

FALL BOARD REPORT FOR YOUTH ACKERMAN ESSAY CONTEST

Debbie Strauss

10/24/17

Hello Board. Here I am again, this time volunteering for a position that is in an area that I love and think is imperative to promote. The Youth Membership in our world. As a crucial part of The American Iris Society the Youth Members currently have a couple of contests to enter. One is the Ackerman Essay Contest, and I am now the Chair for it. There are currently about 460 youth members.

This year our youth will have the opportunity to consider what the first president of AIS thought about iris and put their spin on why his statement is true. The 2018 theme for the Ackerman Essay Contest is:

The first president of the American iris Society, John C. Wister said, "The iris is the mainstay of the hardy garden". Write three examples of why you agree with him.

I have asked them to write from their hearts and from their experiences growing iris as well as seeing them growing in all the gardens they have visited. I encouraged them to tell us things that come into their minds when they think about their iris cultivation. I asked them to explain their examples and paint a picture with words as they tell us why their iris are a mainstay in their hardy gardens. I reminded them to not just make a list of reasons, but to remember this is an essay, so to write details with creativity.

There are two age groups. One is 12 years and under and the other is 13-18 years old. And of course, there are some rules. Essays should be written in **500 words or less**. The deadline for getting the essay finished and sent in to me is **February 15, 2018**. Mail your essay to:

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Email: debbie@loveiries.com
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Or send as an attachment to me at debbie@loveirises.com. If they have any questions they can email or call me.

The rewards for the Ackerman Youth Essay Contest that is sponsored by the **AIS Foundation** are grand. This year Paul Black has graciously donated to our winners also. There will be two prizes of \$100 each (donated by the AIS Foundation) for the first-place winner in each age group. The first-place winners will also receive a coupon for a 2018 new introduction from Paul Black. **Another new part of the awards...there will be a second and a third-place essay winner picked in both age groups.** They will also receive a coupon for a Paul Black 2018 intro. Everyone that enters will receive a lovely participation certificate.

I reminded them to not wait until the last minute to work on their essays, but to write when they have quiet or free time. I asked them to make a list of the reasons they plant iris in their garden. Then when they have more time, to weed out some of the reasons and decide on which three they want to write about. This will get them started and they won't be so overwhelmed with writing the essay.

I hope as board members you will encourage the youth in your region and everywhere to participate in this essay contest and all the other youth programs. Be a mentor to them, by talking to them about their ideas and make them excited about writing. If you have any questions feel free to email or call me.

Sincerely,
Debbie