

For Iris Lovers in the Cold Zones



# Aurora

Newsletter of the Can-West Iris Society

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## Update From the Organizing Committee

What a glorious autumn it has been! We can't know what the winter will be like but it certainly has been a wonderful lead into it.

CWIS has had a great year. The Organizing Committee has already been looking to 2016 and a number of projects are in the works. I am pleased to announce that the success of both the 2014 and 2015 rhizome sales has enabled us to start planning to bring in someone next spring for a member event and judges training. And speaking of which, we welcome Sandy Proulx as our newest judge candidate. Details are to be worked out yet but we are sure members will be pleased with what we have in mind. The date has been set and Bourkevale booked for the 9th annual show on Sunday, June 12th. Jennifer Bishop will once again be in charge of the display design division so all you floral designers start planning your creations. There might be some news to report on that front, too, by the Spring newsletter so stay tuned.

As in all things, along with the good there is the other side. Irene Hyland, a dedicated CWIS member and friend passed away in 2015 at the age of 85. We remember her on page 2.

Other articles in this issue include one in which Dolores (Dolly) Picard shares with us a seed starting method she has been using and reports on her success on page 3. The AIS awards were announced just a little while ago and you can see the major winners on page 5. And the most anticipated piece of the autumn edition, the Top Performers begins on page 6.

Next issue will be out in late winter/early spring 2016. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, we wish you all Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. And if you would like to write something for a future newsletter please contact us. We're always looking for articles of interest.

So sit back, relax and enjoy. We have all earned a rest...

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# In Memory of Irene Hyland

(By B. J. Jackson)



CWIS lost a long time member and a good friend in 2015. Irene (Betty) Hyland, a staunch supporter and dedicated volunteer, passed away on July 21st at the age of 85. She could be found at the information table at the show each year greeting the public, chatting with all and sharing a laugh. With a quick wit and a sometimes dry sense of humor, Irene always had a smile and a story or two to share. Every time I see the little MDB Spot of Tea blooming in my garden, I think of her. She was very proud that she won Best in Section for it at the 2008 show.

Irene was very much looking forward to being at the show this year and meeting up again with all her iris friends, but an accident the week prior prevented her from attending. She was very angry at herself when she called me to let me know she wouldn't be able to make it to take her shift. During that phone call she shared with me details of her trip back home to England this past spring where she visited many of her "old haunts" from when she was a girl. Her son Alan shared this photo with me from that trip during which she participated in acrobatic flying fun. It turns out Irene was quite the pilot and very much enjoyed 'looping the loop". Just look at that smile! She will be missed.



The full obituary can be viewed at [http://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-227233/name-Irene\\_Hyland/date-range-all/first-name-Irene/last-name-Hyland/order-publish\\_date|DESC,last\\_name|ASC,first\\_name|ASC/](http://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-227233/name-Irene_Hyland/date-range-all/first-name-Irene/last-name-Hyland/order-publish_date|DESC,last_name|ASC,first_name|ASC/)

# Success With Seeds!

*(By Dolly Pickard)*

My garden is grown strictly for my own pleasure. I do keep track of the named irises for preservation purposes, but I also enjoy my NOIDS and surprizes. I feel no pressure to rid myself of them because I have a few love children instead of thoroughbreds in the lot.



Allah x bee from seed - I bought these as seeds on line from the MIS society  
[http://www.medianiris.com/mis\\_downloads/mis\\_seeds\\_current.pdf](http://www.medianiris.com/mis_downloads/mis_seeds_current.pdf)

I was discouraged from trying to grow irises from seeds because of the length of time before I would see any results, and because the seed wouldn't be true to the parent. I bought the seed in the winter of 2013 and placed them in plastic sandwich bags with some moistened soil. They were placed in the crisper of the spare refrigerator and I was absolutely thrilled when I saw little shoots a few months later. On a very cold March day, I sat in a warm sunbeam and planted all my delicate little lovelies in warm peat looking forward to the spring ahead.



They were placed in my cold frame greenhouse in the spring where they flourished with very little heat for another couple of months and then placed in the garden late May. The photo above is one of my seed purchases in full bloom this spring - just a year and a half after planting from seed.

