

The background of the cover is a photograph of a garden filled with Japanese irises. In the foreground, there are several large, vibrant blue irises with yellow markings on their petals. Behind them, there are more irises in shades of purple and white. A dark wooden picket fence runs across the background under a bright sky.

THE REVIEW

OF THE SOCIETY
FOR
JAPANESE IRISES

VOLUME 40
NUMBER #2
FALL 2003

PAYNE MEDAL WINNERS (TIE)



LION KING (Bauer/Coble 1996)



RASPBERRY GLOW (Aitken 1992)

THE REVIEW OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

VOLUME 40

NUMBER 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Officers and Appointments	4
Business Items	6
2003 SJI Board Minutes	8
Letter from the President - Jill Copeland	10
Coming Attractions	11
Commercial Garden Directory	12
Photo Contest Winners	14
AIS 2003 JI Awards	16
SJI Popularity Poll by Bruce Filardi	17
Memorial Tribute to Dr. Currier McEwen by Ted White..	18
Notes from the Beardless and Borderless Convention	25
This 'N That	26
Chirps From Robins	31
A Massachusetts Garden by Phil Cook	34
The Two Seasons of Japanese Irises in Japan by Clarence Mahan	36
Iris Trials at the RHS Garden Wisley by Clive Russell	40
Meet the New Hybridizers Robin Members	44
2005 Invitations to Hybridizers	49
2003 Show Reports - Japanese Irises	50
Editor's Essay - Rita Gormley	54
Advertisers	53
Photo Credits	53

THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

Officers

President	Jill Copeland, 78118 M-40 Lawton, MI 49065 Tel: (269) 624-1968; <jandjcope@aol.com>
Vice President	Carol Warner, 16815 Falls Rd., Upperco, MD 21155-9445 Tel: (410) 374-4788; <draycott@qis.net>
Secretary	Peter Weixlmann, 280 Seneca Creek Road, West Seneca, NY 14224 Tel: (716) 674-6289; <Pweixl@aol.com>
Treasurer	Catherine Button, 70 Sharpless Blvd, Westampton, NJ 08060 Tel: (609) 835-4218; <cathy@gixxergirl.org>
Immediate Past President	Terry Aitken, 608 NW 119 th Street, Vancouver, WA 98685 Tel: (360) 573-4472; <aitken@flowerfantasy.net>

Directors at Large

Donald Delmez, 3240 Connecticut Dr., St. Charles, MO 63301
Tel: (636) 723-2274

Virginia (Ginni) Hill, 1030 Autumn Oak Circle, Collierville, TN 38017
Tel: (901) 853-2641

Andy Wheeler, 90 Call St., Colrain, MA 01340
Tel: (413) 624-8800; <Foxbrook@javant.com>

Nominating Committee

Through 2004 Riley Probst, 418 N. Van Buren, Kirkwood, MO 63122
Tel: (314) 822-2485, <rprobst02@earthlink.net>

Through 2005 Ellen Gallagher, 1689 Riverside Drive, Berlin, NH 03570
Tel: (603) 752-5731; <ellengalla@yahoo.com>

Through 2006 Sharon Hayes Whitney, 1709 Harpswell Neck Road, South Harpswell, ME 04079-3303
Tel: (207) 833-6905; <ertheart@gwi.net>

SJI is an affiliate of AIS and all meetings are open to the public.

Appointments

Membership Chairman	Catherine Button, 70 Sharpless Blvd, Westampton, NJ 08060; Tel: (609) 835-4218; <cathy@gixxergirl.org>
Slides Chairman Librarian	John Coble, 9823 E. Michigan Ave., Galesburg, MI 49053; Tel: (269) 665-7500; <ensata@aol.com>
Robins Chairman	Cindy Rust, 2016 Meadow Lane., Union, MO 63084; Tel: (636) 583-6355; <srust@fidnet.com>
Hybridizer Robin	Jill Copeland, 78118 M-40 Lawton, MI 49065 Tel: (269) 624-1968; <jandjcope@aol.com>
E-Mail Robin	Dennis Hager , PO Box 390, Millington, MD 21651 Tel: (410) 928-3147; <academyhouse@toad.net>
Popularity Poll	Bruce Filardi, 4244 NE Royal CT., Portland, OR 07213; Tel: (503)2381604;< bfilardi@comcast.net>
Display Garden Chair	Phil Cook, PO Box 338, Underhill, VT 05489 Tel: (802) 899-9928; <phgarden@together.net>
Awards & Registrations	Anna Mae Miller, Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson Way #155, Kalamazoo, MI 49009; Tel: (269) 349- 5934; <irisquilt@aol.com>
Editor:	Rita Gormley, 6717 Martha Dr., Cedar Hill, MO 63016; Tel: (636) 274-7435 <GormleyGreenery@aol.com>

Business Items

DUES:

Single annual - \$5.00 triennial - \$12.50 Life - \$75.00

Family annual - \$6.00 triennial - \$15.50 Life - \$100.00

Youth annual – \$3.00 triennial – \$ 7.50

Dues may be sent either to the AIS Membership Chairman (see AIS Bulletin for address) or directly to the Membership Chairman, The Society for Japanese Irises.

Address changes: please notify Membership Chairman

SALES AND RENTAL ITEMS

The Japanese Iris by Currier McEwen \$24.95

Color Postcards – 2 for 1 Sale

Set #1 – 16 different W.A. Payne introductions

Set #2 – 18 different Payne Award winners

2 sets (#1, #2, or both) \$5.00

Overseas orders, add \$1.00 per set for airmail

Back issues of The Review - \$1.50 per copy

Volume 1 (1964) consists of 3 issues

All others contain 2 issues each

SJI Slide Set Rental \$5.00

Iris Laevigata – book rental \$5.00

All prices include postage. Send requests to John Coble.

Check payable to SJI. Please allow ample time for scheduling.

Deadlines for Submitting Articles and Information

Spring - February 15

Fall - August 15

ADVERTISING

Advertising will be accepted for plants and horticultural-related items.

Charges:

Full page layout	\$18.00
Half page layout	\$10.00
Short ads, text only	\$2.00 for up to 5 lines and for each additional 5 lines or fraction thereof
Full page, color layout	FREE , Photo color separation at cost

Please send original photos (prints or slides) for scanning. Advertising copy and payment to SJI should be mailed to the Editor prior to Editorial deadlines.

NEW!!!

Commercial Directory \$3.00 - includes 2 issues and link to website. Send name, address, phone, e-mail info.

1999 J.I. CHECKLIST

The SJI Checklist contains all registrations and introductions through 1999 of Japanese iris and any interspecies crosses involving Japanese iris. All updates, including awards, can be found in the 1999 edition. The 1999 Checklist is 65 pages of 8.5" X 11" format. The previous edition was published in 1997.

To order, Send \$4.00 postpaid* to:

John Coble, SJI Sales Chairman
9823 E. Michigan Avenue
Galesburg, MI 49053

*\$5.00 Canada, \$8.00 Overseas air mail – payable in US funds only
please make checks payable to **SJI**.

This checklist is also available as a WORD document on the SJI website updated with new information yearly by Bob Bauer, current through 2002.

SJI MEMBERSHIP LIST AVAILABLE

A current SJI membership list can be ordered. This will be a computer printout, listing members alphabetically.

Send check for \$3, payable to **SJI**, to Catherine Button, 70 Sharpless Blvd, Westampton, NJ 08060, Tel (609) 835-4218; cathy@gixxergirl.org

2003 SJI Board Meeting
May 13, 2003
Falls Church, Virginia

Attendees:

Peter Weixlmann, Carol Warner, Lorena Reid, Will Plotner, Carl Boswell, Bill Smoot, Frances Thrash, Anna Mae Miller, R. Dennis Hager, Rita Gormley, Jill Copeland, Ken Duke, Reba Duke, Terry Aitken, Ron James, Donna James, Barbara Aitken, Carla Lankow

No Quorum was Present

Agenda 2003

1. Minutes as published.

2. Treasurer and membership

Cathy Button (report to be published)

\$17, 164.50

Current Membership 280

3. Committee Reports

A. General Robin – Cindy Rust

B. Hybridizer Robin - Jill Copeland 9 members, excerpts to appear in Review

C. E-Mail Robin – R Dennis Hager 68 Members

D. Awards – Anna Mae Miller: currently we have an Honorary Life Membership. Anna Mae and Committee will outline and recommend guidelines for SJI sponsored convention awards for “Best Guest Iris” introduced and seedling.

E. Popularity Poll – Bruce Filardi – report published in Review

F. Display Gardens – Phil Cook – no report

G. Slides and Librarian- John Coble – 2 slide rentals last year with a loss of \$1 but gained \$6.46 over all.

4. Fund Raising

A. Live Auction – Peter Weixlmann: we will hold our second annual SJI iris auction during the general meeting. We always need more donations. **(Editor’s Note: Proceeds were \$535.00. Thanks to all!)**

B. Raffle – Cathy Button: to raffle an item over the course of one year and hold a drawing, we could post a nice photo of the prize on the SJI web page and in the Review and would sell raffle tickets at the conventions and over the next year. We would have to bring in enough money to cover the shipping to the winner.

