



## THE SIBERIAN IRIS

## THE SIBERIAN IRIS

Volume 5 Number 10

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Want to be useful? Write the Chairman of the committee you'd like!

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

This has been a good year for Siberian Irises and the area around the Seattle AIS Convention site was a good place to see them. The Siberian Section meeting at Seattle during the Convention was exciting and well attended (there's a report in this issue). The AIS Board approved the Morgan-Wood Medal for the Siberians and Dave Silverberg is busy reworking the wording on the obverse side to make it appropriate by 1986.

Plans are being made by Jim Foreman to print a new Siberian Checklist. He has just finished one for the Median Irises which was much admired at its 'unveiling' at the Seattle Convention, and so he wanted to keep in practice by doing one for us for our 25th Anniversary year, 1985. We all appreciate his generous offer to edit a new checklist for the Siberians. If any of you know of anything in the old list that needs to be changed--omissions, corrections, additions, etc., be sure to write Jim soon.

We are pleased to report that Bill McGarvey has won the Morgan Award for 1984 for PINK HAZE. This iris was outstanding at the Huntsville Convention and again in Denver, but was not yet eligible for consideration. It was also great in Roy Davidson's wonderful garden at the Seattle meeting, and we are delighted that the majority of AIS judges named it on their ballots for the Morgan in this year's balloting. Congratulations, Bill!

And now for a bit of sad news. Our Editor, Peg Edwards, who has served this Society with distinction for 24 years is going to step down as Editor at the end of this year. This will be her last issue. We sure will miss you, Peg. Yours has been a job well done.--Peg has agreed to continue as contributor, but has earned a chance to rest from the everyday job of editing. Peg is also assisting Keith Keppel in gathering articles for the AIS Bulletin salute to Siberian Irises and our 15th anniversary as a society next year.

Our new editor will be Mrs. Carolee Clay of Beaver Dam, Wisc. Many of you met Carolee at the Boston Convention when she became the SSI Publicity Chairman. At that time she lived in Madison, but she has married and has moved out to the suburbs this past year. She is a vivacious young lady with lots of good ideas and we ask all of you to help her in her new undertaking. Jim Foreman has already volunteered to assist by printing the semi-annual publication. Julius Wadekamper, when he recovers from the big move of his garden to Faribault, and Don Koza, who now has an IBM personal computer, will be associate editors and help Carolee whenever asked. Carolee will be our Editor starting with the first issue in 1985. Please write to her and contribute anything worthwhile on the Siberians that our membership would like to know about them.

Sincerely,

  
Harry Kuesel

## MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING, May 27, 1984

The 1984 Board Meeting of the Society for Siberian Irises was held in the Whidley Room of the Weston Hotel, Seattle, Washington on May 27 with Harry Kuesel presiding. The meeting opened at 4:30 PM.

The minutes of the 1983 Board Meeting were approved as printed in the Fall 1983 Siberian Iris. The Treasurer's report was printed in the Spring 1984 Siberian Iris with a supplemental report sent by Gunther Stark. The balance at present is \$1617.

In the Editor's report the resignation of Peg Edwards was read. It was noted that Peg has served as editor for many years and has done an excellent job. Her reason for resigning is health problems. Jim Foreman can print the publication, but a new editor has not been named as yet.

In the listing of Officers and Committee Chairmen, the name of Carolee Haack has been changed to Carolee Clay. Her new address is P.O. Box 398, Wayland Academy, Beaver Dam, WI 53916.

It was noted that a plaque has been placed in the American Horticultural Society's Display Garden at River Farm, Mt. Vernon, Va., near Washington, DC, with the Siberian Display. Another Siberian Display Garden is in the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens in Hamilton, Ont., Canada.

In the report of the Bylaws Committee, the non-profit (Sec. 501-C-3) status has not been attained in AIS nor the Siberian Section. It is noted that the Dwarf Iris Section does have a non-profit status. A motion made by Ainie Busse and seconded by Jim Foreman, to have Harry Kuesel check on the possibility of the Siberian Iris Section getting the tax-free permit, was passed.

The Morgan Award was proposed to be upgraded to the Morgan-Wood Award. Ken Waite has received a favorable vote from his presentation to the AIS Board. A letter from Betty Wood to Harry Kuesel favors the use of the Ira Wood Medal with adaptation of the engraving to the new medal being done on the back. A motion by Jim Foreman seconded by Dr. Currier McEwen, to have Dave Silverberg arrange for these changes with the Medallic Art Co., and for the Siberian Section pay for these alterations, was passed.

Nomination for the Distinguished Service Award for Julius Wadekamper received unanimous approval.

A special portion of the AIS Bulletin featuring Siberian Irises will be contained in either the January or July issue of the Bulletin. For the January issue all articles would have to be in the hands of Mr. Keppel, the Editor, by October 1. Suggestions were made of articles on Landscape, to be written by Ainie Busse; Potted Siberians, by Charles Trommer; Developed Red Siberians, by Steve Varner; Update on Tetraploids, Dr. McEwen; Photography by Jim Foreman; Display Gardens

by Jim Foreman and Dr. Don Koza; Wide Crosses by Jean Witt or Dr. Tomas Tamberg. Black-and-white prints are also needed.