There were many other successes from the seeds ordered but this was my first one blooming. I would say I probably had about a 50% germination rate, but I was playing with some of the older seeds on the list. I will definitely do this again as the irises grown from seeds appear to be much more resilient to the elements once established rather than planting a single rhizome. I also have the benefit of the experience of many established iris hybridizers and growers who have shared some of their creations with the MIS seed society.

### ***Did you know...***

***- Region 21's own Gary White was installed as American Iris Society President in November 2015 in Omaha, Nebraska???*** (Gary is on the left below.)



***- The American Iris Society's 2017 national convention is going to be held in Des Moines, Iowa from May 23-27???*** Convention attendees will tour at least four Des Moines area gardens, including two public gardens. Stay tuned for more information coming soon!



# 2015 Awards

Full list of awards and photos available at the  
Iris Encyclopedia website:  
<http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view>

**THE DYKES MEDAL - All iris classes, originated in US or Canada**  
- GYPSY LORD - TB iris - (Keith Keppel)

**THE JOHN C. WISTER MEDAL - Tall Bearded irises**  
- MONEY IN YOUR POCKET (Paul Black)  
- SNAPSHOT (Thomas Johnson)  
- TEMPORAL ANOMALY (Richard Tasco)

**THE KNOWLTON MEDAL - Border Bearded irises**  
- NICHE (Joseph Ghio)

**THE HANS AND JACOB SASS MEDAL - Intermediate Bearded irises**  
- MAN'S BEST FRIEND (Paul Black)

**THE WILLIAMSON-WHITE MEDAL - Miniature Tall Bearded irises**  
- HOT NEWS (Stephanie Markham)

**THE COOK-DOUGLAS MEDAL - Standard Dwarf Bearded irises**  
- MAUI SUNRISE (J. T. Aitken)/ZOOBOOMAFOO (Paul Black)

**THE CAPARNE-WELCH MEDAL - Miniature Dwarf Bearded irises**  
- KEENO (Thomas Johnson)

**THE RANDOLPH PERRY MEDAL - Inter-species hybrid (SPEC-X) irises**  
- DO THE MATH (Jill Copeland)

**THE MORGAN-WOOD MEDAL - Siberian irises**  
- HUMORS OF WHISKEY (Marty Schafer/Jan Sacks)

**THE ERIC NIES MEDAL - Spuria irises**  
- MISSOURI MORNING (O. D. Niswonger)

**THE FRED AND BARBARA WALTHER CUP - Most HM votes in any category**  
- DESERT SNOW - AB iris - (Paul Black)

# Top Performers of 2015

*(Compiled and edited by BJ Jackson)*

This year's top performers is a very interesting list. Chuck Chapman tops the hybridizer list with 7 (with 8 participants reporting). Other hybridizer's varieties receiving more than one vote on the list included Paul Black with 4 (and one on the runners up list) as well as J. Terry Aitken and Thomas Johnson with 2 each. One SDB, one TB and one Siberian were the top picks of two participants. In total, 41 iris were submitted as top performers with an additional 7 on the runners up list.. This includes 13 SDBs, 5 IBs, 2 BBs, 4 MTBs, 7 TBs, 5 Siberians, 1 Spuria, 3 Species and 1 Species-X.

2015 was definitely not the best year for the irises. There was a lot of rot. There were split rhizomes. There was not enough snow, too much cold and lots of freezing and thawing. But through it all, these 41 iris made the cut. My thanks to the 16 members who took the time to send in their choices. This annual list is a valuable tool for members seeking to add new iris to their gardens by seeing what does well for other members in similar conditions.

Here's the list of this year's contributors:

Allison Day, Winnipeg MB (AD)  
Tom Davies, Carstairs AB (TD)  
Sandy Eggertson, St. Andrews MB (SE)  
Len Giesbrecht, St. Norbert MB (LG)  
El Hutchison, Ste. Anne MB (EH)  
Debbie Innes, Winnipeg MB (DI)  
BJ Jackson, Brandon MB (BJ)  
Jodi Lockyear, Leduc AB (JL)  
Jacquie McDonald, Penticton BC (JM)  
Brenda Newton, Brandon MB (BN)  
Deborah Petrie, Brandon MB (DP)  
Dolly Picard, Grey SK (DPi)  
Sandy Proulx, Winnipeg MB (SP)  
Dianne Skimming, Calgary AB (DS)  
Naomi Wiebe, Winnipeg MB (NW)  
Sandy Venton, Winnipeg MB (SV)

The list is organized by class from smallest to tallest for the bearded classes, with beardless classes listed alphabetically. Along with the varietal name is the registration information comprised of the hybridizer's name and year of registration and the individual's comments if provided. The person contributing is denoted by their initials in brackets at the end of each. Unless otherwise indicated, photos are by the person indicated in the listing.