Peter Weixlmann will head committee to formulate this idea, Bill Smoot has a rare iris print to donate to this project.

5. Publicity Chair- Bill Smoot has accepted the position.

6. Picture Policy – Committee Report: Rita Gormley: ads take place inside covers if sold, award winners on the outside cover.

A. Photo Contest – R Dennis Hager: Rules in Review, slides, photos and digital photos of JI gardens and JI landscapes can be submitted by anyone, not necessary to be an SJI member.

7. Bylaws Change: discussion on the following;

A. to place SJI Editor on the board as a voting member

B. to increase the number of directors

Currently a quorum is difficult to obtain the discussion was to modify to the Executive and the Directors at Large- majority present.

Other business:

New Cover for the recent SJI Review was free due to a publisher's mistake reported Rita Gormley

Electronic Checklist: R Dennis Hager has the list on disc to 2002 date and is available on disc or download as an E mail attachment. It is available on the web site.

Web Site: Bylaws to be made available on the site.

Research: R Dennis Hager- reported a Professor in Maine is interested in doing research for JI planted in the same soil. He will try to connect him with the AIS grant for scientific research committee.

2008 Convention site is being sought

Sharon Whitney New Nominating Committee

Peter Weixlmann, Secretary

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jill Copeland

Hi all,

We had another wonderful bloom season. I still have 6 seedlings blooming (August 15, 03). It still amazes me that crossing white (like LOVE GODDESS) X a red-violet (or pink) results in blues! The best blue seedlings I have come from that kind of cross.

In the Hybridizer's Robin, Phil Cook wondered, if the reason that all the crosses he made on one day didn't take, could be because it rained. He covers his crosses and didn't think rain could get in to wash the pollen off. He didn't record which days rained, however. Since I record weather for all my crosses, I thought I could answer his question. In checking, I found none of the crosses of JI X JI were done on days when it then rained. I told him that it doesn't rain in Michigan very often in July. As soon as I sent the Robin, it started to rain and rained for the next 8 days. We ended with one of the rainiest coolest Julys on record. I am not complaining. JI people never complain about too much rain (except if it gets into the basement) and we didn't get too much rain. I, also, have plenty of seed-pods.

Thanks to all of you who participated in the photo contest. You can see in this issue that it was a big success. Thanks, also, to Rita for setting it up, getting the judges, *etc.* Even though the contest is over, we would still love to have any landscape pictures of JIs that you would like to send. Thanks again for all your help. Wow! Just look at this issue!

SJI suffered a big loss when Currier died. I will miss him, too. When he found out that I was trying to convert JIs to tetraploid, he sent an advanced generation tetraploid seedling for me to use to test my success (or lack of success). When our son had a JI seedling patch, and Currier was at a convention at our house, Currier spent a lot of time with Jimmy helping him evaluate his seedlings. When I was frustrated trying to cross tetraploid cultivar, I wrote to Currier and asked which introduced cultivars were fertile. He sent me a list by return mail. I could go on and on. I expect many of you could, too.

Best Wishes, Jill

COMING ATTRACTIONS!!

Spring of 2004 - Region 4 is planning to have a JI - Regional meeting. *Ensata Extravaganza* will be held on the 3rd, 4th, & 5th of June 2004 in the Norfolk, Virginia area.

Ensata Extravaganza will have something to offer the beginning as well as the advanced JI enthusiast. Our main focus will be to introduce everyone to the beauty of Japanese Irises.

Six Hours of Judges Training

- Exhibition Judging of Japanese Irises (2hrs)
- Garden Judging of Japanese Irises (2hrs)
- Judging the Design Division (2hrs)

Irises for Beginners 101 – a two hour education series of mini-courses covering topics such as JI growth, culture, showing, dividing & planting, color patterns & form, and hybridizing.

An AIS Beardless Iris Show complete with a JI Design Division.

A Day of Garden Tours featuring visits to unique gardens. We'll visit:

The Norfolk Pagoda – a Chinese Garden featuring a two story pagoda, goldfish & koi ponds, unique plants, and the HRIS display bed of JIs. An interesting side-trip will be an opportunity to go aboard the Battleship Wisconsin, which is berthed adjacent to the garden.

Tour a private Japanese Garden owned by a financial company with a large plantings of JIs.

Visit 3-4 private gardens of HRIS members.

The Norfolk Botanical Gardens, and visit the HRIS display planting of Japanese irises. You'll have an opportunity to tour the gardens and to take a boat or tram ride thru the gardens.

Exhibitions, Demonstrations & Displays An art exhibition Sumie flower paintings, and an exhibition of painting techniques, a Ikebana flower arranging, and a Photography Contest.

A Super Plant Auction!

For further information, contact Bill Smoot at (757) 393-4617 and watch the REVIEW and website for updates.

COMMERCIAL GARDEN DIRECTORY

AITKEN'S SALMON CREEK GARDEN
TERRY & BARBARA AITKEN
608 NW 119TH STREET
VANCOUVER, WA 98685
360-573-4472 aitken@flowerfantasy.net
www.flowerfantasy.net

DON DELMEZ
3240 CONNECTICUT AVE.
ST. CHARLES, MO 63301
636-723-2274

DRAYCOTT GARDENS
CAROL WARNER
16815 FALLS RD
UPPERCO, MD 21155-9445
Tel. (410) 374-4788
draycott@qis.net

EARTHEART GARDENS
SHARON HAYES WHITNEY
1709 HARPSWELL NECK RD
HARPSWELL, ME 04079
207-833-6327 ertheart@gwi.net
McEwen Japanese Irises

ENSATA GARDENS
BOB BAUER & JOHN COBLE
9823 E. MICHIGAN AVE.
GALESBURG, MI 49053
269-665-7500 ensata@aol.com
www.ensata.com

GREYWOOD FARM
DARLYN WILKINSON
TOPSFIELD, MA 01983
978-887-7620 greywoodma@att.net
www.greywoodfarm.com

IRIS CITY GARDENS
GREG & MARCY MC CULLOUGH
7675 YOUNGER CREEK ROAD
PRIMM SPRINGS, TN 38476
800-934-IRIS (4747) icity@email.msn.com
<http://www.iriscitygardens.com>

ISLE OF VIEW IRIS GARDEN
LYNN FINKEL
21015 NE 220TH CIRCLE
BATTLE GROUND, WA 98604-4904 360-687-1567
lynn@isleofviewirisdgarden.com
www.isleofviewirisdgarden.com

SANS SOUCI NURSERY
L. BRUCE HORNSTEIN, DVM
3819 BEATY ROAD
MONKTON, MD 21111
410-557-0250 lbh0251@msn.com
www.irises.com

THE IRIS GALLERY
JAY & TERRI HUDSON
33450 LITTLE VALLEY ROAD
FORT BRAGG, CA 95437
800-757-4747 irishud@mcn.org

THE ROCK GARDEN
CHRISTY ANN HENSLER
952 VIET ROAD
NEWPORT, WA 99156-9325
509-447-4143 hensler@povn.com
www.povn.com/rock/

WILDWOOD GARDENS
WILLIAM PLOTNER
P. O. BOX 250
MOLALLA, OR 97038-0250
503-829-3102 gardens@molalla.net
INTRODUCING FOR LORENA REID

SJI REVIEW PHOTO CONTEST A GREAT SUCCESS!!

The SJI Photo Contest was conceived because the SJI REVIEW Editor had a dearth of "Landscape Shots" to promote Japanese Irises. To entice shutterbugs, SJI offered small cash prizes and our generous hybridizer members offered donations of newer introductions.

We were very pleased by the results! There were 60 submissions from 15 photographers and we thank them all.

We arranged for three expert photographers to judge the entries. Pictures were judged on content, composition, lighting and perspective.

.....And the winners are.....!!!

Grand Prize - Button Garden, Westampton, NJ - Picture by Catherine Button

Slide First Prize - Academy House Garden, Millington, MD - Picture by Dennis Hager

Digital First Prize - Pagoda Garden, Norfolk, VA - Picture by Bill Smoot

Honorable Mention - Delmez Garden, St. Charles, MO - Picture by Don Delmez

The winning pictures are posted on the SJI Website - look for them there, as well as in this issue.

As Editor of the SJI REVIEW, I was thrilled by the participation in this effort to make the REVIEW an interesting publication full of JI pictures and articles. My sincere thanks to all the photographers who sent pictures and also to the hybridizers who donated the introductions to be used as prizes: Terry Aitken, Jill Copeland, Don Delmez, Eartheart Gardens-Sharon Whitney, Chad Harris and John White. Also thanks to the Judges who donated their time. Thank you all very much.

Photo Contest Judges – we sincerely thank them for donating their time and expertise as well as the Judge Coordinator, Jim Morris, who made all the arrangements for the Judging in a timely fashion. Jim is many AIS Section's "Secret Weapon".