A Siberian Iris print by Jane Massman was shown to the Board Members by Ainie Busse. The Horticultural Society is selling this print for \$40. Ainie has a limited number that she can sell for \$15. each.

On the status of the loan from the American Iris Foundation we are ahead on payments. A report from Julius Wadekamper indicates that he has sold almost as many books in January-March of this year as he sold for the whole year 1983. A motion to repay \$1,000 of the loan was passed. The balance presently due is \$2,500.

In committee reports, the Minnesota beardless auction report was given by Ainie Busse. Bee Warburton and Dr. McEwen commented on the New England beardless auction.

Dr. Don Koza and Jim Foreman reported on the Display Gardens.

On publications, Ruth Wilder reported that we have made some sales and we have back issues available.

Agnes Waite reported on Registrations.

Jim Foreman reported that our slides are being used for programs, and we can use more slides.

Material for the Siberian Judging Standards is now in the hands of the AIS Handbook Committee.

Jim Foreman showed the Board the new Check List that is now available to members of the Median Section. He is willing to update the Siberian Check List. A motion by Currier McEwen, seconded by Ainie Busse, to have Jim undertake this, was passed. (If anyone finds any mistakes, please forward them to Jim.)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Ruth Wilder, Secretary

#### SIBERIAN AWARDS AT THE MUNICH, W. GERMANY INTERNATIONAL GARDEN EXHIBITION 1983

The following medals were awarded to Dr. Currier McEwen in the Siberian Section: Gold Medal, Harpswell Haze; Silver Medal, Fourfold White; and Bronze Medal, Marilyn Holmes. These were part of the AIS grand display, which received the Great Gold Medal, which was presented to Ron Mullin at the Awards Banquet of this year's Convention. The three Medals won by Dr. McEwen were presented to him at the Siberian Section meeting.

Bee Warburton lugged all the American-won Medals to the Convention. It is reliably reported that her suitcase felt like a full load of gold bullion.

Congratulations are in order! (Details were in the Jan. 1984 Bulletin.)

## THE SIBERIAN SECTION MEETING, SEATTLE, WA, May 28, 1984

Reported by Harry Kuesel

We had a few anxious moments at first, when we found that the room supplied for us would only hold about 50 people. But we were moved to one that held 150, and needed just about all of it, when Jim Foreman, the Program Chairman, opened the meeting. Harry Kuesel gave the highlights of the SSI Directors' Meeting. The big news was that the AIS Board has approved the establishment of the Morgan-Wood Medal for the top annual award to Siberian Irises. He then introduced Bee Warburton, AIS International News Editor and SSI 2nd VP, to make a presentation to Currier McEwen of the Medals his irises won overseas (reported elsewhere in this issue). SSI Director was then called to the podium to present a lovely print of a Siberian Iris, by Jane Massman, to our distinguished International Visitor, Dr. Tomas Tamberg.

Jim Foreman then introduced our program which consisted of two parts: 1. New Developments in Siberian Irises, Currier McEwen and Tomas Tamberg; and 2. Panel Discussions--Ben Hager, Steve Varner, Currier McEwen and Tomas Tamberg.

Currier illustrated his talk with excellent slides. He first showed pictures of the species *I. sibirica* and *I. sanguinea*, noting that the latter had only two flowers at the terminal and no branching. He then showed WHITE MAGNIFICENCE (Kitton) as an example of the classical form, and WHITE SWIRL (Cassebeer) as an example of the more modern ruffled, flaring form; and CREME CHANTILLY (McEwen), a more refined ruffled lilted form; and CIRCLE ROUND (McEwen '85), a very large, very round blue one. He said that Siberians range in height from 7" to 39", and then showed a slide with the diploid flower on the left and a tetraploid flower on the right, and explained the differences. The latter is much bigger, and the color is more intense and the petals appear to have more substance.

FOURFOLD WHITE was shown as an example of the early tetraploid form which has open spaces between the falls (he calls this a propeller shape), and then CORNISH CREAM and MARSHMALLOW FROSTING (two recent registrations) which show how he has closed the gap between the falls. Next came the various color patterns--BUTTER AND SUGAR, a fine diploid yellow amoena; GREEN PROMISE, a new approach to green from the white side; GATINEAU was shown as an example of the best blues from 30 years ago; and DEAR DELIGHT, a near true blue, and SOFT BLUE, another lighter blue with fine clarity of color. SILVER EDGE, a violet with a fine silver line edging the falls; ADJ, a violet with a gilt (golden) edge on the falls; DEAR DIANE, a fine bluish purple; with REGENCY PLUS, a new refinement in this color range. TEAL VELVET, a very dark red-violet; and HUBBARD, a good wine red; PINK HAZE (McGarvey), a fine pink amoena diploid; and DANCE BALLERINA DANCE (Varner), a tetraploid pink amoena; ROMANTIC LADY (McEwen) closest to a blue amoena to date, VIOLET JOY (McEwen) a pure violet with almost no signal; and OUTSET, a violet with a heavy white blaze at the haft. Currier calls this a sun-

burst pattern and plans on introducing HARPSWELL SUNBURST as the best example he has developed so far; next came LAVENDER BOUNTY--an 8-budded Siberian in light rosy lavender which blooms for 8 weeks in its home garden in South Harpswell, Maine. He explained that he has developed repeat bloom (second bloom 1 to 2 weeks after first bloom stops) in WELCOME RETURN, SOFT BLUE and CHARTREUSE BOUNTY.

