

AIS Region 23 Newsletter New Mexico



Cindy Rivera with stalk 'Flamingo Fever' (H. Dash, TB, 2019) - Best in Show Albuquerque, NM May 12, 2024. She also received the 2024 AIS Region 23 Judges Award this year

2024

September 2024

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Editor's Note

The views and information contained in the articles within this newsletter are solely those of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by the Region 23 Executive Board. Reprinting of articles contained in this newsletter is permitted provided the source of publication, and the author is given full credit.

Due to rising costs of printing and postage, the Region 23 American Iris Society Members approved the discontinuance of the newsletter in hard copy format, and have authorized the publication of the regional newsletter via electronic format. Society Presidents are encouraged to copy the newsletter to share with their members that do not utilize computers and/or internet services.

The Region 23 Newsletter will be posted to our Website at least once a year. I sincerely hope that you continue to enjoy the newsletter and all the information concerning the AIS members within our Region. All regional members are encouraged to submit news flashes (special kudos, get well wishes and memoriam information), photos, and articles to me at: sdayres2@aol.com. Any comments on format or changes you would like to see implemented, please let me know as well. Since the document is electronic, it is easy to modify.

Regional Vice President Message, Jacqueline Pountney

Hello and Welcome to Everyone! I go by Jacquie. I am 79 years old. I have been married for 61 years. I moved to Las Cruces 12 years ago from South Carolina.

I found out about the Mesilla Valley Iris Society, and at the first meeting I attended I decided to join the group. Cynthia Wilson was the president at that time. I have served as the society's Vice President several times. I became a judge four years ago. I have around four hundred iris in my yard. My husband is a great help to me.

Club News

Albuquerque Aril and Iris Society (AAIS)

Submitted by Rae Phillips, AAIS President

We have been blessed with another successful year due to the great participation of our members in all of our activities. And we continue to gain new members while retaining

most of our existing ones; we started the year with 41 members and as of August 24 have 57. Our financials are healthy and allowed us to provide extra benefits to members. We held meetings and/or events each month, beginning in February, at the Albuquerque Garden Center. Our meetings include presentations by iris experts who teach us more about growing iris.

Our other officers this year are: Candy Scott, Vice President; Linn Furnish, Treasurer; Jody Kennedy, Secretary; and Eva Barry, Past President. Usually over half of our members were present and helped at most of our activities. We couldn't have done our jobs without them!

As our club, and our individual members, are also members of the Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs (CAGC) who own & run the Albuquerque Garden Center, we share in many of their scheduled activities as well, which gives us opportunity to have more exposure to other gardeners.

Highlights of our Year: In April we participated in the Garden Center's Spring Plant Sale by offering potted iris. This is our second year of doing this, and both years we almost sold out on the first day. It also offers us more exposure to encourage other gardeners to get involved in growing iris, and we gained a few new members. It's success is due thanks to Eva Barry, Candy Scott and a few others who saved rhizomes from last year's sale, and acquired some from other sources, and planted them in pots in anticipation of this sale.

This year we went back to holding our Iris Show on Mother's Day, and it was a big success, with 15 exhibitors and 67 entries, although many of our gardens had already finished blooming. Attendance was excellent; it seems a perfect place to bring Mom after you've taken her out to lunch! Cindy Rivera won Best Specimen of Show and the Silver Metal for the most blue ribbons, and Eva Barry won the Bronze Metal for second most blue ribbons. This was our first year to have a judged Artistic Division, and had excellent participation, with Patricia Randall winning Best Artistic Design. We are always grateful to our Judges for also sharing their knowledge with us.

AAIS participated in the Garden Center's annual sanctioned Flower Show June 14/15 with entries from several members (of note was Jody Kennedy's entries all won blue ribbons.) Plus, we participated in the club competition with a table setting for four with the theme of "Puttin' on the Ritz" (the theme of this year's show was "All That Jazz" highlighting the 1920s & 30s).

One of the most fun thing we do is our hands-on program in June showing how to divide and process iris in anticipation of our sale. After trial and era prior years, we now use doggie wading pools to contain most of the mess (this year we actually used three) and members bring some of their gnarliest clumps of iris for us to use to demonstrate. After

giving the demo first, we then open the process to all attendees, who crowd around each pool and attack the challenge with enthusiasm! The final treat is participants get to take the rhizomes home.

While we originally didn't think we'd have enough members digging iris this year for our July 13th sale due to the excessive heat temps we were experiencing, everyone helped each other as well as volunteering to dig at non-member yards, so this wound up as our best sale ever.

Considering that we must pay CAGC 25% of our profits, we still realized several thousand dollars. This summer we also dug up our old iris bed at the Garden Center that had been mostly neglected, and refurbished it by turning in compost & fertilizer, and replanting with a choice selection from our iris sale. Hopefully, with some diligence, we should eventually see a lush bed of beautiful iris blooming at springtime. The gardens at the Albuquerque Garden Center are a showplace for the various clubs to feature the particular type of flower they promote, as well as a big variety of various garden scenes. It is also a special place offered to the public in which to hold events such as weddings, receptions, or graduation parties.

At our August meeting, we had our annual drawing for the new iris rhizomes we had ordered in the spring from two different growers, Mid-America and Superstition. By paying the grower a set dollar amount, but giving them the freedom to select the iris, we got over 50 rhizomes, most of them being recent introductions. We were able to provide these free of charge to our members. They certainly earned it with all their hard work for the many events we had this year!

Still to come for 2024: We will participate and volunteer at the New Mexico State Fair Flower Show September 5-15. We also look forward to attending the Regional Convention at the end of September in Santa Fe. There will be meetings in September and October, and we will look forward to a catered Holiday Party in December to finish out the year.

We sadly said goodbye to two of our beloved long-time members who had contributed so much through the years, going back to when there was just the New Mexico Iris Society: Phil Doonan and Helen Radebaugh both passed away earlier this year.

