

Region 2 of the American Iris Society

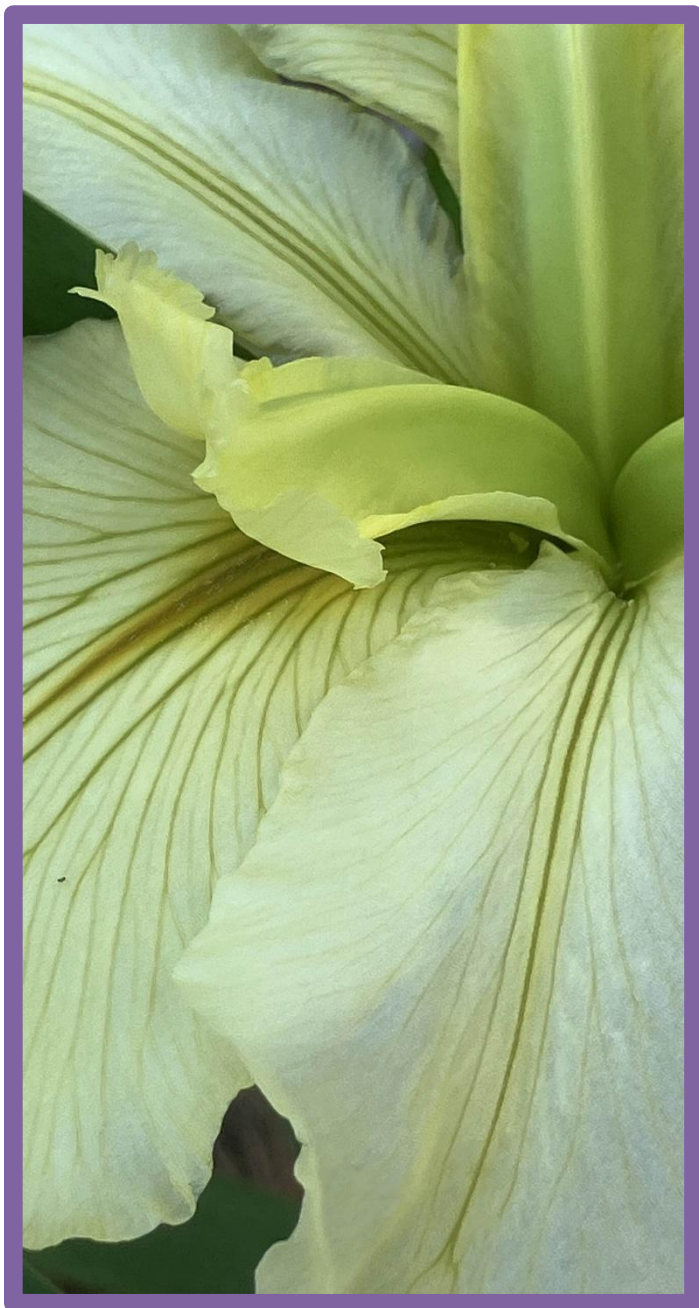
NEWSLETTER

New York - Ontario - Quebec

AUTUMN 2025

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LA 'Gentle Memories' (J. Musacchia, 2017)

© Leto Solla

Who We Are

Region 2 of the American Iris Society

AIS Region 2 website: [Home Page \(aisregion2.org\)](http://aisregion2.org)

Officers

Regional Vice President (RVP)

Cara Hutchings – rvp@aisregion2.org

Assistant RVP - Debi Chowdhury -

debichowdhury@yahoo.com

Interim Secretary

Kate Brewitt – just1moreiris@gmail.com

Treasurer

Annette Kuhn – akuhn43@yahoo.com

Affiliate Chairpersons

Capital-Hudson Iris Society (CHIS)

Kathryn Mohr – kemohrke@aol.com

Greater Rochester Iris Society (GRIS)

Cara Hutchings – thehutchings@mac.com

Ontario Iris Society (ONIS)

Terrance Laurin – tlaurin@rogers.com

Western New York Iris Society (WNYIS)

Ida Blasak – iblasak7113@gmail.com

Committee Chairpersons

Archives – Cara Hutchings (See RVP)

Awards & Exhibitions – Position open

Bylaws

Kate Brewitt - just1moreiris@gmail.com

Judges Training

Wendy Roller – gwr67@frontier.com

Membership

Georgette Martin

martingeorgette@aol.com

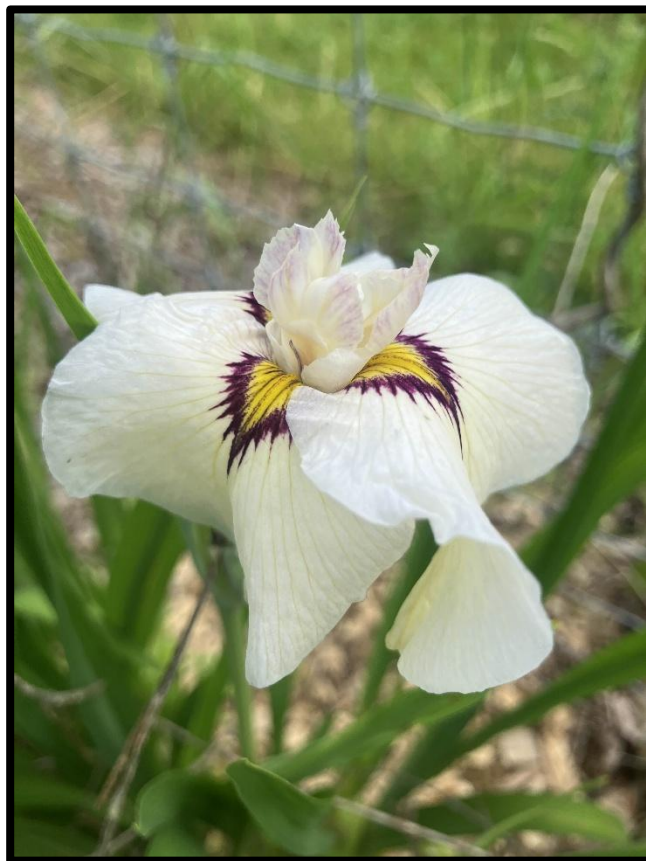
Webmaster

Kate Brewitt (See Bylaws)

Newsletter Editor

Leto Solla -

aisregion2.newsletter@gmail.com



SPX 'Yukiyanagi'
(H. Shimizu by C. Warner, 2010)
© Leto Solla

RVP Message

Cara Hutchings, AIS Region 2 RVP



As I started to write my last RVP message, I again looked back at the past. Although this time, I just looked at my own RVP messages. They all had a sense of hope; that there is a future for Region 2 and its affiliates. And as I end my leadership, I still have that sense of hope. I feel we are stronger than when I first took over, we have some new people in positions of leadership, and we have an Assistant RVP who is willing to be the RVP. While membership is down, we seem to be retaining people who are willing to be a bit more active.

