



# Cedar Valley Iris & Daylily Society



March, 1998

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Barry Stoll

Greetings! It's hard to believe that Spring is just around the corner! El Niño has certainly been producing some very strange weather patterns. Just when we were getting used to a mild winter with temperatures that were 20 degrees above normal, we've been ambushed by a major snowstorm in Central Iowa and a blustery reminder of winter. I hate to think of what damage this will bring to plants that have started growing three to four weeks ahead of schedule. Though it was been a mild January and February, it has been virtually sunless; this has given us all cabin fever, and made us all the more susceptible to the lure of all those catalogs that are spread out all over the place.

1997 was a very good year for our club! We hosted the Region 21 American Iris Society Spring Tour on May 23-24. The cold wet spring didn't allow us to show folks the outstanding Siberian Iris bloom that we had anticipated, but the tour was well attended and everyone seemed to have a good time. On July 5 we toured daylily gardens in Kalona, Keokuk, Ft. Madison, and Kahoka, Missouri. Then, too, Mother Nature gave us below normal temperatures and prevented us from seeing the daylilies at their best. It's weather events like this that make it hard to schedule dates for tours. Our annual August plant sale at Monticello was our most successful sale ever. We have enough funds to continue purchasing plants from major hybridizers and give club members a chance to grow them. We also were able to bring in Steve Moldovan, who gave a talk at our November Banquet on daylily hybridizing in the North (see pp. 8-11). This year for the first time a Region 1 Midwinter Daylily Symposium was held in Marshalltown, Iowa. Fifteen members of our club attended. We hope that it will be an annual event and more of you will be able to go next year.

Our plans for hosting the Third National Siberian and Species Convention are on course (see p. 8). The Convention Gardens have received almost 200 guest plants. We will also be hosting the 1999 Region One AHS Convention in July. I am pleased to announce that Lynn Stoll has been elected to the Board of Directors of the American Hemerocallis Society for a three-year term. She will represent Region One and oversee the Daylily Popularity Poll, and chair a new committee on Electronic Communications. Once again, Lynn has received a national award for one of her articles in the Region 1 Journal, which first appeared in this newsletter. Her article on Jack Carpenter and his hybridizing program will appear in the Summer *Daylily Journal*.

I hope to see you all at our next meeting on March 28 at Jean Hecht's house at 1:00 (see directions on p. 2). We will be electing officers for the next two years. A slate of new officers will be offered by the Nominating Committee for your approval. We want you to come and renew your friendships and encourage you to bring along a friend or two who you think would be interested in our activities. If you have any suggestion for new club activities or ideas on how to improve our club, please let us know. Meanwhile, cross your fingers that El Niño will be kind to us the 28th!

It has been my distinct pleasure to have served as your president for the last two terms. Thank you for all your help and support during this period. It is time for new leadership and fresh insights!

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### REMINDER: DUES ARE DUE!

If you can't attend the March 28 meeting, please send your 1998 dues (\$6.00 individual, \$8.00 family) to the treasurer (Lynn Stoll, 999 310th St., Atalissa, IA 52720) to ensure that you continue to receive the newsletter and notices of club activities. Make checks payable to Cedar Valley Iris and Daylily Society (CVIDS).

## SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 28: CVIDS spring meeting.** Jean Hecht's home (105 N. Dubuque St., North Liberty), 1:00 PM (directions below). Election of officers for 1998-2000. Social time, business meeting, plans for 1998 activities. Lynn Stoll will show slides of club auction plants, including those on this year's auction and some of the 1998 club plant purchases. *Please bring some friends who you think would enjoy our club!* Beverages will be provided; treats to share would be appreciated.

**May 9: Project Green Plant Sale,** Carver-Hawkeye Arena, Iowa City, 9 AM to Noon.

**May 16: CVIDS Spring Sale.** Location and other details will be discussed at the March 28 meeting.

**May 21-24: AHS National Convention, Lafayette, LA.** Complete information can be found in the latest issue of *The Daylily Journal*.

**June 2-6: American Iris Society National Convention, Denver, CO.** \$185 if postmarked before April 1, \$200 after April 1. Contact David Miller, 14425 W. 48th St., Golden, CO 80403. (303) 227-0358.

**June 12-14: AIS Region 21 Convention, Sioux Falls, SD.** Contact Tova Johnson, President, Sioux Empire Iris Society, 28185 468th Ave., Centerville, SD 57104. (605) 957-4409.