Our schedule for 2025 has been set for some time (to book our space at the garden center we must set it up the year before). Our Iris Show will again be on Mother's Day, May 10th. We are pushing our Rhizome Sale to later in the year, September 20th, hoping to avoid digging during the hottest time of year. Meetings and/or events will be held each month from February through October at the Garden Center. For more info contact me at raecyp65@gmail.com.

We are so grateful to have such a wonderful bunch of iris-loving members who give so generously of their time and participation, and anticipate 2025 will see this continuing robustly.

AAIS artistic section at their show is entitled “Animated Iris”. They have 6 design classes that could be entered.

1. Pocahontas – A traditional mass design which must incorporate native plant material.
2. 101 Dalmatians – A black and white traditional line design.
3. Yellow Submarine – A creative line design featuring a single yellow iris.
4. Toy Story - A design using one or more toys as a floral container and/or within the design.
5. Pinocchio – A design using wood, either as a container and/or within the design.
6. Ratatouille – A design incorporating fruits and/or vegetables. Any cut fruit or vegetable must be sealed



Figure 1 101 Dalmatians - A black and white traditional line design.



Figure 2 Toy Story. A story using one or more toys as floral container and/or within the design



Figure 3 101 Dalmatians



Figure 4 Pinocchio – A design using wood, either as a container and/or within the design.



Figure 5 Cindy Rivera won "Best in Show" with an iris hybridized by MVIS club member Howie Dash



Figure 6 The recipient of the best Aril specimen in the show will a special AAIS medal and certificate for a new Aril/Arilbred

Enchanted Vista Iris Society (EVIS)

Submitted by Robin Kishbaugh, rgkishbaugh@yahoo.com, EVIS President

Our year began with our February Meeting which was celebrated as a Valentine's Day Potluck. Although membership is down over previous years, the enthusiasm was there for a good start to the year. We discussed upcoming plans and a Judge's Training to be held in March called "Putting Art Into Your Artistic Designs" by Emeritus Judge and member Patricia Randall. We also welcomed Jennifer Martinez, a new member to our group and introduced ourselves to her.

In April, Eva Barry gave her talk on "Getting Your Iris Ready for the Show" which is always a good refresher to have the month prior to the iris show.

Traditionally, we don't have a May meeting due to the fact that our iris show is held the first Saturday of the month. In addition to the show, we sold potted iris and fertilizer at our event, which boosts the Treasury a little.

In June we talked about digging and dividing our Commemorative Iris Garden at the Veteran's Memorial Park, here in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. We will be replacing all of the patriotic named irises, and will be replacing them with red, white and blue iris to make it look more patriotic. Member Patricia Randall and her daughter will undertake the replanting project. We also had a round table discussion about caring for iris after the bloom season and protecting them against the hot sun of the New Mexico Summer.

In July we held our July 4th Celebration Potluck at our normal meeting place. Plans were made for the digging and dividing of the Commemorative Garden for our rhizome sale, as well as to mark and clean the iris in preparation for our sale.

Our August meeting was filled with planning for our sale, then a nice Judge's Training on "Miniature Tall Bearded Iris" was conducted by Patricia Randall. Our sale was held August 31st at the Sabana Grande Recreation Center here in Rio Rancho. It was well attended.

We picked up another new member at our sale and look forward to getting to know her in the months ahead. Sadly, we lost a valued member this year when Philip Doonan passed. We currently have nineteen members.

We will conclude our year with a regular business meeting, our last for the year, followed by "Fun and Games" with prizes in October. The final event of the year will be our annual "Holiday Party and White Elephant Gift Exchange" in December. Our December meeting time is highlighted with a Christmas Potluck and no business meeting, just having a great celebration of all things iris and the upcoming Holidays.

Mesilla Valley Iris Society (MVIS)

Submitted by Collette Bullock, mvis.newsletter@gmail.com, MVIS President

2024 has continued to be a very hot dry year for our area but our club and our irises have continued to thrive thanks to our hard-working, wonderful members. Howie Dash is one of those members. He is a very active hybridizer and president of the Arilbred Iris Society. In 2023, Howie won the Wister Medal with his 'Chihuahuan Desert' iris. His tall bearded 'Gold Dust Woman' won a high number of votes for the award of merit. His tall bearded iris 'New Mexico Skies' won a high number of votes for honorable mention. His arilbred 'Chihuahua Morning' won the highest number of votes for honorable mention of any of the classifications except one.

Steve Kelly is another award-winning hybridizer in our club. This year Steve won an award of merit for 'Sunglasses Needed'. Steve is one of the hybridizers featured in the Summer 2024 issue of "Irises Spotlight on Hybridizers – The Next Generation".

April 13, 2024, MVIS again held our annual iris show at the Mesilla Valley Mall. Wes and Cynthia Wilson and Scarlett Ayres were unable to participate so our numbers were down somewhat. There were 11 exhibitors, 101 entries and 98 total different cultivars. Highlights: Best in Show was 'Handful of Magic', TB 2015, Barry Bylth, exhibited by Steve Kelly. The Best Seedling was won by Howie Dash. Exhibitor with the Most 1st Place Ribbons was won by Jacqueline Pountney. The Bronze medal was awarded to Howie Dash.

Another of our members, Karin Hite, is an elementary school principal who has developed an iris garden with several of her students. MVIS donated several iris rhizomes and the students are very enthusiastic about this new project. Last year, MVIS funded an endowed scholarship for horticulture students at NMSU. Two scholarships of \$500 each were awarded last year, and another two scholarships are in the works for this school year. Below is a letter from Karin Hite.

There is a new Gardening Club at Sonoma Elementary! The club meets after school on Fridays and is in its fourth week currently. There are 14 students in grades 3,4,and 5 who've volunteered for the club and are excited about the positive impact they'll be making at our school. Sonoma has an existing garden area that has been used sporadically by different grades to plant vegetables and herbs. It consists of 10 raised beds. This year nothing was planted in the garden prior to the initiation of the Garden Club. With a generous donation of 4 flats of unnamed irises from the Mesilla Valley Iris Society, the club has planted its first sets of flower beds. The students are excited to take care of the plants and continue to improve the garden area by introducing more plants and cultivating their iris beds.

