

# Twin City Iris Society

## NEWS & VIEWS

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There is a surprise in store for those of you who were not at the January meeting of the Twin City Iris Society!! We have a beautiful new place in which to hold our monthly meetings as well as the pot luck dinner held in March. We have been meeting at the YWCA in Minneapolis for several years and have greatly appreciated using these facilities. Recently, however, through the good offices of some of our members an agreement has been made with the Guaranty State Bank, 3700 Broadway, Robbinsdale to use their facilities for all our activities, including the summer auction. This meeting room, including kitchen, is made available to various groups as a public service by the officers of the Guaranty State Bank with no charge!! It was the overwhelming desire of the Society when this matter was brought to them at the January meeting to accept this hospitality and change our meeting place.

The Guaranty State Bank is located at 3700 West Broadway in Robbinsdale and is easily accessible to most of you. To those of you who are accessible to Highway #100--turn East on either North 36th Street or #52. The Bank is a block or so North of the Terrace Theatre, there is a parking lot on the lower level from which doors open directly into the meeting room. For those of you who must come through the city, it should be easy to find using any route leading to Robbinsdale--once you reach Broadway or Highway #52 it will be easy to find.

If there are any of you who have been depending on buses to get to our meeting place please call any of the officers of the Society and someone will try to arrange a ride for you, we want each and everyone of you to share in these beautiful new accommodations.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, February 17, at 8:00 p.m. (Please arrive a little early as the meeting will start promptly!) Remember our new meeting place. Guaranty State Bank, 3700 West Broadway. We hope to see all of you there!

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Progress necessitates changing our meeting place to the Guaranty State Bank, 3700 West Broadway, Robbinsdale, near the Terrace Theatre.

How often in the early morning have you been awakened by the song of the Cardinal? Then go hastily to the garden when the iris is bursting forth in all its splendor. Dew lies heavy on the petals and the sun is showing a glow of red on the Eastern horizon. How fitting that the Twin City Iris Society should hold their first meeting February 18, 8:00 p.m., at our new location, on the subject: "The Invitation to Birds," by Mrs. Ray D. Fuller of the Audubon Society.

It is about this bank that the following articles were written:

May 26, 1964

A serene expectant mother, oblivious to the distractions of city life, is delaying  
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start of a \$200,000 construction project in Robbinsdale, Minnesota.

Excavation work was scheduled to begin Wednesday on the site of the new Guaranty State Bank of Robbinsdale at the triangular intersection of North France Avenue and West Broadway Street, in the suburban city which adjoins northwest Minneapolis. This one-acre tract is just 200 feet west of U.S. Highway 52, one of the most heavily-traveled stretches of highway in Minnesota.

Contractor Henning M. Nelson, 4216 Shoreline Drive, Robbinsdale, was looking over the plot last week, preparatory to putting his power shovels and bulldozers to work, when he nearly stepped on a wild Mallard duck hen who had built a nest in the center of what is to be the new bank's parking lot.

When the hen fluttered away, attempting to decoy Nelson from her nest, he counted ten eggs and an oval stone in her one-story rambler. He reported the presence of the nest to Walter C. Rasmussen, 5311 Hollywood Road, Edina, Guaranty president.

Rasmussen determined that he would delay the project until Mrs. Mallard hatched out her decatuplets (quints times two). He assumed that only the eggs would hatch and that the rock would not yield a duckling.

Rasmussen reasons, "If that mother hen feels she is secure in the midst of all the confusion and noise of city life, we will 'guaranty' her safety and keep the bulldozers quiet until she can march her ducklings into Crystal Lake." Crystal Lake is just across Highway 52 from the bank site.

A check with Minnesota Department of Conservation wildlife experts in the Division of Game and Fish brought forth the prediction that the Mallard hen will stay with her eggs until they break out of their shells. The best estimate concerning delivery date is approximately June 4, based upon the normal hatching period of 24 to 26 days.

Rasmussen, a life-long hunting and fishing enthusiast who was raised in the northern Minnesota community of Pelican Rapids, said that he has never seen a nesting wild Mallard. Neither had several other outdoors-lovers who visited the nesting area. Normally, Mallards nest in extreme isolation, far from the furor of the city.