There is still plenty to do. We need a new Assistant RVP, the archives need to be more streamlined, the By Laws need to be gone over and updated, etc. But there is hope. We are more willing to have in-person shows and sales, we're having our first in-person and Zoom hybrid Regional Fall meeting in five years. We've gotten help from AIS to get here, and we will need more help in the future.

We've got hope. As I look at my weed-filled garden, due to sickness and surgeries, I have hope that it will start looking better this fall, as I am able to move around the garden a lot better. We have hope that Region 2 will continue to be relevant and grow in the 21st century. We have hope that we will continue to be an active part of AIS and the world of iris.

Thank you for a never-a-dull-moment three years, I wouldn't trade them for anything!

Cara Hutchings



Region 2 Bi-Monthly Zoom Meetings

Bi-monthly Zoom meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of every month. **Start time is 7:00 PM ET.** Members are encouraged to attend.

Our next meeting will be in September

Meeting minutes for the 2024 board meeting are available on the [Region 2 website](#)

From the Editor's Desk



Jl 'Silverband' (Bauer/Coble, 1989)

© Leto Solla

What a year it has been!

As I expect many readers will have experienced, the iris season was an unusual one this year in my garden. A cold, wet spring derailed many of the earliest blooms, but the iris did their best, and pushed on into warmer, brighter days that brought brilliant color. Despite the irregularity and oscillations of water and sunlight, the irises rose to the occasion to put on a phenomenal showing spread across several species and many cultivars. (And, although the season is mostly winding to a close, there are still some jubilant *Iris x norisii* stretching out to the bees with their freckled petals.) Still, even if the blooms have faded for the year, there is always more to do; there are seed pods to collect and sort, irises to lift and divide, notes to be taken, and beds to be prepared for next year.

There is also more to be done in Region 2! The Region 2 annual general meeting will be hosted by CHIS on Saturday, October 18th. Our guest speaker will be Howie Dash, a prolific hybridizer of tall bearded, arilbred, and Louisiana irises. Please find the registration form on page 6, hotel information on page 7, and a listing of irises for the silent auction—donated by Howie Dash—on pages 8 and 9.

Region 2 is also looking for a new Assistant Regional Vice President! If you are interested in the position, please see page 10. We are also still looking for a few volunteers to fill other positions in the region; please see page 14 for more details.

This has clearly been a busy year for our affiliates, as well, with lots of news and pictures to share beginning on page 15! ONIS and GRIS both had successful shows and sales, and Kathryn Mohr of CHIS shares some thoughts on the importance of recordkeeping.

Last, but certainly not least, we have articles from some of our members who were fortunate enough to attend iris conventions this year! Cara Hutchings (RVP, GRIS) has provided an overview of the AIS national convention in Billings, Montana on page 21. Alex Solla (GRIS) traveled to Iowa to attend the joint meeting of the Society for Siberian Irises and the Species Iris Group of North America (SIGNA), and brought back many stories, pictures, and some hands-on hybridizing experience beginning on page 23.

As I leave you to explore the shared world of irises, I once again ask a favor; if you have stories or images to share, please submit them! Region 2 grows through our shared collaboration and love for this beautiful genus of flowers.

Wishing everyone a beautiful and restorative garden!

Leto (aisregion2.newsletter@gmail.com)

AIS Region 2 Annual General Meeting

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Capital-Hudson Iris Society will host the 2025 Region 2 annual meeting October 18 at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County 24 Martin Rd, Voorheesville, NY 12186. The meeting schedule will be included in the email acknowledging members' registration for the meeting.

The **registration form is available on page 7**, and a list of **nearby hotels is available on page 8**. A listing of irises available in the silent auction can be found on pages 9 and 10.

Region 2 General Meeting Speaker

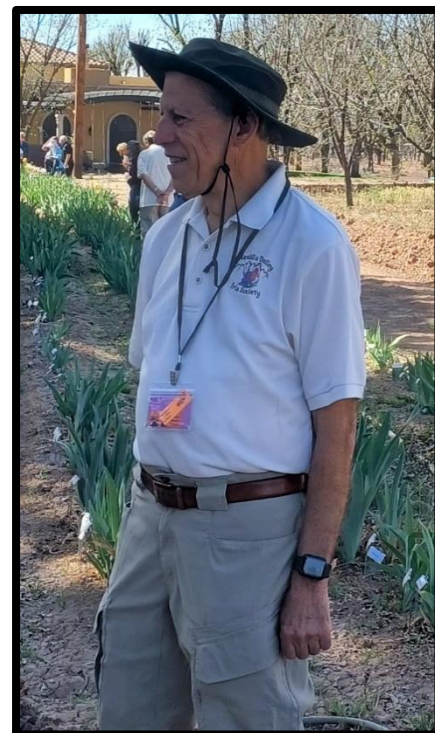
Howie Dash will be the guest speaker. His program "Picacho Mountain Iris, a hybridizer's journey", is a photographic presentation of his introductions and seedlings, including tall bearded, arilbred and Louisiana iris.

Howie was a founding member of the Hudson Valley Daylily and Iris Society. He chaired the 2022 AIS National Convention and is First Vice President of AIS.



TB 'Gold Dust Woman'
(H. Dash, 2018)
© Howie Dash

**Mark your calendars and
plan to join us!**



Howie Dash
© Kathryn Mohr

Region 2 of the American Iris Society
General Meeting – Saturday, October 18, 2025
Tentative Agenda

8:00 - 9:30 am – Registration

8:00 - 9:30 am – Silent Auction set-up continues

9:30 am - 12:30 pm – Silent Auction bidding

10:00 - 11:15 am – General membership meeting

11:30 am - 12:15 pm – Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 pm – Program by Howie Dash

“Picacho Mountain Iris, a Hybridizer’s Journey”

A photographic presentation of his introductions and seedlings, including tall bearded, arilbred and Louisiana iris.

