



Prescott Area Iris Society



Winter Dreams

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s short story “Winter Dreams” features a Gatsby-like character, a young boy, dreaming of beauty, wealth, and status. Iris gardeners have winter dreams as well. We have our favorites that delight us year after year with their unique beauty or personal history. Scrolling through our albums and Facebook posts helps remind us that spring will be here soon enough, and we simply have to wait a bit longer for the wondrous display to begin. Dreams of wealth and wishful thinking make us hope to be able to purchase all the irises we mark as favorited as the iris farms begin opening up online sales for the 2024 season. Staying in budget is difficult as we discover even more growers that offer an even wider array of cultivars. Status can also play a role in some of our dreams. Those brave and meticulous enough to hybridize have studied each step of the painstaking process and hope to create an iris worthy of registration.

Our winter dreams are hopefully about to culminate into a rewarding 2024 gardening season. May all of our iris hopes and dreams come true. Good luck to all of us in our new growing season.

Barbara Walls

In This Issue

Table of Contents	
Winter Dreams	1
President’s Message	1
Meet the Executive Board	2
Calendar	3
Yavapai College Endowment and Scholarship	4
Treasurer’s Thoughts	4
Region 15 Fall Conference	4
New Member Shout Out	4
Prescott’s Public Iris Gardens	5-6
The Dirt on Dirt	7
Live and Learn	8
Anticipation	9-10
Birthdays	11



Marty Boxer’s noid

President’s Message

February—Not this gardener’s favorite month—short days, cold temperatures, frosty mornings, rain and snow. Not much to see in my garden, and certainly not in my iris beds (although something has been nibbling). There’s work to be done, though. It’s almost time to prune the peach and apple trees, next month the roses. There’s compost to make and to spread on the flower and vegetable beds. And there is waiting—waiting for the forsythia to bloom and for the redbud tree to bloom and then leaf out. And waiting for the daffodils and the hyacinths... And finally, the joy of irises! Awakening from their winter slumber, first come leaves and then stems and then finally flowers! When winter doldrums hit me, I look at photos of the amazing irises in my garden, and in the community gardens that PAIS members support and nurture.

Join in our PAIS activities. Come to our meetings, help with our show and sales. Spring will be here soon. The thought of it warms my February.

Marty Boxer

Meet the 2024 Executive Board

President Marty Boxer

I got turned on to irises at the PAIS show at Mortimer's Nursery in 2015. I joined the Society immediately (and got a free iris for joining!). My rock-hard soil was a challenge, but soon I had dozens of rhizomes planted. I took lots of photos and met lots of great people. Somehow I ended up on the board. I've visited fabulous iris gardens around the country —Presby in Montclair, New Jersey, and planted iris with youngsters at Taylor Hicks and Abia Judd elementary schools here in Prescott.



Left photo: Marty Boxer participates in work group planting Tasso Garden at Sculpture Garden, Yavapai College, 2022

Secretary Jeri Conklin

I have always loved irises and grown some beautiful ones all over in our military moves. I rarely knew names—I just knew I loved their colors.

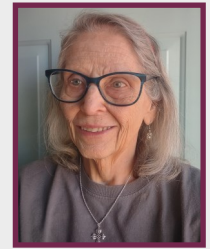


While in Lancaster, California, prior to our 2020 move to Prescott Valley, I grew a beautiful yellow and tan iris that became my photographic model for several county fair photo exhibitions. Just before we moved, I discovered an iris club in Lancaster. I attempted to bring several rhizomes with me on the move. Long story short, they didn't make it. I think it was 2021 when I discovered PAIS through the Rhizome sale flier posted somewhere. I was first in line that day, which was very expensive! I came to my first meeting and was hooked. The people were amazing! Everyone offered encouragement and support and was happy to share information and resources.

Initially, I wanted to do it correctly - organize plot lines, times, dates, names, etc. That worked the first two seasons. I kept everything up to date. My markers with permanent ink disappeared in the sun. I had such growth expansion on all the plants that I had no clue where one started or stopped. I think they had millions of babies overnight. This past year, I was finally able to see the beautiful blooms. I spent painstaking hours mixing and matching my notes to what "should be" there. My goal this year — just let them bloom and enjoy them. I don't care who they are or if they are where I planted them. They are just beautiful. As for the iris that started this journey - Fall Fiesta, I was able to get some from long-time PAIS member Brenda Griffin (TX), and I'm looking forward to their bloom this year. I'm a writer by nature, and I thought it would be fun to give back to an amazing community of Iris growers. It isn't about just coming to meetings but about giving back to keep those meetings growing and going.

