

# 'Cajun Sunrise' Wins Army Award ...Symposium Results Announced

by David Nitka\*

The SLI Symposium, or Popularity Poll, identifies the favorite Louisiana Iris cultivars of the current members of the Society for Louisiana Irises. With each Symposium, the iris getting the most votes receives the Charles W. Army Award. Past winners of the Army Award, however, by rule, are no longer listed on the Symposium ballot.

This year's overwhelming favorite, voted on 41% of the ballots returned, is the late Joe Mertzweiller's 'Cajun Sunrise' (R 92). 'Cajun Sunrise' is the first Mertzweiller introduction to win the Charles W. Army, Jr. Award, joining past winners 'Ann Chowning,' 'Koorawatha,' 'Jeri,' 'Dural White Butterfly,' 'Praline Festival,' 'Acadian Miss,' 'Eastertide,' and 'Clara Goula.'

'Cajun Sunrise' performs well in diverse climates and growing conditions, shows wonderful garden presence, and has distinctiveness that sets it apart from other red Louisianas.

We owe thanks to the SLI Board for encouraging and obtaining stronger member participation in the 2003 Symposium. Participation this year was 200% to 300% higher than participation in other recent years. Thanks to Joe Musacchia for his diligent work and leadership, spirited promotion, and timely and accurate compilation of the results. All SLI members gain because the best irises get recognized, and 'Cajun Sunrise' is a worthy winner. A total of 94 ballots were re-



'Cajun Sunrise' voted the most popular Louisiana iris, receiving 38 votes.

Photo by Patrick O'Connor



'Felician Hills' was voted one of the most popular Louisiana irises.

Photo by Patrick O'Connor

turned, displaying a representative geographical cross-section of SLI membership: 22 different states, including Hawaii, and 4 ballots from Australia.

Runners-up to 'Cajun Sunrise' include two irises that have also contended closely in recent symposia:

Dorman Haymon's 'Rokki Rockwell,' and Patrick O'Connor's 'Felician Hills.'

It is especially gratifying to see newer irises garnering votes on over 20% of the ballots and placing high! This is a credit to the hybridizers for creating exceptional cultivars and to SLI members for making effort to acquire, grow, view and appreciate the results of the hybridizer's efforts. Heather Pryor's 'Garnet Storm Dancer' (R 94) was voted on 26% of the ballots and finished tied for fourth. Dorman Haymon's 'Great White Hope' (R 99) finished third, and his 'Longue Vue' (R 99) and his 'Chuck Begnaud' (R 99) both finished in the top 15. Kevin Vaughn's 'Red Velvet Elvis' (R 96) was cited on 22% of the ballots. The late Richard Butler's 'My Friend Dick' (R 98) got votes from 20% of the ballots returned. The late Mary Dunn's 'Hush Money' (R 98) got votes from 21%.

The late Joe Mertzweiller's 'Professor Neil' (R 90) was selected on 25% of the ballots, finishing tied for sixth place. This is one of the finest showings ever by a tetraploid Louisiana iris in our Symposium/Popularity Poll. Write-ins are encouraged and top write-ins get included on future ballots. Ron Betzer's uniquely colored 'Honey Galore' (R 99), with 7 write-in votes, was the overwhelming write-in favorite of the SLI membership this year. Finally, 31 different irises received at least two write-in votes.

\*David Nitka serves as an SLI Regional Representative. He lives in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts.