He then showed slides of *I. chrysographes*, which is a 40-chromosome species coming in both blue-black and red-black forms, and *I. forestii*, a yellow 40-chr. species which has only two buds. He then showed PRAIRIE WARBLER--a most unusual 3-branched hybrid with 8 to 9 buds, and FORETELL (McGarvey) a purple-flecked yellow hybrid from crossing the 40-chr. and 28-chr. species.

Dr. Tamberg then took over the podium and showed a fine light blue amoena seedling that he had developed, and a tall blue with a fine white signal which he called ANNEMARIE TROEGER and one called WHITE SPIRAL which has unusual white twisting petals. Another example of an unusual form was BLUE ROSEBUD which looked just like a blue rose with no signal to mar its clear blue petals. He has just converted this to a tetraploid. He also showed a large purple tetraploid which he called an all-German tetraploid because it came from a cross of his own and Eckard Berlin's seedlings. Then he showed some interesting Cal-Sibes, sterile crosses of 40-chr. Siberians with Pacific coast Natives. He has converted these to tetraploids, and a ruffled white with flaring 4" blue falls impressed the audience. Next came the setosa hybrids. He said that *I. setosa* is very difficult to transplant so he selects the best, widest-falled seedlings and crosses 40-chr. Siberians onto them. One of the best seedlings has been named STILLES WASSER by Eckard Berlin--this is 3/4 Siberian and 1/4 setosa. He has also successfully crossed *I. lactea* (formerly *I. ensata*) with 40-chr. Siberians and has about 150 seedlings to bloom this year. One of his widest crosses is one from LIMEHEART (Brummitt), a white Siberian, x *I. delavayi* x *I. clarkei* BERLINER RIESEN (Berlin Giant)--only one seedling came, and it has violet standards and lavender falls. The audience really raved over this one.

The panel discussion then took over the platform and questions were solicited from the audience. Steve Varner said his best red to date is one he is introducing this year, called DUTCH, named for President Reagan. We later saw it blooming well in the Crandall Display Garden on the Convention tour and it was exactly as Steve described it. Currier said the best new white he had seen was Bee Warburton's BELLIS-SIMA. This bloomed after the Boston Convention so most of the AIS visitors missed it, but it is very heavily ruffled, a diploid, and appeared to be vigorous. Ben Hager said he has developed yellow seedlings from his STAR CLUSTER--a creamy white. It was also predicted that black, brown and orange were not too far over the horizon.

After a very lively meeting we were all anxious to get out and see the Siberians in the tour gardens. Below is a good picture of Roy David-



son's garden, which had more Siberians than any other on the tour. Three I particularly enjoyed were Ben Hager's JAYBIRD, Anna Mae Miller's DANCING MAMOU and Currier's LAVENDER BOUNTY.



THE DAVIDSON GARDEN

#### SIBERIANS I CAN GROW IN TEXAS

Marie Caillet

I contend that success in growing most irises is 90% gardener and 10% variety, but we are inclined to blame our losses on variety. What follows is a very unscientific report on growing and blooming a few Siberians in my North Texas garden, where growing conditions are anything but perfect for them. Soil is on the alkaline side, our summers are usually very hot and dry, and the yearly rainfall can be scarce. Local iris growers told me I would waste time and money by trying to grow them, but many have said the same about the Louisianas. It is true, I have lost a few in these ten years, but I also have some very presentable clumps that grow and bloom and attract a lot of attention from the doubtful. There is seldom a year in which some stalks don't get to the Dallas Show and I have begun to cut stalks to bring in the house--a sure sign of having more of something than specimen stalks.

My success list won't appeal to most Siberian growers, for many are too old to be found in a catalog or on the Awards Ballot, but there are a few of the newer ones. Some of the very oldest ones grow and bloom the best, like CAMBRIDGE, LIGHTS OF PARIS and SPARKLING ROSE.

The last two grow 3 feet tall here and have 30 or more stalks in a clump--an unheard-of achievement for my area. As a result I am now saving bee pods for numerous people who feel these varieties might hold the key to produce a hardy strain for the South.

Also on my four-star list are some slightly newer ones: ORVILLE FAY (McEwen), EWEN (McEwen), VI LUIHN (DuBose), STAR CLUSTER (Hager), and SPARKLE (Hager), which produces more stalks to a clump than any other Siberian I grow. They all form nice clumps and bloom well, even after dividing to give to friends. The only late introduction on my four-star list is McEwen's TEAL VELVET. I realize, many of these are tetraploids, which seem easier to grow here.

The three-star list contains LITTLE TRICOLOR (Sensenbach), BUTTER AND SUGAR (McEwen), and LAVENDER LIGHT (McEwen). This last one has only been in my garden a couple of years but became established at once. Those on the two-star list are trying to move up to three, and could make it by the time this is printed. They are RUFFLED VELVET (McEwen), SILVER EDGE (McEwen), DEAR DIANE (McEwen), and ROSE QUEST (Hager). Since ROSE QUEST is a child of SPARKLING ROSE, I expect it to grow equally well in this area and would be disappointed if it did not.

