12,000 funding agreement for that grant.

The full cost of these grants amounts to over \$48,400, of which over \$28,000 has already been disbursed. Another \$13,000 will be paid within the next month.

Finally, the 2012 Ackerman Youth Essay Contest submissions have been received and the entries are being evaluated. The essay title this year is “What’s So Great About An Iris?” The two youth winners (Junior and Senior) will be selected before the convention in California and announced at the Awards presentations.

**Donation contributions:**

The contribution from the DuBose Trust interest continues to be the single largest yearly donation coming to the Foundation. Other individual donations have been sporadic the past few months, however.

At the spring 2011 AIS Convention in Victoria, a special joint meeting of the Boards of the AIS and the AIS Foundation convened to discuss mutual interests and handling donations to both organizations. Out of that meeting, there were three agreements.

*Agreement #1 is:*

That the AIS promote the AIS Foundation as the recipient of all donations intended for the AIS. The implementation is to be refined with the appropriate input from legal and tax authorities and with consideration of the internal processes of both the AIS and the AIS Foundation. The AIS Foundation will then disburse payments received to the AIS for those purposes intended by the donators.

*Agreement #2 is:*

That the AIS Foundation shall be the sole supporting group for iris research activities, and that the AIS Scientific Advisory Committee shall handle scientific reviews.

*Agreement #3 is:*

That the AIS Foundation and the AIS shall form a joint advisory committee for the support and development of AIS Library activities and the development of sources for AIS Library funding.

Agreement #1 has been implemented. The AIS Foundation is now receiving donations for both the AIS and the AIS Foundation. On a quarterly basis, the AIS Foundation will disburse funds to the AIS for those purposes intended by the donors. The first of these quarterly payments will be made to the AIS Treasurer at the convention in California.

Agreement #2 has been implemented. Currently, the AIS has no outstanding scientific research projects. Those of the AIS Foundation are detailed above. The AIS transferred money in the AIS restricted Research and Scholarship fund to the AIS Foundation in late 2011.

Agreement #3: The joint AIS/AIS Foundation working group members are Will Plotner and Nancy Price from the Foundation and Jeanne Clay Plank and Jill Bonino from the AIS, Gary White from both organizations. Bob Hollingworth and Judy Keisling are ex-officio members.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary E. White  
Secretary/Treasurer, AIS Foundation