**June 21: Russ O'Harra Hosta Society Summer Garden Tour, Marshalltown, IA.** 10:00-4:00; catered lunch. Contact Kris Jurik (515-232-0027) for more information

**CVIDS Summer Tour?** (early to mid-July; will be planned at March 28 meeting).

**June 25-27: National Hosta Society convention, Peoria, IL.** \$185; send check to Nelson and Ruth Chatham, P. O. Box 3241, Peoria, IL 61612. Phone 309-691-0767.

**July 10-12: Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention, Omaha, NE.** \$75 before June 10 to Tim Hammelman, 3506 Oak Ridge Rd., Omaha, NE 68112-1214.

**July 17-19: AHS Region 1 Convention, Wayne, NE.** An opportunity to tour some terrific gardens and enjoy fellowship with other daylily lovers. You don't have to be an AHS member to attend; all daylily lovers are welcome. Headquarters: Super 8, 610 Tomar Dr., Wayne, NE 68787 (402-375-4898). Registration: \$55 before June 10, \$65 after June 10. Send registration to Doug Moritz, 608 S. Ash., West Point, NE 68788.

**Aug. 23: CVIDS Annual Plant Sale:** Riverside Gardens, Monticello, IA. Plan now to set aside some plants to contribute to our only public fund-raising activity, and join us for a pleasant potluck picnic in the gazebo in this beautiful setting!

## OTHER UPCOMING CVIDS EVENTS

These will be planned and scheduled at the March 28 meeting. We hope to tour as many gardens as possible during the bloom seasons for iris and daylilies. We also hope to plan some slide shows and some picnics or potlucks. **What would you like the club to do this year?** Come to our meeting, or pass along your suggestions to any of the current officers.

**Directions to Jean Hecht's Home (105 N. Dubuque St.):** From I-80 (Exit 244), follow Dubuque St. north to North Liberty (6-7 miles). After coming to a 3-way stop at the edge of town, Jean's house is the 8th house on the left; it has a small deck on the front. There is no on-street parking on North Dubuque St.; parking is available in the school parking lot across the street. Questions? Call Jean at 626-6159.

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PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

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## CONVERSATIONS WITH HYBRIDIZERS: MATTHEW KASKEL

by Mary K. Baker

On February 5, 1998, I took a four day trip to visit my friend, Gayleen Allen, in Miami, Florida. The red-eye left Omaha at 6:00 and touched down in Miami at noon, with a nearly too brief layover in Atlanta. There was only forty minutes between flights, and our flight had arrived twenty five minutes late. Just like in the movies, I raced downstairs and leapt aboard the airport tram just as its doors began to shut. I arrived at the gate during final boarding of the flight to Miami.

Gayleen picked me up at the airport. After running a few errands in Coral Gables, we arrived at her south Miami townhouse. The sky was a clear, saturated tropical blue. Gayleen's front yard is filled with blooming flowers and exotic foliage plants, many of which grow poorly here as indoor house plants. Huge Boston and other types of ferns grow in the shade, while crotons, pentas, and ixora sparkle in the sun. The most spectacular flowering tree I encountered was a specimen *Callistemon citrinus*, also known as Lemon Bottlebrush because of its long racemes made up of brilliant red stamens. Enormous bougainvillea vines grow vigorously and are smothered with neon purple, burgundy, magenta, and yellow bracts. There are, of course, many different varieties of palm trees. Sun-loving gecko lizards are abundant; they eat lots of bugs.

It was almost 3:00 and time to call Matthew Kaskel, who lives less than a mile from Gayleen. He arrived a few minutes later and took me to Kaskel Farms in Homestead, which is about thirty miles south of Miami. Both Miami and Homestead, parts of southern Florida, are in USDA hardiness zone 10. This is about 250 miles south of "Mecca," the Orlando area, where many major Florida daylily hybridizers are based.

Matthew owns and operates Kaskel Farms, which is a wholesale tree farm. He sells palms and shade trees to landscape contractors. A big surprise was a neighboring operation full of vigorous and healthy corn, something I'd not expected to see. Its harvest will supply Nebraska and Iowa farmers with seed corn for future summer crops. The corn had reached tassel stage during January!

Matthew is 52 and a native of Brockton, Massachusetts, which is a suburb of Boston. When he was 13, his family relocated to Homestead primarily due to Matthew's polio. He needs crutches to get around in cold weather, but in the warmth of southern Florida they're seldom used. Matthew is in great shape. He regularly works out at the gym and eats a healthy diet consisting of six small meals per day.