2:00 - 2:30 pm – Silent Auction payment and pickup



AB 'Chihuahua Night'
(H. Dash, 2019)
© Kathryn Mohr

Region 2 General Meeting Registration Form

Hosted by Capital-Hudson Iris Society (CHIS) and the Garden Alliance

Location: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County 24 Martin Rd, Voorheesville, NY 12186

To Register: Mail completed registration form (below), with your check made payable to CHIS, to:

Don Salhoff, 429 Wellington Rd, Delmar, NY 12054

Confirmation will be sent by email. Please make a copy of this form for your records. ***A map to CCE will be included with the email.***

Questions: Please email Kathryn Mohr at kemohrke@aol.com

For our Canadian members, you may email the registration form to Don and pay at the door.

Registration - \$10 US per person – Return registration before September 30, 2025

(please print clearly)

Full Name: _____

Name to appear on your name tag: _____

Affiliate Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Lunch will be provided. Please specify any dietary requests:







Region 2 General Meeting Hotel Information

Prices are included for comparison purposes only. Better rates should be available by registering through an online travel platform.





| Hotel Name | Hotel Address | Hotel Phone Number | Estimated Rate (USD) | Distance from Venue |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Hampton Inn Albany | 1442 Western Ave, Albany, NY 12203 | (518) 438-0001 | \$242.74 | 8.3 mi / 13.4 km |
| Days Inn by Wyndham Albany | 1230 Western Ave, Albany, NY 12203 | (518) 992-7851 | \$116.79 | 8.7 mi / 14 km |
| SpringHill Suites Albany-Colonie | 8 California Ave, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 724-7999 | \$281.00 | 10.1 mi / 16.3 km |
| Holiday Inn Express & Suites Albany Airport - Wolf Road | 16 Wolf Rd, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 459-3600 | \$153.00 | 10.7 mi / 17.2 km |
| Travelodge Inn & Suites by Wyndham Albany | 42 Wolf Rd, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 650-1740 | \$81.00 | 11.0 mi / 17.7 km |
| Staybridge Suites Albany Wolf Rd-Colonie Center | 39 Wolf Road Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 438-3300 | \$252.00 | 11.3 mi / 18.2 km |
| Fairfield Inn & Suites Albany Airport | 168 Wolf Rd, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 482-8800 | \$168.00 | 12.0 mi / 19.3 km |
| Red Roof Inn Albany Airport | 188 Wolf Rd, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 459-1971 | \$80.00 | 12.1 mi / 19.5 km |
| Residence Inn Albany Airport | 227 Wolf Rd. Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 319-8900 | \$234.84 | 12.3 mi / 19.8 km |
| Homewood Suites by Hilton Albany | 216 Wolf Rd Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 438-4300 | \$220.00 | 12.4 mi / 20 km |
| Hampton Inn Albany-Wolf Road (Airport) | 10 Ulenski Dr, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 438-2822 | \$180.91 | 12.6 mi / 20.3 km |
| Home2 Suites by Hilton Albany Wolf Rd | 10 Metro Park Rd, Albany, NY 12205 | (518) 482-4045 | \$174.00 | 13.0 mi / 20.9 km |

Region 2 General Meeting Auction Irises

All irises for the silent auction were generously donated by Howie Dash. These irises will be available at the silent auction during the general meeting. Underlined text indicates a link to the AIS Iris Wiki for more information and images.

| Iris Name and Image | Iris Description |
|--|---|
| <u>Allen James Tetreault</u> (TB)  | 'Allen James Tetreault' (Howie Dash , R. 2023) TB, 32" (81.5 cm), Midseason to late bloom. Standards red-violet with faint gold rim; style arms red-violet with faint gold rim; falls red-brown overlaid on pale yellow base, faint gold rim; beards burnt orange; slight sweet fragrance. |
| <u>Happy Cat</u> (TB)  | 'Happy Cat' (Howie Dash , R. 2024). TB, 36" (91.5 cm), Early midseason bloom. Standards khaki; style arms yellow; falls brown fading to tan, medium orchid flush around beard, tan rim; beards burnt orange. |
| <u>Sword of the Jedi</u> (TB)  | 'Sword Of The Jedi' (Howie Dash , R. 2024). TB (horned), 32" (81.5 cm), Midseason bloom. Standards pale blue; style arms pale blue; falls pale blue, brown veining at halts, followed by blue-violet flush at shoulders; beards orange with purple flounces; slight fragrance. |
| <u>Stephanie Returns</u> (TB)  | Stephanie Returns' (Howie Dash , R. 2023) TB, 30" (76 cm), Early bloom and rebloom. Standards pale blue to white; style arms pale blue; falls blue, white zone around beard, white veining; beards yellow base, white tips. |
| <u>Tropical Charm</u> (TB)  | 'Tropical Charm' (Howie Dash , R. 2024). TB, 35" (89 cm), Early to midseason bloom. Standards white, pale red brown flush on midrib, gold rim; style arms white with gold rim; falls red brown, faint beige rim; beards red orange; slight fragrance. <u>'Copper Angel'</u> X <u>'Milk In My Coffee'</u> . |
| <u>Ukrainian Princess</u> (TB)  | 'Ukrainian Princess' (Howie Dash , R. 2024). TB (reblooming), 30" (76 cm), Early midseason bloom. Standards light lavender, lavender veining; style arms light lavender, lavender veining; falls lavender veining on white base with lavender plicata markings, light brown veining on shoulders; beards light brown; slight fragrance. |