TODD DAVIS

Todd is a professional photographer who specializes in gardens and landscapes. He has been on photo shoots from Ventura Beach, CA to the state of Maine. He has been published nationally and internationally in books and magazines such as Fine Gardening.

JUNE HUTSON

June is supervisor of the world-famous Kemper Home Demonstration Gardens at Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis where she has been employed for 27 years. With a degree in horticulture from St. Louis Community College - Meramec, she is an ardent 35mm garden photographer. She has judged the St. Louis Post-Dispatch Garden Contest on two occasions.

STEVE SMITH

An MIT engineering graduate, Steve has developed into an excellent photographer who has been published in home and garden magazines. He is an AIS member.

Thanks to all.

Rita Gormley, Editor

AIS JAPANESE IRIS AWARDS 2003

*Number of votes listed first

PAYNE MEDAL (JI)

32 LION KING (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

32 RASPBERRY GLOW (J.T. Aitken)

Runner-up:

27 EPIMETHEUS (Sterling Innerst)

AWARD OF MERIT

30 BLUE SPRITZ (Donald Delmez)

29 TIDELINE (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

Runners-up:

24 PLEASANT STARBURST (Chad Harris)

23 SING THE BLUES (Lorena Reid)

HONORABLE MENTION

29 DIRIGO PINK MILESTONE (John White)

19 REISYUN (Hiroshi Shimizu)

18 LITTLE BOW PINK (Donald Delmez)

17 BLUSHING SNOWMAIDEN (Chad Harris)

17 DIRIGO STAR (John White)

15 BLUES REVISITED (Lorena Reid)

15 LITTLE SPRITZER (Donald Delmez)

15 SLUMBERING DRAGON (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

Runners-up:

14 GLITTERING RAYS (Sterling Innerst)

13 ALL IN WHITE (Donald Delmez)

13 DIRIGO BLUE PLATE (John White)

SJI POPULARITY POLL

I'd like to express my appreciation to each and every member who voted in this year's Popularity Poll. We received ballots from 58 members, almost three times as many as last year. Thank you!

The new type of ballots seemed to work well. Most arrived in very good condition. In fact, ballots from as far away as England and Belgium arrived in perfect shape; the one that looked as if it had been partially eaten en route was the one that came from Will & Tracy Plotner, only 30 miles away from me!

Our winner this year is **ELECTRIC RAYS** (Aitken '90), which barely edged out **CASCADE CREST** (Aitken '88) by one vote, and then one more vote back to Lorena Reid's **SING THE BLUES** ('97) in third place. And only one additional vote back to a three-way tie for fourth place: Bauer & Coble's **LION KING** ('96), Don Delmez' **BLUE SPRITZ** ('96), and the beautiful old favorite **FRILLED ENCHANTMENT** (Marx '59). Three votes made the difference between first place and seventh place, so *your* vote has an impact!

1.	ELECTRIC RAYS	Aitken '90
2.	CASCADE CREST	Aitken '88
3.	SING THE BLUES	Reid '97
4 (tie):	BLUE SPRITZ	Delmez '96
	FRILLED ENCHANTMENT	Marx '59
	LION KING	Bauer/Coble '96
7.	JOCASTA	Innerst '88
8 (tie):	BUTTERFLIES IN FLIGHT	Aitken '91
	CAPRICIAN BUTTERFLY	Marx '85
	JAPANESE PINWHEEL	McEwen '88
11 (tie):	ALPINE MAJESTY	Aitken '97
	BELLENDER BLUE	Bauer/Coble '93
	IAPETUS	Innerst '88
	ROSEWATER	Bauer/Coble '96
15 (tie):	JOY PETERS	Ackerman '90
	KOSHUI NO ASA	Shimizu '98
	RASPBERRY GLOW	Aitken '92
	RIVULETS OF WINE	Aitken '99

Among the cultivars which received more than one write-in vote, EPIMETHEUS (Innerst '92) received four, POOH BAH (Hager '99) received three, and seven varieties received two write-in votes. Those nine cultivars will be added to next year's ballot.

*Bruce Filardi, Portland, OR
bfilardi@comcast.net*

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO DR. CURRIER MCEWEN

by Ted White, Maine Iris Society

On the afternoon of Monday, June 23, 2003 the iris world lost one of its greatest ambassadors when Dr. Currier McEwen of South Harpswell passed away at the age of 101 at Mid Coast Hospital in Brunswick, Maine. Currier had fallen at his home several days earlier and had broken his hip. Following an operation to repair the hip he made a gallant effort to recover, but his advanced age and frail condition made it impossible for him to survive.

Currier's death ended what was truly a most extraordinary and full life. Blessed with a brilliant mind, a charming personality, and a large measure of graciousness, he became accomplished in both medicine and horticulture. Throughout his life, whenever he was complimented on his various achievements, he would often attribute his good fortune to "McEwen luck." Those of us, who knew him well, understood that his accomplishments in life were the product of great ambition, perseverance, and an aversion for idleness.

Currier was a very unique and engaging personality. He had an indomitable spirit and a will to succeed, and he always set goals. In his later years one of his goals was to create a true blue Siberian iris. In 1998 he introduced 'Pride In Blue,' a sky-blue beauty without a trace of violet. He also had an excellent sense of humor and loved to regale others with humorous stories. There was something very special just being in his presence. You knew from the moment you met Currier that he was man of great intellect, compassion, and dedication.

Although Dr. McEwen was best known to many of us for his vast contributions to the world of irises, he was also revered by the

medical establishment for his leadership skills and medical expertise. Following his two-year residency at Bellevue Hospital in New York City and four years spent working at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, he returned to his alma mater, New York University School of Medicine, in 1932 where he became dean of the medical school in 1937 at age 35. So great were his abilities that he became the youngest person ever to become dean of a medical school and was affectionately known as the "boy dean." In 1943 he joined the Army's Medical Corps where he ultimately became a colonel and the chief consultant in medicine for the European Theater of Operations. Following the war, he returned to the United States in 1946 and resumed his professorial duties, specializing in rheumatology at New York University.

After the war Currier's medical expertise and problem solving skills continued to be in great demand. In 1955 he went to Egypt where he was asked to evaluate that country's three medical schools. In Saudi Arabia in 1957 he was asked to conduct an evaluation of that country's medical school. In 1958, he arrived in the Galapagos Islands at the request of the U. S. Department of State and Public Health to do a survey of rheumatic diseases. In 1960 at the request of the same agency, Currier went to the Soviet Union where he participated in a scientific exchange mission. In 1970 at age 68, he retired as Professor Emeritus from New York University and returned to his South Harpswell home. Upon learning that there were only four rheumatologists in the entire State of Maine, he decided to open his first medical practice in rheumatology at Mid Coast Hospital. He continued his practice until 1984, when at age 82, he thought it was time to finally retire and devote all his energy to hybridizing irises.

Before becoming involved with irises, Dr. McEwen began hybridizing daylilies in the 1960s. He continued to hybridize daylilies until 1976 when he gave his daylily hybrids to Howard Brooks, who continued the McEwen hybridizing lines. This allowed Currier

to concentrate his efforts on Siberian and Japanese iris hybridizing. In 1960, through his work with daylilies, he met Orville Fay, the famed daylily hybridizer, who was the first to use colchicine in daylilies to induce tetraploidy in that species. Currier asked Fay if he thought that colchicine could be used to produce tetraploid irises. With Fay's encouragement he began converting diploid Siberian irises to tetraploids, and by 1970 introduced his first tetraploid Siberian iris, 'Orville Fay.' Currier would later recall that his meeting with Fay was "a day that changed my life." Later, he used similar conversion techniques to create the first tetraploid Japanese irises. With these groundbreaking advances in the genetic makeup of irises, Dr. McEwen became an international authority on tetraploidy and its uses to advance the genres, *Iris siberica* and *Iris ensata*.

Over the course of the next thirty years, Dr. McEwen registered and introduced 118 Siberian irises, 50 Japanese irises, and 43 daylilies. He was awarded five Morgan-Wood Medals for his Siberian irises and five Payne Medals for his Japanese introductions. His iris, 'Butter And Sugar,' the first yellow Siberian iris, was a significant advancement in the hybridization of Siberian irises, and earned him much acclaim. In recognition of his hybridizing skills, he was awarded the Hybridizer's Medal from the American Iris Society and the Foster Memorial Plaque from the British Iris Society. He was also awarded the Luther Burbank Award from the American Horticultural Society in 1995. Currier received the Gold Medal from the American Iris Society in 1999. This is the most prestigious award that can be bestowed by AIS for exemplary service to the Society. Currier was presented his special award by his longtime friend and colleague, Shirley Pope, in a ceremony at the Maine Iris Society's Japanese Iris Show in July 2000.

Currier, of course, loved to hybridize irises, but there was also a need to introduce and sell his stock. Realizing that he did not have the time or the energy to devote to shipping his plants, he first

enlisted the help and support of Shirley Pope, who for several years managed all the shipping of his introductions. She also assisted Currier in the selection of his iris introductions. Sharon Whitney, proprietor of Eartheart Gardens, became his business partner in 1993. She helped to propagate his introductions and was in charge of shipping orders across the country and the world. Sharon also helped Currier evaluate his seedlings and in recent years, when he was unable to hybridize, she made specific crosses that he mapped out. Sharon will continue to introduce the last of the McEwen iris introductions.