Matthew attended graduate school at the Rhode Island School of Design. He received his architecture degree in 1970. When he was in his mid twenties, Matthew attended a Harvard Hillel, or Jewish youth group, mixer, and met his wife Lani (pronounced Laynee). Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Wisconsin. From Boston University she received a masters degree in special education and a doctorate degree in psychology. Lani has a private practice in the Miami area.

Matthew and Lani have one son, Benjamin, age eighteen. Matthew and Lani each carry a gene for Tay-Sachs disease, an inherited fatal disorder found in individuals of Eastern European descent. Ironically, there is only a one in 900 chance that both parents carry the gene. Fortunately, amniocentesis revealed that Benjamin was okay. After Benjamin's birth, however, Matthew and Lani decided not to attempt having another child.

Hurricane Andrew devastated Homestead a few years ago. Matthew's office was one of the casualties; only bits of foundation block remain. He's temporarily operating out of a trailer. We stopped briefly at his office and then proceeded through the vast, beautiful tree farm. We paused for a moment to admire a young Bauhinia tree that was showing off lovely, four-inch lavender orchid-like blooms. We soon arrived at the area where Matthew grows and hybridizes tetraploid daylilies. This encompasses about 1/3

acre, or 75 feet by less than 200 feet. There is an adjacent area where Matthew is building a reverse greenhouse for hybridizing. It will have light shade and be cooled by an air conditioner.

As soil pH is greater than 8.0, daylilies won't grow in the ground. To compensate, Matthew built a series of 12' by 3' raised beds from standard 2' x 10' deck joists. Each raised bed contains high grade potting soil. The elevated planters display lush, healthy daylilies. The raised bed sit atop a layer of ground cloth. The ground cloth covers a base of graded road rock. Terrain is absolutely flat and easy to navigate. There is enough aisle width between the raised beds to make the whole operation handicapped-accessible. Weeds are almost nonexistent.

Matthew has been hybridizing tetraploid daylilies since about 1981. His first daylily catalog was published in 1996. Matthew's primary goal is hybridizing for ultra early bloom. Jeff Salter's MY DARLING CLEMENTINE has been instrumental toward achieving this goal. In Homestead, ultraearly means at least a month before STELLA DE ORA begins to flower. In the North, where time is compressed, ultra earlies might bloom one or two weeks before STELLA DE ORA. Matthew further strives to create hardy daylilies that not only survive, but actually thrive, in the North. He wants them to open well after chilly nights. In addition, he's breeding for consistent rebloom in the North, something that currently occurs with only a small percentage of cultivars.

Matthew's seedlings and future introductions will be evaluated for hardiness, vigor, ease of opening, and rebloom in Barry and Lynn Stoll's Walnut Hill Gardens in Atalissa, Iowa, beginning this summer. Dan Trimmer had formerly performed this function before moving to "Mecca." Walnut Hill Gardens is a large commercial garden as well as official AHS Display Garden located at the boundary of hardiness zones 5a and 4b. Barry and Lynn have had many years of experience growing daylilies of both Northern and Southern origin. Lynn's scientific background will provide for objective and precise evaluation of Matthew's cultivars. Photographs taken by the Stolls will further document performance. Matthew has made an excellent choice for a Northern test garden.

Many scapes were evident in Matthew's garden on February 5th. The first to bloom was only about five days away. Matthew has a thirteen week hybridizing season, from about March 21st to June 30th. In an average year, he has approximately 10,000 seedlings. 1997 was atypical in that only about 5,000 seedlings were produced. His ultra earlies bloom in nine months from seed. An average 16-month-old seedling has eight fans. Florida's climate is definitely an advantage; many generations in a line can be achieved in a reasonable amount of time. It takes at least two years for me to bloom a seedling in Zone 4b; some don't bloom until their third year. It could take a decade for me to achieve a small second generation clump. Vive la difference!

Matthew's growing, hybridizing, and shipping methods are both scientific and logical. Cultivars from other hybridizers are planted alphabetically. He wants to find plants quickly, which is an advantage in such an intensive hybridizing operation. His inexpensive and fade-proof method of labeling cultivars and seedlings using the portable Brother P-Touch III assists in fast plant identification. It's available from many office supply companies. The power source is five C batteries. The cost is about \$100; each label cartridge is approximately \$12. Matthew simply types the cultivar name, prints the label, removes its adhesive backing, and slaps it on a plant stake. Seedlings are labeled somewhat differently; an explanation of this will follow. I saw many older labels in full sun and they looked brand new. They're virtually impossible to peel off. I plan to convert to this method ASAP, as constantly replacing faded labels is both tiresome and expensive.