The Game and Fish people said that only an extremely frightening action would drive the hen from her eggs at this point in the hatching period. In order to protect the bird from harassment by uninformed and curious people, Nelson put up a snow fence between the nest and busy West Broadway Street, just 50 feet away. Rasmussen is hiring guards to keep visitors from getting too close to the nest. The guards will be on duty around the clock until the ducklings arrive. A large, 12-foot by 4-foot sign has been placed near the undergrowth which surrounds the down-filled nest. It says:

Quiet, please! Mallard Maternity Ward, future site of Guaranty State Bank of Robbinsdale, construction to begin following birth of Mrs. Mallard's decatuplets about June 4.

The bank structure was scheduled for completion during the last week in September. Contractor Nelson now believes that work will be finished in early October. The project was planned to last approximately four months from the time of ground-breaking.

If and when the eggs become ducklings, the normal procedure is for their mother to lead them to water within 24 to 48 hours. Rasmussen said he will attempt to convince Robbinsdale officials that they should halt traffic while Mrs. Mallard escorts her brood across U.S. 52 to Crystal Lake.

The recently-chartered institution will be housed in a two-story, 7,500-square-foot building with entrances facing both Broadway and France. Banking services will be located on the upper level, including drive-in facilities. Parking lots will be situated on both levels.

The building's unusual design, created by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Larson and McLaren, Inc., will have a pre-stressed concrete roof which simulates a series of giant "T's." It will be faced with random field stone in order to blend it into its hilly surroundings. Guaranty State Bank will offer the full range of banking services, including savings, checking, safety deposit boxes, loans, insurance and drive-in teller windows.

Courtesy--Minneapolis Tribune and  
North Hennepin Post of  
Robbinsdale

June 2, 1964

Four newly-hatched ducklings are being turned over to a foster mother Wednesday to prepare them for a life in the Minnesota out-of-doors. The quartet of baby Mallards are survivors of a setting of 10 eggs which had been nested in the center of a bank construction site in suburban Robbinsdale, Minnesota. The nest was disturbed last Friday and six of the eggs were destroyed, causing the mother duck to abandon the nest. She had been nesting near the intersection of West Broadway and North France Avenue.

Officials of Guaranty State Bank of Robbinsdale determined that an effort should be made to hatch out the remaining eggs. They were rushed to Armstrong's Game Farm near Anoka, Minnesota, where they were placed in an incubator. The quadruplets broke out of their shells Tuesday, three days ahead of the anticipated birth date.

Bank president Walter C. Rasmussen, 5311 Hollywood Road, Edina, who had posted a guard on the nest and delayed start of construction, said Tuesday that he would deliver and release the foster mother and her adopted ducklings to Crystal Lake on Friday. Crystal Lake is just East of U.S. Highway 52, about 500 feet from the bank site.

Fred Armstrong, proprietor of the game farm, is selecting a "brood hen" from his flock of Mallards to take over the chores of motherhood. Although the game farm hens have clipped wings to prevent them from flying away, Armstrong said the birds are moulting now and soon will be able to fly when new feathers are grown.

Rasmussen said he is hopeful that the ducklings will mature on Crystal Lake in time to join the fall fly-out to a warmer climate.

Construction began Monday on the \$200,000 bank building project. Contractor Henning M. Nelson, 4216 Shoreline Drive., Robbinsdale, who discovered the nest two weeks ago, expects to complete the job in early October.

Courtesy--Minneapolis Tribune and  
North Hennepin Post of  
Robbinsdale

Maybelle Wright will give a short talk on Iris, other than tall bearded.  
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The New Year brings New hope, New anticipation, and dream as a larger Iris Society. There are so many admirers of this lovely flower that do not belong to this specialized organization. Joining the Twin City Iris Society means: Friends with one common interest, growing iris, knowing iris, learning about the originators, learning about its care and knowing how to meet the problems effecting this flower. Having obtained this knowledge, then it becomes a very pleasurable hobby.

So that you will enjoy the fruits of your efforts by obtaining new members, Iris rhizomes will be your reward. For the grand prize--to anyone that qualifies with five memberships and then the contest begins--Davids Hall new Introduction of 1963, "Wine and Roses,"

First prize, a choice of Sextons--Pacific Panorama or Ploughs--Rainbow gold.

2nd prize, a choice of Cooks--Whole Cloth or Hinkles--Helen Novak.

3rd prize, a choice of Halls--Bravado or Shreiners--Amethyst Flame.

A family membership counts 2. A single membership counts 1.

When memberships are turned in, do make it known, to the membership secretary, Mrs. S. Rudser, where the credit is due.