Growers of Louisiana irises are constantly asked, "why don't you develop varieties that are hardy for my climate?" I will ask the same of the growers of Siberian irises, for I do know some can be grown in North Texas, but not all of them. Mine are growing under similar conditions in one area of the yard in beds prepared much as I do for Louisianas. Each gets the same fertilizer, mulch and water, and some afternoon shade, but some simply do not grow or bloom and a few do not even live! I will not list the no-grows and no-shows, for I figure such failures might be due to that 90% I credit to gardening practices. Moles sometimes tunnel under one and allow the roots to dry out, or I may be out of town at the time transplants need water. James Foreman has suggested a remedy for transplants that dry out too fast, so I shall try this in the fall.

After seeing those beautiful clumps in bloom at the Seattle Convention and especially those in LeRoy Davidson's garden, there is no way I will give up. My growing of Siberians may be more trial and error than scientific, but it has produced results. I am even including them in my garden training sessions on judging beardless irises. You Siberian growers may laugh, but where else are our North Texas judges going to learn to tell a Siberian from a Spuria or a Louisiana? Seeing them in my garden might even encourage a few judges to try growing a few.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DUCK POND  
Jennifer Hewitt

Interest in Siberians is growing rapidly in Britain, partly because more iris growers, and non-specialist gardeners, too, are realizing what good garden plants they are, and because the new hybrids now coming into this country from the USA and Germany are making such advances in color, form and bud count that they command attention at shows and in gardens. Some of the not-quite-so-new ones are beginning to find their way into nurseries; veterans such as PERRY'S BLUE and HELEN ASTOR are still the most widely listed but nurserymen are very interested in newer plants which have proved their garden value. Marjorie Brummitt's fine varieties are becoming widely available and we hope that the same will soon be true of ORVILLE FAY, NAVY BRASS, SOFT BLUE and many more. Larger and more showy flowers are much appreciated providing that they are durable and can cope with the changeable British climate, flower freely, and make good clumps in a reasonable time.

Among BIS members, new varieties and especially new colors attract a lot of interest and many are keen to acquire them (though not always willing to go to the slight trouble of importing!). In fact, those of us who sell plants to raise money for the BIS are finding that we can't meet the demand for outstandingly popular plants. At present, the number of hybridizers is tiny--literally only a handful of fingers!--but from the interest shown by buyers it looks as if we might need both fingers and toes to count them before long.

I'd hoped to see Siberians in several gardens this year but other things happened which kept me at home most of the time. Still, I did see EWEN, NAVY BRASS, OUTSET, ORVILLE FAY and CLEVE DODGE making successful appearances in several shows, and have also enjoyed showing my plantings to a number of visitors and hearing some illuminating comments. One variety which impresses me more each year is Currier McEwen's SOFT BLUE and it was picked out from a distance by all my visitors. Its color carries extremely well and its shape adds greatly to its visibility; individual flowers aren't large but there are so many, at different levels. It has now been selected to go into the Sibirica Trials at the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens at Wisley and should, I think, be an outstanding success there. Some years ago Currier sent some of his introductions for a display bed at Wisley and these irises were subsequently included in the Trials and have gathered many awards; when replanting took place, surplus plants were placed along the margins of a large pool at the foot of the Rock Garden where they make a wonderful show and are appreciated by thousands of visitors.

Other McEwen introductions which arouse lots of interest are BUTTER AND SUGAR (of course!), LAVENDER BOUNTY and FOURFOLD LAVENDER, all especially for their colors. As they're in my garden I can appreciate the length of their bloom season, particularly LAVENDER BOUNTY, and also LAVENDER LIGHT, VIOLET JOY, DEAR DIANNE, DARK CIRCLE, and IRA WOOD have all had comments on their depth and richness of color and varying forms

and patterns. DREAMING GREEN, alas, has been a little disappointing this year. For some reason, perhaps the drought we had in spring, the green coloring has been much less noticeable than in 1983. As I write, CHARTREUSE BOUNTY is opening for the first time. The temptation to "help" a new arrival to open must be resisted! This came here in autumn 1983 and I'd really be happier if it concentrated on growing into a nice big plant this year and gave me typical flowers in 1985, rather than small ones on short stalks now--but I'm looking to see the color...

Steve Varner's KISMET is providing a vigorous and free-flowering variety of an unusual dark red which catches visitors' eyes and so does the lighter WINE WINGS. REJOICE ALWAYS gets notices for its unusual mixture of colors. AVON is another light blue that carries well, and it and PIRATE PRINCE, so richly dark, set each other off. ANN DASCH grows and blooms well, of course, and I like its coloring but, perhaps because of its climate again (what a useful scapegoat it is!) the characteristic mottling on the falls doesn't show up. WING ON WING and HUBBARD both had small flowers on short stalks in the summer after arriving here, so have missed this year. What I saw of both was enough to make me hope to see their fall beauty in 1985. SPARKLE took longer to get going but is doing very well now--an odd one, but it gets noticed.

One of the most beautiful flowers is Tomas Tamberg's ANNEMARIE TROEGER with intense blue coloring set off by sparkling white signals. The snag is that both standards and falls flare widely and as the flowers are on tall stalks, it doesn't get noticed from a distance. The more 'up-and-down' flowers are the ones visitors spot from yards away and home in on. When they get close, they look down, and this is when flaring flowers score, if they are on shorter stems, DEAR DELIGHT gets them every time and so does SHIRLEY POPE, both even better in reality than the photos in 'Siberian Irises'. In fact, one thing which my visitors and I agree on is how lovely the colors and forms are, in all their variety.