Matthew annually makes a custom stud book out of heavy cardboard. He files it down so it easily fits in his back pocket. He uses a pollen parent identification method developed by Lillian Grovenstein. Each hybridizing season requires a one hundred foot length of 25 pair telephone cable. Twenty-five single wires identify 25 parents by color. Each wire color is coded to a specific plant in Matthew's stud book. As 25 parents are not enough for Matthew, he winds two different colors together with an electric screwdriver for more color combinations. Each wound wire is then identified with a unique pollen parent in the stud

book. The one hundred feet of cable is cut to lengths of five feet each. Each five foot long piece of cable is divided into individual (or braided) wires that are wrapped around cardboard (or fingers, if in a hurry) and cut into pieces 2 1/2 inches long. The pieces are bent to form horseshoe shapes. A horseshoe easily twists around the base of a pod flower after fertilization. Lillian's method avoids use of tags, which fade and sometimes become illegible after heavy rains or intense sunlight. Cable is available from Graybar Electric Co., part #OR-804025CX100-1BE, description Ortronics 25P SE 100FT FX BE PVC. [Iowa outlets: 600 E. 4th St., des Moines, 50309-1855, 515-243-8611; Cedar Rapids, 3336 6th St. SW, Cedar Rapids, 52404-5418, 319-364-1190; Davenport, 5008 Tremont Ave., Davenport, 52807-1007, 319-388-8182.] Cost is currently \$30.49 plus tax. Cable can either be picked up or shipped; it's not necessary to be a wholesale customer to order from Graybar.

Matthew has come up with an easy way to separate and track the various wire horseshoes. He uses heavy duty eight-ounce plastic jars with lids. Each jar is the exact size of a yogurt cup. One jar holds lost of horseshoes. Matthew will drill a hole in the bottom of each jar and bury it at the base of the pollen parents its horseshoes identify. Drainage holes are necessary if he becomes rushed and lacks time to immediately replace jar lids. A duplicate jar setup is located on gray-painted outdoor storage shelves built from marine plywood. Shelves are adjacent to a small freezer containing frozen pollen. With dual jar locations, Matthew can choose between using fresh or frozen pollen and instantly access corresponding wire identifiers. Matthew formerly used disposable beverage cups to hold his horseshoe; these have the disadvantage of cracking. Because they're lidless, they also spill. Jar source is Consolidated Plastics Company at (800)-362-1000. The item number is 42428KL. A bag of 60 lidded eight ounce jars costs \$35.70 plus shipping and handling by UPS. The eight ounce size is perfect for Matthew. Consolidated Plastics also carries 16-ounce jars, about the size of a tomato soup can, for \$60.00 plus shipping and handling.

Matthew said that Grace Stamile developed an innovative way of hybridizing using six pollen parents at a time. She uses a six pack double stack carrier made to transport small parts; the carrier is available from Home Depot. She puts six different types of frozen pollen or fresh pollinator flowers in the top rack and their respective wire identifiers in the bottom rack. Several quick sweeps of the garden can be made using Grace's method.

Matthew is getting many seedlings with future introduction potential from TANGERINE HORSES; the percentage of keepers is very high. Pollen parents include BILL NORRIS, CALYPSO BAY, and SEMINOLE WIND. ONE FINE DAY, out of MY DARLING CLEMENTINE, is a parent to lots of wonderful small-flowered seedlings. Matthew's legendary SENEGAL is a parent to HOT CAKES and several fine seedlings. SENEGAL grows and performs well throughout the country. Its hybridizing potential is enormous as well as diverse.

Excellence doesn't stop with growing and hybridizing, however. Matthew's outdoor shipping area is state of the art. He has a large slop sink with a shower head where plants are thoroughly washed. Pipe and drain are large; dirt and debris easily whisk away. Immaculate surrounding counters are made of marine plywood painted gray. Matthew packs wet. Each plant is wrapped in three layers of newspaper. Plants stay damp in shipping, which guarantees healthy arrival. Even hair roots look good. Kaskel Farms is conveniently close to UPS; his plants ship out quickly.

As the sun set, all too quickly it became dark and my visit with Matthew drew to an end. He returned me to Gayleen's home. I had a fabulous time touring Kaskel Farms, but enjoyed getting to know Matthew even more. He is a truly courageous, kind, generous, multi-talented, and enthusiastic person who has given much to the world. He's done a lot to promote daylilies. Matthew loves speaking for local, state, and regional daylily organizations and has excellent slides to accompany his presentations. Visiting Kaskel Farms was the highlight of my Miami trip. Thanks, Matthew, for your time and for making me feel at home!