Vice President Vicki Hughes

My husband and I moved here from Ohio in 1994, but I lost him in 2005. My brother and I have joined forces and share my house. My garden is my never-ending project. I'm looking forward to spring, especially since I was out of commission last summer after I broke my leg in April. I kind of feel like I'm starting over.

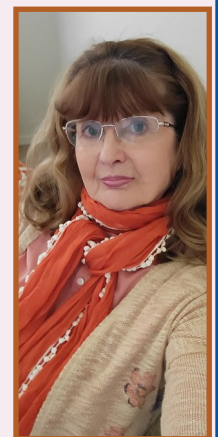


Co-Treasurers Sherry Williams and Juliana Stewart

I (Sherry) joined PAIS in July of 2017 after moving to the area in June. I quickly learned that this is a group of wonderful friends as much as an organization dedicated to irises and beautifying the area we live in. I have spent four years as president and I am now in my third year as treasurer. This year I will share the responsibility with Julianna Stewart. Julianna just joined in 2023 and this will be a great way for her to learn.

Director at Large Kathleen Shaffer

I moved from San Diego in 2010 to Prescott and found PAIS in 2011. I have held many positions on the board, such as vice president, and am now Director at Large. I help oversee the Fire Fighters Memorial Garden at Embry Riddle University. I'm chairing the upcoming Fall Conference, and I'm looking forward to a productive iris show this year and to working with everyone. It's a great organization with many members and I have made many friends.



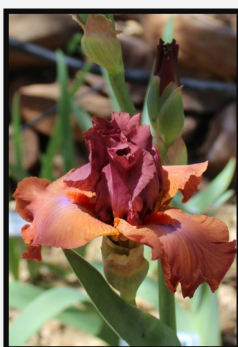
*Chairs will be introduced in the next issue.

2024 PAIS Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise stated, all events will be held at Stoneridge Community Center, 1300 Stoneridge Drive, Prescott Valley, 86314.

- February 17** General Club Meeting-- Speaker – PAIS Member and Beekeeper, Sandy Schilling presenting ‘What’s the Buzz?’
- April 20** General Club Meeting--Guest Speaker - Lisa Fahey from Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm
- May 10** Setup Iris Exhibit and Sale 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.
- May 11** Iris Exhibit and Sale final setup 7.30 A.M. - 9.30 A.M. Public entry 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.
- June 15** General Club Meeting, Ice Cream Social, Photo Contest
- July** Marking Party (date and venue TBD)
- July 26** Rhizome Sale Setup 10 A.M. Stoneridge Community Center
- July 27** Rhizome Sale 10 A.M. - 2 P.M. Stoneridge Community Center
- August/September** Potting Party (date and venue TBD)
- September 21** General Club Meeting and Iris Silent Auction--Speaker - PAIS Member Isabel Olsen presenting ‘Creative Design.’
- October 12** Region 15 Fall Conference at the Highlands Center of Natural History. Registration form & more details in future newsletters.
- November 16** General club meeting and 2025 PAIS Board Election--Guest Speaker - Kathy Chilton – who has the distinction of an iris named in her honor.

- General Club Meetings are 1:30 - 3:30 P.M.. Speakers & Guest Speakers will be updated if there are any changes.
- Board meetings are at 10 A.M.. on general club meeting days.
- All updates and announcements will be emailed (and included in the newsletter when possible). So be sure not to miss out on all PAIS happenings, by keeping your email address up to date.



Top Row Left to Right: Marty Boxer’s garden picture, Cinque Terre, Mary E. Nicholls, Crimson King (photos Barb Walls)

Yavapai College Endowment and Scholarship

PAIS has for many years provided a \$1,000 scholarship for horticulture students at Yavapai College. Five years ago, we committed to an endowment that will carry forward to assure there is always a scholarship opportunity from us for the horticulture students. This is a \$10,000 commitment that we paid \$2,000 a year into until we achieved the \$10,000 commitment. During this five-year period in addition to the \$2,000, we also provided a \$1,000 scholarship to assure that students continued to receive a scholarship to aid them with their education. We are pleased that we have completed our commitment, and we have an ongoing scholarship for YC students. We have also decided to continue the scholarship, if we have the funds, to provide a scholarship for two students each year.

