

Southeast Region Board Director: 2016 Year End Report
(Areas included in the region are indicated at the end of the report)

2016 was another year of great energy and progress for HIPS. I enjoyed the opportunity to participate in it.

I participated in all teleconference meeting of the Board and in discussions held on the board's listserve. Currently I serve as a member of the Board's Budget Committee and the Bylaws and Policies Committee. I also participate in the HIPS website Member Forum. The forum is an excellent resource for communicating with the full general membership. It's a super way for all of us to chat, exchange ideas and strengthen our community. See you there!

Our Public Relations chair, Cathy Egerer, who is also our President, is leading the charge on an effort to promote email newsletters to the members. She is working with the Directors to help us use this vehicle to inform our regional members of news and activities. So that is something I want to start doing in the future. Please feel welcome and encouraged to send me whatever news you think the other members would benefit from hearing about. It's a place I can pass on the activities and events you'd like the other member to know about or join in. We need the active email address of any member who wants to receive the newsletters so send us that if you haven't already.

The volume of communication to me from regional members was light. I'd love to hear from more members who have general inquiries I might assist you with or who have ideas and feedback for me, our program coordinators or the HIPS leadership. Sometimes our members have to scale back their collections or make arrangements to see that they are passed on to the future. You might know of situations where an iris rescue type effort seems needed. I can facilitate you in getting advice and assistance that HIPS offers to help people with that.

The 2016 HIPS annual rhizome sale was a phenomenal success and we all can warmly thank the people who worked so very hard to make it happen. The proceeds are a very major part of generating funds to sustain and grow the organization. At the roots of making the sale successful are the donations of rhizomes from our members. Big boxes or little boxes, we take joy in seeing them all. I can tell you that packing up a box of rhizomes to send in is one the most gratifying things I do yearly. Sharing our beloved historic irises is at the very heart of our main mission, keeping them growing and going forever!

I continue to look for reports on and evidence of bearded irises that grow well in the hotter and more humid sections of the Southeast. I've gathered a few reports of people successfully growing some in sections of Zone 8 and 9 where conventional wisdom says they should not do well. Help us bust the myth! South Central Director Judy Schneider is partnering with me since her region includes Texas and Louisiana. HIPS is pushing to be more inclusive of the preservation of species and beardless irises so members are encouraged to send me reports about those as well.

I also continue to coordinate a field project which we call the 'Thelma's Irises Project. The focus of the project is to facilitate dispersal of endangered irises from a family's large collection located in Winston-Salem, NC. The project has been active since 2015. We've dispersed a good number of the irises but many more remain. The project would benefit from other members partnering with me to keep the program as successful as possible. Those interested in this or just interested to learn more about the project in general are encouraged to contact me.

I thank people for continuing their membership and whatever ways you help make the HIPS active and successful. As always, I look forward to serving you in the future.

Respectfully submitted;
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The Southeast Region is comprised of Maryland, Virginia, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands