

A Bit of History

by Dorothy Stiefel

What was happening in the AIS and Region 2 iris world 10, 25, and 50 years ago? Thanks to our Region 2 Archives, we know! How many of you can remember some or all of the following?

2005: A scant **10 years ago**, Jean Plank was President of the American Iris Society (AIS). The AIS National convention was held in St. Louis, Missouri, and the Dykes Medal was won by **'Splashacata'** (Tasco, 1998). The Tall Bearded Iris Symposium, a list of favorite irises as voted by AIS members, was topped by **'Dusky Challenger'** (Schreiner, 1986) (right).



Bob Keup was Regional Vice President (RVP) of Region 2, where six iris shows were held. Bob was a multi-winner, taking Best Specimen of Show in three of them! He won with the TB **'Vibrant'** (Black, 1999) (left) at Colonie, the IB **'Obligato'** (Stahly, 1989) at Poughkeepsie, and the historic TB **'W. J. Fryer'** (Fryer, 1917) at the Pulaski, NY show. Floyd Reitzel had the top iris, TB **'Coastal**

Mist' (Schreiner, 1998) at Buffalo. Two beardless irises also came out on top; I. pseudacorus shown at Johnson City by John Colley, and the JI **'Japanese Pinwheel'** (McEwen, 1988) (right) shown by Judy Tucholski in West Seneca. The three shows that featured design sections awarded Best Design to Judy Tucholski, Maria Gerbracht and Jaime Smith. In Region 16, part of which would later become part of Region 2, Chris Hollinshead was RVP. One show was reported held at Waterdown, Ontario, with **'Ancaster Blue Ruffle,'** (McMillen, 1993) shown by Gloria McMillen winning Best in Show.

1990: **Twenty-five years ago** and the memories are getting less vivid! On the national scene, Ken Waite was AIS President, and the



national was held in Omaha, Nebraska. The year's Dykes Medal Winner was '**Jesse's Song**' (B. Williamson, 1983) and '**Beverly Sills**' (Hager, 1979) topped the Popularity Poll.



Closer to home, Carl O'Shea was Region 2 RVP. Only two shows were held that year. In Buffalo, Carolyn Schaffner had Best of Show with the TB '**Cascadian Skies,**' (Aitken, 1983) (left), and in Cicero, Jim and Lillian Gristwood had the top iris with '**Stepping Out.**' (Schreiner, 1964) Dave Baehre had Best Design in Buffalo, and Mary Barany won in Cicero. With great regret, the Capital-Hudson Area of the region disbanded that year due to lack of able members. However, in the Binghamton area, the new Southern Tier Iris Society was gaining members and momentum. No shows were reported in Region 16, and indeed, there was no approved AIS Affiliate. RVP was John McMillen.

1960: Fifty years ago! Region 2's own L.F. Randolph of Ithaca was AIS President. The national convention was held at Portland, Oregon. '**Blue Sapphire**' (Schreiner, 1953), (left), was tops in the Popularity Poll, but the Dykes Medal was not awarded that year because no iris received the requisite 15% of votes cast.

RVP of Region 2 was Dr. Irwin A. Conroe. Three iris shows were held. At Westbury, Mrs. John Moore had the Best Specimen with '**Harbor Blue**' (Schreiner, 1953). In



Scotia, Joseph Ryan took the top spot with '**Dancing Deb**' (Tompkins, 1952) and in Syracuse, '**Star Shine**' (Wills,



R. 1947) (right) was the best iris for Mary Hall. No shows were reported for Region 16, and Douglas Insley of Montreal was RVP.

100 years ago in the AIS iris world?

Sorry, we will have to wait until 2020 to do this one, as AIS was founded in 1920. It is fast approaching!