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## SO STILL IN SPRING

by D. Elton Trueblood

The women place his body near the pane  
That he may once again watch  
The trees so bare  
Put on their shining raiment in the sun  
Which they may gaily  
For a season wear.

How strange that he should be so still in Spring!  
That he should sit and watch  
While other toil --  
How can it be that he should stay indoors  
While men again go forth  
To stir the soil?  
In early spring of 1869, he followed in the furrow as a boy  
Amid the sod that had not once been turned  
Since morning stars together sang for joy.

There came the time he would plant for two.  
That year the maples robed  
Themselves with glee --  
But oh, how sweetly did the plowshare sing  
When he could plant and toil  
As well for three!

Sometimes the labor of the day seems long  
And those yet full of strength  
Forget to sing.  
They have not seen the wistful eyes of him  
Who knows how good it is  
To work in Spring

*Contributed by Jim Glasson*

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## CALCULATING YOUR DAYLILY BUDGET

Many of us are now attempting to work out our daylily budget for the coming year. Members of the Daylily E-mail Robin have also been struggling with these same budgets, and have put together a number of helpful suggestions (sort of like the "diet tips" that broken cookies have no calories, and cookie dough doesn't count before it's baked!). We've been characterized as a support group for hemaholics -- with the difference that we don't want to get better! ("I recognize my dependency; I recognize your dependency; I will willingly aid and abet your dependency, as you will mine.") We hope you will find some of the following thoughts useful:

I don't spend money on (fancy clothes/gambling/liquor/cigarettes/sports cars/nightclubs, etc. [choose all that apply])

Making a new daylily bed costs less than redecorating the living room.

Daylilies last longer than a fancy dinner out.

This is my exercise program.

This is my psychotherapy.

Daylilies don't count if I get them in swaps.

Daylilies purchased at club or Regional auctions don't count; it's a contribution to a worth-while cause.

It doesn't count if you buy them with a Post Office money order, so there's no record in the checkbook.

If a hybridizer comes to give a talk to your club, it would be impolite not to buy at least a few of their daylilies -- so those don't count.

It makes me happy.

Any money saved by virtue of comparison shopping equals found money and therefore is not counted as spending.

It doesn't count if you buy them from your secret Credit Union account.

It doesn't count if you get home before your spouse does on the days the boxes arrive.

Any daylily that you absolutely need for your hybridizing program doesn't count.

If you still have checks left, you can still buy daylilies.

If you have actually planted everything you have purchased, you need more plants.

If you buy a \$100 daylily knowing that you can trade it next year for another \$100 daylily, then it only counts \$50.

Or, to look at it another way:

Do you add up kisses? Do you add up chocolates? Hugs? Kind words?

### PLAN AHEAD FOR 1998 CVIDS AUCTION

The following daylilies and Siberian irises will be available in the 1998 CVIDS Silent Auction.

- AV. #60 \*Blueberry Candy (P. Stamile '93) 4 1/4
- 47 \*Cherry Drop (P. Stamile '93) 4 1/4
- 27 ✓ Cinnamon Sunrise (Copenhaver '92) 6.5
- 55 ✓ \*Crush on You (P. Stamile '93) 6 PINK
- 75 \*Darker Shade (P. Stamile '94) 5.5 PURP
- 540 \*Driving Me Wild (P. Stamile '93) 5.5 LAV
- 37 ✓ \*Elizabeth Salter (J. Salter '92) 5.5 PINK
- 35 Flamboyant Eyes (J. Carpenter '93) 6 PINK/RED EYE
- 29 \*Friar's Lantern (Moldovan '92) 5 PURP/GRAY BAND
- 13.50 Gretchen Glime (Weston '91) 4.75 RED
- 29 \*Isle of Capri (P. Stamile '91) 6 LEMON
- 21 Just a Bit G. Stamile '96 2 3/8 LAV. PURP EYE
- 37 ✓ Land's End (Millikan '93) 5 PURP/PURP EYE
- 19 Lovely Blessing (J. Carpenter '91) 5 3/4 GOLD
- 48 ○ Mary Frances Ragain (J. Carpenter '93) 6 PINK
- 20 \*Maybelle (Blaney '92) 5" PINK
- 48 Merle Kent Memorial (J. Carpenter '91) 7" PEACH/ROSE EYE
- 40 Mt. Herman Starlight (J. carpenter '94) CREAM 6"
- 10 \*Phoenician Ruffles (P. Stamile '86) PURP
- 45 Pink Scenario (Sikes '93) 5.5 PINK BLEND
- 400 \*Raspberry Sunshine (J. Carpenter '91) 7 ROSE) EYE
- \*Red Heat (Benz '92)
- 30 \*Ruby Spider (P. Stamile '92) 9" RED
- 420 \*Silken Touch (P. Stamile '93) 6" PINK
- 40 Siloam Olin Frazier (Henry '91) 5 1/4 ROSE
- 390 \*Still Night (P. Stamile '93) 6" PURP
- 44 Susan Weber (Branch '93) 5 3/4 PINK/ROSE EDGE SLIP
- 100 Ted Robinson (J. Carpenter '96) 7" CREAM BLEND
- 30 \*Tigger (P. Stamile '91) 4 1/4 ORANGE/RED EYE
- 65 Twirling Ballerina (J. Carpenter '95) 5 3/4 PEACH RED
- 30 \*Watermelon Candy (Benz '91) 5.5 ROSE
- 30 \*Wedding Band (P. Stamile '88) 5.5 CREAM/YELL
- 25 Woodland Ruffles (J. Carpenter '91) 5 3/4 APRIL COT