Single membership in the Twin City Iris Society . . . \$1.50 yearly.

Family membership in the Twin City Iris Society . . . \$2.00 yearly.

Minnesota Horticultural Society membership. . . . . \$2.00 additional.

The American Iris Society publishes four publications in book form yearly. It contains a wealth of knowledge about Iris. Add it to your own garden library. Yearly subscription \$5.00.

Have you paid your own 1965 dues? We need you, Now for a Banner year full of good fellowship.

Greta M. Kessenich, President

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#### FROM FARMING TO HORTICULTURE by Alice Foss Stencien

Memory takes me back to 1940 when, as city dwellers, we moved to a new home located on two acres of land in Golden Valley. Having four children, ages five to fifteen, we were desirous of living suburban, giving them room to play and grow, and us, a chance to garden.

As both Mr. Foss and I were raised on a farm, we had a love for animals and growing things. Our first project was to build a small chicken coop and barn. We invested in twenty five chickens, a spotted riding pony and a beautiful Jersey cow that we named Honey. Her rich milk gave our youngsters an abundance of wholesome milk, cream, homemade butter and cottage cheese. The children's rosy cheeks and the absence of doctor bills attested to the benefits derived from these natural foods.

Honey was the privileged pet of our family; however, on one occasion, when my teenage daughter brought some of her girl friends home from the city, she called me aside to say, in great disgust, "MOTHER, WHY did you stake Honey in the front yard TODAY? The girls will think we are farmers!" And I replied, "We ARE farmers."

The manure pile that accumulated each winter, was largely responsible for the productive garden which filled many jars with fine vegetables and luscious strawberries each summer.



Our chickens, also, taught us a lesson in organic farming. Mr. Foss was very meticulous in cleaning the chicken house each Saturday and putting fresh, new straw over the floor. But each winter many hens died from disease and as we were feeding them a balanced formula, we were at a loss to understand it. Finally, we called the Farm School at the University of Minnesota. We were told we should not clean out litter each week, but apply fresh straw on top of the old straw; and to wait until spring, when we let our hens out, before cleaning the coop thoroughly. Much against our ideas of sanitation, we tried this method the following winter. The results were astounding. Sickness among the chickens lessened to a marked degree and egg production increased. The mixture of old and new litter broke down to a relatively fine material, dark in color and inoffensive--the perfect compost! We made the discovery that this compost was rich in antibiotics and vitamins which the hens ingested, in the course of their customary scratching and picking; thereby protecting themselves against disease, improving their nutrition and increasing their output of eggs. We regarded this evidence as strong support for the theory that compost keeps plants healthy, and may explain the phenomenal fertility of composted soil.

In 1953, we were forced to discontinue our farming hobby, as the nine acres of meadow around us was sold to a real estate firm, who proceeded to build twenty-six homes around us. Reluctantly, we sold our chickens, pig, pony, and with tearful eyes, our beloved Honey. We haven't had whipping cream in our mashed potatoes since!

I then turned my attention to growing Irises, Daylilies and Roses. I followed the recommended procedures and had good success with Iris and Lilies, but was disappointed in my Roses. Then, several years ago, I decided to use the organic material from my compost, which is made up of leaves, hay, manure, garbage and what have you--in both my planting and mulching. The past five years I have had the finest Roses I have ever grown--with almost complete lack of leaf spot. Organic compost can not take the place of proper spraying or commercial fertilizers, but, I am firmly convinced that it is the "missing link" between depleted soil and high fertility soil which will grow everything better, including Irises!

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#### SNOW AS A COVER FOR IRIS

I have always believed that, inch for inch, snow provided as good a cover for iris as hay or other material. However, if the snow melts and the ground becomes bare followed by sub-zero temperature, then we are in trouble and losses can be expected. For that reason it is best to cover and take no chances.

On the Saturday morning following Thanksgiving we were on our way home from New York. The weather was mild and it was sprinkling rain as we packed the car before daylight at a motel in a small town north of Fort Wayne, Indiana. We got started without getting wet but as soon as we got out on the highway it really began to pour and it rained all the way to the Illinois state line. Big trucks coming East from Chicago threw up a blinding mist until the wipers cleared the windshield. Our thoughts were about the weather ahead so my wife set the radio dial at 830 and in came WCCO loud and clear with a weather report of 17 degrees below zero in Minneapolis. It was hard to believe.

