

# IRIS AUSTIN

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

An affiliated Society of the American Iris Society in Region 17



**JULY/ AUGUST 2011**

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**VOLUME XX, NO. 7**

**NO JULY AND AUGUST MEETINGS**

**2011 CONVENTION BY KEN FUCHS**

Oh, Canada! What a magnificent setting you provided for the 2011 A.I.S. National Convention! The British Columbia Iris Society, one of several A.I.S.-affiliated societies in Canada and part of Region 13 (along with Washington, Oregon and Alaska, and Yukon) hosted the Convention in Victoria. The B.C.I.S. is only five years old, and under the leadership of Ted Baker, they put on a very exciting and memorable convention.

Victoria is located on the southeastern tip of Vancouver Island and is the capital of British Columbia. This vibrant city has Old World charm and yet seems very American. Only differences in currency (at a convenient 1:1 rate with the U.S. dollar) and a few vowels in the local inhabitants' speech made visitors realize we really weren't in the U.S. The Convention Headquarters were at the Fairmont Empress Hotel, a splendid structure built in the Chateau style between 1904 and 1908, on Government Street. It faces the harbor, and the Parliament building is located in easy walking distance one block away. Tourism has become the primary industry in Victoria. A vast assortment of shops, restaurants, and pubs are located in the adjoining blocks near the Empress, so taxis and buses were unnecessary for dining and shopping in our free time. It was an exciting time to be in Victoria and in Canada in general. The Vancouver Canucks were playing against the Boston Bruins for the Stanley Cup. There was Canucks-Madness everywhere, especially after they won the first game while we were there. The atmosphere was equivalent to Super Bowl excitement here in the U.S.

The Victoria Convention had almost the exact number of attendees as did our 2008 Convention in Austin, around 390. Three members of the Iris Society of Austin attended: Carolyn Wylie, Jim Landers, and Ken Fuchs. Another familiar face was there, too, Beth Alley, who attended with a friend from Austin. Finding the meeting rooms for the Convention was somewhat awkward at first. Jim and I arrived on Sunday, May 29. The banners for the BC Iris Society and the American Iris Society were hanging from the railings along the Upper Level in the Lobby, which is a newer wing of the hotel, but there were no signs indicating where to go. It was a matter of exploring the hotel, but it was worth it. We had to go upstairs and then follow a passageway which led to the original part of the building. It was like a time tunnel, and soon we were surrounded by the elegance of 1908. Eventually we found a staircase that took us downstairs again, and the registration table and various section tables were located in the hallway there.

One disappointment for many representatives from the various sections and societies was the Boutique. Because of import and licensing restrictions, none of the American attendees were allowed to sell any items. Therefore, there was no Silent Auction and no A.I.S. Store Front. Only Canadian artists and craftsmen were selling their creations in the Boutique. To be sure, it was a beautiful art gallery in itself, but there was too much competition for the individual artists to really make much headway. Also, there was no Geek Dinner.

One very special treat for all attendees took place Tuesday afternoon. All of us rode buses to Butchart Gardens, about thirty minutes away from the hotel. Along the way we had an opportunity to see more of Victoria and the outlying countryside. One shrub particularly dominated the scenery along the roadways



— Scottish broom. This brilliantly yellow flowering plant grows wild everywhere along the highways. This extremely invasive plant was brought to North America by Scottish immigrants who missed their homeland. Like mesquite trees in Texas, it keeps spreading and is considered a nuisance by many Canadians. We saw it in Oregon during the 2006 convention, also.

Victoria and British Columbia experienced an unusually long winter, and as a result, the local iris bloom season was delayed, and we saw only a very limited number of irises blooming in the gardens. But there were so many other flowers and flowering trees and shrubs in bloom that our eyes were overwhelmed with myriads of colors. Our first real visual feast was Butchart Gardens. Originally a stone quarry that eventually was exhausted of limestone, the elaborate gardens came about when Mrs. Butchart, the owner's widow, began converting it into a sunken garden which opened to the public in 1921. Enormous tulips of every imaginable color grace the walkway into the gardens, and gigantic rhododendron and azalea bushes form backdrops that inspire artists and photographers from all over. We often had to patiently await our turn to take pictures while groups of Japanese and Chinese tourists were busy taking theirs. Besides the sunken garden, at the far end of which is a large lagoon with a dancing waters display, we also visited a lovely Japanese garden. Most breathtaking in it, near a Zen garden, stood large clumps of delicate blue poppies. Butchart Gardens are a worthy destination for anyone who loves beauty and color.