Region 2 General Meeting Auction Irises– continued

| Iris Name and Image | Iris Description |
|--|---|
| <p><u>Wonderful Tonight</u> (TB)</p>  | <p>'Wonderful Tonight' (<u>Howie Dash</u>, R. 2024). TB, 41" (104 cm), Midseason bloom. Standards rosy brown; style arms rosy brown; falls red brown, with tan rim; beards burnt orange.</p> |
| <p><u>Akela Flats</u> (AB)</p>  | <p>'Akela Flats' (<u>Howie Dash</u>, R. 2024). AB (OGB-), 27" (68.5 cm), Midseason bloom. Standards dark violet, with purple veining; style arms dark violet, with purple veining; falls dark violet, with purple veining; beards dark brown base, blue tips.</p> |
| <p><u>Otero Mesa</u> (AB)</p>  | <p>'Otero Mesa' (<u>Howie Dash</u>, R. 2023) AB (OGB-), 20" (51 cm), Early bloom. Standards beige, light yellow veining; style arms light yellow; falls light yellow overlaid on beige base, light yellow rim; diffuse brown signal; beards light orange.</p> |
| <p><u>Pecos Valley</u> (AB)</p>  | <p>'Pecos Valley' (<u>Howie Dash</u>, R. 2024). AB (OGB-), 26" (66 cm), Midseason bloom. Standards pale violet, violet veining; style arms red brown; falls pale violet brown base, violet brown veining, dark brown signal; beards burnt orange.</p> |

Nominating Committee Report

Submitted by Debi Chowdhury, ARVP and Committee Chair

According to the By-laws of Region 2 of the American Iris Society, all officers are elected annually and can serve no more than three consecutive years except for the Treasurer and Secretary. The Nominating Committee will be submitting the following nominations to the AIS Region 2 Board of Directors for their approval at their Board meeting on October 15, 2025.

Region 2 has an opening on its Board of Directors. Please consider assisting your AIS region by volunteering for the position of Assistant RVP. Time commitment varies but is usually minimal. Please contact Debi Chowdhury debichowdhury@yahoo.com or Cara Hutchings thehutchings@mac.com.

Assistant Regional Vice President (ARVP) –

This individual shall be required to perform the duties of the RVP in the event of the RVP's absence plus assist him/her in all regional activities. The ARVP also organizes and chairs the Nominations Committee.

Regional Vice President (RVP) – *(Debi Chowdhury, nominated)*

Treasurer – Annette Kuhn (incumbent)

Secretary - Kate Brewitt (incumbent)

Once approved, voting will take place during the AIS Region 2 Annual General Meeting on Saturday October 18, 2025.

Nominations for any office may be made from the floor at the General Meeting, but nominees must be present and must agree to serve. If there are nominations from the floor voting will be done by roll call.



AB 'Chihuahua Morning'
(H. Dash, 2021)
© Kathryn Mohr

Bylaws for Region 2 AIS

<https://aisregion2.org/2020%20bylaws.pdf>



Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Annette Kuhn, Treasurer

As of the end of July 2025, Region 2 of the American Society Iris Society had \$7,111.30 in its checking account and an I-Bond totaling \$1,105.20 including accumulated interest. Total assets for 2025 year to date were \$8,216.50 compared with a total of \$8,830.01 at the end of 2024.

Total revenue received so far in 2025 was \$66.40 This included \$50.00 in affiliate contributions and \$16.40 in I-Bond interest. Total expenses for the period were \$679.91. This included \$111.48 for web hosting and domain registration fees and \$4.14 for bank international fees, \$159.90 for Zoom license, \$25.39 for membership expenses, \$369.00 for the AIS National Convention RVP registration fee, and a \$10 unresolved charge from Amazon.

Membership Corner

Georgette Martin, Membership Chair



Welcome New Members to Region 2 of the American Iris Society

Due to the AIS membership drive, Region 2 has gained 13 new members, with four members in grace status.

D. Just (Pearl River, NY), H. Drinkwater (Schenectady, NY), A. Marshall (Tonawanda, NY), C. Doeffinger (Fairport, NY), J. Sullivan (Yonkers, NY), L.E. Wallis (Burlington, ON), D. Dubler III (NYC, NY), D. Thibado (Eagle Bay, NY), P. Klosowicz (Bay Shore, NY), J. McManus III (Lindenhurst, NY), K. Riddick (Middletown, NY), K. Campbell (Modena, NY), and C. Mouthorp (Canton, NY).

The 2025 AIS Membership Drive Continues

The 2025 Membership Drive offers to NEW and lapsed (greater than one year) members a one-year FULL membership at the discounted price of \$10.00 (a \$45 value!)

See page: [2025 Promotional Membership - AIS Integrated System](#)

Both Print and Full Memberships qualify for this offer.

Join the American Iris Society



Full Membership (Printed bulletin + online access)

Annual: \$45 US – Single / \$50 US – Dual

Triennial: \$115 US – Single / \$130 US - Dual

Basic Membership (Printed bulletin, no online access)

Annual: \$30 US – Single / \$35 US - Dual

Triennial: \$70 US – Single / \$85 US - Dual

E-Membership: One-year online access includes online version of bulletin and online iris register database of registrations and introductions – Single/Dual - \$15 US.

Annual Youth Rates (under age 19) - \$8 US without a Bulletin / \$12 US with a Bulletin (print).

The AIS website, [AIS Members – American Iris Society \(irises.org\)](https://www.irises.org) has a list of additional membership types. There is also a link that allows you to pay with PayPal.

Judges' Training Update

Submitted by Wendy Roller, JT Chair for AIS Region 2

REGION 2 OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY – JUDGES and STUDENT JUDGES

Status Roster – as of July 31, 2025

Active Master Judges (served as a judge for over 15 years)

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| David Baehre * | Chuck Chapman | Wendy K. Roller |
| Joanne Bassett * | Terrance Laurin | |
| Kate Brewitt | Donna J. Lowry * | |

Garden/Exhibition Judges (served as a judge for less than 15 years)

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Marilee Farry * | Jinny Missons | Suzanne Perry |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|

Apprentice Judges (completing requirements to become Garden/Exhibition Judge)

Annette Kuhn **

Retired Master Judges (may serve as show judge if joined by at least one fully accredited judge. Must be AIS member in good standing).

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| John Colley | Gloria McMillen | Janette Smith |
| Donna James | Vaughn Sayles | Dorothy Stiefel |
| Maureen Mark | Helen Schueler | |
| Daniel McMillen | Kathleen Shadrack | |

* AIS Artistic Design Judge

**Currently enrolled in the AIS Artistic Design Judge Accreditation Program.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

During the period August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025, the Region 2 accredited judges and one apprentice judge collectively earned 11 hours of credit for attending or presenting in-garden, classroom, or showbench judges training sessions held within the region. These individuals also collectively earned 18 credit hours for attending AIS Zoom Meeting classroom course sessions which aired from the states of Nebraska and Texas.