In 1988 Dr. McEwen announced that the 1990 national convention for the Society of Japanese Irises would be held in Maine. This came as a complete surprise to the Maine Iris Society that would have to sponsor such an event. Shirley Pope remarked that you just could not say "no" to Currier, and so, MIS accepted the challenge and plans for the Japanese Iris Convention were set in motion. For several days preceding the convention the weather had been cloudy and rainy, but on the first day of the garden tours, the day dawned sunny and warm and continued throughout the convention. At a lobster banquet at the McEwen home and garden, Currier declared the good weather to be one more example of "McEwen luck." At the banquet he was presented a special plaque for "Lifetime Membership" in the Society for Japanese Irises. The good doctor rose to accept the award and remarked, "Just imagine, a lifetime membership at age 88!" Predictably, the audience responded with uproarious laughter.

There were seemingly no limits to Currier's quest to observe and evaluate irises whenever the opportunity presented itself. On a visit to the Maine Iris Society's Japanese Iris Show in 1996, he decided to visit John White's Japanese iris seedling garden. There was just one problem; torrential rain was pounding the local area. When asked if he really wanted to view the garden under these conditions, he responded with an emphatic, "yes!" No one who saw him on that rainy afternoon will ever forget the sight of Currier at age 94

slogging his way through the JI seedling beds in the pouring rain, sheltered only by a guide holding an umbrella.

The Maine Iris Society honored Dr. McEwen in 1998 with the creation of the Currier McEwen Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the world of irises. The award is presented annually at the MIS June Show to the 'Best Siberian Iris of the Show.' A photo of Currier standing in his hybridizing garden in South Harpswell, that first appeared on the cover of *People, Places, and Plants* magazine, graces the plaque that bears the names of those who have won the award. We were all pleased that he lived to see the first six presentations of this award.

During a visit to John White's seedling garden in 1998, Currier confided to your editor that his favorite flower was still the daylily. When asked why he did not continue his work with daylilies, he responded, "Well, I had an opportunity to either be a small fish in a large pond, or a big fish in a little pond." He recognized that there were literally hundreds of daylily hybridizers, but only a precious few who were hybridizing Siberian and Japanese irises. He understood that he could make his greatest impact on horticulture by pursuing the road least traveled. That led to his decision in 1976 to abandon his very successful daylily hybridizing program.

Dr. McEwen was honored on the occasion of his 100th birthday by the State of Maine in 2002 when then Governor Angus King declared June 22, 2002 Currier McEwen Day throughout the state. A large crowd gathered at Centennial Hall in South Harpswell for the dedication of the Currier McEwen Centennial Garden. The garden, prepared by the Harpswell Garden Club, was planted with some of his iris and daylily introductions. Currier stood to acknowledge his many well-wishers from the porch of the Centennial Hall in his typically gracious manner. His actual birth date was April 1, 1902, and he always thought it humorous to have been born on April Fool's Day.

Currier was the subject of numerous magazine articles, providing the gardening public with a chronology of his remarkable life. Two of the best articles on his life story were written by Paul Tukey, editor of *People, Places, and Plants* magazine. The articles appeared in the Summer 1997 and the March/April 2002 issues of the magazine. These issues are now collector's items and may be difficult to obtain.

When someone of Currier McEwen's stature dies, it is as if a great library has burned to the ground. So vast was his knowledge of irises that we are extremely fortunate that he wrote three books on irises. His most recent books, *The Japanese Iris* © 1990 and *The Siberian Iris* © 1996 are outstanding treatises on these two iris species. What is most remarkable is that Currier completed his second Siberian iris book when he was 94 years of age.

Not only was Currier an excellent writer, he was also in great demand as speaker at iris conventions and regional meetings. He could say in fifteen minutes what might take others more than an hour to present. In his mid-90s he was still traveling and speaking at various AIS functions. It seemed the iris world couldn't get enough of Currier McEwen. When not speaking publicly, he could be seen on numerous occasions holding court in his beautiful Seaways Garden where visitors flocked annually to see his latest creations. He was ever the most genial and gracious host to garden clubs and iris connoisseurs alike. Not for a moment did his guests suspect that they might be interrupting his hybridizing tasks that surely needed to be completed that very day.

Currier was not just an outstanding hybridizer of irises and daylilies. He was an inspiration to all who knew him, but in particular, to those who would follow in his footsteps. Today, his hybridizing lines continue through the work of his disciples, John White, Jeff Dunlop, Dean Cole, and Sharon Whitney right here in Maine. Each of these hybridizers is building and expanding upon the genetic base that Currier developed. And so, although he is gone, he has left us

with an incredible volume of plant material that can be used to further advance Siberian and Japanese irises.

And so, dear Currier, we bid you a fond farewell. Your work here on Earth is over, but you will never be forgotten. We shall always cherish our time with you and the wonderful memories we all have of you. Your life will live on through the rich legacy of the irises that you have left behind. We salute you for the wonderful friend that you were to all of us. You taught us how to best make use of the time that is allotted to each of us and inspired us all to be better human beings.

The Society for Japanese Irises and the Maine Iris Society sends its most sincere condolences to Elisabeth McEwen and the entire McEwen family.

Ted White, Maine Iris Society

Memorial Donation
received in remembrance of
CURRIER MC EWEN
from

Catherine Button
Jill & Jim Copeland

NOTES FROM THE BEARDLESS & BORDERLESS CONVENTION 2003

A chartered bus took the Southwest Michigan Iris Society members and their friends from many states to the Siberian and Species Iris Convention in Hamiltón, Ontario, Canada. These are some comments written by the travelers:

Attending a Siberian conference for the first time, I enjoyed putting faces to familiar names and making new friends.

Jackie Kropf

How charming was the keynote speaker and what an asset to the promotion of the iris! She apologized for her 'poor' English and made me ashamed of my inability to communicate well in any other language except English. It was exciting to see WHITE AMBER, Shafer/Sacks, and I enjoyed the Royal Botanical Gardens. Thanks to our hosts and to all who worked to make the experience so pleasant.

Carol Morgan

This was the first iris convention we have attended and we were overwhelmed with the knowledge of these 'Iris People'. The gardens were beautiful and the people were so friendly. All in all a wonderful experience.

Marilyn Keene

I had a great time on this convention and especially enjoyed riding the 'Michigan Bus'. Jill and Jim Copeland took great care of us and I am certain Anna Mae Miller talked with each and every person who attended this event. She is my favorite cheerleader. We learned a great deal about what's new in the beardless. The food, hospitality and everything except the fire alarm was perfect. The judges training was excellent. I had a wonderful time and want to thank those who are responsible for putting this convention together.

Jean E. Morris, St. Louis, MO

THIS 'N THAT

Letter to the AIS Bulletin Editor and the AIS

*The blooms they keep a coming,
the garden chores expand,
The shows, the sales, the meetings,
become ever more in demand.*

*Please o wondrous AIS gods do tell,
there may be reason overlooked,
why amidst this blessed bloom
a judges ballot must be booked!*

In case my poor verse does not carry the message, I would dearly love to see the due date for the judges ballot for the AIS awards be moved to a later date. It certainly was a late season of iris bloom this year here in New Jersey zone 6b, and it served to show how nearly impossible it would be to ever vote a ballot in time if I lived in zone 4 or the like!

In addition to just getting to see some iris before the July 1 deadline, a few weeks to gather the little scraps of paper with all my notes made while garden visiting and compile them into something resembling reason, well that would be helpful too. How does September 1st sound?

And if wishing is all it takes, being able to vote the ballot electronically would be a great plus too!

Sincerely,
Catherine Button, AIS Garden Judge

7-23-03

Wonder how the SJI judge-folks feel about the JI due date. Unbelievably, I STILL have JI's blooming! Voting for the popularity poll was even harder. I want at least twenty votes!

**IN MEMORIAM
CURRIER MCEWEN
1902 - 2003**



SJI PHOTO CONTEST

GRAND PRIZE

Button Garden, Westampton, NJ

Picture by Catherine Button



SLIDE FIRST PRIZE

Academy House Garden, Millington, MD

Picture by Dennis Hager



DIGITAL FIRST PRIZE

Pagoda Garden, Norfolk, VA

Picture by Bill Smoot



HONORABLE MENTION

Delmez Garden, St. Charles, MO

Picture by Don Delmez



POPULARITY POLL

Sing the Blues (Reid 97)



SING THE BLUES
Reid '97

BLUE SPRITZ
Delmez '96



FRILLED
ENCHANTMENT
Marx '59

CHIRPS FROM THE GENERAL INTEREST JAPANESE IRIS ROBIN

By Cindy Rust, Director

It seems as though the computer age is upon us! I say that because there are only three members to this very general, general interest robin. So, if any of you reading this article in The Review are interested in joining us, there is plenty of room!