Tuesday evening the Welcome Banquet was held in the Crystal Ballroom in the original part of the Empress Hotel. Most of us enjoyed salmon with fresh asparagus for our main course. Afterwards, the entire group of attendees moved to the Victoria Convention Centre, a large new hall directly behind the hotel. The guest speaker was the Honorable Iona V. Campagnolo, the previous lieutenant-governor of British Columbia. (The office of lieutenant-governor is equivalent to that of governor in the United States.) She was extremely dignified and spoke softly, but it was obvious that she was a figure of authority and very well respected. She is also a member of the BC Iris Society, and as a gift, she was presented with a recently hybridized, potted Pacific Coast Native iris called 'Banner for Iona' as well as a lovely painting of the iris.

There were four guest gardens on the tours. Two of them were at university gardens. Finnerty Gardens are operated by the University of Victoria and boast more than 4,000 different trees and shrubs, including 1,500 rhododendron and azalea plants. The guest garden was in the back, and beneath a red-leaved tree stood a clump of 'Banner for Iona' in full bloom. Nearby stood a shrub with orange-striped blossoms. One woman told me it was hybridized Scottish broom.

The 2011 Master Planting was at the Gardens at Hatley Park, operated by Royal Roads University. This national historic site stuns the eyes when you first approach it. Atop a high rise stands a large castle-like house built in the Edwardian manner in 1910. During the Battle of Britain in 1940, when there was a possibility that the German armed forces would invade England, plans were made for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth and their family to move to the safety of Canada and the Hatley House.

Fortunately, they never had to move. Beside the house is a very extensive wooded park area which contains a Japanese garden, a rose garden, and several other formal gardens. Beyond the rose garden lay the guest iris garden, and while the blooms were limited, there were many fine specimens for everyone to enjoy.

On Wednesday and Thursday our buses stopped for lunch at Stake Centre, a large church and youth center. We were treated to choices of barbecued chicken, salmon, or a vegetarian meat substitute. The salads and desserts were really delicious. Following Mormon custom, no coffee, tea, or pop (we say soda) was allowed, but there was plenty of juice. →

The Gardens at Government House were fit for royalty — literally. The large stately manor is the residence of the sitting lieutenant-governor, and when members of the Royal Family visit British Columbia, they always stay there. The estate contains twelve acres of formal gardens with many rhododendrons, and twenty-four acres of woodland. In 2004 the grounds were opened to the public. We enjoyed the small guest iris beds on the far side of the grounds, and another delight was a small duck pond and a family with new ducklings.

The last guest garden was Glendale Gardens and Woodland, often referred to as “The Garden for Gardeners,” located at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific in the Municipality of Saanich, just north of Victoria. These grounds are on the side of a hill, and the irises were located at the bottom of the hill. We wandered through a forest of fir trees and clumps of heather and another Japanese garden before reaching the irises. Two irises that particularly attracted everyone here and in the other gardens were ‘Dazzling’ (Paul Black, IB 2008) and ‘Ginger Twist’ (Schafer/Sachs, SIB 2009). Paul Black was awarded the President’s Cup for ‘Dazzling’ at the Awards Banquet, and Thomas Johnson received the Dykes Medal for ‘Paul Black.’

The 2011 A.I.S. National Convention concluded Friday evening following the Awards Banquet. However, the best was yet to come. There was an optional garden tour on Saturday, June 4. This tour took us to Salt Spring Island, which required a thirty-minute ferryboat ride. The morning weather was brisk, but it was a sunny day and the ride across the channel was exhilarating. We were delighted with the sight of snow-covered Mount Baker in the distance in Washington as well as a whole string of snow-capped mountains.

On Salt Spring Island we visited the home of Pat Spiers and her late husband Ray Spiers. Both of them were very active in the BC Iris Society. Sadly, he died unexpectedly in November 2009. Their home is almost hidden in a large wooded area. Ray Spiers was a very talented sculptor, and everyone enjoyed visiting his work studio. Pat Spiers is a very accomplished painter, and their gallery was filled with beautiful water colors of local scenery. Their yard, front and back, was filled with water features and many individual gardens. Ray specialized in Pacific Coast Native irises, and a bed of PCN’s was a joy to behold.