Thanks for featuring us and supporting our club!

*Karin Hite
Principal
Sonoma Elementary School*



Our Big Dig and rhizome sale went very well. Wes and Cynthia Wilson along with Scarlett Ayres donated the majority of the rhizomes. We had about 360 varieties to choose from and had shoppers come from as far away as Tucson.

We are trying to make our meetings fun, educational and interesting. Bob Van Liere from Iris4U was our guest speaker in February. We then bought many irises from him and passed them out to our members for “club iris”. Members will grow them and then share the increase with the rest of the club in a few years. Scarlett Ayres has given several very popular programs such as “Reblooming Iris and Companion Plants”. We often have door prizes and bring extra seeds and plants to share with our members. To encourage new members and promote our mentoring program, we are planning a potluck in October in Scarlett Ayres’ beautiful backyard. We will also have a fun Christmas party.

We approached the Magoffin Historic House in El Paso Texas about growing historic irises (1930's and earlier) around the Magoffin House. Nestled in downtown El Paso, this striking and unique adobe homestead tells the stories of a multicultural family that influenced the development of the Southwest borderlands. Talks are ongoing to collect historic irises and plant them next year. Though El Paso is not part of Region 23, it may be in the near future. Scarlett Ayres also briefed the Master Gardeners in El Paso on growing irises.

Pecos Valley Iris Society (PVIS)

No report this year.

Santa Fe Iris Society (SFIS)

Submitted by Diane Brennan, SFIS President, SantaFelris@gmail.com

This year has been a year mixed with successes and sadness. We had a successful show in May and a sale in August. The board was new to the iris society and the functioning of the Santa Fe chapter. We learned a lot and look forward to continuing sharing the love of irises with all. We were able to meet each month and welcomed speakers on arrangement design and lessons learned on a farm in northern New Mexico. All this was mixed with the sadness of the loss of some wonderful long-standing members who contributed so much to the iris community. We said good-bye to Virginia Oppenheimer, Monte Bilberry, Fran Day and Pat Feather.

The artistic design competition for SFIS is entitled "The Wonderful World of Disney". It consists of the following classes:

1. Encanto – La Familia Madrical "So many stars and everyone gets to shine".
2. Pinocchio – I Got No Strings on Me. An arrangement in the oriental manner featuring wood in the design.
3. Lion King – Circle of Life. A modern arrangement incorporating circles in the design.
4. The Little Mermaid – Under the Sea. An underwater design in which some or all plant material and other optional components are submerged in water.
5. Snow White – Who is the fairest of them all? A design that contains reflections.
6. The Jungle Book – I Wanna Be Like You. A parallel design in which 3 or more groups of plants are featured in a strong parallel placement in single container.
7. Mulan – Reflection. An arrangement in the Moribana style using a shallow container with water as a feature of the design.
8. Tangled – I Got a Dream. A cascade design with emphasis on downward rhythmic movement. A minimum of components may extend upwards.
9. Peter Pan – I Won't Grow Up. Youth division. A design that captures the exuberance of youth.



Figure 7 Encanto – La Familia Madrical “So many stars and everyone gets to shine”. Traditional Mass Design



Figure 8 Pinocchio – I Got No Strings on Me. An arrangement in the oriental manner featuring wood in the design.



Figure 9 Mulan – Reflection. An arrangement in the Moribana style using a shallow container with water as a feature of the design.



Figure 10 Tangled – I Got a Dream. A cascade design with emphasis on downward rhythmic movement



Figure 11 SFIS took the judges to lunch.



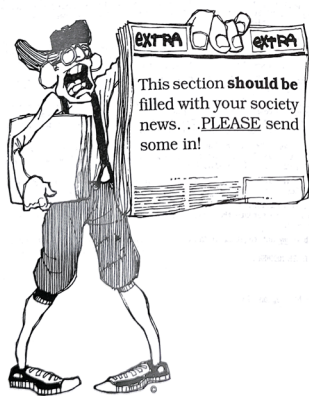
Figure 12 Debbie Swaim and 'Daughter of Stars' (D. Spoon, TB, 2001).

Region 23 News

There are no minutes available this year. Due to unforeseen circumstances I was unable to obtain the convention meeting minutes from Frances Day, who kept notes for me as I was not able to attend the 2023 convention. And sadly, as you know, Fran has passed away.

I will be attending the convention this year and all will be back on track with the usual meeting minutes next year, covering all of the happenings of our 2024 convention.

Welcome to our new members



We would like to take this opportunity to welcome new American Iris Society members to our region. We also would like to take this opportunity to welcome new members to the various clubs. We hope your association with the regional and national members about our favorite flower will prove to be beneficial and educational and that you make many new life-long friends.

Spotlight on Our New RVP – Robin Kishbaugh

I was born and raised in San Diego, California. I am the eldest of six children, and attended school there, graduating from The Bishop's School in La Jolla. After attending Pepperdine University for 2 ½ years, I transferred to San Diego State University and graduated with a BS in Accounting from their School of Business Management. I was active in several groups including the Junior League of San Diego and Young Friends of the San Diego Symphony.

While accumulating some working experience in my field, I met my husband, Wayne, on a blind date. We fell in love and got married the next year. Wayne and I welcomed two children to our family, Doug and Stephanie, and decided to move to Albuquerque to escape the fast pace of the

Southern California lifestyle. As the children progressed in school, I was very active in their Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and then Boy Scouts and Rainbow Girls and wound up serving as President of the Parents Association of Sandia High School for four years.

With the kids out of the nest, I focused on quilting and then on irises. While I still enjoy my quilting, the irisarian in me has taken center stage. I have served on the board of Enchanted Vista Iris Society since I joined. I am currently an American Iris Society Judge and President of the Enchanted Vista Iris Society and grow some 300+ cultivars of iris happily growing in my yard, coexisting with my Great Dane, Titan, and my collection of box turtles.

