

Earnest Royal's 92-15-2, a very tall and well-branched TB with blooms somewhere between white and palest cream, with just a touch of yellow at the hafts.

It has been the custom in recent years for there to be a competitive show in connection with the Convention, and this year was no different. The West Tennessee Iris Society's show featured many creative and striking artistic arrangements and beautiful horticultural entries. HELLO DARKNESS (Schreiner '92) was chosen Best Specimen.

Some conventioners opted for the organized side-trips; others chose to explore Memphis on their own. I went back downtown to the Pyramid for the fascinating exhibit of art and artifacts from 400 years of the Russian czars. Interestingly, one part of the Kremlin throne room contained a section of wall clearly adorned with *bas-relief* reproductions of iris blooms. I wonder if Graceland (an optional side-trip) included such an iris tie-in!

At the closing-night Awards Banquet most everyone was decked out, as usual, in appropriate attire. There was no end of skirts, blouses, shirts, ties, vests, earrings, and necklaces all bearing the iris motif. But my favorite article of clothing was neither iris-themed nor worn to the banquet. It was Terry Aitken's tee-shirt emblazoned "Stop me before I volunteer." Words to live by!

After dinner came the medals and awards for 2001, then the announcement of the conventioners' two favorites. The President's Cup for most popular Region 7-hybridized variety went to John Pierce's TENNESSEE BICENTENNIAL ('96). Runners-up were Tom Parkhill's MIAH JANE ('01) and Hugh Thurman's MTB MADAM PRESIDENT ('01). Joe Ghio's STARRING ('00) won the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup as favorite out-of-region cultivar. Runners-up were GOLDEN PANTHER (Tasco '00) and SPLASHACATA (Tasco '98).

Perhaps the most warmly-received announcement on that final evening was that the nesting goose's eggs had hatched and the goslings were to be seen following their mother around the hotel grounds.

Following the awards ceremony, through the magic of digital photography, all those at the banquet were treated to a slide show. We saw once more the irises we had admired and ourselves admiring them. The show brought back a flood of memories of the preceding days.

After all, anyone who had thought *en route* "I hope I like it" must surely have concluded. "I certainly did!" – for what was there not to like? 