Jennifer also sent some comments about making or remaking a mixed perennial border, which I think might be of interest:

Most of my Siberians are in beds by themselves, but I'm trying to work them into mixed plantings in the borders, with other perennials and shrubs, etc. I find they need to be fairly vigorous varieties, otherwise they can be swamped by faster growers. But they look well in association with others, both flowers and foliage making useful contributions to the groupings. I wish there were more with bluer foliage (and know the flower arrangers feel the same). In one bed, mostly of older varieties, much of the ground is carpeted with a variety of *Ajuga* named, I think, 'Delight,' which has grey-green leaves variegated with pink and cream, and the usual blue flowers, and this has proved to be a good combination. Most of the Siberians can cope with the *Ajuga*, and there is color all year round. Also in that bed are some *Hostas* and *Pulmonarias* which give variety of foliage shape when in leaf--and the blue leaves of *Hosta tardiana* look especially good with the irises--and

a *Corydalis*, name unknown, which has soft ferny grey-green leaves and stems with a pinkish flush. This, too is evergreen and looks good all year. The very small pale yellow and white flowers are inconspicuous, which I prefer in this association. Due to our being able to buy a piece of the field behind us, the garden is being reorganized (this has been in process for several years and is going very slowly) and one border when replanted will, I hope, develop the color scheme of deep red-wine red--clear pink-white flowers and foliage, together with some glaucous-leaved plants. The reds will all be on the blue side. Shrubs I plan to use are *Berberis atropurpurea*, *B. a.* 'Rose Glow' and *Rosetta*, both of which are variegated with pink and white on the dark red; *Rosa rubrifolia* and *R. fedtschenkoana* (bluish leaves, single white flowers), and *Cotinus coggygria* 'Atropurpurea'; also several *Hebe* species with glaucous leaves and white flowers, and other white-flowered shrubs. Perennials will include *Paeonia* spp. and varieties, *Aquilegia*, *Polygonum* (if not too rampant),--*Astilbe*, *Geranium*, etc. And I plan to include as many wine-red and white Siberians as possible--HELEN ASTOR, ERIC THE RED, EWEN, REDDY MAID, WINE WINGS, KISMET, WHITE SWIRL, WEISER ORIENT, LIMEHEART, WING ON WING, etc., plus probably REJOICE ALWAYS to represent pink. *I. chrysographes* in its dark form, and *I. c. rubella* will be there, too.

Elsewhere, *I. forrestii* and yellow-flowered 40-chr. hybrids look good with plants of similar coloring but have to be watched to make sure they are not throttled. *Euphorbia* varieties contrast well but are thugs if not controlled. Yellow, orange and red forms of *Primula veris* (Cocksfoot) make excellent companions, blooming before the iris, and their leaves keep the ground cool for iris roots.

\* \* \*  
\* \* \*  
\* \* \*

Things to take note of:

In the next issue of the AIS Bulletin, the meeting of the Board and RVPs should appear. I've been told that it was emphasized at that meeting that in standard (AIS approved) iris shows the finest specimen, regardless of type, must be named Queen of the Show, or Best in Show, or however that particular iris group prefers to indicate the finest example of a well-grown iris. Exhibitors, get in there and go for the 'Best'; Judges, if you're working a show, don't be prejudiced, but don't let the others be, either; and if you're on the Show Committee, make sure that the Judges know you expect all qualified Section winners to be given equal consideration. (I have in the past found that many judges have been told the Committee 'would prefer' a TB to win. "They are showier." Hah!)

## GARDEN NOTES -- Walter Erhardt

The German Iris Show was held in Dirmingen on June 2--but I was not there, for I had no Siberians in flower yet. Spring was too cold and rainy. *Iris sibirica* from the Moscow Botanic Garden was showing the first flowers. These are larger and have taller stalks than our indigenous form.

The first cultivar to open was LAVENDER LIGHT. It is much better than the old MRS. ROWE which is still in my garden as it is a very rich bloomer. Some other old ones I will dispose of this year--for example, CAESAR and CAESAR'S BROTHER, which are identical and not very good at flowering; perhaps they are not true to name?

Some of the new cultivars I have obtained the last couple of years were a great surprise to me. COURT RUFFLES which I planted in the fall of 1982 had 15 stalks with many, many flowers this spring. Also richly flowering were Dr. Tamberg's cultivars; one I liked very much is BREITER START, for it has very broad falls. But no other iris in my garden is so round and full as DARK CIRCLE.

The largest white flowers I have ever seen are those of FOURFOLD WHITE. Other whites I like are WHITE SWIRL and WEISSER ORIENT, an older German cultivar, rich and flowering nicely. But the Queen in my garden is BUTTER AND SUGAR--every visitor to my garden has said so. There are many other cultivars I must not miss: CAMBRIDGE, CLEAR POND, DREAMING SPIRES, EGO, FANNY HEIDT, PANSY PURPLE, PURPELLER, RUFFLED VELVET, SWANK. And there were some that did not flower this year, for the plants were too young: ADJ, AUGURY, ILLINI CHARM, PEG EDWARDS, TEAL VELVET, and REMEMBER--a new Belgian cultivar.