So without further ado, here is the list for 2015:

### **SDB**

Autumn Jester (Chuck Chapman, 2000) - the only reblooming bearded iris this year!!! (EH)

Beyond the Sky (Paul Black, 2013) - this one multiplied quickly and sent up stalks the first year. The second year, it was already becoming a nice little patch. (DS)

Blueberry Tart (Chuck Chapman, 2002) - it has rebloomed for the 3rd time in 5 years. (TD)

Casper's Shadow (O. David Niswonger, R. 1987) - was planted as a runt of a rhizome last year - just love the colouring on this one. (DPi)

Cherry Web (Chuck Chapman, 2002)

- just kept blooming and blooming this spring. I received this one in 2012 and finally big enough to be spectacular. (AD)

- for really no other reason than I like it. (TD)

Forever Blue (Chuck Chapman, 1996) - bloomed and rebloomed this year for a long time, one bloom just froze this week. Every time I thought they were finished another bloom would pop up, I had 3 clumps though. (AD)

Devoted (Paul Black, 2005) - planted in 2012 and has done spectacular - so much so that I've already gave some away. (JL)

Mikey Likes It (J. Terry Aitken, 2003) (DI)

Peach Ruffles (Carol Lankow by J. Terry Aitken, 2000) - purchased this a couple of years ago from a CWIS sale. It is surprisingly tough and has survived the root rot and winters for which its neighbours were too faint of heart. (DPi)

Ruby Eruption (Chuck Chapman, 1997) (DI)

Ruby Passion (Chuck Chapman, 2004) - great multiplier ... and its Canadian... love it. (LG)

Spirit Guide (Chuck Chapman, 2003) planted in 2011. It has exploded! I can't keep up with it. (JL)

Toy Boat (Paul Black, 1988) - a maybe, maybe not survivor that gave me quite a show. (TD)

## **IB**

Code of Honor (Thomas Johnson, 2013) - planted in 2013, purchased from the CWIS sale. (JL)

Interim (Orpha Salsman, 1961) - By far the best under adverse conditions. Every single iris around it died over last winter! Truly one of the tough and more vigorous. (BJ)

John (Allan Ensminger, 1989) - was new to me and it was prolific the first year and I just loved the look of it. (JM)

Rumours (Barry Blyth, 1996) - just because it made such a lovely clump! (AD)

Shorty (Paul Black, 2011) - looks very much like Energizer Bunny but taller and not as energetic in its multiplication, but still one of the best in my garden, even with its midget stalk. (DS)

## **BB**

Brown Lasso (Eugene Buckles by David Niswonger, 1972) - the first non TB to win the Dykes medal. Haven't seen it bloom for a few years since I moved it, so I was doubly glad to see it this year. (EH)

Sprint (J. Terry Aitken, 2008) - because it won my first ever Best of Class ribbon at the CWIS show this year, and in spite of the drastic swings in temperature ... that caused other BB and TB irises to have malformed or aborted blooms, this one came out PERFECT! (SP)

## **MTB**

Among Friends (Terry Varner, 1999) - a beautiful clump this year and noticed by guests! (BN)

Little Bay Denoc (Frank A. Williams, 1978) - a cheerful and bright iris that is always popular with garden visitors. And it won best in show this year. Bonus! (BJ)

New Idea (Ben Hager, 1970) - this is an older one but I love it because of its graceful form and branching ... its simple flower shape which gives it an understated beauty (in my opinion) and the lovely clump that has formed. I'm only sorry it is one of the earliest MTBs to bloom, so I will probably never be able to exhibit it at the June show. (SP)

Peebee and Jay (Barbara and David Schmieder, 2005) - such an amazing color combination and bloomed the first year (JM)

### **TB**

Aile Volante (Richard Cayeux, 2013) - What a colorful and fun TB. It bloomed the first year after planting. (JM)