AIS Region 23 2022 Annual Honorary Awards (presented by Patricia Randall)

Judges Award

Cindy Rivera has been one of the regional judges who has always provided educational judges training for AAIS, as well as EVIS when asked to do so. Her PowerPoint programs are always chocked full of beautiful photos of the irises on discussion, and her information related to the specific topic at hand is always well researched and presented. Cindy holds the honor of Master Judge for the American Iris Society. In 2023 Cindy was also certified as an Artistic Design Judge. Cindy provided her expertise in judging the artistic design divisions of EVIS, AAIS and SFIS shows for 2024. Her services are greatly appreciated

Debra Bilberry was selected an honoree of the 2024 Region 23 Judges Award for her continuing work as a judge, as well as judge related duties for SFIS. Debra is certified as a Garden/Exhibition judge. Debra has provided in-garden judging training sessions over the last few years, including the years during the pandemic shut down. These were scheduled to help the judges of SFIS remain compliant with their AIS Certification.

She has also served as the Judges Chairman for the SFIS annual shows for many years, selecting and inviting regional judges to perform the judging duties of their show each year. In 2023 she was also certified as an Artistic Design Judge for the newly created AIS Judges status. Debra served as a judge for the Artistic Design division at the 2024 EVIS Show.

Hybridizer Award

We have not had a nomination for the Hybridizer Award for the past several years, so am most pleased to inform that there is a nominee this time around. Nominated as the winner of the Hybridizer Award is **Paul Hill**. He was acknowledged for his hybridizing and iris introductions over the past few years. His irises have proven good growers as so noted by several of SFIS members. Paul is not only working hard to cross and introduce good quality irises but is a great supporter of the SFIS group, digging, and providing many of his introductions to help boost the sale proceeds each year. Helping with many chores needed to keep the group active and productive. He also provides an open house in his garden each year. For those of us who have visited his gardens we have to marvel at the great beauty that meets the eyes as we round the last corner of the path. His garden is immaculately clean, well arranged by types of irises grown, and clearly marked for everyone's information.



Figure 13 Debra Bilberry, SFIS received the Judges Award from Patricia Randall.



Figure 14 Paul Hill, SFIS received the Judges Award from Patricia Randall.



Figure 15 Ann and Dave Curley, SFIS received the Distinguished Service Award from Patricia Randall.



Figure 16 Rae Phillips, AAIS received the Distinguished Service Award from Patricia Randall.

Distinguished Service Awards

David Ferguson is a member of both AAIS and EVIS. This individual was nominated for the numerous duties he has helped with at their shows and sales events. He serves as a classification judged at both of the society shows. David also helps to setup the mechanical equipment needed for any PowerPoint educational programs and manning the projector as well. He is great at relaying detailed and correct information pertaining

to many of the iris types and has provided interesting programs on the background of the iris evolution.

Ann and Dave Curley are from the Sana Fe Iris Society. They were honored for their devotion to their society for all of the duties they carry out during the course of the year. They have served as officers, committee chairman and committee workers. They willingly stepped up and helped whenever and wherever needed. They played a big role in putting the numerous things together for the last Regional Convention that the SFIS hosted. They have also kept a close eye on the SFIS public iris garden, always helping with the cleaning, digging and planting chores.

Rae Phillips has always been a super inspiration to the group and never slows down. She wears many hats. She has a fantastic knack of attracting new members to the society. Not only do they willing join the group but step up to the plate to perform the duties required to keep an active group busy. AAIS currently has 57 members. There are not enough words to detail all of the duties she has performed for the group. Everything is completed on time and correctly.

Please get your nominations ready for next year. The awards can be purchased ahead of time and be ready for the convention next August 2025. Listed below are those Region 23 members who have received our prestigious awards in the past years.

The past Hybridizer Award Winners have been: Howard Shockey, Luella and Henry Danielson, Pete McGrath, Sharon McAllister, Steve Kelly and Howard Dash.

The past Distinguished Service Award Winners have been: Barbara Figge, Maxine Perkins, Floyd Stoppani, Ann Colwell, Karen Bergamo, Patricia Randall, Jim Reilly, Reita and Scott Jordan, Cindy Rivera, Pat Feather, Pegi Blackwell-Smith, Phil Doonan, Fran and Henry Day, Rosemary and John Cain, Debra Bilberry, Eva Barry Cynthia and Wes Wilson, Scarlett Ayres, and Howie Dash.

I sincerely THANK YOU for your nominations and hope you can join me next year in the presentation of more awards.

Iristatically Yours,

Patricia Randall,

Region 23 Awards Chairman

If you are unable to email your nominations, you can mail them to me at:

758 Hood Road, SE Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124

In Memory Of Our Loved Ones

Monty Bilberry

Monty John Bilberry, a beloved resident of White Rock, NM, passed away on June 25,



2024, at the age of 73. Born on October 10, 1950, in Portales, NM, Monty was known for his kind and loving nature, deeply cherished by all who knew him.

Monty graduated from Santa Fe High School and earned his Bachelor's degree from Eastern New Mexico University. His career was diverse, including time as a rancher with a small cow and calf operation, and roles in real estate, construction, the oil and gas industry, and the TV and film industry. These varied paths showcased his wide range of interests and talents.

Monty was a proud member of both the American Iris Society and the Santa Fe Iris Society. He enjoyed growing irises and traveling across the USA and Canada to see them. Monty deeply loved the outdoors, finding joy and peace in activities such as hunting, fishing, and camping. He also enjoyed rodeos, horse racing, card games, dominoes, movies, music, and books, which allowed him to connect with family and friends, creating lasting memories.

Monty is survived by his devoted wife, Debra Bilberry, treasurer of the AIS Region23.