# Most Popular Louisiana Irises

1. 'Cajun Sunrise' (Mertzweiller 92)--38 votes
2. 'Rokki Rockwell' (Haymon 92)--31 votes
3. 'Great White Hope' (Haymon 99)--27 votes
4. 'Feliciana Hills' (O'Connor 87)--24 votes
4. 'Garnet Storm Dancer' (Pryor 94)--24 votes
5. 'Black Gamecock' (Chowning 78)--23 votes
5. 'Longue Vue' (Haymon 99)--23 votes
5. 'Professor Neil' (Mertzweiller 90)--23 votes
6. 'Bubble Gum Ballerina' (Haymon 89)--22 votes
6. 'Exquisite Lady' (Owen 86)--22 votes
7. 'Extraordinaire' (Dunn 90)--21 votes
7. 'Sinfonietta' (Raabe 86)--21 votes
8. 'Cherry Cup' (Morgan 88)--20 votes
8. 'Red Velvet Elvis' (Vaughn 96)--20 votes
9. 'Clyde Redmond' (Army 70)--19 votes
9. 'Hush Money' (Dunn 98)--19 votes
9. 'Sea Knight' (Morgan 85)--19 votes
10. 'Chuck Begnaud' (Haymon 99)--18 votes
10. 'Festival's Acadian' (Haymon 89)--18 votes
10. 'Kelly's Choice' (Morgan 91)--18 votes
10. 'My Friend Dick' (Butler 98)--18 votes
10. 'Red Echo' (Rowlan 83)--18 votes
11. 'Aunt Shirley' (Mertzweiller 90)--17 votes
11. 'Colorific' (Mertzweiller 78)--17 votes
11. 'Deirdre Kay' (Granger 90)--17 votes
11. 'Geisha Eyes' (Army 87)--17 votes
12. 'Black Widow' (MacMillan 53)--15 votes
12. 'Buff Dancer' (Chowning 85)--15 votes
12. 'Dixie Deb' (Chowning 50)--15 votes
12. 'Gerry Marstellar' (Raabe 88)--15 votes
12. 'Grace Duhon' (Haymon 87)--15 votes
13. 'Kentucky Cajun' (Norris 94)--14 votes
13. 'Marie Dolores' (Haymon 86)--14 votes
14. 'Delta Star' (Granger 66)--13 votes
14. 'Heavenly Glow' (Morgan 88)--13 votes
14. 'Sea Wisp' (Rowlan 83)--13 votes
14. 'Starlite Starbrite' (Granger 85)--13 votes
15. 'Ann Faith' (Faith 98)--12 votes
15. 'Hurricane Party' (Haymon 86)--12 votes
15. 'Obvious Heir' (Taylor 91)--12 votes
15. 'Rhett' (Dunn 82)--12 votes
15. 'Rich Jewel' (Morgan 94)--12 votes
15. 'This I Love' (Chowning 73)--12 votes
16. 'Big Easy' (Dunn 95)--11 votes
16. 'Bob Ward' (Morgan 82)--11 votes
16. 'Charlotte's Tutu' (Pryor 94)--11 votes
16. 'Lone Star' (Campbell 97)--11 votes
16. 'Valera' (Army 80)--11 votes
16. 'Willow Mint' (Morgan 92)--11 votes
17. 'Bryce Leigh' (Chowning 73)--10 votes
17. 'C'est Si Bon' (Taylor 83)--10 votes
17. 'Count Pulaski' (Chowning 78)--10 votes
17. 'Empress Josephine' (Haymon 89)--10 votes
17. 'Godzilla' (Durio 87)--10 votes
17. 'Heather Pryor' (Taylor 93)--10 votes
17. 'Ila Nunn' (Army 67)--10 votes
17. 'Kay Nelson' (Granger 86)--10 votes
17. 'Lafayette Honey' (Haymon 99)--10 votes
17. 'Professor Marta Marie' (Mertzweiller 90)--10 votes
18. 'Arrows' (Dunn 98)--9 votes
18. 'Bayou Bandit' (Weeks 98)--9 votes
18. 'Beale Street' (Vaughn 96)--9 votes
18. 'Creole Rhapsody' (Mertzweiller 98)--9 votes
18. 'Full Eclipse' (Hager 77)--9 votes
18. 'Hot and Spicy' (Pryor 95)--9 votes
18. 'Joie de Vivre' (Pryor 95)--9 votes
18. 'Laura Louise' (Mertzweiller 90)--9 votes
18. 'Little Miss Leighley' (Chowning 81)--9 votes
18. 'Mrs. Ira Nelson' (Army 69)--9 votes
18. 'Noble Moment' (Morgan 85)--9 votes
18. 'Voodoo Magic' (Rowlan 86)--9 votes
18. 'Voodoo Music' (Rowlan 87)--9 votes
18. 'Waihi Wedding' (Pryor 99)--9 votes
19. 'Bit of Blue' (Army 75)--8 votes
19. 'Cajun Cookery' (Hager 89)--8 votes
19. 'Classical Note' (Taylor 90)--8 votes
19. 'Crisp Lime' (Dunn 82)--8 votes
19. 'Good Doctor' (Mertzweiller 90)--8 votes
19. 'Lake Sylvia' (Morgan 91)--8 votes
19. 'Marvell Gold' (Waddick 91)--8 votes
19. 'Peaches in Wine' (Pryor 97)--8 votes
19. 'Star Power' (Dunn 93)--8 votes
19. 'Sunny Episode' (Rowlan 83)--8 votes
19. 'Twirling Ballerina' (Rowlan 86)--8 votes
19. 'Wake-up Susie' (Haymon 86)--8 votes
19. 'Wine Cooler' (Durio 83)--8 votes
20. 'All Agaze' (Taylor 89)--7 votes
20. 'Andouille' (O'Connor 99)--7 votes
20. 'Fiesta Gal' (Army 87)--7 votes
20. 'Gladiator's Gift' (Taylor 90)--7 votes
20. 'Glowlight' (Taylor 86)--7 votes
20. 'Jazz Hot' (Pryor 94)--7 votes
20. 'Malibu Magic' (Taylor 90)--7 votes
20. 'Marie Caillet' (Conger 63)--7 votes
20. 'Our Parris' (Carroll 87)--7 votes
20. 'Overnight Success' (Ghio 96)--7 votes
20. 'President Hedley' (Mertzweiller 79)--7 votes
20. 'Professor Fritchie' (Mertzweiller 93)--7 votes
20. 'Professor Paul' (Mertzweiller 80)--7 votes
20. 'Velvet Memory' (Morgan 94)--7 votes