One in-garden judges training session was offered within Region 2 during the past year. We thank Master Judge Kate Brewitt for presenting a one-hour course on Siberian Irises in the beautiful Laurin-Brewitt garden setting located in Aurora, Ontario, Canada.

Annette Kuhn is now eligible for appointment as an accredited American Iris Society Garden / Exhibition Judge. We thank Master Judges David Baehre and Joanne Bassett for working with Annette Kuhn this Spring to help her complete the apprentice judge requirements. David and

Judges' Training Update – continued

Joanne each provided Annette with four hours of credit on judging various types of irises in the garden setting as well as at the showbench site.

Janette Smith has decided to retire as an American Iris Society Master Judge. We cannot thank her enough for serving as a judge within Region 2 for the past 19 years. Janette was an active member of the former Central New York Iris Society for many years. She grows many types of bearded and beardless irises in a lovely rural garden setting in upstate New York.



Looking for Volunteers

Volunteers are fundamental to the success of our region. They are what makes the region 'tick'. When you volunteer you meet new people. You can also put an existing skill to effective use, or you might decide to learn a new one. Additionally, you could find out more about the AIS organization that you joined, and more about irises and the people who grow and hybridize them.

If you are interested in volunteering, we are currently looking for an Awards & Exhibitions Chairperson. Inquiries can be made with Cara Hutchings, our RVP (email address on [page 2](#)).

Awards and Exhibitions Chairperson – This individual shall oversee the rotation of the regional show awards plus arrange for the engraving of award trophies and/or the printing of award certificates for presentation at the fall annual general meeting. The chair also provides basic guidelines to any affiliate that is staging a show for the first time. Being an AIS Judge is helpful but not required.

Support and training will be provided by the Board of Directors.

Capital-Hudson Iris Society (CHIS)

The Capital-Hudson Iris Society is part of The Garden Alliance (Capital Area Garden Societies). They meet at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, 24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY. Meetings are at 10 am unless noted otherwise and usually include a guest speaker and a “dish-to-pass” luncheon. All meetings are open free to the public. Why not join us and consider becoming a member.

CHIS President:

Kathryn Mohr - kemohrke@aol.com

Vice-President: Cindi Jones

Secretary: Michelle Young

Treasurer:

Don Salhoff - driris2000@hotmail.com



Record Keeping

By Kathryn Mohr, CHIS President (from 'Shades of Green' - August 2025)

Maps, labels and garden journals are all valuable tools for tracking successes and failures, plant ID and effects of weather/climate. My journals date back to 1995. I record yearly garden maps, plant purchases, bloom times, plans for future changes and lists of plants to donate to society sales. Lists of who I've given plants to are important; I've used those to recover special plants that later died in my garden.



There are quite a few “rare” irises in the garden.

The Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS) has a program called Guardian Gardens (GG). The GG program rescues irises on the brink of extinction, distributes them to experienced growers who nurture and increase them, distribute them to other GG growers and eventually to HIPS members and the public. As a GG participant it's crucial for me to have an accurate ID before I share out the iris. While the plant is in bloom I label each fan with its name, using vinyl blinds cut into discs. A six-inch piece of galvanized steel wire is threaded through a hole in the disc, then the wire is pushed through the iris leaf and secured. A 28-gauge steel wire is stiff enough to push through the leaf without damaging it too much.



Stay connected with the Capital-Hudson Iris Society (CHIS):

On the Region 2 website: [CHIS \(aisregion2.org\)](https://aisregion2.org)

Greater Rochester Iris Society (GRIS)

GRIS meets on the second Sunday of the month at St John's Episcopal Church, 11 Episcopal Avenue, Honeoye Falls, NY starting at 2:00 pm unless otherwise noted.

GRIS President:

Cara Hutchings - thehutchings@mac.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Nate Hutchings - thehutchings@mac.com

Vice-President: Alex Solla



2025 GRIS Events

September – Picnic and planning meeting for 2026.

October 14 – Presentation on bluebirds.

What We Did in 2025

The Greater Rochester Iris Society has had a busy year, having our first show in 6 years and building our membership these past few years.

March started out with a bang, I gave a talk on how to present your iris for the show bench, since most of our members have never been in a show. There was a feeling of excitement, knowing we were going to have our first show since the pandemic!



April had Wendy Roller giving a talk on beardless iris; the pictures were amazing, and the sheer color and variety of iris captured our attention. I also gave a quick review of what positions were needed at the show, and we were all set for the big event.

The day of the show arrived, the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, and what a day! Almost everyone in the Society came and gave it their all. We had a wonderful showing of median iris and there were even some Siberian irises in bloom! The Tall bearded section, which usually takes up more than half the show bench, only had three entries, due to the unusual spring weather we had. Everyone worked their job and had a great time! A special acknowledge goes out to the entire Roller family, for all their help and the great entries they presented.

MTB 'Little Paul' (K. Fisher, 1983)

© Leto Solla

Greater Rochester Iris Society (GRIS) – continued

In June, we had an opportunity to present our society at the annual Master Gardeners' sale. We had quite a good response to our display, and had quite a few people come to our sale, with our flyer promoting a free rhizome. We also had a raffle and had quite a number of people come to the sale for their free named rhizome.



*Nate, Wendy, and Cara at the
Monroe County Master
Gardeners' sale
© Cara Hutchings*

Our sale came next, during the second weekend of August. We had gotten iris from 2 sources, with lots of newer and older varieties available, besides what we harvested in our gardens. It was steady both days, although with the hot weather, we did close early, people were not coming out of their air-conditioned homes. We made a tidy profit, to help with our projects throughout the year.

We're having a meeting in September, which will be our annual picnic at a member's home. We will also be having a speaker give us an introduction to microgreens. I for one am looking forward to it.

Our last meeting of the year, October 14th, will be a presentation on bluebirds. What do bluebirds have to do with iris? Not much, but we are enjoying having speakers present us with other aspects of outdoor gardening, not just iris. We always have discussions on what to do with your iris at each meeting, but then we also learn something new.