Philip Doonan



Philip Doonan known affectionately as Phil was a faithful member and strong supporter of our various New Mexico Iris Societies' and the American Iris Society for many years. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on January 18, 1957. He served in the United States Air Force for an impressive 32 years, rising through the ranks to Major. Phil's service was distinguished by numerous accolades and decorations earned during his tenure. He later returned to the Southwest and attended the University of New Mexico, where he obtained his MS in Special Education.

He was a beloved schoolteacher who dedicated his life to shaping young minds with care and compassion. He taught special education at Corrales Elementary and Stapleton Elementary in Rio Rancho, NM. He retired after twelve years.

In addition to his military service and teaching career, Phil was deeply involved in various volunteer organizations that focused on children's welfare and community enrichment. He generously contributed his time and efforts to the Security Police Association, Friends of the Library of Rio Rancho, VA Volunteer Services, Enchanted Vista Iris Society, Albuquerque Aril Society, Masonic Sandoval Lodge, Eastern Star, Kiwanis Club, and the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.



Fran Day

Fran Day (nee Abrahamson) was born on October 17, 1947, in the town of Onawa, Iowa, and died on September 2, 2024, in Santa Fe, NM.

Many of Fran's friends called her "the great organizer," which she truly was.

Fran was brought up on a farm and loved all her animals, especially cats.

Working for the military, she became a secretary at Strategic Air Command in Omaha in the 1970's. In the 1980's, she moved to Santa Fe, where she became an editor of publications for Submerged Cultural Resources (underwater shipwrecks), a division of the National Park Service.

After marrying her husband, Henry Day, she became very involved in gardening, with an emphasis on Iris plants. She trained to be a judge for the American Iris Society. For many years she helped to organize and plan events for Iris groups in New Mexico. She attended national iris conventions as well.

From childhood, Fran always loved Christmas. She made Christmas stockings every year to give to Girl Scouts, who, in turn, filled them and gave them to organizations designed to help those in need. She became well known for her Christmas party to kick off the season in December, taking a week off work to prepare for the party every year.

For most of her life, Fran was involved deeply with Girl Scouts of America. She became a troop leader for her daughter, Jill, then later helped establish troops in the Santa Fe area. Girls fortunate enough to be in her troops took many adventures far and wide, even out of the country.

In the last 14 years, Fran became an extraordinary traveler. She and Henry visited some 30 countries together.

Fran was a no-nonsense person who really knew how to get things done. We will miss her greatly and are thankful that she touched our lives.

Helen Radebaugh

Helen was an avid gardener and amateur photographer. She was born in Deedsville, Indiana. Though her journey has come to an end, Helen's spirit will forever live on in the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing her.

Pat Feathers

While working as a journalist she met Joseph Feather and they honeymooned in Santa



Fe. Charmed by the city, the couple permanently moved to Santa Fe in 1961 where they raised three sons. Pat was a cub scout leader for her three boys and active in the PTA. She is one of the founding members of the Canyon Association, helped establish the first independent recycling center in Santa Fe, was president of the Friends of the Library, quilted, grew prize winning irises and was a judge for the Santa Fe Iris Society. She was an avid gardener. Most of all, Pat loved Santa Fe and its culture, shops festivals, galleries, orchestra, opera, bookstores and thrift shops.

Virginia Oppenheimer

Born in Savannah, Georgia, she graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in German and from Tufts with a MA in German literature. During her many decades in Santa Fe, NM, she taught Head Start in Pojaque, raised three children, and worked for the state of New Mexico. She was an expert quilter, knitter, and iris grower, and she made a mean Frito pie. She will be missed deeply by her friends and family as they remember her sense of humor, joy of living, love of gardening, generous spirit and calming presence.

*God saw they were getting tired
And cure was not to be.
So, He put His arms around them,
And whispered, "Come with me."
With tearful eyes we watched them suffer,
And saw them fade away.
Though we loved them dearly,
We could not make them stay.
Their golden hearts stopped beating,
Hard working hands to rest.
God broke our hearts to prove to us,
He only takes the best!!!*

A poem from a Deaton-company card (1995)

And to all of our other beloved iris sisters and brothers who have departed this world over the past years. They were truly treasured as society members, as well as our beloved friends, they are sorely missed.

Region 23 Convention Speakers

Howie Dash of Picacho Mountain Iris

Howie Dash was the guest speaker of the 2024 Region 23 Convention He gave a program on his business Picacho Mountain Iris and the Judges training on Aril and Arilbred irises.

"I started growing irises along with my wife Lilly 35 years ago in my then home in New Paltz, NY. After visiting a friend's iris garden in the late 1990's, I acquired a number of newer irises from my friend. Shortly thereafter I saw an article about a local iris Society meeting in Poughkeepsie, NY. Lilly and I decided to go to the iris society meeting, which was a month before the annual show, and decided to join. We got our first blue ribbon at that show. After receiving a club iris, Lilly and I brought a stalk of that iris back the following year and won "Best Specimen of Show". Ten irises soon became 40 then 120

and before you knew it 300! Several years later I became president of the Hudson Valley Iris and Daylily Society.”

“In 2008, after 36 years working on Metro-North Railroad in New York City, I retired. In 2009 Lilly and I moved to our new home in Las Cruces, NM”. When he traveled to Las Cruces, he packed up 150 of his best irises, potted them and drove to Las Cruces with the irises and some furniture. They stayed in pots until his house was completed.

“Since living in Las Cruces, I have held many positions. They include president of the Mesilla Valley Iris Society, RVP of AIS Region 23, and member of the American Iris Society Board of Directors. I am currently the president of the Aril Society International and Second Vice President of the American Iris Society. I am also a certified American Iris Society judge and currently hold the rank of Master Judge.”