I also have some 40-chr. Siberians in my garden and no problem with their culture, for one part of the garden is always moist, even in the summer. The best of all is WIESENPRINZESS which is violet with white styles, a very nice contrast! I not only like the cultivars like BERLINER RIESEN and MAUVE MOOD, but also the species of the chrysographes, for example *I. chrysographes Rubellum* and *I. forrestii*.

Some words about the culture: in my garden the soil is very sandy. So I mix peat moss into it when I am planting, and I don't let the soil dry out. Between the plants I lay a perforated hose, so the water drips onto the ground and keeps it moist. Also, I add a lot of mulch material, such as compost and lawn clippings. (But this year I could forget the hose, because it is raining, raining, raining!)

(Walter, you have my sympathy; my own soil is sandy over a gravel base and peat moss is good for about a year before it all sinks through the gravel into the water table. I've heard only two tales of woe this year--either they are having a drought, or they are drowning. Did anyone have a nice, normal year, with sunshine and occasional showers?--Peg)

THE STEELE GARDEN  
Clarence Mahan

This past year the Western N. Carolina Chapter hosted the Region 4 Spring Meeting at Charlotte. The garden of Katherine and Richard Steele of Charlotte was on the tour of local gardens. Before the tour there was an Iris Show, and there were two strong clues that the visit to the Steele garden was going to be something special. First, there was the stalk of MY LOVE which almost won the Queen of the Show over the Tall Bearded RASPBERRY RIPPLES for Katherine Steele. It was a perfect stalk, beautifully branched and obviously grown by an expert. The second clue to what to expect at the Steele garden was provided when Katherine won the Silver Medal.

It is difficult to believe that the garden was only three years old when we visited it, or that much of it had recently been flooded by McMullen Creek, which edges the 365-foot deep lot that the lovely Colonial-style house and garden are on. The garden looks as though it has always been there. There really are three gardens. In the front of the house is a lovely formal lawn. This gives way at the sides of the house to a shaded informality, then at the back there are brick terraces, and lovely evergreens, azaleas and lush ground covers make for a relaxed quietude. From there, paths meander down through a sloping woodland, filled with wildflowers, ferns and azaleas growing beneath the wide oaks, redbuds, dogwoods and other native trees. At the end of the woods is a lovely open meadow-like terrace, bordered by the creek. It is here that daylilies, pampas grass, sedums, and Japanese, Louisiana and species irises are growing--but the predominant plantings and those which provide the greatest beauty are the Siberians. The Steeles grow seventy named Siberian cultivars, and never have I seen them grown with any more loving, expert care. The clump of delicate, medium-blue MY LOVE was nothing short of awesome. Along with Senior Judges, and some of the sharpest-eyed critics in AIS, one could just stand and look. It was so beautiful it seemed to inspire reverence--voices hushed. Almost as breathtaking: a splendid clump of PERRY'S PYGMY with perhaps 50 bloomstalks, and 6 buds to the stalk. And SKY WINGS: in the January 1984 Region 4 Newscast, Brian Lazarus described it thus: "...the flower that stole my heart was SKY WINGS, a delicate, old-fashioned mid-blue, with a large yellow center. The flowers were blooming at different heights and made a magnificent airy arrangement."

Some other Siberians grown outstandingly in the Steele garden: MARANATHA, DEWFUL, EGO, SUMMER SKY, COOL SPRING, NAVY BRASS, PANSY PURPLE, MISS DULUTH, ON AND ON, and BLUE BURGEE. Mrs. Steele has written that her own favorites, in addition to MY LOVE, are BUTTER AND SUGAR, RUFFLED VELVET, WING ON WING, ROANOKE'S CHOICE, and PINK HAZE. Katherine Steele's promotion of Siberian irises is a really outstanding service to the Society for Siberian Irises along the mid-Atlantic.

And, of course, the best publicity that one can give is to grow the beloved Siberians in such a way as to show them at their most splendid form. Nowhere is this evidenced better than in the Steele garden. Many Region 4 people who never grew Siberians before went home with a list of 'must haves' (and I'll bet MY LOVE and SKY WINGS were on every list!).

(2¢ worth--don't I wish we could have an article like this one in every issue! There's nothing like reading about someone else's planting (except of course, seeing it yourself) to put fresh ideas into our heads about improving our own plantings. Between this one, and Jennifer's plans for a new border, I'm wondering if I couldn't maybe dig up the tomato bed and...well, no. I suspect if I took away the tomato patch my spouse would become a self-made widower. He loves his sweet 100s and this year went almost as wild over the Park Whoppers. And home grown lettuce--Green Ice and Ruby--both looseleaf types, which we cut leaf by leaf from the plant and then tore into pieces for salads. No wastage that way, no head turning brown in the fridge when he didn't feel like salad for a couple of days; every morsel picked within an hour before eating. Talk about fresh!

I was delighted to see two older-type Siberians getting so much praise; it is good to see that they still can hold their own with the tetraploids on even terms. I think that maybe we will be among the 'lucky' sorts of irises that can welcome the new and still enjoy the old ones too. Variety forever!--Peg.)