Stay connected with the Greater Rochester Iris Society (GRIS):

On the Region 2 website: [GRIS \(aisregion2.org\)](http://GRIS.aisregion2.org)

Facebook: [Greater Rochester NY Irises](https://www.facebook.com/GreaterRochesterNYIrises) | [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GRIS)

Ontario Iris Society (ONIS)

ONIS events are held at the Toronto Botanical Garden (TBG), 777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto, ON unless otherwise noted.

ONIS President: Terry Laurin – tlaurin@rogers.com **Secretary:** Kate Brewitt – kbrewitt@rogers.com

Vice-Pres.: Jinny Missons - jojimis@sympatico.com **Treasurer:**
Lyn Hickey - lynhickey94@gmail.com



2024 ONIS Events

October/November – October/November – Annual meeting to review events of 2025 and plan for 2026. Contact Kate if you are interested in attending. This is our last event of the year.

What We Did in 2025

Our season started in February with 'Get The Jump On Spring' at the TBG. After a four-year absence, it was wonderful to reconnect with our gardening friends at this one-day horticultural open house. There were over 30 plant and garden-related vendors and exhibitors which included local horticultural societies, garden clubs, and environmental organizations. Activities included free demonstrations, Master Gardener advice clinics, a seed swap, and, new this year, a houseplant swap.

In March ONIS had a booth at the Evergreen Brick Works Seedy Weekend, a two-day affair with gardening workshops, seed exchanges, and talks given by horticultural experts. Here we sold potted iris rhizomes, seeds and answered the public's questions about growing irises.

Mother Nature sure had us guessing about what to expect for our June 1st show. May temperatures would soar into the upper twenties (low eighties in Fahrenheit), causing blooms to fade within a day, then they would drop to almost freezing, turning blooms to mush. And, to add to the mix, there was lots of rain!

In the end, five exhibitors entered 44 bloom stalks in a variety of classes: everything from SDBs to Siberian with the majority being MTBs and IBs.



Terry at 'Get The Jump On Spring'

Ontario Iris Society (ONIS) – continued



IB 'Witty' (P. Black, 2011)
© K. Brewitt

It was a highly successful day with Terry Laurin, our president, receiving the Region 2 Magdalen Award for the highest placed median with IB 'Witty' (*pictured left*). Terry also earned the AIS Silver Medal for having the most first place specimens, while Ilona Shtepan was awarded the AIS Bronze Medal for the second highest number of first place specimens.

Our July online rhizome sale continues to be a popular event. In the end, after digging in temperatures ranging between 30°C and 36°C (86°F to 95°F), we shipped over 200 rhizomes to both new and returning customers. No sooner had we shipped the last order then it was time for our in-person rhizome auction and sale at the TBG. Many of our 'regulars' returned, along with many new faces, making it the best auction and sale ever! Thomas Johnson of Mid-America Garden had provided us with an excellent selection of 2025 iris introductions hybridized by Paul Black, Lynda Miller and himself.

This resulted in fierce bidding as everyone sought to get one, or two, for their garden.

Our year will close with our annual meeting in October or November.

ONIS Donates to the Nature Conservancy of Canada



China Cove is a 29-hectare property (71.5 acres) on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula in Ontario where the dwarf lake iris grows amongst other threatened species of plants and animals including Hill's thistle, and the midland painted turtle. However, the property is under threat, having been divided into seven building lots ready for development. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) was looking for donations to help them protect and care for this area.

Since part of the American Iris Society's (AIS) vision statement is *"to support the conservation and protection of all irises, including existing wild and cultivated species."*

the ONIS board felt this project was worthy of our support. To that end, ONIS donated to NCC in support of their efforts to protect this valuable tract of land.



Stay connected with the Ontario Iris Society (ONIS):

On the Region 2 website: [ONIS \(aisregion2.org\)](https://aisregion2.org)

ONIS website: [Ontario Iris Society \(google.com\)](https://ontarioirisociety.org)

Facebook: [Ontario Iris Society | Facebook](https://facebook.com/ontarioirisociety).

Western New York Iris Society (WNYIS)

WNYIS meets the first Sunday of the month at the Julia Boyers Reinstein Library, 1030 Losson Road South, Cheektowaga, NY starting at 1:30 pm unless otherwise noted.

WNYIS President:

Ida Blasak - iblasak71113@gmail.com

Secretary:

Chris Krzal – cjktoybay@yahoo.com

Vice President:

Annette Kuhn – akuhn43@yahoo.com

Treasurer:

Marilee Farry – farmare@aol.com



2024 WNYIS Events

October 6 – Business meeting and iris show awards presentation.

November 3 –Presentation: ‘Introduction to Beardless Iris’. Design Demonstration: Mass Design.

December/January – Winter Break – No meetings.

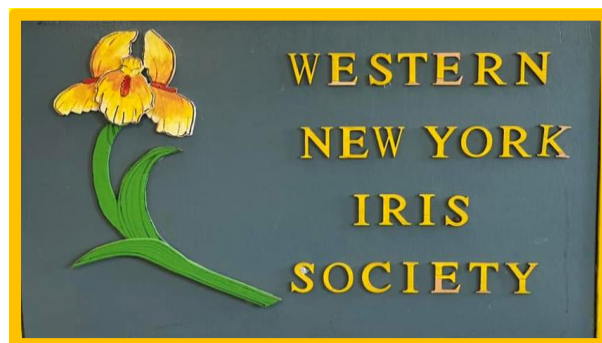


Stay connected with the Western New York Iris Society (WNYIS):

On the Region 2 website: [WNYIS \(aisregion2.org\)](https://www.aisregion2.org)

WNYIS website: [HOME | Wnyiris](#)

Facebook, [Western New York Iris Society | Facebook](#)



Big Sky Country - Convention Bound!

By Cara Hutchings, RVP for AIS Region 2

Last year, my husband and I were able to attend the AIS National Convention because it was later in the year, along with the Japanese Iris Convention. Being a florist, and having the spring be our busiest times, it's hard to get away then. Since the convention was in June, we thought we had a shot at it. And we did! It was a wonderful convention; we had such a great time that we wanted to go again.