“I always wanted to try my luck at hybridizing irises but was unable to start when I was in New York due to my long work hours. In 2010, the first iris season that Lilly and I experienced in New Mexico, I began hybridizing with the help of local Las Cruces hybridizer, Steve Kelly. As I didn't have room to grow the seedlings in my home garden, Mesilla Valley Iris members Wes and Cynthia Wilson generously gave me space at their farm to grow my seedlings. As my collection of seedlings began to multiply, I realized that I had some introduction worthy seedlings. In 2016, I introduced my first irises and started Picacho Mountain Iris. I have introduced many Tall bearded irises and several Arilbred irises over the last nine years. I also hybridized Louisiana irises of which several have been registered and will be introduced through Hooker Nichols in Dallas, Texas. My irises have gained in popularity, and several have made their way through the American Iris Society award system. I was thrilled that one of my first introductions, 'Chihuahuan Desert', (TB, 2016) won a Wister Medal in 2023, the highest award a tall-bearded iris can win short of the Dykes Medal.”

Howie finds that 50% of his crosses successfully produce seed pods. It takes about 8-10 weeks before the seed pods crack and are ready to be harvested. Around the beginning of November, he washed them for 10 days to remove the inhibitor. He plants about 20 per 1-gallon pots.

Once the monsoon starts, the seedlings are lined-out in the ground. Howie showed some of his recent introduction. 'Silver Silk' (TB, 2017) won an Honorable Mention (HM) in 2022. 'Tango in the Night' won an Award of Merit (AM) in 2023. It has been known to rebloom (RE) in CA. Howie handed out 'Copper Angel' (TB, 2018) which won an AM in 2023 to the convention attendees. All of the 5 crosses he introduced from 2019 won at least an HM. 'Flamingo Fever' (TB, 2019) won the 2017 Zurbrigg-Mahan Award for best seedling at the AIS National Convention in Des Moines IA. 'Gold Dust

'Woman' (TB, 2019) won an AM in 2024 and won the best out of region seedling in the region 15 spring regional in Phoenix, AZ

'Jedi Princess' (TB, 2019) won an AM in 2023 and was Howie's first space-age (SA). 'Frank's Dream' (TB, 2021) won an HM in 2023 and was named after his good friend Frank who liked the color blue. 'Nittany Lion' (TB, 2021) won an AM this year.

'Tonantzin' (TB, 2021) has lovely veins and came from a seedling with thin stems. He was able to correct that problem in 'Tonantzin'. 'Vulcan Sun' (TB, 2021) was out of a Jedlica seedling. He wants to name his space agers after Star Trek or Star Wars terms. 'Witchy Woman' (TB, 2021) did fantastic in the Dallas Convention in 2023 and was 5th on the convention ballot. It won a HM that year.

'Chewbacca' (TB, 2022) is a SA. His goal is to create a Keppel like iris but with SA appendages. This year he received an invitation to send irises to Italy Firenze international.

More recent introductions are as follows. 'Chocolate Delight' (TB, 2023) is his attempt to create a rebloomer. It is out of 'Boundless' (M. Sutton, TB, 2010). 'Kachina Cosmos' (TB, 2023) reminded him of a Kachina doll so hence the name. He really likes 'Dot Matrix' (TB, 2024) because it has yellow on the back side of the brown and white falls. Very striking. 'Stephanie Returns' (TB, RE, 2024) is his first rebloomer introduction.

Yet to come is the following. 'Sword of the Jedi' (TB, seedling) is a beautiful SA with orange and blue fat beards that was influenced by a Burseen iris. It may be introduced in 2025. 'Ukrainian Princess' (TB, seedling) is another RE name for his wife whose parents are from Ukraine. One of his hybridizing goals is to create a pink amoena. He does have a pink amoena seedling that he is currently evaluating.

On to the Arilbreds. 'Chihuahua Night' (AB, OGB, 2019) won the winner of the 2022 Presidents Cup for best in region iris at the AIS National Convention in Las Cruces, NM. All his arilbreds are named for southwestern stuff instead of the mid-east.

'Chihuahua Morning' (AB, OGB-, 2022) won an HM this year. It won the most Arilbreds HMs this year and was the second highest number of HM votes overall. 'Hachita' (AB, OGB, 2023) is his best Arilbred so far. Great round form, great veining and a signal. Pecos Valley (AB, OGB-, 2024) has wonderful veining and is a beautiful seedling.

He is also introducing Louisianas (LA) irises. Most of his LA are on drip system where they can get plenty of moisture in the New Mexican desert. Hooker Nichols is growing some of his best Las and when he has enough, he will introduce the LAs for Howie.

'The Rhythm of the Bayou' (LA, 2024) is a lovely red.



Figure 17 Howie Dash presenting at the 2024 AIS Region 23 Convention



Figure 18 'Jedi Princess' (TB, 2019)



Figure 19 'Frank's Dream' (TB, 2021)



Figure 20 'Nittany Lion' (TB, 2021)



Figure 21 'Tonantzin' (TB, 2021)



Figure 22 'Vulcan Sun' (TB, 2021)



Figure 23 'Witchy Woman' (TB, 2021)



Figure 24 'Chewbacca' (TB, SA, 2022)



Figure 25 'Chocolate Delight' (TB, 2023)



Figure 26 'Kachina Cosmos'
(TB, 2023)



Figure 27 'Dot Matrix' (TB,
2024)



Figure 28 'Stephanie Returns'
(TB, RE, 2024)



Figure 29 'Ukrainian Princess'
(TB, seedling)



Figure 30 'Sword of the Jedi' (
SA seedling)



Figure 31 'Chihuahua Night'
(AB, OGB, 2019)



Figure 32 'Chihuahua Morning'
(AB, OGB-, 2022)



Figure 33 'Hachita' (AB,OGB,
2023)



Figure 34 'Rhythm of the Bayou' (LA, 2024)

Judges training for Arilbreds

Howie Dash gave judges training on Arils and Arilbred. The name Arils refers to Oncocyclus and Regelias species and crosses between the species. Once you add a

bearded irises to the mix, you then have an Arilbred. The species come in so many different flower and plant types that there is no point scale for in-garden judging. There are several different characteristics that are associated with Arils and Arilbreds. These are well recurved falls, scraggly beards, presence of a signal at the base of the beard, broadly domed and reflexed standards and veining. Arilbreds with less than 50% content should have at least two of these characteristics. The rest should have at least three. Howie was careful to stress that Arilbreds are different from the bearded irises. The flowers may appear to be too large for the stem, there may be less branching (especially for the ones with higher aril content) and the stems may be straight or only slightly curved. These would be considered faults for the bearded irises but not for the arilbreds. Howie has been training people around the country to not mark off for some of these characteristics.