Cindy Rust of Union, Missouri: "We grow about a dozen JI along with other beardless and bearded irises in our garden. We are basically median hybridizers here. But, JI are definitely my mother's favorites and it is about her garden that we will write for this robin. My mother's name is Phyllis Burton and she lives about 15 minutes away in Villa Ridge, MO. She plants her JI right up against the west side of her house and has about 50 huge clumps, all different varieties. Her favorite place to visit in the spring is Don Delmez' garden. Her garden is in zone 5-b and we are about 35 miles west of St. Louis. This means that we are in close proximity to the Missouri Botanical Gardens and Greater St. Louis Iris Society, which always hosts a late show for JI in June. This past year, less than three weeks after being released from the hospital after a stroke, she tied for the silver medal with ten blue ribbons. Alas, she had nothing but blues, so did not win the silver or bronze medal. **McKenzie Sunset** was considered for Queen, but mom had pried it open and it was very fresh, not yet full size.

We moved my Mom's garden a mile up the road two years ago in the heart of the heat and summer. We felt like human post hole diggers, the ground was so hard. But, the irises settled right in and did fine.

My Mom is fanatical about tending her irises, especially her beloved JIs. She feeds them Miracid at least every two weeks, if not every week, throughout the growing season. Each clump gets its

own bucket. When she was first released from the hospital, I was drafted for this duty. Even though it was hot and she was unsteady, she made sure I didn't cheat on each clump getting its own bucket. By the time we ran out of JI, she let me broadcast buckets of the stuff over the LA irises, which are lower down in her caste system! She waters almost every day with a hose if it doesn't rain a lot. Results are that she has waist to head high clumps of perfectly green foliage all season long. It certainly is a sight to behold! She also manages to get rebloom most summers and the things that rebloom, such as **Dirigo Devil**, are not listed as rebloomers. She also has a sport of **Dirigo Devil** that she has had for four years now. It is just like Dirigo Devil in every detail, except it is splash. It's garden name is **Dirigo Splash** ... what else?"

Rita Gormley of Cedar Hill, Missouri: "Unfortunately, we did not get to replanting our existing JI bed in the kiddie pool this year but Tom did a new bed up front to hold the 12 new ones we got from Don Delmez and from the JI auction at the Convention this year. Our JI population has about doubled since I became editor of the REVIEW!"

Pat, sorry I didn't get to answer your question on what JI would be good to order this year but here are the ones that do especially well for us. Many came to us from Don Delmez's garden which is a very good bet for our garden because he lives close to here with the same growing conditions. He, however, redigs the soil adding alfalfa and cotton boll meal each year and moves them often (more work than we want to do!).

FLASHING KOI, GEISHA GOWN, GRACEFUL DANCER,
INK ON ICE, LEAVE ME SIGHING, LITTLE BOW PINK,
ORIENTAL ELEGANCE

Cindy, SJI Review has received many compliments on the article you wrote on Don Delmez. It seems everyone is interested in "knowing" the hybridizers. Should any of you worry about sending pictures to the REVIEW, the picture of Don in the article has been

altered electronically by my resident graphics artist – Don originally was holding a huge white cup which was distracting so Tom removed it! If you look closely, you can see the shadow.”

Pat Brooks, Ladson, South Carolina: “I had most of my JIs in buckets and I decided I didn’t like that method. I really didn’t get good bloom that way. A friend told me that you had to add new dirt almost every year because they would not bloom well. So I put some back in the ground. I had put them in pots originally because I was told that they wouldn’t do good for more than three years in the same spot. Not true I have some for over six years in the same spot and they bloom every year. I add alfalfa meal to ground every year and I cover them with pine straw. My yard slopes and pine straw does not float away with heavy rains.

I use to judge, but I had allergic reaction to medicine and it made my hands shake very badly. I have medicine to stop that but can’t write well enough to read my own writing. So I couldn’t take the test because I couldn’t make arrangements with our judges chairman to have some write down my answers. Funny I did it for two people at one session a few years back so now I am not a judge. I do get to go Region 4 things as my daughter lives in Durham NC and she has a nice group.

Our group has done away with our JI shows - a shame because we always had fun with that. Our club was originally formed as JI group and to show JI. Now our shows are held about an hour away from Summerville and they start taking entries early and I don’t feel like cutting them the night before. It is still just getting light before I would have to leave. So I also stopped showing, I do help sell iris to the public. I do get to meet a lot of interesting people that way.”

A MASSACHUSETTS GARDEN

by Phil Cook

At the beginning of July (03) I decided to take a break from my own garden and to make a pilgrimage to visit some hybridizers and display gardens in Massachusetts and Maine. I had heard about Dick Jarzowski's garden from several different sources and his was the first destination. The trip to West Newbury, MA took about 4 hours and the weather was not the best, ranging from heavy mist to downpours. A sign indicating Japanese Iris Display Garden was in front of the house and I followed the arrows down a long driveway to where a Japanese style gate led into the garden.

The garden is sited in a dell below the house and is surrounded by a variety of mature hardwood trees. An oriental theme is apparent in the design and in the plants. A "dry" pond surfaced with small pieces of shale is traversed by a Japanese bridge. Paths connect semi-enclosed areas in which collections of daylilies, hostas, and Japanese irises are planted. Many small trees and shrubs of Asiatic origin (maples, cherries, magnolias) complement the larger native trees and provide partitions between major beds.

Dick's collection of over 100 JI cultivars is separated into two large beds. One is a semiformal planting which is devoted to the cultivars of McEwen and Hirao. A parterre consists of a rectangular arrangement of flagstones surrounded on three sides by the irises. The second, informal planting includes cultivars ranging from introductions by Payne to those of contemporary breeders. The plants were healthy and nicely labeled. Heavy rains had left many of the flowers rather bedraggled and, perhaps because of the shade from the surrounding trees, the plants didn't appear as sturdy as those grown in a sunnier exposure. Nonetheless, there was the promise of many more buds to open and one could not help but be impressed by the artful integration of the Japanese iris collection into the rest of the garden.

Dick deserves much credit for bringing his garden and Japanese irises to the attention of the public. Each season he publishes notices in the local papers, indicating when flowers are in bloom. This past summer, his garden was featured in the Boston Globe and attracted many more visitors than usual. While I was there, there were 8-10 visitors despite the misty rain. He estimates that over a thousand visitors have passed through during the past few years. Dick greets as many as he can and enthusiastically provides information and advice—an ideal spokesperson and an excellent display garden.

Alas, this is probably the last season that the garden will be available to the public. There was a realtor's sign posted next to the welcoming sign in front of the house. Dick and his wife feel that it is time to move to a smaller home and to pursue other interests. We must hope that there will be others with Dick's enthusiasm who will provide regional gardeners with information and inspiration for growing Japanese irises.

*Phil Cook, Underhill, VT
Display Garden Chairman
phgarden@together.net*

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Series *Laevigatae* includes *I. laevigata*, *I. pseudacorus* and *I. ensata*. The English include *I. versicolor* and *I. virginica* which the Americans treat separately.

I. laevigata is known in Japan as *Kakitsubata* where it has been grown for at least 12 centuries. The German Peter Pallas found *I. laevigata* in a swamp near Lake Baikal, Siberia in 1770. In 1829, Turczaninow found a large wild clump at a place nearby, and from this specimen Fischer named it *I. laevigata* in 1837. This is a true water-loving and demanding species. This one will actually grow in water and requires full sunlight and acid soil, but will tolerate some lime.

THE TWO SEASONS OF JAPANESE IRISES IN JAPAN

Clarence Mahan

One aspect of Japanese iris displays in Japan intrigued me. On Children's Day, which is on May 5th every year, streets and shops in Japan are decorated with many colorful carp streamers. I also saw Japanese iris streamers made of paper, cloth and synthetic materials on a couple of occasions. You will sometimes see Japanese boys wearing iris leaves on Children's Day. I wondered for years what the connection was between Children's Day and irises because the Japanese iris bloom season is usually a month later than Children's Day. Why is there a season of paper irises apart from the real iris bloom season? Now I know.

The Japanese from ancient times celebrated what was originally a Chinese festival on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar. The Chinese still celebrate the festival, which they call *Duan Wu Jie*, or Dragon Boat Festival. It is also celebrated in Korea where it is called *Tano*. The Japanese version of this festival was called *Tango no Sekku*. The word *tango* originally meant the "first day of the horse" of each month. The "first day of the horse" was always the fifth day of the month. Over time the word *tango* came to mean only the fifth day of the fifth month because of the popularity of the festival.

The Japanese also called the festival *Ayame no Sekku*, and *Shôbu no Sechinichi*. These two names are usually translated as "Iris Festival" even though "Sweet Flag Festival" would probably be a more nearly accurate translation.

The Chinese, Koreans and Japanese all considered the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar to be a time when evil spirits were rampant. The festival was held to perform ritual purifications

to guard against fires, pestilence and damage to crops. Following the Chinese custom, leaves of mugwort and sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*) were attached to the rafters. People washed their hair and bathed in water infused with *Acorus calamus* leaves. People wore sweet flag and iris leaves on their clothing, and finely chopped sweet flag leaves were mixed with *sake* to produce a drink called *shobu-sake*.