A GENTLE SUGGESTION -- Peg Edwards

It has recently occurred to me that there is one way we can bring the Siberians to the attention of our friends and co-members of AIS which we may not have considered. Most regions have some sort of publication, and I will bet that 9/10th of the editors would love to have more articles. My own experience in this job is that one of the toughest things an editor has to work at is trying to pry articles out of people who don't regard themselves as 'literary' and consequently don't try to write anything. I have a feeling that this is due to some extent to the almost universal (at least in America) use of the phone for personal communication and the consequent dropping off of the habit of writing notes as a means of keeping in touch with family and friends. Some of the young people only know how to write a business letter--they learn a set of forms and all they need to do is fill in the right names, phone numbers, parts numbers, etc., and there it is. Lifeless, but 'Correct' for the purpose. But when they talk on the phone, what a flow of words--and frequently very well expressed. Of course, maybe they can't spell the words; but I bet if they tried to put their ideas on paper, any reasonably competent editor can dope out what word is meant, and get the right spelling from the dictionary (which every editor ought to have at hand.)



Now, if you can write as you would talk, and there is something you are interested in and can talk about, why can't you 'talk' it on the typewriter? Or write a first draft by hand if you don't own a typer? Never mind the spelling; make the editor do some of the work. The only qualification I'd make is that if you can't write legibly, you should try to get someone to write it or type it for you. (I've had a couple of articles come to this desk that I couldn't make heads or tails of, and they came from people who had the makings of very good, informative articles in them. Bwoke my wittle heart, but I couldn't use them.)

But if you really have something to say I believe you can find some way of getting it to an editor's desk in usable condition. That doesn't mean clearly and accurately typed with perfect spelling and perfect grammer' either. I have an article on my desk right now that is very usable. I can't read it. It's in German, which I studied in college; I had a double-dose of first-term German and managed to flunk it both times. Still, with the help of my little pocket dictionary (I still have it after all these years) I can get a small, rough idea of what the article is saying. Somewhere among my friends and neighbors there is someone who can read German, and I'll find him or her, and get a good translation of it, and quite possibly it will land in a future issue. So, you see, if we can pry the details out of another language, we can surely pry them out of anyone's English! (As long as it is at all legible.)

So, how about writing to the editor of your Regional publication and ask if he or she can use an article on Siberians? Or even better, send it to the editor in time for the deadline, but not too soon before--because if you do that you might get it back with suggestions on how to improve it. As I said, make the editor do some of the work. A little note clipped to the article saying, "Feel free to edit this as long as you don't change the meaning"--and I'll bet you won't have to do his job for him. You might even get a request for a follow-up, and lookie-lookie, you're a writer. No, make that Writer, with a capital letter. It might even get picked up by some other Regional publication--heck, you might even get a request from the Bulletin for an article! Who can tell? I do know of one writer, a professional, who can't put a word on paper by herself but must dictate it to a secretary, who types it for her. She can't read her own writing, she can't type. She has a good excuse, though--she is in her eighties, crippled with arthritis and about 7/8 blind. What's your excuse?

And if you can't talk on paper' for about a pageful of typed or printed matter, you can do a publicity job for Siberians. Tell your fellow iris fanciers about those lovely new Siberians you bought last year that bloomed this spring for the first time in your garden. Or, in the late winter, invite members to come see your planting in Siberian season--and how-and when--to get there. When they come, make

sure there is a leaflet available with an application for membership in SSI (you can get them from the Secretary) and two or three pens or pencils available.

Of course, it isn't only among AIS members that we need to promote our kind of irises. If you are a Dahlia admirer, or a Fuchsia fancier, maybe there's an activity group near you with a Program Chairman who sometimes has to scratch his or her head for a fresh program. Offer to do a program on Siberian Irises for the group. You can borrow a set of slides from Jim Foreman, or if our set is engaged for the time you'd need it, you might be able to get a set from AIS; try to set the date for a time when you can cut a few stalks from your own garden to bring along--though I've had some good results from late-winter programs--then print a set of cards in large black block capitals and just prattle along as you show the slides. Then ask for questions. What kind of soil do they need? Tell 'em what yours is like. Do you need a pond for them? When do you fertilize them? Where can I buy them? If you just bear one thing in mind you can answer just about any question you may be asked; you grow the Siberians, they don't, so right off the bat you know more than they do. This is all it takes to be an expert. (An expert is someone who knows more than you do but less than the people he considers to be experts. They, in turn, look up to other experts. I sometimes wonder who the top expert is.) You don't need to tell them in beautiful English--that isn't expected of experts. And in case of doubt, you can admit that there are different opinions on that point. From my own experience you can be scared stiff the whole time and still do a good program; I've been doing talks to garden clubbers for about 30 years and I still get stage fright--but once I start talking, I can go on--and on--and on. The most useful thing to keep it going is--get them asking questions. Sometimes I get the Program Chairman to plant a couple of questions to be asked of me to prime the pump. This is enough to get others going. Always bring along some catalogs and price sheets, but be sure to mention you'll need them for your next program; they can take down the addresses and send for their own.--And because you live in the same area as they do, you really do know more than some expert 1500 miles away about how to grow Siberians where you live. You really are an expert!