Website News

The webmaster Scarlett Ayres now belongs to the American Horticultural Society. They do have an events section that AHS members can access. This year we added club shows and sales to the AHS event section for the southwest region. If you want to add more events, please contact the webmaster. You will need an event website (or contact the webmaster to add one to the AIS Region 23 website. The site is not open to the general public but those that view it are avid gardeners.

[Events by Region - American Horticultural Society \(ahsgardening.org\)](http://ahsgardening.org)

- Sustainable Gardening >
- Creating Container Gardens
- Gardening Maps
- Master Gardeners
- Societies, Clubs and Organizations
- AHS Gardening Podcasts
- Events by Region**
- Educator Resources
- IVER FARM >
- AYS TO SUPPORT >

To submit a regional event for potential posting, please email information to webmaster@ahsgardening.org.



AUG 03 **Santa Fe Iris Society Rhizome Sale (Santa Fe, NM)**

The SFIS rhizome sale will be held on Saturday August 3 at 9 am – 12 pm (or until sold out) at the DeVargas Center on N. Guadalupe and Paseo de Peralta These rhizomes are excess rhizomes from our members' gardens and are proven growers in our climate. The rhizomes have been donated by our members and freshly dug from their own gardens. All rhizomes are cleaned, labeled and dipped in a disinfectant solution.

[View event website »](#)

AUG 31 **Enchanted Vista Iris Society Rhizome Sale (Rio Rancho, NM)**

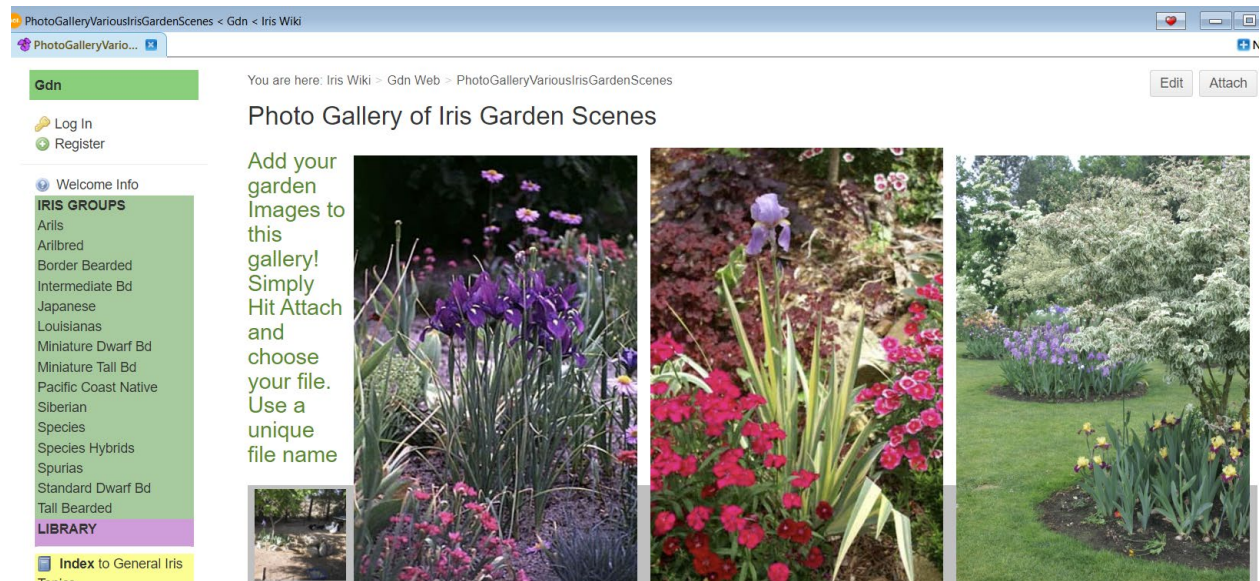
The sale is open to the public 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Potted Iris at \$7.00 each and iris rhizomes \$2 to \$7 will be available. These are irises that are locally grown by club members. The irises are cleaned and marked. Club

Geek Corner

You can put your garden pictures on the Wiki. The AIS has developed a web page for a gallery of garden pictures on the Wiki. This page is currently under construction and for the moment, the AIS is just collecting garden pictures. The idea is to show pictures of your garden with your garden art and your companion plants to encourage irisarians to use irises in a garden setting instead of just have rows and rows of irises. MVIS has uploaded pictures of their members' garden to the site. You can view their pictures at

<https://wiki.irises.org/Gdn/PhotoGalleryVariousIrisGardenScenes>

To attach pictures, you have to create a Wiki account. Just try and attach a picture to the web page and the site will ask you to login or create an account.



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Photo Gallery of Iris Garden Scenes' on the Iris Wiki. The page features a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Log In', 'Register', and 'Welcome Info'. The main content area includes a heading 'Photo Gallery of Iris Garden Scenes' and a call to action: 'Add your garden images to this gallery! Simply Hit Attach and choose your file. Use a unique file name'. Below this text are three photographs of garden scenes featuring various iris plants. The first photo shows purple irises in a garden bed. The second photo shows a purple iris in a garden bed with red flowers. The third photo shows a garden bed with purple and yellow irises.