## Popularity Poll Voting by State

Arkansas	10
Arizona	3
California	6
Florida	3
Georgia	2
Hawaii	1
Idaho	2
Illinois	5
Kentucky	1
Louisiana	25
Massachusetts	6
Maryland	2
Michigan	1
Missouri	4
Mississippi	3
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	3
Pennsylvania	1
So. Carolina	2
Tennessee	1
Texas	7
Washington	1
Australia	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>

## Colder Climate Symposium Favorites

By David Nitka, Massachusetts

Our SLI Symposium chairman, Joe Musacchia of Louisiana, kept track of the state and country of all who participated in the 2003 voting. He kindly separated out the 21 ballots that originated from climates colder than that of Arkansas (USDA Zones 6/7). The iris named on at least *five* “cold climate” ballots probably earned their votes through good distribution, cold climate durability and plant habit, reliable bloom, and appeal which sticks in one’s memory.

Yellows are well represented, from the collected *I. fulva* ‘Marvell Gold’ (Waddick 91), Henry Rowlan’s floriferous ‘Sunny Episode’ (R 83), the green infused Richard Morgan introduction by the name of ‘Willowmint’ (R 92), and Dorman Haymon’s popular gold streaked yellow ‘Rokki Rockwell’ (R 92). In the gold and tan colors we have Frank Chowning’s ‘Buff Dancer’ (R 85), and ‘Little Miss Leighley’ (R 81), plus Morgan’s rose edged ‘Kelly’s Choice’ (R 91).

Among lavenders and pinks, we find Morgan’s pale lavender ‘Bob Ward’ (R 82), Archie Owen’s breakthrough silver rimmed ‘Exquisite Lady’ (R 86), and Joe Mertzweiller’s coral pink ‘Aunt Shirley’ (R 90). Blues include the timeless Charles Army iris, ‘Clyde Redmond’ (R 70), Morgan’s deep blue ‘Sea Knight’ (R 85), and Rowlan’s lighter blue ‘Sea Wisp’ (R 83).

Red Louisiana’s tallying five or more cold area votes are the Symposium winner, ‘Cajun Sunrise’ (Mertzweiller 92), and Henry Rowlan’s ‘Red Echo’ (R 83). The dark iris include the ubiquitous ‘Black Gamecock’ (Chowning 78), plus Morgan’s beautiful ‘Rich Jewel’ (R 94), and Heather Pryor’s stunning ‘Garnet Storm Dancer’ (R 94).

