

The Geek Dinner Misconception

by Robin Shallow


IF YOU THOUGHT THAT ALL THEY DID AT THE GEEK DINNER AT the National Convention each year was talk computers and technical jargon, you've been missing out. Now I'm not exactly qualified to be considered a computer geek, but you don't have to be a computer wiz to have a great time at the Geek Banquet. Although not an official part of the convention package, the banquet is open to anyone for the cost of the dinner (around \$25). If you want to put a face to that email address you have seen on iris-talk all these years, this is the place to do it. If you want to meet some of the well-known hybridizers, a number of them attend. Or if you just want to have a good time with a bunch of iris lovers, you can come and enjoy the conversation. We really don't talk much about computers except for the occasional "Hey, send me a picture of that new seedling". And don't forget the auction and the chance to bid on many things iris. The banquet has been held at the national convention for many years to the benefit of the AIS's computer projects. Every cent earned goes to the AIS Electronic Services fund.

Last year's banquet was a great success thanks to the many generous contributions for the auction. New introductions and Gift Certificates for irises were donated by many well-known hybridizers and commercial gardens. Also donated and auctioned were many truly lovely iris-themed items. The centerpiece of the auction was a petit point iris brooch donated by Jill Bonino that was truly astounding. I understand that there will be another one this year – bring your checkbook!

George Sutton kept everyone on their toes during the bidding. Or maybe sitting on their hands. Dr. Epperson made the simple mistake of asking a question, and even his preface of "This is not a bid" did not prevent our dauntless auctioneer from shouting "SOLD!" The auction continued with much laughter as other items were put up for bids, George's idea of a bid that is. Not to worry though, he got everyone off the hook. – Well, almost everyone. After he got over the shock, it seemed that Dr. Epperson had a great time!

Rosalie Figge lived up to her reputation of always getting what she wants in the end. She succeeded in winning the beautiful petit point brooch after outlasting everyone in the lively bidding. Thanks to everyone who donated and bid on the items, a record amount was earned last year. And special thanks to John Jones and Joanne Prass-Jones for all of their work putting on such a fine event!

The proceeds from the banquet are already being put to good use. This year promises great things for the online checklist. Access to the search engine for the 1999 checklist (and '89, '79, and '69) data is now available for a modest \$10.00 annual fee. If you haven't already tried the online checklist, you should try it out. It is easy to navigate and puts a great deal of information right at your fingertips. It is wonderful for researching pedigrees! You can find the site at www.irisregister.com, where it will give you directions on how to get your password. Additionally, the Electronic Services committee is using the funds accumulated for the Geek Dinner auctions over the years to purchase a projector that can show digital iris pictures from a laptop computer onto a slide screen. The projector will be made available for people to use at iris events. With so many people using digital cameras these days, I am sure there will be great demand for the projector.

John Jones sang for us at the banquet, inviting up all to come join them next year in California. I'm pretty sure his rendition of *Rice a Roni, the San Francisco Treat* was what convinced me that I'll have to find a way to make it out to Fresno. Hope to see you at next year's banquet. I'm easy to spot, I'll be the one having the most fun! 

The Sooner State Iris Society

is pleased to announce our **TWENTY-THIRD** (now semi-annual)

POLLEN DAUBER'S SEMINAR featuring **PAUL BLACK**

of Mid-America Gardens of Salem, Oregon

2002 Winner of the AIS Hybridizers Medal

MARCH 26-27, 2004

Will Rogers Garden Center, 3400 NW 36th St., Oklahoma City, OK

Paul will speak to the Society on Friday, March 26th following a 6:30 PM pot luck dinner. Pollen Dauber's Session will be from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Saturday, March 27th. Seminar fee is \$20 per person (pay at the door).

For Assistance: Call Greer Holland or Mona French, 405-424-6634
or e-mail mona@eclectic-garden.com