

SPRING 2017 BOARD MEETING REPORT

Debbie Strauss

Silent Auction Co-Chair

This year, Nick Stewart and I, Debbie Strauss, will be at the helm of the American Iris Society National Convention Silent Auction for the last time. We have worked diligently to gather a fun and exciting range of donor submissions, from new iris introductions from esteemed hybridizers, to bountiful baskets from our AIS Regions, to beautiful iris and floral decor from individual AIS members. "Rhythm of the Prairie" will be our most thrilling Silent Auction to date – it has been a privilege to organize the AIS Silent Auctions for the past six years, and we are excited to go out with a bang! Here's a peek into what the 2017 Silent Auction has in store...

I mailed out 96 postcards to hybridizers asking for new or newer iris donations for the Silent Auction. As of May 14, 2017, I have 84 separate iris coupons for the Silent Auction. For their generosity, please help me thank: Mel Cross, Terry & Barbara Aitken, Barbara Shuette, Joe Ghio, Bob Hollingworth, Bonnie Shileny, Tom Burseen, Jill & Jim Copeland, Elizabeth Rieniets, Howie Dash, Steve Kelly, Keith Keppel, Larry Lauer, Chad Harris, all of the Schreiner's, Ric Tasco & Roger Duncan, Ginny & Don Spoon, Jan Sacks & Marty Schafer, Lynda Miller & Nancy Price, and Dave Silverberg. Some of these hybridizers have donated every year for the past 6 years we had the Silent Auction. They are truly awesome!

Thus far, I have only heard from five Regions that plan on contributing to the *Region Raisin' Baskets* drive – these gift baskets, from Regions 23, 17, 22, 1, and 18, will be fabulous! We hope that some more Regions end up bringing baskets, too. The silent auction bidders really enjoy bidding on these thematic region goodies.

We have about 100 donated items from loyal AIS members – highlights include eight original canvas photographs from Cathy Egerer, a designer crystal vase, carved wooden figurine with an iris, the Polish Irisairian *Book Beauty of Iris* Lech Komarnicki, and both of Kelly Norris's books. Come check everything out and do some bidding.

I have included the list of items that the AIS Librarian wishes to donate for the silent auction. Please make a motion to approve the acceptance of these donations.

We do need help with manning the silent auction. PLEASE consider offering to work in the Silent Auction. Nick and I would like to be able to attend a few meetings and judges' trainings. It is also a tremendous feat to set it all up, eventually distribute items to the winners and collect money, and finally to tear down. I know everyone has responsibilities, but the Silent Auction has many *many* things that must be done all week and there are only two of us, so we could really use your help! Thank you to AIS, as well, for covering the rooms for Nick and me so we can have adequate time to set up in advance this year.

After this year, the Silent Auction will need at least two new coordinators to fill our vacated roles. The Silent Auction – a multi-day affair that brings in dozens upon dozens of

conference attendees – is one of the marquee events of the AIS National Convention. It's a perfect way to cool-off after a long day in the gardens; you can chat with your fellow attendees during a stroll through our tables, delight over the bounty of our diverse Regional Baskets, or snap up that perfect iris decoration for your home. The written bidding is fun, and returning to check on your items each day is a thrill! We sincerely hope to see this special tradition continue, though there will be challenges ahead. The new National Convention format has reduced the number of days for the conference, which will severely limit your time to set up the Silent Auction before attendees arrive. This will, in turn, make it difficult to wrap up bidding and distribute the winning items before the end of the conference. We are happy to share the refined Excel Database we have developed for streamlining the traditional Silent Auction, but new volunteers will need to be energetic and creative in adjusting the Silent Auction format to meet these changes. Best of luck to the future coordinators, and thank you again for supporting AIS through our Silent Auction for these past six years!