

Society for Siberian Irises Board Meeting, December 4, 2025, via Zoom

Attendees: Gary White (President), Adam Cordes (1st Vice President), Jan Sacks (2nd Vice President) and Marty Schafer, Margaret Spence (Secretary), Jean Kaufmann (Treasurer), Carol Warner (Immediate Past President), Kate Brewitt (Director), Lois Girton (Director), Chad Harris (Director), Rebecca Ary (Director), Barbara Aitken (Director), Bob Hollingworth (TSI Editor), Judy Hollingworth (Membership), Jim Wilson (Website Manager), Susie Everse

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm Pacific.

Minutes – May 23, 2025 – Margaret

Jan moved to accept the minutes and Jean seconded the motion. It was noted that minor revisions had been made to the meeting minutes via email after the meeting. Gary provided the revised minutes for this meeting. There were no further comments or corrections. The minutes were approved.

Nominating Committee – Adam Cordes, Carol Warner

Nominations for Directors are Kate Brewitt, Susie Everse (terms ending 2028). Bob noted it's been more than 1 month after the TSI went out, so they were elected per the bylaws. Their terms begin January 1.

Membership – Judy Hollingworth

There are currently 204 members: 17 in Canada, 22 overseas, and the rest are US members. As of December 31, there will be 39 membership expirations; 7 renewals have been received so far. The 2025 TSI spring issue listed 5 new members, and the fall issue listed 11 new members. There have been 13 new members since then, mostly due to seed exchange (membership required). Judy noted that we typically lose some members at renewal time. There is also 1 new member from Argentina.

Gary discussed the reciprocal ad between the American Horticulture Society. The ad with AHS was free because of the reciprocal deal (the cost is usually \$600). The SSI ad (and AIS ad) ran in the July and September issues, which supposedly went to 22,000 members. There apparently was not much success getting members from the ads.

SSI Spring Board Meeting Date / Possible Membership Meeting?

Because there aren't board meetings at AIS conventions any more, a general date for a spring meeting is needed. Gary requested preferences for timing. Most suggested early, before gardening season starts. The last week of March or 1st week of April were suggested. Gary will send a note shortly before then with a few dates as options.

Siberian Iris Program at AIS Convention in Newark/NYC

National conventions still have section programs. Gary gave the program last year at Billings; he discussed the 40th year of Morgan-Wood medal and the recent spring SSI convention. The group discussed suggestions for program and presenter. Jan mentioned she is unable to attend entire convention, so may not be able to attend section meeting. Gary (convention co-chair) may be able to change the timing this early.

Possibility of SSI Convention in 2029 in Michigan – Adam Cordes

Adam's club (Mio Irisarians) unanimously decided to offer to host a convention, hopefully in conjunction with Region 6 meeting. The dates they have in mind are June 15-16, 2029. It would

be located in the NE corner of lower peninsula with Alpena, Michigan, as the base or maybe Gaylord. Guest irises will need to be sent in 2026.

Gary has been talking to Gary Slagle in southern New Jersey about hosting an SSI convention in 2031. They'll need to find another garden or two to make it work, including Longwood Gardens. There was some discussion about a 2-year break between conventions and the possibility a 2031 convention may compete with an SJI convention.

Possibility of Siberian iris Auction and/or Sale in Early Fall 2026

There was a discussion of holding an online auction for Siberian irises. Lois Girton handled the auction at the SSI convention this year, and it went well. Other AIS sections have been holding auctions to bring in money and members.

Lois talked about the peony society's auctions (convention and fall online auction), which generate more than \$20,000 per year with both sales. The peony society uses a program called Auctria. The peony society charges shipping cost so that donators can get reimbursed for shipping and don't impact sales proceeds. The peony auction happens in later September and runs from Thursday through Sunday. She also described how Auctria can be used to add a member list and donator list, then it can generate emails to members to encourage them to donate or participate. Once the auction is over, emails can be automatically generated to bidders and donators so the bidders/donators can coordinate shipping. Lois said she can help or run it an iris auction if doesn't overlap with the peony auction.

The group discussed timing and agreed that late August would be best timing for most people to get their irises. Sales would be limited to US participants. Kate asked if any way to set up a Canada-specific auction and a US-specific auction or somehow get US Siberian irises into Canada. The group discussed challenges and possibilities for international shipping. There was also discussion about limiting the number of irises available to avoid discouraging commercial growers by having too many available for auction.

Funding needs for TSI will need to be balanced challenges of paying for and running an auction. Typically, it costs more to send out the TSI (about \$3,800 per year) than income received. SSI has received donations in addition to membership fees, so there are 5 to 10 years of spending in the treasury.

Auction proceeds from the SSI convention in the spring were \$1,276 for Region 21 (silent auction), \$422 for SIGNA, and \$1,701 for SSI.

The discussion was tabled but may be revisited in the spring.

2025 Seed Exchange – Bob Hollingworth

The 2025 exchange is going well, with about 30 different sets of seeds. 20 people requested seeds, including 7 from outside the US (4 in Canada, 2 in the UK, and 1 in New Zealand). It led to some new members. Bob is happy to do it again next year. SSI is not charging for seeds, instead trying to encourage people to be interested in hybridizing. Also shipping isn't being charged (about \$300 this year), so may want to charge for postage next year.

Display Gardens – Kate Brewitt

Kate did start working to send out an email about adding to display garden list. The perennial problem of no visitors still exists, so she's not sure if the display garden list still serves any purpose. Gary will add his garden and will send information to Kate. She's thinking about adding

a requirement for display garden owners to submit annual report about the 10 best iris that perform in their garden so she can compile information for the TSI to help members see what grows well in their areas. The group agreed this was a reasonable request, but will need to give garden owners a heads up.

Gary mentioned the new AIS popularity poll that replaces the tall bearded symposium. It ends January 31, with all write-in votes for up to 25 varieties of any category.

By-Laws Revision Update – Kate Brewitt, Bob Hollingworth, Gary White

Kate noted that there is so much that needs to be reviewed (so many changed processes over the last 24 years; very outdated). There was discussion about how to update processes. It was noted that parts may also need to be run by the AIS attorney.

TSI Discussion – Bob Hollingworth

Bob asked if everybody's happy with it. He's been editor for 10 years now; he requested input. He noted that there's not much talk about culture. Bob mentioned recent scientific literature about using mycorrhizae to encourage root growth; he asked if anybody knows anything about it. Bob requested input for including something in the TSI. Jan mentioned she's been trying out soil amendments; she'll plan to write that up for the TSI.

Gary asked Jan and Bob for a growing Siberians article for the spring AIS Bulletin.

Other Items, New Business

Website Updates – Jim Wilson

Gary noted there are lots of new information and photos. Jim's been updating it. He's including Wiki links for new introductions instead of re-creating the information. He and Gary discussed including previous meeting minutes in the archives.

Jan looked at website today. She suggested including more pictures of Siberians growing in gardens. She suggested publishing a request for such photos in the TSI to send to Jim for the website.

Membership Rates

SSI membership rates were discussed. Currently, the rate is \$10 per year for single annual. It costs about \$20 per year per person to publish TSI. Increasing from \$10 to \$15 probably would not be really noticeable. Other membership rates would also need to be adjusted: international, single triannual; family annual, and family triannual.

Rates will be decided in the spring meeting, then published in the spring TSI and AIS bulletin to begin in 2027.

Adjournment

Margaret moved to adjourn the meeting, and Barbara seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm Pacific.

Submitted by Margaret Spence, Secretary