We were on our own for lunch at Ganges, the only town on the island. Every Saturday in the summertime Ganges holds a large arts and crafts fair, so there were lots of tourists and lots to see. After lunch we all went to Convention Chair Ted Baker’s home. Ted’s iris garden was absolutely magnificent. It was located in a large grassy area before we reached his house, and it contained more irises in bloom than we saw in the four guest gardens put together. There were mountains all around, and the overall setting was almost too beautiful to adequately describe in words. Surrounding Ted’s house are a number of pathways leading through small unique gardens.

Besides all the flowers that we saw in Ted’s garden, I was especially intrigued by one particular tree. Ted Baker has a PhD in horticulture, and earlier I asked him if linden trees grow in British Columbia.

Berlin’s most famous street is “Unter den Linden,” and I’ve always wondered just what they look like. So just as we were leaving, I asked Ted again about the linden tree. He grinned and pointed to a large tree standing immediately in front of his house. And next to it was an enormous large-leaved maple tree. I knew I was in Canada then.

— Ken Fuchs



**AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY CONVENTION**

May 29 – June 3, 2011

Chairman: Ted E. Baker

185 Furness Road

Salt Spring Island, British Columbia

Canada

Photographs by Ken Fuchs and Jim Landers

<http://picasaweb.google.com/irisaustrin2009>



Hooker and Bonnie Nichols from Dallas, Carolyn Wylie from Austin



Beth Alley (left) from Elgin, Tx, a former member of the Iris Society of Austin, and her friend Ellen Kallman from Austin

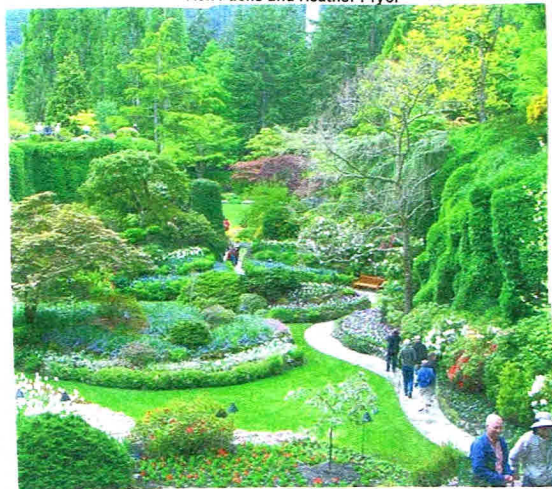


Australian  
Hybridizer  
of  
Louisianas

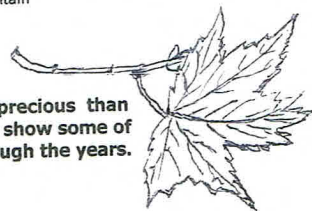
Ken Fuchs and Heather Pryor

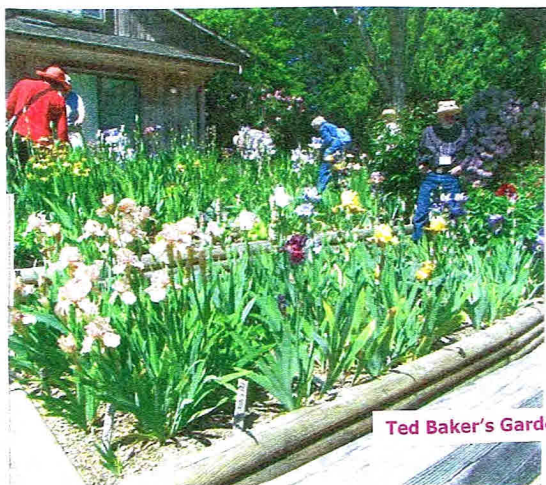


The Star Fountain



Butchart Gardens is more precious than jewels, and these pictures show some of the features created through the years.