The Japanese words *ayame* and *shôbu* were historically used to denote both irises and the sweet flag. A distinguishing feature of the sweet flag leaf is its lemony fragrance. Throughout East Asia, sweet flag has the reputation of being useful in warding off evil spirits.

The festival was also celebrated both in China and Japan with archery contests. It was a special holiday for men and boys because it was a day when the *yang* principle, symbolized by the number five, was dominant. *Yang* is masculine, *yin* feminine in Taoist philosophy. The Kamakura period (1185-1333) in Japanese history was marked by militarism and the rise of the samurai class. It was apparently during this period that it became fashionable to call the festival of the fifth day *Shôbu no Sechinichi*. This name has a double meaning. Even though the Chinese ideograms are different, *shôbu* when spoken in Japanese means "iris" and it also means "warlike spirit." The leaf of the iris and of the sweet flag came to symbolize a sword and male sexuality. The custom of celebrating the birth of a son as part of fifth day festival activities apparently began during the Kamakura period.

The festival of the fifth day of the fifth month was changed into a boy's festival during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). In the Meiji period (1868-1912), the government designated May 5th of each year Boy's Day. Finally, in 1948, May 5th was changed to Children's Day, a modification that was probably intended to separate its celebration from past associations with militarism.

This year, as in centuries past, carp streamers flew throughout Japan on the fifth day of the fifth month. Boys wore iris leaves, and some people bought bundles of sweet flag leaves and mugwort to hang in their houses. Women washed their hair with sweet flag water. The day was May 5, 2003.

Although the Chinese and Korean governments have adopted the Gregorian calendar, their citizens still celebrate the festival of the fifth day of the fifth month according to the lunar calendar. This year that day was June 3, 2003. On that date real Japanese irises were blooming in Japan. When Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873, the government directed that Boy's Day would be held on the fifth day of the fifth month of the new calendar. The fifth month became May. This is why Japan has two iris bloom seasons. Paper irises "bloom" in May in Japan. Real irises bloom in June.

Clarence Mahan, McLean, VA
CEMahan@aol.com

INVITATION TO JOIN SJI

We are pleased to report that the new *SJI Invitation to Join* has received many favorable comments.

We have mailed some to each of the gardens listed in the Commercial Directory (in this issue of the REVIEW) and each Display Garden. This is a great tool to solicit new members for SJI.

If you need more of these brochures for meetings or other JI functions, let Catherine Button know and she will mail them to you.

Rita Gormley, Editor

SJI REVIEW

The SJI Review is published semi-annually by the Society for Japanese Irises. The editorial office is temporarily located at 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065.

The REVIEW is issued twice a year by the Society for Japanese Irises, Inc. which is a nonprofit 501c(3) organization, and is a Section of the American Iris Society, which is a non-profit organization incorporated February 2, 1927, in the County of Philadelphia, State of Pennsylvania. Subscription is free to SJI members. All rights reserved.

Reproduction in whole or in part of the publication without the written permission of the editor is prohibited. Such permission is hereby granted to the Bulletin of the American Iris Society, to the Journals of the other AIS Sections and to the Journals of the AIS Regions.

Views expressed herein are those of the authors and contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the Society for Japanese Irises, Inc. nor the American Iris Society, its officers and members. The mention of any equipment, product, plants, companies or organization in this publication does not constitute an endorsement by the Society for Japanese Irises, Inc., nor the American Iris Society.

Return postage must accompany all manuscripts, drawings, and photographs submitted if they are to be returned, and no responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials. All rights in letters sent to The REVIEW or its agents acting as officers of the Society for Japanese Irises, Inc. will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyright purposes and as subject to The REVIEW's unrestricted right to edit and to comment editorially. Society for Japanese Irises, Inc.

Deadlines for receiving copy are February 15th and August 15th, with earlier receipt desirable. Black and white photographs, colored prints (glossy), slides and black and white drawings are welcome.

ROBINS FLYING AGAIN!

We are pleased to report that the Robins are up and going again. Jill Copeland has included an article in this issue showing more of the interesting hybridizers. If you are interested in any of the Robins, please contact:

JI General Interest Robin: Cindy Rust, director, 2016 Meadow Lane, Union, MO 63084; 636-583-2745; E-mail: srust@fidnet.com

JI Hybridizer's Robin: Jill Copeland, director, 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065; 269-624-1968; E-mail: jandjcope@aol.com

JI E-mail Robin: Dennis Hager, director, E-mail: academyhouse@toad.net; www.socji.org

IRIS TRIALS AT RHS GARDEN WISLEY

by Clive Russell

I am sure that most of you who arrive on these shores take time out to pay a visit to the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) garden at Wisley. What many of you may not realize is that the garden hosts an on-going trial of iris on the Portsmouth Field, which started in the 1920's. Originally, the trial was only for TB's, when 12 rhizomes of each variety were planted, but over the years, with the increase of types of iris being trialed, the number of rhizomes has decreased, and has now bottomed out at 3 per variety. All rhizomatous types, with the exception of MDB's, LA's and oncos and regelias are in trial. Each trial lasts for 3 years, but spurias are allowed 4 years, and the trials are staggered so that the judges and gardeners are not overloaded with marking and lifting respectively in any one year. The end result of each trial is now to determine whether any/some/all of the iris deserve the RHS's Award of Garden Merit (AGM), and to this end, we view the trials in the final year, marking the iris and noting how they have performed.

Iris are Referred for Further Assessment (RFA) by the Joint Iris Committee (JIC), which is made up of equal numbers of members of both the RHS and the British Iris Society (BIS), and we select from stems brought either to shows, or to committee meetings. By the time the land is being prepared for a new trial, the RHS head gardener has allocated the amount of space available, and then the trial coordinator counts up how many varieties have been RFA'd. If there is any space unaccounted for, she then contacts breeders, exhibitors and growers to see whether the remaining land cannot be filled with varieties they know and/or grow as nominations.

The trails are moved around the Portsmouth Field turn by turn, but because of their specific requirements, special raised beds filled with ericaceous compost were created for the ensata trial which started in 1993, prior to that, ensatas having been grown only for

display. Unfortunately, the irrigation turned out to be inadequate, and at the end of the first year had to be corrected by laying in more water pipes, and the trial restarted.

I first saw the ensatas in the third year of the second trail, when I had really gone down to Wisley to have a look at the spuria trail, for which I was responsible for some 31 varieties. To get to the trial grounds on the Portsmouth Field, you have to walk up and over Battlestone Hill, and going down the other side, the trial ground opens up before you. The JI's beds are on the immediate right at the head of the field, and I was totally bowled over on that occasion when I first saw them in full bloom.

There are not many growers of JI's in the UK, so the first ensata trail was really a "catch-up" trial consisting of varieties that were readily available, such as HUE AND CRY, FLYING TIGER and CONTINUING PLEASURE. The second trial consisted of varieties from our principal stockist, who supplied slightly newer varieties including HUE AND CRY and SUMMER STORM. Wisley has a rock garden, at the bottom of which is a pond, and JI's are grown along its edge. These are hybrids from Japan, and for the third trial, which started in 1999, it was decided that *they* should be tried out, together with a few varieties (such as CAPRICIAN BUTTERFLY) which, for one reason or another, were being retrialed. Unfortunately, because of the visitors' requirements, Wisley would not lift their ensatas until the spring of 2000, which meant that they were 6 months behind all the others. Matters were not helped by the irrigation not working properly in that particular bed, and none of them did well (as can be seen from the dearth of 1999 AGM's listed below). With such a limited supply of ensatas it was decided that for the fourth trial water loving iris (as opposed to water iris) should be included, making it more of a wetlands trial. In 2002 the JIC voted an AGM for both ROY DAVIDSON and PHIL EDINGER just on the experience of their being grown by a number of its members, but it was thought that other I pseudacorus hybrids should have the opportunity for trial. (CHANCE BEAUTY was in the last trail, but succumbed to thrips, so is being retrialed from fresh stock.)

Over the years I have submitted TB, BB, IB, SDB and spuria hybrids to the trials, and am now always asked to nominate varieties to fill up the space on these trials. Not having ever previously submitted ensatas, but having built up a collection since joining the SJI in 1997, I contacted the trials coordinator to make a few nominations. In the event, because there was sufficient space, I ended up sending 11 varieties, and although not all could be said to be at the cutting edge of ensata development, they were the best of what I had available. They were:

ACK-COUNTABLE
ALPINE MAJESTY
CRYSTAL HALO
FRACTAL BLUE
FRECKLED GEISHA
HEGIRA
LORENZACCIO
PINKERTON
RIVULETS OF WINE
SANDSATION
TIDELINE

At present, because of the logistics involved, it looks unlikely that there will ever be a trial of *I. laevigata*, but what will become of the wetlands trial? Unless there is an influx of new ensata cultivars, the land is likely to be lost to irises. I am planning to relocate so that I have more space in which to grow the types of iris in which I am particularly interested, but my main JI interest is for patterned 6-fall types. Obviously, for the future, a larger cross-section of varieties is needed to provide better representation of the type, and whereas I will continue to import ensatas into the country, what I submit to Wisley will reflect my personal taste, so the balance of 3-falls, 9-falls and selfs will not be there, and visitors could develop the erroneous impression that all JI's are 6-fall types.