MISSING FROM LIST BLACKBERRY CANDY, ANN THOMAS, HEAVEN ALL DAY, PUG YARBROUG

## CATCHY SLOGAN CONTEST

### Prairie in Bloom 2000

It's time to decide on a slogan for the National Siberian and Species Iris Convention we will be hosting in 2000! We've been tentatively using "Prairie in Bloom 2000" as a working slogan, but nobody is very excited about it. (For one thing, both the American Iris Society and the American Hemerocallis Society have used the "Prairie in Bloom" theme for recent national conventions.) So, we're going to have a contest! We need a catchy slogan that ideally would make reference to Iowa, Siberians, and the Millennium -- not an easy combination! Just to get you started, the following slogans have already been suggested. All of them have some merit, but none of them has made the Convention Committee say, "Yes!! That's IT!! That's PERFECT!!!" So give us your suggestions. If your slogan is used for the Convention in 2000, you will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate from Walnut Hill Gardens.

Blooms for the 21st century, with roots in the past  
Iowa Show-off 2000  
Siberian/Species Showoff 2000 (SSS 2000 for short)  
A Century of Progress  
Prairie Fires 2000  
Flower Power 2000  
Siberian Iris: Flowers of the Hour 2000  
Two Thousand Blooms  
Siberilennium 2000  
[Acronym of IOWA 2000] -- like  
    Iris Oomph with Appeal  
    Iris Orgy with(out) A \_\_\_\_\_  
    (Other ideas?)  
Back to the Future 2000  
New Tomorrows 2000  
Millennium in [Flowering] Review 2000  
Hawkeye Plains  
A New Millennium of Beauty  
Millennium in June

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### CVIDS Fall Banquet Speaker: Steve Moldovan

*[Editor's note: the following material was transcribed and edited by Lynn Stoll from a tape of Steve's talk at the banquet. All quotes are Steve's. Editor's comments are italicized. Unfortunately, we can't provide much information about the individual cultivar slides shown. Many were simply breathtaking -- but the only thing on the tape was "Oooooooo" and "Aaaahhhhhh" and "Oh, wow, look at that!!!"! However, much of Steve's philosophy of breeding was stated clearly during the presentation. We hope this information will be of interest to those who couldn't attend.]*

Our club was honored to have the distinguished daylily hybridizer Steve Moldovan at our banquet in November. Steve is from Avon, OH, and is a widely recognized breeder of high quality tetraploid daylilies which are always outstanding performers in Northern gardens. Steve made his first cross in 1958. In the 40 years he's been growing and breeding daylilies, he's seen some extraordinary changes in the daylily over this period of time. In a series of slides, he showed us a brief history of the daylily. Steve's introduction to hybridizing came from the work of Orville Fay, Brother Charles Reckamp, and Dr. Robert Griesbach. Two slides of state-of-the-art 1966 introductions included BEAUTY PAGEANT ("I thought this was the finest pink daylily I had ever seen") and a nondescript purple "the first real purple, ever!" CRESTWOOD BITONE, which Steve bought in 1960, was his first Tetraploid -- purchased for \$200! (Let's see, given the inflation rate over 38 years . . . !) Throughout his talk, Steve repeatedly stated with wonder, "Can you



believe the progress the daylily has made in 40 years" He showed us three daylilies he has introduced and named after his mother: MARY MOLDOVAN (1971), MARISKA (1986) ("Then she wanted another one, so I called it MARISKA [*the Hungarian diminutive form of Mary; pronounced 'Marishka'*], and finally HAIL MARY (1993) ("She says her rosary a lot"). As he showed these, and as he contrasted the 1966 purple with his FRANCIS OF ASSISI (pictured on the cover of his 1998 catalog), he said softly, almost in awe, "It's amazing what's happened to the daylily in 30 years!"