Sherry Williams

Region 15 Fall Conference

We PAIS members have the honor of hosting the Region 15 Fall Conference on October 12, 2024 so mark your calendar now! The speaker will be hybridizer Rick Tasco from California. The committee has been



working hard planning and finalizing all details for this spectacular conference titled 'Iris In The Pines.'

The centerpieces for the tables (photo left) will be made by Isabel Olsen with the assistance of any members that wish to

help. Several branches will be needed to complete this project, so let's all save branches that we prune from our trees for the next several months. More details and information will be shared at our next meeting

Isabel Olsen

Treasurers' Thoughts:

Our 2023-year end results were amazing. While we started the year close to zero, we ended on a high note. This is thanks in large part to the amazing people in this organization that volunteer their time to assure that the two events that are our only fundraising – the Spring Sale and the Rhizome Sale – are successful. In 2023 our Spring Sale brought in just over \$2,100 and it probably would have been much more if there weren't torrential rains, and our Rhizome Sale brought in a whopping \$11,000. Since we are committed to hosting the 2024 Region 15 Fall Conference, our year end numbers have put us in a great position to be able to afford the associated expenses without hindering our ability to continue our other commitments. Our other commitments include

- *all the iris acquisitions, amendments, irrigation supplies, fertilizer, etc. for the three public gardens volunteers from PAIS maintain —Yavapai College Sculpture Garden, Hot Shots Memorial Garden at the Interfaith Chapel at Embry Riddle, and Sharlot Hall historical irises;

- *all the supplies necessary for potting, marking and preparation of the irises for our two sales;

- *speaker honoraria and travel (yes, we pay to fly speakers in for our meetings, if necessary);

- *all the food supplied to volunteers that work tirelessly to assure amazing irises are available to the public;

- *our storage unit for supplies (tables, signs, display items for sales, etc.);

- *our annual donations to local food banks;

- *and PAIS Yavapai College scholarships.

Our thanks are to those that volunteer to assure we have the ability to continue to maintain our gardens (We are recognized nationwide for our gardens) and have successful sales to continue our efforts. If you haven't had the opportunity to volunteer – join us – we actually have a great time while we work.

Sherry Williams

Membership Chair Robin Walter's Shout Out

Welcome to our new PAIS members

- Vicki Harmon
- Rachel Coon Family

PRESCOTT'S PUBLIC IRIS GARDENS

Part of the mission of the Prescott Area Iris Society (PAIS) is to “stimulate an interest in irises for the public throughout the Prescott area, Arizona, and across the Southwest. What better way to achieve this mission than to create public iris gardens for the community to view and enjoy!

PAIS maintains three public gardens: the Richard Marcusen Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College, Sharlot Hall Museum Historic Iris Garden, and the Fire Fighters Memorial Garden at Embry-Riddle University honoring the Granite Mountain Hot Shots. Our success with these gardens is due to the dedication of our volunteer members who work throughout the year to groom, fertilize, divide, and plant the iris in these gardens.

Our main and largest garden is in the Marcusen Sculpture Garden at Yavapai College named in honor of professor and sculptor Richard Marcusen. This six-acre iris garden managed by Dennis Luebkin is a place of tranquility, peace, and beauty. It includes a diverse collection of contemporary sculpture, native plants, and drought tolerant irises.

RICHARD MARCUSEN SCULPTURE GARDEN

The Sculpture Garden is one of the few gardens of its type in the nation. This joint effort of Yavapai College and the Prescott Area Iris Society is a treasure in the Prescott area. In 2016 the Sculpture Garden was honored with the distinction of becoming an American Iris Society Display Garden and was also designated a Historic Iris Display Garden by the Historic Iris Preservation Society. PAIS and Yavapai College were honored to receive these national designations for the gardens.

The Sharlot Hall Museum Historic Iris Garden in Prescott also holds both national distinctions and was a leader in the preservation and display of historic irises in the Southwest.

The Sculpture Garden iris plantings began in 2006 with donations from members gardens. 2006 was also the beginning of the Francelle Edwards Honor Garden in recognition of one of Arizona's premier iris hybridizers. The creation of the William R. Dykes Medal Winners iris garden features American Iris Society award winning irises from 1926 to the present.