Region 23 Regional Officers and Club Directors for 2024

RVP (executive): Jacquie Pountney, jacquiepountney@yahoo.com

Assistant RVP (now RVP): Robin Kishbaugh, rgkishbaugh@yahoo.com

Secretary: Scarlett yres sdayres2@aol.com

Treasurer: Debra Bilberry dbilberry@gmail.com

Membership Chair:

Webmaster: Scarlett Ayres sdayres2@aol.com

Newsletter Editor: Scarlett Ayres sdayres2@aol.com

Judges Report by Patricia Randall Judge's Training Chairman

We currently have nine Garden/Exhibition judges, four Master Judges, one Apprentice Judge, one Retired Judge, and one Emeritus Judge. Serving as Garden/Exhibition Judges are: Scarlett Ayres, Eva Barry, Debra Bilberry, Howie Dash, Betty Gunther, Steve Kelly, Robin Kishbaugh, Jacqueline Pountney and Loui Reyes. The Master Judges are: Pegi Naranjo-Smith, Helen Crotty, Henry Day and Cindy Rivera. Our one Apprentice Judge is Suzanne Andrego. Our one Retired Judge is: Dr. Scott Jordan. Currently, I am the only Emeritus Judge. All of our judges are very dedicated to our profession and work hard to maintain our certification, while providing guidance and education to all of the society members and prospective judge candidates.

Students Beth Schneider and Candy Scott have accumulated enough hours and have been a member of the American Iris Society for the required three years or more, so their names have been submitted to Bonnie Nichols, American Iris Society Judges Training Chairman, for approval as Apprentice Judges beginning January 2025.

Last year the American Iris Society had approved a new program to provide training for current judges to also become certified Artistic Design Judges. Those of us who qualified to be grand- fathered into the program, due to our vast knowledge in the components of artistic designs, were Henry Day, Cindy Rivera, Debra Bilberry and myself and qualified to begin judging designs in iris shows this year. We were delighted to be invited to judge at the Albuquerque Aril and Iris Society, Santa Fe Iris Society and the Enchanted Vista Iris Society shows this past Spring. It was a very delightful experience, and we are all looking forward to judging many more artistic design creations at future shows.

All Garden/Exhibition Judges are required to accumulate a total of five (5) hours of classroom training within a three-year period, of which, two (2) hours must be in-garden training. Master Judges must acquire a total of three (3) hours in that three (3) year period, only one (1) of those hours must be in-garden. The newly implemented webinar training sessions are a great help in keeping our compliance and certifications up to date.

Sadly, Master Judges Philip Doonan, Frances (Fran) Day and Patricia Feather passed away this year. These judges were all great judges, utilizing their expertise annually judging area iris shows as well as volunteering their services to judge's training at the annual American Iris Society conventions and garden tours. They passed their knowledge and expertise on to student and apprentice judges. As your Regional Judge's Training Chairman, it was a delight working with these great judges and wonderful people. And above all of this they were the kindest people to know, we loved them dearly and they will be sorely missed by all.

American Iris Society News

Future AIS Conventions Locations: The 2025 AIS National Convention will be held in Billings, Montana June 2-7. This is just above Yellowstone National Park. The 2026 AIS National Convention will be in Newark, NJ and New York, May 18-23 (tentative). This replaces the convention in 2020 that was canceled due to the Covid pandemic.

The revised *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials Show* is now available for purchase at \$14.00 (includes shipping and handling). 40 pages (front and back).

The AIS 2024 Membership Drive launches March 1st. The purchase of one new full AIS membership qualifies the purchaser for up to two free, one-year, youth print memberships. In addition, if an AIS member upgrades to a full membership from a print or e-membership, they also will qualify for up to two free, one-year, youth print memberships. Youth membership is for gardeners aged 18 and younger. (FYI, the regular rate for each youth print membership is \$12.) The Membership Drive will run from March 1 to December 31, 2024.

The AIS integrated online system can now process gift memberships! To purchase a membership as a gift to someone else, go to <https://system.irises.org/membership> and check the “This purchase is a gift” box. You will be prompted for the recipient’s name, address, and email address (if applicable).

The AIS requests that if you have images of great garden scenes involving irises, you can add them to the new developing Garden Image gallery at:

<https://wiki.irises.org/Gdn/PhotoGalleryVariousIrisGardenScenes>

You will need an account which is easy to set up with an email and password. You select the file(s), provide a comment or description, and then hit upload. This gallery is currently under development. It doesn’t allow apostrophes in the file name. Be sure to check “Create a link to attached files images” under Properties. Let’s show how beautiful New Mexico gardens are!

On the Lighter Side

You might be an irisarian (with a nod to Jeff Foxworthy)

1. If a freeze is predicted and you use your bed coverings to cover your iris beds.
2. If a freeze is predicted and you cover the iris stalks with socks.
3. If you ever bid \$60 on an iris at a local auction that sells for \$30 in the catalogue.
4. If you ever paid \$40 for an iris that you don’t really think will grow in your area.
5. If you ever bought a vehicle with high roof clearance just so you can take your iris stalks safely to a show.
6. If you’ve had to remove the kids’ pictures from the walls of your home to make room for more iris plates or iris awards.

7. If you maxed out your credit card to Mid-America or Schreiners.
8. If you ever removed grass, trees, other flower beds, buildings or sidewalks to make room for more irises.
9. If you ever took your truck to an iris sale because you know the car isn't big enough to hold your iris purchases.
10. If you ever missed your house payment so you wouldn't miss the American Iris Society National Convention.
11. If you ever missed your kid's graduation because you weren't back from the Iris Convention.
12. If you ever used a hair blow dryer on an un-opened iris bud because you are anxious to see what it looks like opened.

Poetry

Here is a short poem written for the 1995 Fall Newsletter. Author unknown.

He Who Plants the Iris

*He who plants an iris, plants beauty;
He who tends it while it grows,
A radiant throbbing rainbow
Pleases many as everyone knows*

*He who plants the iris, plants splendor;
Breathless rapture flung, across the sod,
A light to shake the soul and lift the spirit
Up to the high celestial throne of God.*

*He who plants the iris, plants triumph;
Mastering the brown, reluctant soil,
He lifts at last a brave, bright showing
Of beauty, splendor, triumph for his toil.*

Much of this newsletter was pulled from the Booklet prepared by Rae Phillips, AAIS officer & EVIS member

Iristatically Yours

Scarlett Ayres, editor