I have a few more cultivars in hand (including some Chad Harris seedlings) which I am monitoring and bulking up in readiness for the next trial which starts in 2005, but if anyone would like to

donate seedlings or registered varieties to the trial, you can contact me for details at cliveruss@aol.com.

Previously awarded AGM's

1995

CONTINUING PLEASURE

FLYING TIGER

KATY MENDEZ

ROSE QUEEN

SOUTHERN SUN

VARIEGATA

IMPERIAL MAGIC

1996

FRINGED CLOUD

GIVE-ME-PATIENCE

HUE AND CRY

LASTING PLEASURE

MAGIC OPAL

MANCUNIAN

OL' MAN RIVER

RETURNING TIDE

SUMMER STORM

THE GREAT MOGUL

VINTAGE FESTIVAL

1999

ALDRIDGE SNOW MAIDEN

ALDRIDGE VISITOR

BARR PURPLE EAST

CAPRICIAN BUTTERFLY

2002

MACINUSUME

MURASAME

O KIME SAN

*Clive Russell, Hertfordshire,
England
cliveruss@aol.com*

MEET THE NEW HYBRIDIZERS

ROBIN MEMBERS

by Jill Copeland, Hybridizer Robin Chair

Terry Aitken, Vancouver, WA: I started growing Japanese irises following a Regional 13 program by Lorena Reid, sometime in the early 1980's. Our soils are pH 5.6 to 5.8 normally. We get about 36 inches of rain during winter – almost none in summer (late June through mid October). We irrigate in summer with about one inch of water every ten days, usually. Sometimes we add compost (horse manure, straw and wood shavings) when we can get it and can spare the manpower to spread it. The plants do love it! We do use commercial fertilizer in springtime, about one month before bloom and again right after bloom. We use systemic insecticides (Marathon, Demethoate, alternatively) to get rid of thrips, which cause orange/rust streaks on the foliage. This is also required for international shipping (getting rid of any insects). We use Nemacur to minimize nematode parasites.

Our JI field is 60' x 200', planted alphabetically in double rows at 3'-6" on center. We transplant every three years (and this is the year!). We have certainly observed that some varieties are far more vigorous growers and increasers than others. Our medal winners can be accused of being extra vigorous – CASCADE CREST and BUTTERFLIES IN FLIGHT as examples.

Mike Iler, Coos Bay, OR: I'm 52 and my wife Kathy is 46. She's a wonderful person. We've been together 26 years. We're down to 2 cats but are welcoming some llamas into the family soon. Besides breeding JIs my interests include bonsai, raising species Rhodys from seed, grafting Japanese maples and yatsabusa/corkbark black pines. Beyond that listening to music, reading, and our wild birdlife just about does it for me. Kathy's includes weaving, spinning, knitting, organic food gardening, and breeding auriculas (primulas). She also loves the birds and is an exceptional cook.

We live on 7 1/2 acres located in the foothills of the coast range 12 miles east of Coos Bay. That's like saying 'drive until you get to nowhere then turn east' but we love it. They say we are in zone 8. We get 70-80 inches of rain but 90% of it comes Dec. to March. If only it were spread out over the entire year. That would be paradise but then we'd be overrun by Californians (we're both originally from San Diego. I came north in '75 and Kathy joined me a year latter).

Being slightly elevated and this close to the ocean, we do get the wind. The winter systems rolling in from the Gulf of Alaska can be ferocious. 60-70 miles an hour is all too common. It's gotten over 100 twice in the last 12 years. We have 30 or so large conifers and we've lost a few. I don't mind telling you it can get scary. During the summer months when the interior valleys heat up, it blows 30 mph out of the northwest. As this happens more often than not, weak stems and poor substance are not options on our JIs.

What got me started with JIs was a hilarious chapter on growing them from seed in a book by Henry Mitchell. I believe the title is The Essential Earthman but it's late and I'm too lazy to go downstairs and look for it. Anyway, I duly ordered some packets (supposedly hand-pollinated of Japanese origin) from Thompson & Morgan. As fate would have it, the following spring I bought 3 dried-out 1 gallon pots that allegedly contained JIs at a local garden club plant sale. That was in the spring of '90. Brought 'em home and repotted into 3's with peat, bark and steer. We didn't have much water here then so I plopped them into an old stock trough with 4" of water. They took off. The varieties turned out to be FLYING TIGER, WORLD'S DELIGHT, and I think DAME FORTUNE. Somewhat dated but at the time, I thought they were awesome. That fall I somehow came across an issue of the AIS Bulletin and saw an ad for Laurie's Garden. When peak bloom rolled around that's where we headed. It was still fairly early on a

misty day when we walked in and I'll never forget it. I know almost immediately that I'd found my plant. The word smitten comes to mind. After a couple of hours wearing out Lorena's paths, I finally narrowed my selections down to those I couldn't possibly live without. Returning home to balance the old checkbook, I sent in an order. Think we got 80. At that time, I had a little experience hybridizing other genera so the following year crosses were made. It continues to be great fun.

Maudie Pack, Russellville, AR: My collection has nine planted in April 1999 and 12 planted in April 2001. I ordered both groups from Ensata Gardens in MI. I'm satisfied with the plants—the 3-year-old look to me like they already need dividing. I was surprised that most of my newest plants had one or two blooms last year.

I live in a river valley in Arkansas between the Ozarks and Ouachita mountain ranges. I have landscaped about two acres: the soil is hard packed clay and rock, many rocks. So I build up beds with RR ties and rock boulders. I have various irises planted, in several different places. But I have lost track of the type and name of most of them. My JI bed is marked with sturdy labels

I have been growing daylilies for 15 years. I started hybridizing about five years ago. Therefore, I have hundreds of seedlings. Every year I add to, discard, and sometimes sell a few. And there is nothing more difficult than carrying more than one-half of them to the compost two or three years later. But, I have to, since I need the room for new seedlings. I have not registered any yet. (That would require more beds, more time, etc.). I forgot to tell you that I'm 79 this month—so, I've slowed down some.

Don Delmez, St. Charles, MO: I have been growing JI's and joined the society about 20 years ago. Wow, how time flies when you're having fun! Got interested in hybridizing right off the bat. The problem is I didn't know what I was doing. But it didn't take

long to learn what I was doing wrong with some good tutoring. It seems like all it takes is a good challenge and I have been learning ever since. I live in the St. Louis area. It seems that every problem that could possibly be fall one is here! But we manage to grow and bloom some of the most beautiful iris you will ever see (JI's of course). It is my hope that we will be able as a group, working together, to produce even better JIs that are hardier and grow even better than those we are working with now.

This year seedlings looked very promising. Had VE to bloom this year one week after the TB show. Just can't quite make the show. Sent a 6F VE to Memphis convention but missed that date by a week too. This year blues are getting better each year hope they are good growers too. This year they were all 3Fs that I marked. Maybe we can get a few to the 2005 convention. As you may know JIs will bloom different here in St. Louis than on the east or west coast, etc. It helps to have conventions in different parts of the country to see if your JIs will grow well in other gardens. Had an unusual 3F JI this year. It was the oddest thing, it looked as red as can be from about 25 to 30 ft. but when you got up close it was as violet as can be. The sun light must have been playing tricks on me, Ha Ha!

Jill Copeland, Lawton, MI: My husband, Jim, the work horse of the family, and I live on 36 acres (most unusable) in a new house that was built by our oldest son. We have 3 grown children. Our oldest child, Jimmy, has introduced a few JIs like Arthur Hazzard, Crepe Paper, and Engeltje (his wife's nickname). We lived at a State fish hatchery for the earliest of my hybridizing life so I have used fish names for most of my introductions. My hybridizing goals include jaunty 3F varieties, tetraploids, and interspecies hybrids.

I have been hybridizing JIs since 1970. You would think I'd be good at it by now. Of course, I did have some problems to overcome and I did have to spend time doing other things. The garden at the fish hatchery was a drained pond. It was abandoned because

if a fish disease got into it, the disease would go through the rest of the hatchery. It was spring fed and the springs make a creek around the garden. Sounds like a good place for JIs to grow, huh? Not so! The pH of the garden is 8 and that of the water is 7.8! The soil is full of organic matter including decayed fish bones. The water from the springs goes through marl (lime) deposits. So I battled with pH problems.

I have a BS in Botany and an MS in Biomedical Sciences, which I got after the kids were in school. I worked in medical research on diabetes and cancer until the kids all got out of college. I do tend to have a scientific point of view on things. But as Maudie has said "There is nothing more exciting than seeing the first bloom from my "own" seedlings".