Blue Shimmer (Jacob Sass, 1941) - of the TBs that I have, it is the only one that sent up a bloom stalk the first year after I planted it. The blooms lasted and opened sequentially so that there was at least one open bloom over 3-4 weeks. (DS)

Brussels (Thomas Johnson, 2003) - bought at a CWIS sale a few years ago ... I found out after I bought it, that it was donated by a neighbouring garden buddy that I normally swap with. She ended up losing the mother plant and I was able to give her back one of the children two years later. It likes the spot I chose for it in the garden and has had huge blooms every year. (DPi)

Henna Stitches (James Gibson, 1960)

- The only bearded iris to make my top performer list this year.... this is the only one that both increased and put on a great show in the garden. Many others either rotted or desiccated over the December to April period when we had numerous freeze thaw cycles. (DP)

- Had it for a long time, always a favorite.. great performer and its... oh yeah... brown. (LG)

Olympiad (J. Ghio, 1983) (DI)

Teamwork (Keith Keppel, 2000) - see the photo, don't need to say anything else about it. (SV)

War Chief (Schreiner, 1992). It does so well every year and it has multiplied nicely. (NW)

### **SIB**

Contrast in Styles (Robert Hollingworth, 1989) This one makes the list for its tenacious growth habit. Even though it is planted in a less than ideal spot, has to battle the nearby spruce tree roots and is slept on by deer repeatedly every winter, this iris just wants to grow. Instead of diminishing under these challenges it has managed to increase and bloom repeatedly over the years. (DP)

Demure Illini (Steve Varner, 1984)

- because of its vibrant magenta colour, and the fact that it has increased nicely since I planted it in 2011, better than the other Siberian irises I got and planted at the same time. (SP)

- After blooming for the first time in 2012, this SIB has increased and bloomed more profusely each year. It will make a great clump shot next year I am sure. (DP)

How Audacious (Robert Hollingworth, 2009) - another Siberian that caught my eye this summer. The more frills and flounces that a Siberian has, the more I like it! (BN)

Lemon Veil (Bob Bauer and John Coble, 2000) - best Siberian I have ever had, great increaser and blooms for a long time. (LG)

Pixie Preview (Robert Hollingworth, 2003) - one of my many Siberians I really enjoyed this year. (BN)

### **SPU**

Eleanor Hill (Ben Hager, 1979) - put on an astounding display this year!!! (SE)

### **SPEC**

I. murayana (Andrew Murray (collector), 1935) - bloomed for the first time since it's first year bloom in 2012. (EH)

I. pseudacorus var. bastardii (Dykes, 1846) - won best in class at the show! (SE)

I. spuria (unknown sub-species) - It's been a bit of a wait for this one but the clump went from 1 or maybe 2 stalks a year to many this year. The flowers aren't showy or bright, but still beautiful and it was a remarkable clump compared to the last several years. (DS)

### **SPEC-X**

Tsukiyono (Hiroshi Shimizu by Carol Warner, 2005) - best of the pseudatas this year! (SE)

## **Runners Up**

MDB Suslik (Spec.) (John & Lucy Burton, 1996) - first iris to bloom this year on May 2, the earliest ever first bloom in 20 or so years of growing iris... (BJ)

SDB Energizer Bunny (Paul Black, 2011) - this one multiplied quickly and sent up stalks the first year. The second year, it was already becoming a nice little patch. (DS)

IB Gypsy Queen (John Salter, before 1859) has a beautiful look of antiquity that I love and although called a medium height iris, it grows tall for me. It is prolific. (JM). *Note: 1929 Checklist notes as a TB, but it was changed to IB in the 1939 edition.*

TB Rhein Nix (Goos & Koenemann, 1910) / TB Loreley (Goos & Koenemann abt 1909) - For sheer numbers of blooms, Rhein Nix cannot be beat. It and Loreley have naturalized in my yard. If other irises naturalize like those two there would not be room for weeds. (TD)

AB Desert Snow (Paul Black, 2013) - amazes me every year and my first success with an arilbred after many failed attempts! It multiples well and the blooms are huge and distinctive. (BJ)

SIB Ottawa (Isabella Preston, 1928) - I've divided this one at least three times over the last 10 years and it needs dividing again. Very vigorous and a prolific bloomer! Visitors love it, too. (BJ)