Among the above are some “hard core” cold climate performers, meaning irises that got over half their Symposium votes from the voters residing in colder climates. These cultivars are ‘Marvell Gold,’ ‘Little Miss Leighley,’ ‘Sea Wisp,’ and ‘Sunny Episode.’

## Three of the Most Popular Louisiana Irises



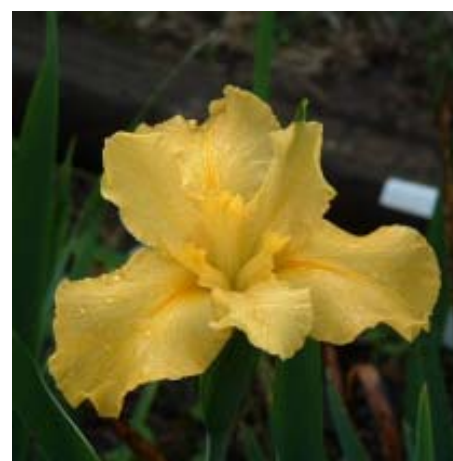
‘Great White Hope’

Photo by Harry Wolford



‘Garnet Storm Dancer’

Photo by Heather Pryor



‘Rokki Rockwell’

Photo by Harry Wolford

## Selecting Favorites... A Difficult Challenge

Selecting favorites is difficult, when there are so many beautiful irises, so I finally decided to choose only from the ones I actually grow [I have to grow LAs in a hot, dry area, with alkaline soil and alkaline water, mine are grown in pots, and I use rain water as much as I can manage; so they don't have an easy life.] The ones I have liked grow good clumps, and flower well, under these conditions. Through the Cottage Garden Society I have been introducing LAs to other gardeners at our Display/Sales day, and 'Exquisite Lady' has been the one that people have really wanted, with 'Popsie' [a rose-purple from Janet Hutchinson], and 'Koorawatha' being much in demand as well. In the garden, 'Our Parris' really stands out, with a huge clump of apricot-toned massed flowers, while the older 'Marjorie Brummit,' on the edge of my front verandah, has brought passers-by in to ask about it. If I could only keep one, then I think 'Exquisite Lady' would be it... but I'd be very reluctant to part with 'Marjorie.'

At the beginning of spring, the fresh, cool-looking 'Spring Welcome,' and an unregistered Peter Jackson lemon, are a delight; John Betts' deep blue 'Thunderclap' and wine-red 'Carioca Carnival' provide colour for weeks, while 'For Dad,' with its huge bud-count and rebloom, is a treasure.

Choose 25? Well, I tried.

Darrelle Watson  
Australia

## Dallas Convention Schedule

The wrong dates were given for the 2004 SLI convention in the last issue of the *Newsletter*. Please record the correct dates, and we hope you will be with the Society for its Dallas convention. The convention will commence on Saturday evening, April 24, 2004, with a hospitality room. The iris show and various SLI meetings will be held on Sunday, followed by garden tours on Monday and Tuesday, April 26-27. It is scheduled to end at noon on Tuesday, but a judges training session will be held from 1 pm to 3 pm that day.

SLI stalwart Marie Caillet of Little Elm, Texas, will have her garden on tour during this convention. Marie will be dramatically cutting back on her garden after this convention, so you should take advantage of what might be your last opportunity to see a garden that has played an important role in the history of Louisiana irises and SLI.

The next issue of the *SLI Newsletter* will contain information and forms for registering for the convention. In the meantime, please reserve the dates of April 24-27.



'Exquisite Lady'

Photo by Harry Wolford

## SLI Cultivar Check List

The *SLI Cultivar Check List* has been updated to cover the earliest Louisiana iris cultivars (pre-1930) through the registrations for 2000. The *Check List* is in an 8 1/2 by 11 format with holes punched for a three ring binder and set-up to slip in the Registrations & Introductions for subsequent years.

The **Check List** is organized by year and indexed by cultivar name and hybridizer. For each iris, complete registration information is given, including hybridizer, year of registration/introduction, color, height, bloom time, parentage, and a description of the flower.

**Checklist: \$20.00, inc. postage**  
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