It was too early to cover before we left on our trip October 5th so my iris were uncovered and many thoughts went through my mind relative to the condition of the plants. I was hoping that the ground was covered with six or more inches of snow but what if there was only an inch or two? I was hoping there had been heavy frosts

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and mornings with temperatures below freezing to harden the iris off. What if some plants had made lush, tender growth in the fall and the rhizomes were full of water? If so, winter injury could be expected. That is my reason for not fertilizing in late summer and fall.

We spent Saturday evening and Sunday visiting friends and relatives in the Davenport, Iowa area and drove home Monday. The weather was clear and cold. Near the Iowa-Minnesota state line there was less than an inch of snow which increased gradually with about three to five inches on the ground in the Twin City area. We will not know until spring if this was adequate snow cover for protection but I believe there will be more than average winter injury and losses.

I covered the iris garden as soon as possible using forty bales of hay. They sure make the hay bales small these past few years. In other years it took only about thirty bales. The hay was spread over the snow which will provide moisture that will prevent the rhizomes from dehydrating. Now there is a layer of snow covering the hay. With this covering I believe that the extreme sub-zero temperatures of January and February will prove to be less damaging than the sudden drop to 17 degrees below zero in November.

I usually commence uncovering the iris April 1st. Any cold weather after April 1st will do less damage than the mildew and bacteria that may develop under the hay on warm days.

If winter injury is discovered I expect to scrape or cut the soft-part away using an old tablespoon that has been sharpened at the edge. I will then treat the rhizomes by saturating with a solution of one heaping tablespoon of Terraclor 75% in one gallon of water. The Terraclor 75% powder can also be dusted right out of the bag onto the rhizomes which also sterilizes the soil next to the rhizome.

Sincerely yours,  
G. B. Gable

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It's fun to go traveling but even nicer to be home. These are the words of Mr. and Mrs. Gable, who have recently returned from an auto trip to Bangor, Maine. They left the first week of October via Canada. The fall coloring was at its peak. Imagine the colorful maples intermingled with the stately pines, the semi-mountainous country, rocky formations, deep forests with ribbons of paved roads all the way to their destination.

At times they traveled for miles through farm lands without a house in sight. At one view point, a half-grown kitty came running up, purring loudly. He was so happy to see a human being. He looked half starved so they decided to take him to the next town, which was many miles on their way. He was a frisky little kitty and didn't want to stay put, showing his affection by using his paws and half hidden claws to find a suitable resting place on Mrs. Gables' lap. This was not appreciated. Near a school and filling station, he was let out and by now, has found a good home.

It was most interesting to hear of the beautiful city of Ottawa--the government has taken steps to keep it that way. The Ford Company was denied permission to build there. Factories are not wanted. The government has purchased all the land in a three mile border around the city for future development. Railroads are being put underground to make the city more beautiful. The parks and city drives are lined with flower beds, where over a million tulips bloom each spring. The bulbs

were a gift from the Netherland government in recognition of the refuge granted the Dutch Royal Family during World War II. The Arboretum, Botanical Gardens and Experimental Farm are so well kept, one would not find a weed anywhere.

Every mile they traveled presented a different picture. Memories of the Old French towns, churches of magnificent architecture, and historic sites, will always linger.

Mr. Gable wanted to listen to the World Series. Well! He did, only it was broadcast in French!

To see Iris beds, they came home.

Welcome--The Society missed you.

Greta M. Kessenich

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### IRIS CLASSIFICATION (A.I.S.)

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|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB) | Less than 10"--early blooms.  |
| 2. Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB)  | 10" to 15".   |
| 3. Intermediates (IB)            | 15" to 28"--hybrids of dwarf x TB--bloom between dwarfs and TB's.       |
| 4. Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB)  | (Table irises) 15" to 28"--slender flexuous stalks, with small flowers. |
| 5. Border Bearded (BB)           | 15" to 28"--shorter irises of TB parentage.                             |
| 6. Tall Bearded (TB)             | 28" or more.  |

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### DEFINITIONS

Amoena: White or tinted white standards with colored falls.

Plicata: Stitched or stippled margin on white background.

Variegata: Yellow or near yellow standards with deeper falls which may be either veined or solid tones of brown or purple.

Blend: Combinations of two or more colors (one always being yellow).

Bicolor: (Two colors) light or medium standards and deeper contrasting falls.

Self: An Iris of uniform color.

Texture: Sheen or finish of the petals.

Substance: Thickness of petals.