Ted Baker's Garden on June 3



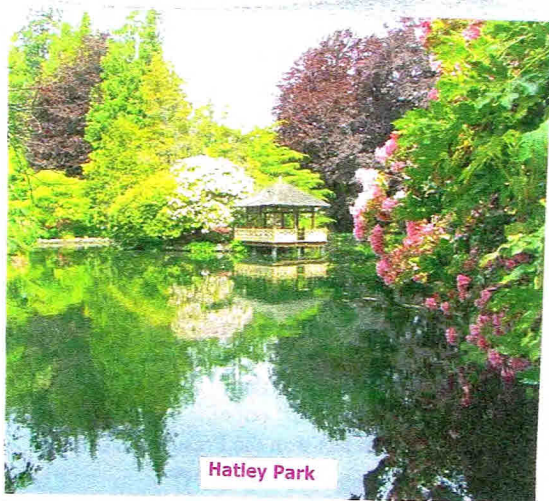
Gout House



Glendale Gardens



Jim Landers



Hatley Park

This Japanese lagoon lies adjacent to the main residential grounds.

## Looking ahead to 2013 and Region 17 Events

### Hooker and Bonnie Nichols' Role in Cleburne and Dallas Conventions

Many who attended Destiny Dallas in 2000 or the Society for Louisiana Irises in 2004 know that Hooker and Bonnie Nichols have spearheaded successful conventions in the past and now look forward to the National Convention in Dallas in 2013. As hybridizers of tall bearded irises and daylilies they operate Hillcrest Gardens and will be the guest speakers for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual AIS 2011 Region 17 Convention in Cleburne August 12 and 13, 2011.

Hooker hails from Woodward, Oklahoma where he began hybridizing irises as a youth member in the Sooner State Iris Society after being influenced by Theda Clark, his grandmother who loved irises. In fact, he won an AM for his Intermediate Bearded 'Theda Clark' (88) in 1993. His first SDB, 'Amazon Princess,' was introduced in 1973, and in 1978 it captured the Cook-Douglas Medal. Other SDB introductions winning AMs are 'Oliver' (74) in 1979, 'Cimmarron Rose' (90) in 1994, and 'Comeback Trail' (91) and 'Court Magician' (85) each in 1995.

Hooker is also known as the hybridizer of the world's first space-age median known as 'Hagar's Helmet' IB (1977). In 1990 another IB followed and Hooker called it 'Helga's Hat.' Both of these won AMs.

For 'Oklahoma Bandit' (80) in 1988 and 'Bottled Sunshine' (95) in 2003 he was honored with Sass Medals.

According to Nyla Hughes, writing in *The Medianite*, rebloom is difficult to achieve in Oklahoma, but Hooker's 'Lenora Pearl' not only has this trait but it also has won the President's Cup

(1993) in Fort Worth and the Knowlton Medal in 1996.

In experimenting with arilbreds Hooker has Mohr winners 'Byzantine Beauty' in 1981; 'Cairo Love Song' in 1984; and 'Solomon's Glory' in 1996.

Hooker is an educator who has also edited *The Medianite* in 1991. He served on the board of directors for the Median Iris Society from 1989-1991.

Region 22 awarded Hooker their Hybridizer's Award for the TB 'Latin Highway' in 1986 which won the President's Cup in 1988 at the AIS Convention in Oklahoma City. In 1992 he received Region 22's most prestigious award, the Betty Emmons Memorial Service Award for his various contributions to the region.

When he married Bonnie Davenport, they moved to Texas, where Bonnie has hybridized and introduced several of her own iris hybrids. She and Hooker offer their iris rhizomes for the Host Gardens during the national conventions.

Bonnie has also been a speaker for The Iris Society of Austin.



'Political Zoo' - Cadd 2008

**Johnson County IRIS & DAYLILY  
society to host 52<sup>nd</sup> annual AIS convention**

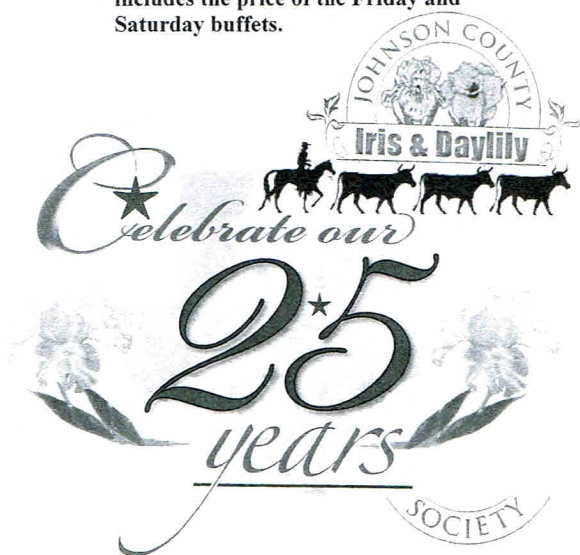
Before July 29 register with the Liberty Hotel, 205 South Caddo, in Cleburne to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the Johnson County Iris and Daylily Society as they host the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual AIS 2011 Region 17 Convention. (817) 645-5660 or (817) 645-5655 Iris Rates King-\$79.90 Queen-\$75.65

The hospitality suite and judges training will be held in the hotel meeting rooms. The banquets, boutique, Region 17 business meeting and auction will be in the Cleburne Conference Center at 1501 W. Henderson.