Steve described Moldovan's Gardens as a "5-acre part-time hobby run amuck." Steve has a full-time job, as does his partner Roy Woodhall. ("I need a full-time job to support my habit.") He showed a series of slide views of the gardens: part landscaped in an Oriental motive, partly fields & fields of daylilies, along with a lot of hostas. ("After 30 some years, I've learned that there's no magic formula: you gotta grow a lot of daylilies to get one good one. I've never found a better way." Also, "We grow everything outside, without mulch, without pampering -- the things are lucky to get weeded. (They do get watered.) We grow our daylilies without pampering."

If there was a single underlying theme to Steve's talk, it was the critical importance of rigorous testing for garden performance without pampering. "I look for a daylily in a clump, in an established plant, how it performs out in the garden. I don't *care* if it's a beautiful flower; it has to be more than a beautiful flower for me. That's how we evaluate our daylilies; we grow them and evaluate them in established clumps. They have to perform in the garden as a clump. Just because a daylily has a pretty flower, it needs more. We believe strongly in thorough testing.

"We don't spray. If the thrips get there, they get there. I will not spray. I used to be a breeder of tall bearded irises. Every spring I would spray at 7-day intervals with Cygon 2E, and I killed everything. Everything. After a couple years of that, my iris rotted and died because I wouldn't put the chemicals down. And I've never sprayed since. If a daylily can't take the bugs in my garden, it doesn't get used for breeding, and we throw it away. What I'm trying to do is breed daylily that are tolerant of insects. My only control is that I feed the birds, and I water during drought to get rid of spider mites."

What are some of the improvements Steve has seen in the daylily over the last 40 years? One is in colors. "We like all colors, though I don't work with 'whites'. I don't breed for doubles. I have nothing against doubles, but I started growing daylilies because I liked the lily form. Purple has always been my passion." He showed a slide of SHAKA ZULU, a luscious rich purple which is a second generation seedling from his STUTTER'S BALL. SHAKA ZULU, in turn, has produced such breathtaking flowers as NOBLE LORD, WATERSHIP DOWN, LORD OF RINGS, and now FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

Steve thinks great progress has been made in getting saturated true reds -- "reds that you can take to a color chart and say, yes, that's *red*, not brown or orange; reds and pinks that you can plant beside petunias or impatiens or begonias and they wouldn't look like dirt. Finally -- it's taken a lot of breeding and work. We're starting to get new patterns -- yellows with orange and red edges. I hope to see a blue daylily before I die!

"Daylily colors are a matter of fashion. Nobody used to want orange daylilies -- but new ones like MAGIC DRAGON are ruffled and gorgeous, with intense hot colors and lots and lots of buds. It's like fashion; colors go out of style, and then come back. For years I couldn't give an orange daylily away, but this year we sold out of this one" [*MAGIC DRAGON*].

"One of our goals in breeding was to incorporate the vigor of miniatures into our lines. Miniatures tend to grow like weeds, so we've used a lot of miniature blood in our lines. PYGMY PRINCE (from Tet PARDON ME) is a tet mini that is a consistent rebloomer for us. We wanted our daylilies to do well in North and South, so my other goal was to cross hardy miniatures with tender evergreen big stuff, like Jeff Salter's BANANA REPUBLIC. These crosses have produced some breeding lines with excellent qualities of vigor and branching.

Steve showed a series of slides of recent and future introductions, selected seedlings, and brand new seedlings still under number. All of his introductions are evaluated on three- year plants. Steve usually

crosses Northern daylilies with Southern cultivars; "3/4 of the seedlings from a given cross may die, but we grow and test the good ones that survive. We look for hybrid vigor, branching and bud count, strong stems, nice leaves. Branching and bud count are special for us in the North, where we don't get the rebloom they get in the South; here, we'll take every bud we can get! We work as much or more on plant habit as on flowers. We continue to grow and test our selected seedlings for several years. We may ultimately introduce them -- or we may compost them." Steve is also working on rebloom, but said that this is very difficult and very sporadic in the North.