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A letter has come from Dr. Fred M. Schlegel of Valdivia, Chile, thanking us for publishing his article on growing Siberians there; he says as a result he received seeds of named varieties from Anna Mae Miller and Tony Ballard. He used the forced germination treatment printed in the Bulletin and had very good results with many seedlings now transplanted and growing nicely. The seed he has growing now are from BIG BLUE, PRAIRIE TAPESTRY, FOURFOLD WHITE, ANNIVERSARY, EGO and SWANK. He would appreciate seed from other good varieties so that he can start a breeding program. I understand it is very difficult for him to import live plants even though he wants them for the Display Garden of the Arboretum of the University Austral. Address him as Casilla 135, Valdivia, Chile.

## PRESENTING OUR NEW EDITOR: CAROLEE CLAY

By Herself

Peg asked me to write something about myself by way of introducing myself to you. Here goes!

I have lived most of my life in or near Madison, the beautiful capital of Wisconsin. I grew up next to one of its five lakes. I am the oldest of six children, with three sisters and two brothers. I'm blue-eyed, blonde, 5 ft. 3-3/4 and weighing 112 lbs. (ooh am I jealous--Peg). I have many interests and hobbies, including collecting cookbooks, knitting, crocheting, sewing, but my three chief loves have always been Art, Biology and Sports. My big achievement in sports was the winning of the All-Around Girl Athlete Trophy. A move to another school without an athletic program ended my dream of becoming an Olympic gymnast, but I'm still an avid fan of football, track-and-field, tennis and gymnastic events. I also enjoy fishing, trapshooting, flying, gardening and horsebackriding. I have two Registered Quarter Horses; I really enjoy almost anything connected with outdoor activity.

As a young girl I loved growing things. I found and grew a rhizome which turned out to be WABASH; I tried hybridizing when I was 12--with no success as I threw away the pods of seed when they didn't come up in a month. I grew irises, off and on, until I joined AIS in 1979. Since then I've attended all the national conventions, starting with Tulsa in 1980.

I started the Madison Area Iris Society that same year. We presently have 30 members and will be holding our first AIS show in June 1985; served as their president through this year. I've also served on the Board of Directors of Madison's Olrich Botanical Gardens, as a Director of the Wisconsin Horse-Racing Association and as editor of the Newsletter of the Badger Quarter-Horse Association.

My third love, Art, revolves around a career in the areas of Advertising, Graphic Arts and Printing. I've worked in almost all aspects of these areas--Art Director for a Silk-Screen Printing firm, Fashion Illustrator for Newspaper advertising, Visual Education filmstrips, Graphic Design, layout and paste-up of camera-ready art. After returning to the University of Wisconsin for courses in Landscape Architecture, Real Estate and Small-Home construction and Design, I came back to printing in my present position in production management for a large four-color printing company in Madison.

I grow many irises running the gamut from MDB to species. I hope to try some experiments with colchicine and also tissue culture next year. I have a growing collection of some 60-plus Siberians, including some of the newer introductions, and a large seedling patch which I expect will expand with each passing year.

Following in the footsteps of Peg Edwards will not be an easy task, after the fine job she has done with the Bulletin over the last 15 years. I hope everyone will continue sending information, articles, comments, etc. as they have done in the past. I'll need them. Suggestions are always welcome, too.

Sincerely, *Carolee Clay*

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George & Myrna Hood, 7032 Darnoch Way, Canoga Park, CA 91307  
Fresno Iris Society, c/o Dr. John Weiter, Historian, 1146 W. Rialto  
Ave., Fresno, CA 93705

## Back Talk

And so we say farewell to beautiful Massapequa Park...no, no, I'm not going anywhere; I like it here. But henceforth we will have a new Editor and a new return address on the envelopes. I am at once happy and sad--I've enjoyed the job very much, but it did take up a large hunk of my time, and I'm finding that everything takes longer these days, so I knew that something had to give somewhere. There's also the factor--and an important one--that jobs need a change of people now and then, as well as vice versa.

You're not losing me entirely; Carolee has asked that I continue with a little something at least for the next few issues. And of course, there will be times when I feel I have something to say that might be of interest to some of you, and I'll break loose with an article instead of a little squib. And now maybe I can finish that book I started to write back in 1958. Then, of course, will come the problem--finding a publisher. Oh dear, that's where the trouble usually comes, they tell me. However, I'm an optimist....

I believe that Carolee will do a good job as editor. I've talked with her, she doesn't come to the job as a rank amateur (well, you read her history on p. 18) and I, for one, am looking forward to the next issue. Maybe she'll even get it out in time!

I'd like at this time to thank so many of you--and some who are no longer with us--for the help I've had these last 15 years. So many of you have come through with an article just when I was in despair about an article that had to be postponed, or one that was sent back was about two pages shorter than expected, or couldn't be written because of illness or a job change which disrupted things. But someone always came up with what was needed, and if there was a 15-line gap, I just prattled until the gap was filled. Now there's a fine way to edit a periodical!

So here's wishing all of us a good year coming--a happy birthday to SSI and TSI, flourishing gardens to each of us and wonderful seedlings to the pollen daubers, and a long happy future for our Society. I don't know of any reason we shouldn't get that, at least, for what has happened to Siberian Irises in the last 25 years has been incredible (well, really since Frank Stubbs had his name changed to WHITE SWIRL in 1957!).

Lots of love --

Peg E