The Sculpture Garden was expanded in 2014 to include the children's storybook garden, a western-themed iris garden, the black iris garden and irises donated by the Verde Valley Iris Society prior to its closing.

Additional expansion began in 2016 with iris plantings in other areas of the Sculpture Garden honoring the work of Arizona hybridizers including Margie Valenzuela, Don Shepard, Larry Johnsen, Floyd Wickenkamp, and Dr. B. Charles Jenkins. An additional area is dedicated to the historic work of Agnes Whiting, a mid-20th century national hybridizer.

Since the Sculpture Garden is located adjacent to the Yavapai Performing Arts Center, fine arts and music complex, new irises have been planted in 2023 that have themed names for music, show tunes, art, dance, and literature. Iris have also been obtained which complement the themes of the individual sculptures in the garden.

The gardens are planted with historic and current iris varieties of Tall Bearded Iris, Dwarf Bearded Iris, Border Bearded Iris, Intermediate Bearded Iris, Spuria Iris and Arilbred Iris which bloom from spring to early summer. Some irises will also rebloom in the fall.



In 2022 a new garden area along the upper portion of the Creekside Trail was dedicated to the hybridization work of Rick Tasco and the late Roger Duncan of Superstition Iris Gardens. They began their hybridization work in Arizona near the Superstition Mountains prior to moving to California. They have won numerous American Iris Society awards for their work.

The Sharlot Hall Museum Historic Iris Gardens are wonderful venue to visit besides the history contained on the grounds. Being the site of the first Capitol and Governor’s Home, the site was also the home of the first Arizona historian “Sharlot Hall.” In 2013 PAIS was asked to plant iris at the museum. It seemed only fitting to plant historic iris that the early settlers of the Prescott area would have brought with them. In that regard iris located from across the US and Canada in conjunction with the Historic Iris Preservation Society were obtained and planted. Irises from the year 1493 to 1943 are protected at the museum. Ancient native irises from both Europe and Central Asia are also located there. As our association with the Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS) grows so does our collection. We are fortunate to have Cynthe Brush, who is the southwest regional representative of HIPS as a member of PAIS. We thank Diane Thornbrugh for her years of service in managing the garden and thank Sandy Shilling for taking over the management of the Garden.



Our last public iris garden is the Fire Fighters Memorial Garden Located at Embry Riddle University. PAIS was requested in 2013 to joint venture in a memorial and garden project to honor the nineteen fire fighters of the Granite Mountain Hot Shots who perished in the Yarnell Hill Fire in 2013. The memorial located adjacent to the Chapel on campus is a tribute to those fallen Heroes. The irises planted there represent the themes of fire, heroism, spirituality, honor, and dedication to duty to our community through service. Thank you to Katheen Shaffer for managing that garden.

Our Gardens have been and will continue to be a work in progress and a dedication of love to our community. None of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our member volunteers each year who contribute their time to maintaining the gardens for the public to enjoy.

We hope you enjoy our public gardens.

Dennis Luebkin



The Dirt on Dirt

We asked members what you do or add to your soil to make it conducive to growing irises and if there is anything you've learned NOT to do. These are your responses.

Amend native soil with Planters Mix from Prescott Dirt since native dirt has low nutritional value. (So I've been told.) I am an organic gardener, so fertilize with Espoma Bulb Food and worm castings. Also sprinkle alfalfa pellets around, water, and dig them into the soil. Raised beds lined with metal hardware cloth or mounds with hardware cloth root cages aid with drainage during monsoon season or if the native dirt has clay in it. The hardware cloth protects iris rhizomes from being eaten by gophers. I've learned not to use chicken wire for raised beds as the wire is not galvanized and rusts out in about three years allowing gophers to invade my iris beds.

Cynthe Brush

I till in Miracle Gro garden soil.
Gary Miller

Fertilizer
Naomi Nabors

I don't do very much. My yard is next to an intermittent stream and has been blessed with alluvial soil from the Peaks for thousands of years. I do use a wood chip mulch, which composts over about 5 years, then I put another layer about a foot deep on it.