2005 - INVITATION TO HYBRIDIZERS

The Diamond State Iris Society will host the Society for Japanese Irises Convention in Dover, Delaware, June 2005. Hybridizers are invited to send guest Japanese irises of recent introductions or seedlings under serious consideration.

Shipments will be accepted:

April 1 to May 15, 2003

September 1 to October 15, 2003

Send guest plants to: Theresa Jewell

310 Lloyd Guessford Road Townsend, DE 19734-9544

Email: tljcjewell@aol.com (302) 378-3523

Photographs: We are requesting that hybridizers send a 35mm color slide of each of their submissions. Please mark them clearly with the name or seedling number of the iris. These slides will be shown at the convention.

Guidelines: Three to five divisions of each variety may be submitted.

The name of the variety or seedling number must be clearly marked on each division. In addition, a packing list with the following information must be enclosed:

Hybridizer name and address

Email, if available

Name or seedling number of variety

Description, distinguishing characteristics and bloom season (E, M, L)

Year of introduction, if applicable. If a guest seedling is named subsequent to shipping to the convention, it is the responsibility of the hybridizer to notify the Guest Iris Chairman no later than January 1, 2005.

A receipt will be sent to all contributors. Two months before the convention, contributors will be asked for instructions regarding disposition of guest plants. Options are destruction, donation to the SJI for auction at the convention, or return. Returns will be shipped post paid, except to foreign addresses. The convention committee and the owners of tour gardens will follow the code of ethics as printed in the AIS Convention Handbook. Only officially submitted guest iris will appear in the convention booklet.

2003 SHOW REPORTS - JAPANESE IRISES

Region 1

Maine Iris Society holds the latest show - July 6, 2003
Shelburne Falls Ma.

Very strange season- some things very late and some on time.
Types of iris in the show Spuria, Siberian, Japanese, Species and
Louisiana

102 entries by 10 entrants; 100 different cultivars.

Best specimen-Dorothea K Williamson- Louisiana- Andrew
Wheeler

Best Seedling DB-R9-11-JI -Andrew Wheeler

First runner up -Soccer's Triumph- Steve Smith-JI

Second runner up-Silver Band -Andrew Wheeler-JI

Third runner up-Rose Queen -Connie Kindahl-JI

Silver Medal- Andrew Wheeler

Bronze Medal- Connie Kindahl

Best design- Andrew Wheeler

Artistic Sweepstakes- Deborah Wheeler

Debbie Wheeler - Show Chairman

Region 3

The Diamond State Iris Society held its Beardless show in
Dover, Delaware on June 22, 2003. Although the show was sched-
uled a week later than usual, it was still very early in the Japanese
iris season. Cold weather and 7" of rain during the week before the
show didn't help either.

There were 78 horticultural entries and 8 exhibitors:

JI: 56, JI Seedling: 12, LA: 6, Species-X: 2

UFO: 2 (DSIS class-not AIS sanctioned)

Until this season, the DSIS has not emphasized design at their shows. This show featured two design divisions.

Best of Show: **Prairie Royalty** by June Roop

Queen's Table: **Japanese Harmony** by Dennis Hager

Freckled Geisha by Dennis Hager

Kimboshu by Dennis Hager

Scheherazade by June Roop

Best Seedling: **01B4** (JI) by Dennis Hager

Silver Medal: Dennis Hager, Bronze Medal: June Roop

Best Design: Theresa Jewell

To see photos of the show, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/JIRobin/>

Region 6

The Southwest Michigan Iris Society held a Japanese Iris display show on July 5, 2003 in Kalamazoo, Michigan at the Romence Garden Center. We had fewer visitors than previous years in the mall, but they were all gardeners who visited the display. Two came to our next meeting (with an auction) and may be new members!

Over 80 stalks were exhibited, with a couple Siberian and Louisiana examples. 68 visitors were handed a blue ribbon and asked to place it beside their favorite exhibit. All of the stalks must have been nice because ribbons were all over the tables! Top vote getters were **RASPBERRY CANDY** and **DRAGON MANE**, each with 6 votes (ribbons); **GAYETY**, **KARIGOROMO**, and **FLASHING KOI** each had 4 votes; **SEAFURY** and **PRAIRIE ROYALTY** each totaled 3 votes. From a table of about 12 seedlings, the public voted 6 ribbons to a large 6F white with blue veins.

Do you ever wonder why the public doesn't understand our AIS judging? The judges present at the show picked a stalk of **TRANCE** as best in the show for "cultural perfection" and

“grooming” — the public didn’t give it one ribbon! We judges also picked a Jill Copeland seedling (N-18) as most “distinctive”: a 3F lavender pink with dark rose-red styles. It was also appreciated by some of the visitors with 3 ribbons.

John Coble, Galesburg, MI

Region 13

Greater Portland Iris Society – June 28, 2003 - Portland,
Oregon - 8 Exhibitors, 108 Entries, 84 Cultivars
Exhibited: JI, SPLL, SIB, SPC, SPC-X, SDB, MDB

Best Specimen : **Golden Waves**, Cal-Sib - Exhibited by William Plotner

Best Seedling : **C-96-75-10**, JI, Hybridizer: Lee Walker

Silver Medal : Chad Harris, Bronze Medal : William Plotner

Best Design : Kay Ludi, Sweepstakes : Kath Collier

Dale Grams/Chad Harris, Washougal, WA

Region 18

The Greater St. Louis Iris Society (MO) Late Show was held June 7, 2003 at the Missouri Botanical Gardens with 14 exhibitors and 107 entries.

Best Specimen of Show – **EYE OF HEAVEN** (JI) exhibited by Don Delmez

Best Seedling of Show – **SVPUOSA** (JI) originated by Don Delmez

Silver Medal Winner (most blue ribbons) – Ernie Henson

Bronze Medal Winner (second most blue ribbons) – Don Delmez

Youth Best Specimen of Show – **WHISTLING DIXIE** (LA) - exhibited by Stephanie Rust

Best Design of Show exhibited by Nadine Wallenstein

Thanks to all who exhibited and those who did all the work setting up including our excellent Hospitality Pair – Maureen and John Northrup.

Don Delmez, Show Chair, St. Charles, MO

ADVERTISERS

Commercial Directory	12
Delmez Garden	Inside Back Cover

PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover -**Grand Prize** - Button Garden, Westampton, NJ - Picture by Catherine Button

Inside Front Cover - Payne Medal Winners -

LION KING (Robert Bauer & John Coble), Photo by J. Coble-SJI Slides

RASPBERRY GLOW (J.T. Aitken), Photo by J. Coble-SJI Slides

Page 27 - Currier McEwen, 1995 Convention, Photo by Chad Harris

Page 28, 29 - Photo Contest Winners credited by pictures

Page 30 - Popularity Poll Winners -

SING THE BLUES, Photo by L. Reid

BLUE SPRITZ, Photo by D. Delmez

FRILLED ENCHANTMENT, Photo by J. T. Aitken-SJI Slides

Back Cover - Popularity Poll Winners -

ELECTRIC RAYS, Photo by J. T. Aitken

CASCADE CREST, Photo by L. Reid

EDITOR'S ESSAY

Rita Gormley

This issue is full of interesting and diverse articles! Hope you enjoy it. Many, many thanks go to all the authors and people who provided input. You are all a delight to work with.

I'm ecstatic about the Photo Contest (see article) and we will have wonderful "Landscape Shots" to draw from for years to come. Thanks to all the participants, donors of prizes and judges. Thanks especially to Jim Morris for helping me by setting up the rules, criteria and judges. Jim, you truly are my "Secret Weapon"!

I have been promising for several issues to do an updated INDEX of SJI articles, since the last one was done in 1981. I have a spreadsheet with the information back to 1994 because I use it to get ideas for future articles and do research on past articles so we are not repeating ourselves. An anonymous donor brought a whole box of old SJI REVIEWS to the VA Convention – thank you and I am sorry I did not write down your name! After consulting with my trusty advisors (Tom, Dennis and Hamilton), I have decided not to expend the money printing the lengthy list but will instead have it posted on the SJI Website (<http://www.socji.org/>). Anyone who really wants this valuable source of information merely has to access it live on the Website as a searchable database, print it out for further use (if they prefer hardcopy) or write/e-mail me and I will, for the price of the printing and postage, mail it to you.

I feel this is valuable historical information but since the price of dues does not cover even half of the cost of the REVIEW, it is a waste of printing money to include it with the REVIEW. If you have opinions (pro or con) on this topic, let me know.

Hope you have a wonderful Fall babying your garden and a peaceful Winter.

Rita Gormley, Cedar Hill, MO
GormleyGreenery@aol.com

**DELMEZ GARDENS
3240 CONNECTICUT DR.
ST. CHARLES, MO 63301
636-723-2274**



SUE JO (Delmez 2003)



WONDERFUL DELIGHT (Delmez 2003)

\$25.00 Each Send for free catalog

SJI POPULARITY POLL

1. ELECTRIC RAYS (Aitken '90)



2. CASCADE CREST (Aitken '88)

Cascade Crest (Aitken 88)