This year, it was going to be in the beginning of June, so we thought that might be possible, too. But Montana is not a very well populated state, and air transportation is not always the most convenient. Being from New York, we're used to flights to and from all over the world. So we decided to drive. It would take us three days to get there, and three days back. We would make a vacation of it, see some sites along the way, etc.

And off we went! The trip to Montana was amazing! Seeing the country go from so hilly to flat, seeing the Canadian forest fires' smoke spread across the North Dakota plains, and then getting into the ND badlands!

We got to the convention hotel early, as we had friends who lived in Billings to visit. They took us to Cody, Wyoming and to Yellowstone Park. Those days could take another article, but I'm here to tell you about the convention.

The first day was the day for all the iris societies to have a meeting or presentation. I stopped in on a few of them, such as the Novelty Iris Society and the Reblooming Iris Society. They were very interesting talks; I would have liked to have gotten to more. The welcome banquet was that night, with a wonderful talk from Mike Sutton, a hybridizer and the father of a hybridizer, on space age iris.

The next day was the first of 3 days of bus tours. Our bus went to the DanWalt Gardens first, a beautiful event venue that had two full gardens of guest iris. Wandering around the venue, it was a wonderful morning, with lively chickens scratching for crumbs at your feet. The guest gardens were in big circles, so it was easy to walk around, but there was quite the crowd around them, so sometimes you had to jockey for positions.

Next up was Tina and Daughters Iris Gardens. It was a phenomenal display of iris! Everything was clearly labeled and there were very little weeds in the gardens. The hosting society really worked hard! The guest irises were spread out a little more, so we could wander the rows. I took lots of pictures, everything was so nicely in bloom!



*Tina and Daughters Iris Gardens
© Cara Hutchings*

Big Sky Country – Convention Bound! – continued



Muriel's Garden
© Cara Hutchings

Day 3 was first a stop at Muriel's Garden, again, a beautiful display of gardens, with rows and rows of gorgeous blooms. There were two irises that she had, that we had lost in our garden and hope to get them from her soon! Next, we went to ZooMontana, where there was a long row of guest iris near the children's garden. Again, a very beautiful display of iris. This was also a chance to have a judge's training session. While that went on, my husband and I wondered around the zoo. It had wonderful gardens throughout.

The last day of the convention dawned bright and sunny, as had all the days so far. We went to two private gardens in the morning, one of them at an apartment complex that the owners had allowed the tenants to build a large garden, loaded with iris. The next garden, there was very little lawn, it was all garden! There was a wonderful display of guest iris in the front yard, and the sides and back of the house were loaded with iris and other perennials. I saw "Don't Doubt Dalton" in bloom, the 2023 Dykes Medal winner. I

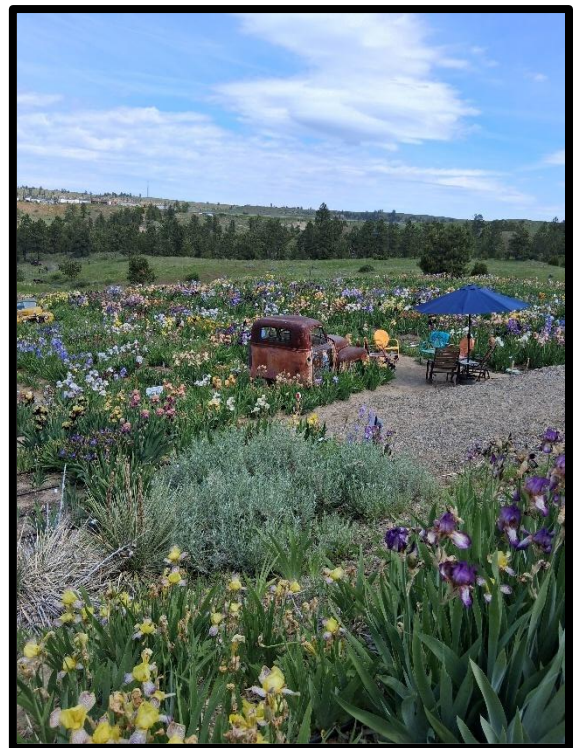
also saw a beautiful pink delphinium, which the owner said she had gotten at Walmart!

That afternoon, we went to Eagle Ridge Gardens, an astounding 9-acre garden. It was wonderful! Just seeing all those irises in bloom, amazing! It was a sight to see. The guest irises were in full bloom along with almost every other iris in the garden. It was a great way to end the garden tours.

At the awards banquet, quite a few of my favorite irises were winners, I was happy to see. And the other award winners were deserving of their prizes.

And then for the journey home. It always seems longer driving home, especially with the time change going against you. But we did have a few stops, such as Wall Drug, in Wall, SD and the Spam Museum in Austin MN.

All in all, a wonderful and memorable trip!



Eagle Ridge Gardens
© Cara Hutchings

Siberian Iris Convention – First-Time Reflections

By Alexander Solla, GRIS

The 2025 Society for Siberian Iris /SIGNA Joint Convention in Ames, Iowa, was a glorious study in contrasts. As this was my first iris convention, I had no idea what to expect. Coming from Upstate New York, where the seasons had only recently begun to creep into spring, the weather in Iowa was quite a shock. Apparently, Ames had already experienced multiple days above 90°F and was actually experiencing a cold spell during the convention.



SIB 'If Swans Were Blue', (R. Hollingworth, 2019)

© Alex Solla

The first stop on the whirlwind tour of Ames was a visit to the garden of Kris and Tom Jurik. Tucked in at the end of the neighborhood, there is nothing to suggest the treasure of a garden that lies beyond the roadside hedges. Once into the garden proper, I struggled to take in the expansive plantings of hostas (many hundreds of varieties) amidst a mature grove of tall trees. Beyond the lovely cool plantings, the paths through the garden opened up onto a flat sunny terrace full of bearded irises in full bloom, accompanied by

the guest Siberian irises. Guest irises are a major component of conventions since it gives the hybridizers an opportunity to share their newest introductions and seedlings. Everyone lined up with their phones and cameras, oohs and aahs at the ready. Knowing that we would be returning the following day for Judges Training, I made one quick pass through the guest irises, promising to return when the light was favorable for better photographs.

