

Final AIS Silent Auction Board Report
By Debbie Strauss CoChair with Nick Stewart
10/24/17

Many of us were fortunate enough to attend the 2017 AIS National Convention in Des Moines Iowa, a truly beautiful and well-organized event. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to an excellent convention, especially Kelly Norris and Paul Gossett. Nick Stewart and I (Debbie Strauss), had the best meeting room in the hotel with the best staff to help us with the Silent Auction. We also had outstanding and enthusiastic volunteers that we would like to thank from the bottom of our hearts, as we could not have done it without them!! We would also like to thank Annie Ullman & Mary Poole for collecting the items mailed to Iowa and for getting them safely to us at the hotel.

There are many people who need to be thanked for their contributions to the success of the last Silent Auction that Nick and I will organize. First and foremost, I would like to personally thank Nick. He has been the most organized, upbeat, and enthusiastic Co-Chair ever! It has been an honor to work with him for the past 6 years. Thanks also goes to his wife Colleen for sharing him with me for all the hard work it takes to run an exceptional AIS Silent Auction, and my husband Dale for all he has done to help us as well.

We would like to thank all the people who jumped in and helped us set-up everything, man the floor, police the last 10 minutes, organize the items that each bidder won, and finally clean up and tear down. Over the years we had volunteers that came back convention after convention to help, and we had new helpers each year too! We appreciate every one of you for all the hours you helped to make the AIS Silent Auction a roaring success every year.

Of course, there would not have been a Silent Auction without the wonderful people that donated all the lovely items for our bidding tables. Every year we had many many people donate beautiful and unique pieces for our bidders to vie for. Whether you donated just a few items or cleaned out all your closets -- you really made the fun happen. An extra special thanks to all of you!

Certainly, we must thank the exceptional hybridizers who we all love and appreciate for contributing their wondrous new iris to our Silent Auction. This year we had 22 hybridizers donate 102 new and almost new iris for bidding on in the Hybridizers Honor Roll. This bidding alone brought in \$2,548! The iris were donated by Terry Aitken, Tom Burseen, Jim & Jill Copeland, Mel Cross, Howie Dash, Joe Ghio, Chad Harris, Bob Hollingworth, Steve Kelly, Keith Keppel, Larry Lauer, Stephanie Markham, Lynda Miller, Nancy Price, Elizabeth Rienets, Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer, Schreiner's, Barbara Schuette, Thomas Silvers, Ginny Spoon, Hugh Stout, and Rick Tasco. Thank you very much to all the generous hybridizers, their partners, their families and their gardens for donating extraordinary iris this year and in many years previously, too.

Last but certainly not least, we are also very thankful to all the AIS Regions that worked so diligently to build their "Raisin' Region Baskets" for my and Nick's last Silent Auction. Regions 1, 8, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, and 23 all made baskets and from Region 21 came a wonderful garden basket donated by Hello Gorgeous Gardens (Jenny & Mark Cich). These special baskets -- full of all kinds of wonderful regional specialties and traditional items -- brought in \$960 for AIS. The Regions participating all provided a magnificent display of local iris pride. Many thanks to all of you!

Personally, thank you all for supporting the Silent Auction these last six years. I spent around 500 hours per year working on this special project, for over 3000 hours total. It was a labor of love, and at the culmination of our time building and achieving greater success with the AIS Silent Auction, Nick and I are happy to report that (with the help of all our donors) we raised more than **\$35,000** for the AIS general fund over six years. We hope that someone will come forward soon to take the reins of this challenging but rewarding volunteer position, carrying on a growing tradition that has become a fun highlight of our yearly conventions! Remember the quote of Henry Rosso...***Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving.***