Comments on possible late 2020 Awards vote

I have roughed out a schedule for AIS Awards voting, including a special ballot this winter. It shows the normal spring ballot going out one month later than last year, which had been later than I prefer.

The schedule is not tight, in that it allows the amount of time that should be needed for each step, but it is success-oriented. We will be doing things differently than in the past, and there is a greater than usual chance of something going wrong, which could either destroy the schedule or invalidate the vote.

Date	Event
9/29/2020	Special telecon
10/4/2020	possible plan out for review
10/28/2020	AIS board vote, draft ballot out for review
11/11/2020	Review complete, ballot to printer
12/11/2020	Ballot printed, goes into mail
1/1/2021	All ballots received by judges (including overseas)
3/2/2021	Voting (postmark) deadline
3/12/2021	Deadline for ballot receipt
3/17/2021	Tabulation complete, winners announced
4/16/2021	Spring ballot complete, out for review
4/30/2021	Review complete, ballot to printer
5/30/2021	Ballot printed, goes into mail
6/20/2021	All ballots received by judges (including overseas)

The process has been smooth the last few years because of an established routine. I do one year's ballot generation, tabulation, and compilation of results. I then set up a new folder for the next year and copy in the current files and start work on the new ballot. Even without the proposed additional ballot, that routine is messed up somewhat by having new different rules for eligibility, but I believe I have handled that. I have already done much/most of the work of generating the 2021 ballot assuming no 2020 vote. So adding a 2020 ballot at this point would mean going back into the 2020 folder and using that for tabulation and compilation, and then either discarding the 2021 work already done or merging the results from the 2020 vote into the 2021 files in a very non-routine way.

Also, preparing and checking the ballot, and then supervising online voting and entering the data from printed ballots received are both tiring tasks requiring meticulous attention to detail. Having to do two rounds back-to-back is not an appealing prospect.

The Hybridizers Manifesto contained the following statement, which I believe to be misleading at best: "The irises up for the top awards and AMs have been in circulation for 8-11 years…. " I did some processing of the iris on the AM ballot, and came up with the following table. The first five rows are for bearded iris and the last five for beardless. Age is the number of years since introduction. Number is the number of Iris on the ballot with that age, and PercentNewer is how many are the listed age or more recent. As you can see, at least 40% of the iris are within the first two years that they could possibly be on the ballot. It seems clear to me that with no garden visits this year many judges will have seen too few of the candidate iris for the required two years.

Type	age	number	PercentNewer
bearded	4	69	21.8
bearded	5	67	42.9
bearded	6	118	80.1
bearded	7	52	96.5
bearded	8	11	100
beardless	5	14	25.5
beardless	6	8	40
beardless	7	19	74.5
beardless	8	11	94.5
beardless	9	3	100

If there is a strong desire to keep the number of Special Medals what it would have been had the 2020 vote not been canceled, having two votes for each and two winners in the normal 2021 vote is much less work and significantly less risk.

The AIS BOD voted unanimously to cancel 2020 Awards voting earlier this year, and then decided unanimously not to reconsider the matter. It makes less sense to vote now than it did then.