Bonnie Feather

I have to add lots of compost and also some coffee grounds.
Peggy

Clay soil in valley downtown of Prescott needs organic matter. Monoculture of iris over years depletes soil. With our dryer summer and very dry fall, I lightly scattered apple and elm tree leaves over the iris patch to keep soil from baking so hard. Commanche Acres' Jim says it is okay to let iris go dry in hot summers, but my fans look terrible now. Feb. 14th--love your Iris day--10-10-10 AZ Best fertilizer (or before rain/snow in that season to melt into ground). End of March or 1st part April--Triple Super Phosphate (from True Value Hardware) for blooms. City engineer designed a detention pond on commercial property uphill from me and it floods down an alley and across iris patch when rain is 1" in a day, so muddy water may contain weed killers or may have extra rain nitrogen and deeply soaks the iris.

Katy Standhardts

I don't do very much. My yard is next to an intermittent stream and has been blessed with alluvial soil from the Peaks for thousands of years. I do use a wood chip mulch, which composts over about 5 years, then I put another layer about a foot deep on it.

Bonnie Feather

I did nothing my first-year planting, probably should have done something but I didn't. I was too anxious to get all my rhizomes planted from the PAIS sale. I have since followed the fertilization schedule PAIS recommends.

Jeri Conklin

We are newbies to Prescott and iris. Don't have much of a clue!

Larry and Ida Montgomery

I grow most iris in large pots. I start with a good quality potting soil, add pumice and mushroom compost. I start adding fish fertilizer in January, to 'feed' the soil. I have learned that the sun can be brutal in the summer. A little shade under a tree is very helpful, as I am located in the Tucson area.

Joyce Knill

I add mushroom compost to the garden soil and don't plant the rhizomes too deep in the soil; doing so you will only get green fans and no iris bloom.

Isabel Olsen

Live and Learn

We asked members if they ever had a "live and learn" moment in growing irises.

Do not plant the rhizomes too close together; otherwise, you will need to thin them out a lot sooner than usual. It will also make it more difficult to know which name tag goes with each iris clump.

Isabel Olsen

Don't buy iris from "Brecks." Every one I ordered arrived shriveled and dry and flaky, and even though I did everything possible, only two out of about 100 survived— Very expensive. Just find local or more reputable buyer resources that ship beautiful rhizomes.

Jeri Conklin

I had read once that iris do not need a great deal of water. Needless to say, I "cooked" those rhizomes that summer! Also, I learned that ground squirrels/voles are not my friend. Last summer I learned to treat mealybugs at the first sign—they multiply and spread rapidly!

Joyce Knill

I've learned that not every person I give irises to will take care of them and be rewarded with their beauty.

Bonnie Feather

Crimson King (old Prescott purple pass along) overgrew my purchased iris, so I dug out a large patch and piled them to the side of the yard, hoping to give them away. They were not planted, had rhizomes exposed, a bit shady for bloom, and were ever watered or fertilized. Now I have more CK than ever, but it is still a treat, without any care. Remember, they thrived in Citizen's Cemetery 120 years with no watering, fertilizing, or dividing.

Katy Standhardt

- 1 Dealing with gophers. I don't want to kill them, but I don't want them eating my irises either!
2. I need to become more consistent with a fertilization program.
3. Keep up with digging and replanting iris beds. I tend to procrastinate and then the job can be overwhelming.
4. ID-ing NoIDs. This is an on-going research project for iris found on the property as well as mislabeled iris I've purchased from PAIS and HIPS (Historic Iris Preservation Society). It's fun and educational. I've learned a lot about iris ID and am having some success putting names to several iris.
5. ALWAYS label your plantings and / or make a planting map, so cultivar names don't get lost and so you know when an iris you have purchased has been mislabeled.

Cynthe Brush

Don't use regular Sharpies to mark the metal tags. They fade.

Naomi Nabors

I learned to never plant too deep.

Gary Miller

My native soil is not good enough.

Peggy

I have learned not to overwater and to overfeed them, especially watch the nitrogen levels. I just add a yearly bone/blood meal sparingly and watch the grubs. I love reblooming irises.

Angela Walsh

Lesson one: bone meal attracts javelina and who-knows-what other kind of animals up in Pine, so I avoid using it. Additionally, don't ever put seedlings out where the animals can mess with them because they will. Last, use lawn staples to hold down the irises when hungry elk rip them up to munch on (it takes them a moment to realize they taste awful). The stakes are also good to hold the iris in place when the ground freezes.