Steve also showed slides of introductions and seedlings by his partner Roy Woodhall. "My partner crosses in the same garden, but comes up with totally different things. His DESIGNING WOMAN (1998) is a hot orange, late bloomer, 44" tall, strong as bamboo and branched like a tree. We need some strong tall daylilies like this for the background and back of border. It's about time we have some good tall daylilies for the garden. (How many front-of-the-border plants can you use?) Roy has been breeding for only 15 years; we call him the new kid on the block. I learned from Orville Fay and Robert Griesbach and Brother Charles This guy came and started crossing and I said, 'You can't cross that, you'll just get junk.' Well he got junk all right; he showed me!" Then Steve showed a slide of Roy's GEORGE WOODHALL (LIGHTNING RIDGE X DESIGNING WOMAN). "I'd never seen a daylily with ruffles like that. Roy's mostly into the hot colors, although he's now starting to rain on my parade with these new reds. Now my theory is, Never say Never. I'm relearning how to cross daylilies. Look at this one: Roy crossed my RAHOTEP (1975) x RUFFLED DUDE, and I just laughed and laughed at him, and when the seedlings started to bloom I kidded him every day, I said look what junk you're getting -- and then this one bloomed. This is the most spectacular coral red daylily I've ever seen in my life. (I had told him, 'never cross a red with a melon.') He calls it RAHODUDE. So for you would-be breeders -- anything goes. If you have a hunch, give it a shot; you never know.

"And now this youngster Tony comes along! [*Tony Slanek, a 21-year-old newcomer to daylilies from Ohio State who is working in Steve's garden*] He bloomed his first 17 seedlings this summer. We all knew he wasn't going to get anything -- we just knew it. [*Slide: LUCK OF THE DRAW*]. Tony crossed LORD OF ILLUSIONS x DIVINE COMEDY and got this magnificent bicolored daylily. The lesson here is that the daylily has reach such a level of perfection today that the chances of getting something good from a cross are so much greater now that it was when the available parents just weren't this good.

"One consequence of this is that there are going to be a lot of new breeders on the scene, which is both good and bad. People are already breeding daylilies in a hurry to get them on the market; they want to be famous. So these daylilies are being rapidly increased and put on the market without testing, and we are getting a lot of inferior, weak, non-tested daylilies on the market with a pretty flower. A lot of these new intros have never been in any one place longer than one year. This is where daylily is going into turmoil: by people -- breeders -- in a hurry to get something out on the market, putting out daylilies that are untested, often daylilies that don't grow well, and other people are using them.

"I'm afraid that the daylily will no longer be the plant that you can have a full-time job, come home from work, too tired to weed, you forget to water, it'll still grow . . . I don't want it to become that iris that I had to give up that had to be sprayed with chemicals, had to be sprayed with fungicides, had to be staked, or it would die. I grew the daylily because it was so easy to grow. The iris is having trouble because Man stepped in and tried to fool with Mother Nature -- and did a *bad* job. This is happening with the daylily too; in our hurriedness to get new plants on the market, our Southern daylily growers are blooming a seedling, and two or three years later are offering it for sale to the public, with a full-color picture in *The Daylily Journal*. It's never been tested outside of their garden. Will a 3-year clump be 14" or 40"? They have no idea; it's *never been* a 3-year clump, ever, anywhere. That's very dangerous. I'm afraid for the daylily, the plant I love. It's getting out of hand; too many problems are being hidden.

A lot of the Northern breeders are in a hurry, too. So they're growing things in greenhouses. You know what we're breeding? We're breeding annual daylilies. They're not tested for hardiness or anything. You can very easily get an annual daylily. And I hate to plant my petunias & impatiens every year. This should be known to growers and breeders. Let's test our daylilies. Let's make sure these things thrive without pampering. If I get a new daylily, whether it's \$5 or \$100 or \$200 -- (I once paid \$500 for one --

I'm really *gone!*) -- I'll mulch it the first winter, because with our open winters it would heave out of the ground. After that: if they die, they die. So there -- ha! I do not want to grow any daylily I have to pamper. My daylilies are lucky if they get fertilized.

"When I started breeding daylilies 'evergreen' meant 'tender' and 'dormant' meant "hardy." That's a bunch of bull. Some of my hardest daylilies are evergreen -- and some of my most tender daylilies are dormant. Just because something is evergreen does *not* mean it's tender. There are tender evergreens and hardy evergreens -- just like there are hardy dormant and tender dormant. It depends on where the breeder is located, because that's where he or she will determine the hardiness of their varieties. For example, if somebody lives in Northern Florida, they can't test for anything further north unless they send their plants out. And even that testing is variable, depending on the amount of snow cover (or lack thereof), mulching, growing in protected locations, etc.

"My final point: *a daylily doesn't have to be pampered.* It should look just fine with nominal care. Just give it water; that's the most important thing you can do for it."

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## SLOGAN CONTEST

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