

## President's Message

Hope all of you are enjoying a lovely fall and are seeing increase on all of your Louisiana irises. Here in Mississippi, we are having a warmer and dryer fall than normal and, with the assistance of the sprinklers, the plants seem to be responding well. I am very optimistic about bloom next spring. The growth on the seedlings has been exemplary.

Yogi Berra says, "You can observe a lot by looking." Here's a recent example of my looking that has turned around my opinions on LA culture.

One thing that has struck me this season is how much better the LA's grow in some water. For years we have been convincing the gardening public that they grow well under normal gardening conditions, much as you would use for daylilies. And they DO grow under these conditions. However, it's also obvious that just a little more water can make a big difference.

This summer I was going to be away for a good bit helping my parents celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Because of this prolonged absence, I bought two kiddie wadding pools and placed about 50 pots of seedlings in the pools. When I returned from the trip the growth on these plants was amazing. They had nearly doubled in size and were much bigger than the seedlings that were in the ground since spring.

The other noticeable difference was in the larger size of the plants. Last fall I had dug a bed that was tremendously overgrown. The rhizomes were in such a tangle that the labels were meaningless. Wanting to save some of these cultivars I planted rhizomes in a ditch at the edge of the property. This ditch sits about six inches below the level of the garden and floods regularly. Now, as I look at these "ditch" plants they have



Kevin Vaughn

greener foliage and many more increase than the ones just across the path in a normal bed.

Anyway, both of these have convinced me that you almost can't give a Louisiana iris too much water, and water may be more limiting than even fertilizer in keeping the LA's happy.

So follow Yogi's lead and do some looking. You might improve your LA culture!



## SOCIETY FOR LOUISIANA IRISES

Founded 1941

**MEMBERSHIP.** To join or renew membership, send dues along with your name, address, telephone number and email address (if any) to *Richard Sloan, Treasurer, 118 E. Walnut, Alma, AR 72921*. Make checks payable to the Society for Louisiana Irises. Memberships are staggered beginning with the quarter in which dues are paid.

**DUES.** Rates for membership are:

### USA

*Individual: Yearly, \$10.00; Triennial, \$25; Life, \$125.*

*Family: Yearly, \$12; Triennial, \$34*

### INTERNATIONAL

*Individual: Yearly, \$15; Triennial, \$40; Life, \$125*

*Family: Yearly, \$18; Triennial, \$40*

**AIS.** SLI is a cooperating society of the American Iris Society. However, membership in the AIS is not automatic with membership in SLI. Individual AIS dues are: Single Annual, \$20; Dual Annual, \$25. Dues can be sent to: Mary Brown, Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 2968, Baltimore, MD 21229; [aismemsec@earthlink.net](mailto:aismemsec@earthlink.net). Rates for overseas or extended memberships can be obtained from the Membership Secretary. The information is also on the Internet at: <http://www.irises.org/>

**MEMORIALS.** Memorial Gifts in the name of a deceased person, and gifts in honor of living persons, are accepted with gratitude by the Society. Please send Memorial Gifts to Richard Sloan at the above address, and enclose a note indicating for whom the contribution is made. A gift will be acknowledged in the *Newsletter* unless expressly requested otherwise.



## From the Editor

This is the second issue of the *Newsletter* for me to edit. While I am amazed and somewhat daunted by the amount of time and energy needed to be the editor, I am gradually discovering the *fun* that comes with this position.

I am wonderfully surprised and grateful for the many fine writers we have within our Society for Louisiana Irises. I have been able to fill two editions now without having to beg or threaten anyone...*cajole*, yes, but not begging nor threatening. This success is due to the fact that several people have volunteered to write articles.

Robert Treadway of Carlisle, Arkansas took a little convincing, but in the end he volunteered to write an account of 'Cajun Sunset,' the iris that recently won the DeBaillon Medal despite the fact that it cannot be found in cultivation. This is not a happy story, but Robert writes it in such a way that we at least learn a lesson or two from this unfortunate imbroglio. If you enjoy Robert's article, please send him a word of thanks.

I am especially pleased to welcome a new author to our newsletter, Mr. Harold Peters from California. Please take time to read his instructive article on how he has learned to grow commercial quantities of Louisiana irises in pots that sit in children's plastic wading pools. Harold has also listed his nursery in our commercial directory.

While our SLI Treasurer, Richard Sloan of Alma, Arkansas, often writes small pieces for the *Newsletter*, I was especially pleased to receive his outstanding article on Edmond Riggs, an African-American who played an early role in collecting and registering Louisiana irises. Dick Sloan has recently named a new hybrid LA iris after the late Mr. Riggs.

'Edmond Riggs' (Sloan 03), the iris, is a beautiful flower. Dick guested it in

my garden, and I don't know when I've ever enjoyed an iris so much. It is a vigorous iris, and it produces a spectacular flower—which is difficult to describe.

Allow me to list a few other irises that did especially well in my garden this year. I have been very pleased with Heather Pryor's 'Bound for Glory' (R. 99). I like the plant for a variety of reasons, including its vigor—it bloomed in my garden less than six months after planting. However, it is the true orange color of this cultivar that marks it for the "glory" its name implies. No, it is not a pumpkin orange, but it is *orange*, "Spanish orange," according to the registration record. Australian Heather Pryor has been working toward an orange LA iris for many years.

If I was an AIS judge, I would have voted for 'Professor Fritchie' (Mertzweiler 93) for the DeBaillon Medal. 'Fritchie' has grown in my garden for several years, and it has been a standout every year. Last May, I cut 12 stalks on

one occasion, and the resulting arrangement at my office elicited scores of excited compliments.

I know one should be careful about judging plants by their first year bloom—especially when it is only one stalk. However, Marvin Faith's new 'Henry Rowlan' (R 00) is a knockout. Granted, this new planting produced only one stalk—but, wow, what a stalk it was! The many-budded plant bloomed on and on, and the very dark flowers held up well to rain and sunlight. Marvin gets my praise for selecting such a fine iris as a memorial for the late SLI President Henry Rowlan.

Just as one cannot judge a first year flower, one cannot properly evaluate a new editor during his first year. I beg your forbearance for my shortcomings, but more importantly, I urge you to have pity on me and *send me an article*. Don't make me resort to cajolery!

Tom W. Dillard

### Possibilities: Using Louisiana Irises as a Water Filter



SLI member Peter Jackson from South Australia snapped this photo during a tour held at the recent Australian Iris Society convention in Perth, Western Australia. These irises are growing in a water filtration plant on a koi fish farm. Peter says they are not growing in soil, but manage to get nutrients from the water.

This "Possibilities" space of the *Newsletter* is being reserved for interesting photos of Louisiana irises, SLI members, garden tours, etc. Send ideas to the editor.

Photo courtesy of P. Jackson