Barb Walls

Anticipation

PAIS asked members which iris in their garden are they most looking forward to see blooming.

I have about seventy named irises that I am looking forward to blooming this year. I have too many "favorites" to name. But I will be most happy to see my "Fall Fiesta" blooming.

That is the iris that for me started this craze!

Jeri Conklin



I look forward to historic iris that display magnificent clumps, blooms for watercolor painting references that look like memorable iris, not round, frilly roses from a distance. Crimson King blooms over a 2-3 month period in various locations in yard-- March or April along south facing walls, late May where shaded by trees and north of fence, between non-bloomers when needed. On Marina St. in front of SRCF church, there was one bloom stalk in December and one in January, but both froze before opening this winter. This spring will be the first bloom of Goodwin Fire, a Louisiana iris generously donated by Gary Miller. The spuria iris Doris Irene of Comanche Acres blooms as the last hurrah of iris season in late May, early June.

Katy Standhardt

Last summer I bought historical iris through the club and am hoping to see what the NOID iris looks like. I would enjoy a surprise.

Joyce Knill



I'm always looking forward to whatever will open next! —And, of course, the ones that were newly planted last fall and I haven't seen in my yard yet. This year, I have one that came from an iris trade with someone in Minnesota. We are officially calling it a NOID, but it could be Celtic Tartan or Spendthrift. She has ordered Spendthrift to grow them side by side and try to identify it. I obtained several from the iris sale developed by Keith Keppel. I can hardly wait to see them! And, I have made friends with the daughter of William Ennenga, who developed Oxmoor Hills, a proven rebloomer which is known to rebloom up to five or six times a year. I don't have one yet, but she has promised me one next summer. Of course, I'll be looking forward to that one blooming. With over seventy varieties and more on the way, it's always the "next" one to bloom that I am looking forward to!

Bonnie Feather (photo credit Amber Fuller)

I have seedlings I am waiting to see bloom.

Gary Miller

Cranfills Gap

Naomi Nabors

ALL OF THEM!

Peggy

I'm excited to see Gold Dust Woman bloom in my garden. I first saw it on garden tour during the AIS Annual Convention in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Isabel Olsen



Anticipation (continued)

PAIS asked members which iris in your garden are you most looking forward to blooming?

I am growing thirty-five seedlings from three different hybridizers, one of whom is a local PAIS member. At least four of the irises 'should' bloom this year in my garden. One will be a maiden bloom from a hybridizer in Indiana. Possibly eight others may also produce maiden blooms though that would be quite optimistic. I also keep a record of iris that have not bloomed in my garden yet, and have forty-one I'm still waiting on. Of those, I'm eager to see a few SDBs — Blueberry Tart and Sky Ray, and then the arilbred Silent Tears.

Cynthe Brush

Left to right: Silent Tears & Sky Ray (both photos courtesy of Rick Tasco of Superstition Gardens), Blueberry Tart (photo courtesy of R. Eagles of Diversity Acres)



I can't wait to see Western Outlaw by Keith Keppel again (far right).

I also love Ruby Fusion by Michael Sutton. This iris is my screensaver and I just love the intensity of color.

Elk Path Irises is the name of my modern garden and HIPS registered garden in Pine.

Barb Walls



Happy Birthday Wishes

Happy Birthday to our PAIS Members

January

Jan. 4	Jean Brennan
Jan. 6	Susan Taylor
Jan. 9	Pat Owings
Jan. 11	Kathleen Shaffer
Jan. 13	J.D. Greenberg
Jan. 15	Barbara Walls
Jan. 19	Barbara McCurry
Jan. 19	Kyria Peavy
Jan. 24	Angela Denis
Jan. 31	Peggy Ahola

February

Feb. 1	Candis Peters
Feb. 2	Cheryl Giovenco
Feb. 2	Vi Zepeda
Feb. 3	Catherine Van Klompenburg
Feb. 11	Constance Van Klompenburg
Feb. 13	Pat Barlow
Feb. 17	Bill Walter
Feb. 23	Diane Thornbrugh
Feb. 28	Betty Lou Barnes

Thank you

to Stoneridge Community Center for the continued use of their facilities.



Above: Life of Riley

Below: Badlands