The dates selected for this event are August 12 and 13. Bonnie Nichols will teach the Judges Training. Cost: \$5.00

To register send your name, address--including city, state, and ZIP plus your telephone number and e-mail address to JC&DS c/o John Parks, P.O. Box 3563, Cleburne, TX 76033-3563.

The cost is \$65 per person, and this includes the price of the Friday and Saturday buffets.



**CARES AND CONCERNS:**

Tracey Rogers expresses her thanks for the sympathy card and the donation to the nursing home garden in memory of her father.

David Lewis Steed's wife of 25 years suffered a stroke in April, and he has been taking care of her ever since. Wish both of them well and pray for Faith's recovery.

Pauline Guerrero's daughter named Janis Kay Guerrero-Thompson passed away June 7 as a result of cancer. A scholarship in her honor at the Hispanic Scholarship Consortium, 1007 S. Eighth St., Austin, TX 78704 has been established as a tribute to her service as a volunteer and former top administrator in the Austin school district.



**Iris chrysographes, species iris  
by Jim Landers**

**IRIS RHIZOME SALE TO BE SEPTEMBER  
10<sup>TH</sup> IN NORRIS CONFERENCE CENTER**

Each year the Iris Society of Austin provides the public with the opportunity to purchase beautiful irises for their garden. This sale is held on the Saturday after Labor Day, which is September 10, at the Norris Conference Center near the Wal-Mart off Anderson.

If you plan to remove some rhizomes from your garden for the sale, please contact Tracey Rogers as soon as possible. Her e-mail is [rogers89@earthlink.net](mailto:rogers89@earthlink.net).

### OFFICERS:

President: Nelda Moore  
607 Westlake Drive  
West Lake Hills, TX 78746-5311  
512-327-0401

First Vice President: Marney Abel  
8045 Chalk Knoll Drive  
Austin, TX 78735  
512-330-9052

Second Vice President: Ken Fuchs  
710 N. Eleventh Street  
Temple, TX 76501-3016  
254-773-5017

Secretary: Carolyn Wylie  
904 East 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78751  
512-453-2556

Treasurer: Pat Byrne  
1102 Aster Drive  
Katy, TX 77493-1825  
281-391-6190

Historian and Librarian:  
Tracey Rogers  
4608 Hoffman Drive  
Austin, TX 78749  
512-280-4856

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Hospitality: Shelia Senghas  
for September and October.  
Don Freeman, Horticulture;  
Tracey Rogers, Rhizome Sale  
Nelda Moore, Publicity  
Debora Boyle, Council  
Representative  
September 13, 2011-  
May 31, 2012

### WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Donna Little  
1005 Shinnecock Hills  
Georgetown, TX 78628  
512-869-0683



If you attended the August meeting last year, you received a Yearbook in an orange folder. Please make these changes:

Best Specimen of the Show was  
'Thornbird' By Patricia Colacino.

Silver Award in 2011 awarded to  
Charles and Sonja Hensley

Bronze Award won by Marney Abel

Membership: Debora Boyle

Carol Canfield's address is 6311  
Oleander Tr., Austin 78735  
Phone Number: 699-5157

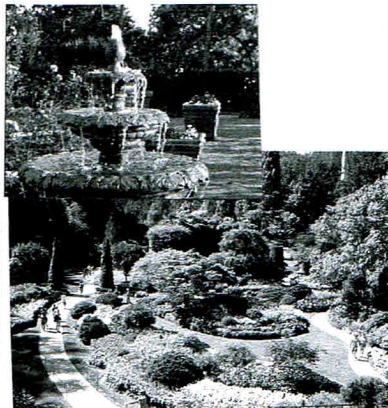
Corrected Yearbooks will be provided  
to new members and those who  
were absent in August.



*The Rose Garden  
at Government  
House*



**FAIRMONT EMPRESS**



*The Sunken Garden*