In my opinion, the best-looking irises in the guest iris beds were: 'If Swans Were Blue' (Hollingworth), 'Full of Beans' and 'Spin and Glow' (both from Schaefer and Sacks). Dean Cole's 'Amethyst Frost' was in fantastic form.



SIB 'Amethyst Frost', (D. Cole, 2021)

© Alex Solla



SIB 'Full of Beans', (Schaefer/Sacks, 2024)

© Alex Solla

Siberian Iris Convention – First-Time Reflections – continued

When I could draw my eyes away from the expansive beds of hostas and the irises, I realized there was a whole part of the garden down the hill that stretched nearly to the river's edge. This space was filled with over a thousand different varieties of peonies. There is no way to convey the awe of being surrounded by such a profusion of bloom. It was a sea of color! Of course, interspersed here and there were large flowing clumps of Siberian irises. Too soon darkness caught up and it was time to return to the hotel.



SIB 'Maranatha', (S. Varner, 1973)
© Alex Solla

The next morning our first stop was the garden of Lois and Jack Girton. It is impossible to be prepared for a garden devoted to the collection of Saunders' peonies. It was a living museum, capturing the hybridization efforts of A.P. Saunders and his contributions to the peony world. Filling in the spaces between magnificent herbaceous and woody peonies were wonderful clumps of Siberian irises of all varieties. At every turn, discussions circled around to the effect of planting Siberian irises with other shrubs and peonies and perennials.

The guest irises at the Girton garden were fewer due to limited space. According to the convention brochure, the Girton garden initially had only two guest irises, with the remainder on display having been purchased after they had been introduced. As a result, many were quite small. In the Girton garden, the most impressive irises were: 'Spin and Glow' (Schafer/Sacks), 'Wish Me Luck' (Schafer/Sacks) and 'Sun and Mist' (Schafer/Sacks). Dean Cole's 'Amethyst Frost' had yet to open but was very clearly going to make quite the show in the next week. Seeing so many beautiful mature clumps of irises surrounded by astounding peonies was awe inspiring.

All too soon, we had to hop back on the bus and mosey on to the Iowa Arboretum and Gardens in Madrid, IA. Lunch was enjoyed among the many acres of cultivated gardens, native woodland, and prairie restoration at the Iowa Arboretum and Gardens. The guest irises took center stage upon one's entrance into the arboretum. Due to the extremely hot and dry summers of 2023 and 2024, there were quite a few guest irises here that had died. The most impressive surviving irises were: 'Will You Wear Red' (Schafer/Sacks), 'Spin and Glow' (Schafer/Sacks), 'Full of Beans' (Schafer/Sacks).



Marty Schafer offering hybridizing instruction at the Iowa Arboretum

© Alex Solla

Siberian Iris Convention – First-Time Reflections – continued

Bob Hollingworth's seedling 14V17A1 (now registered as 'Miz Liz') was quite the stunning performer with a profusion of gently ruffled creamy yellow blooms.



SIB ('Miz Liz', R. Hollingworth, 2025)
© Alex Solla

The next stop was back to the Jurik garden for the judges' training session with Jan Sacks, Marty Schafer and Patrick Spence. As a newcomer to growing Siberian irises and the hybridizing process, it was eye-opening to learn what the judges see in a new introduction. Whether it be branching and bud count, or the behavior of foliage after blooms have faded, these aspects need to be taken into account when judging the entire plant. These concerns (and more!) were brought up again during the evening presentations from Marty Schafer, Jan Sacks, and Patrick

Spence. One thing I took away from a side conversation was the value of reviewing the iris in question for multiple years before considering it for introduction. Jan Sacks described how those detailed assessments of each iris under consideration are collected and reviewed.

The evening festivities included the convention banquet and silent auction. This was followed by the presentations of Marty Schafer, Jan Sacks and Patrick Spence, who shared their respective hybridizing efforts. Seeing the plants being considered for introduction was an incredible opportunity to see the editing process necessary in hybridizing. Marty and Jan shared images of their latest irises, including their efforts towards a true orange! Patrick shared his experiences growing and hybridizing the 40-chromosome Siberian irises. After seeing such rich, dark colors, I think most everyone wished they had the ideal growing conditions for them too! Patrick traded hats and admirably performed the duties of auctioneer while taking bids on irises (and peonies!).



*Judges' Training in the Jurik Garden with
Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks*
© Alex Solla

One of the things that makes a convention like this so special is the opportunity to meet new people and to ask questions in person. All of the presenters and guests alike were approachable, kind, and generous. As I boarded my flight home, I reflected on the new friends I had met and thought longingly about the next iris convention.



Presby Memorial Iris Gardens



BROOKLYN
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The American Iris Society
2026 National Convention
May 19-23 ~ New Jersey & New York



RUTGERS
GARDENS



Phanaticville

2026 American Iris Society National Convention

New York/New Jersey – May 18 - 23, 2026

Watch the convention website for details about the 2026 AIS National Convention in New York and New Jersey. [2026 AIS Convention website](#). Registration will open Fall 2025. The convention hotel is the Newark Liberty International Airport Marriott Hotel in Newark, New Jersey.

AIS Online

You can find the American Iris Society Online

American Iris Society Website: [American Iris Society \(irises.org\)](https://irises.org)

AIS Iris Encyclopedia [WebHome < Main < Iris Wiki \(irises.org\)](#)
including the Ben R Hager – Sidney DuBose Memorial Online Iris Library

[The American Iris Society - YouTube](#) contains past webinars, including JT sessions, presented by the AIS.

[World of Irises \(theamericanirissociety.blogspot.com\)](https://theamericanirissociety.blogspot.com)

The American Iris Society is also on social media,

[The American Iris Society | Facebook](#)

[The American Iris Society \(@theamericanirissociety\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)



The newsletter of Region 2 of the American Iris Society is published twice a year and emailed to all members of the American Iris Society residing in Region 2 (New York State, Ontario, and Quebec). Members without email may receive a paper copy by mail upon request. It is the member's responsibility to advise of email changes and to submit a written request for paper copies to the editor. Permission is granted to reproduce articles, with proper attribution, unless otherwise noted. It is appreciated that a copy of the publication is provided to the editor. (Please note, submissions may be edited for style and clarity.)

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