

**American Dahlia Society
Spring Planning Meeting
March 29, 2025**

Strategic Plan Update

Alli Richards provided information on the mission statement and goals that were reviewed by the strategic plan committee. The strategic plan committee is focusing on four key areas, technology, education, brand identity and research. Under technology two items have been completed. We are currently working on a membership task force to improve communication with local clubs and members and have created an ad hoc committee to present brand identity options to the board. Some next projects we plan to work on are:

- Provide and highlight additional information on local societies on the ADS website. The communication coordinator and membership tie into this so we need to have those two things completed.
- Online version of the *Bulletin*. Could have links to other content, such as society report and could be in an e-reader format for tablets.
- Support for local societies with website design, Zoom training, hardware recommendations & support.
- Brand identity to be used for selling merchandise with the ADS logo. We need to have the brand guide and logo established first. We could hire a professional to design a new logo for the ADS; this would allow us to rebrand the ADS.
- Increase our YouTube presence with programs of interest to all growers including home gardeners, cut flower gardeners, exhibitors, and hybridizers.
- Create a book on the evolution of the various dahlia forms based on information from historical *Bulletins* and publications.
- Build growing dahlia modules similar to the judging modules.
- Create a forum for ADS club reps and presidents,
- Create a program coordinator position for research to gather data, analysis of data and preparation of articles for the Bulletin and website.
- Put together a citizen science program to research and learn about aspects of dahlia culture, including fertilization, micronutrients, watering, seed storage, tuber storage, vase life, and mycorrhizae.

Another important element in the area of research is our relationship with WSU. With the creation of the chair at Washington State it was negotiated to have a Dahlia Resource Center that was meant to be a staffed, integral part of that relationship. Ron has had conversations with Dr. Pappu as to how to expand that function. We need to reestablish and build on that link.

Membership Task Force

Brad Freeman presented information from the membership task force. What they are looking at is a membership management system (MMS) for non-profits which is similar to a customer relationship management (CRM) system in the business world. He will refer to it as an MMS. This system can be used to streamline the management of membership, communication, events, donations, and volunteers. This is done using a cloud-based database that is accessible by key administrators. Only certain people, such as the membership chair, will have access to all the information in the database and others will have access to information in the area they are responsible for. The database provides a package of tools (software) for communication and managing events, volunteers, and donations. They can also automate routine tasks. The types of contact information that can be kept in the database are current ADS members, newsletter subscribers (non-ADS members), donors, potential donors, potential members. All information is placed into the database and information can be received by those who need it. For instance, judging information can be accessed by the judging accreditation chair. What has been accomplished by the task force to date has been:

- Online research of potential vendors
- Message to ADS membership seeking input or assistance, which resulted in recruiting two people to fill key positions
- Created a document outlining the operational and marketing needs to be supported by an MMS
- Initial meetings with several vendors
- One vendor demonstration and another scheduled.

The next steps are to continue with vendor meetings and demonstrations. Review and evaluate our current database. Make recommendation on an MMS, select a vendor, and bring those to the executive committee and the board. Begin data migration and system implementation. Get the membership management portion up and running by the end of the year. It is hard to determine the annual cost of an MMS as there are several variables, such as number of contacts, number of emails sent per month. Some systems are modular – which ones would we utilize. Could we phase out GroupVine and Constant Contact? Other considerations are better communication with new members may result in better retention. We may be able to increase membership through targeted emails to reach a larger group of home gardeners and businesses. We may increase the number and size of donations with a streamlined marketing program. We want to get the best return on our investment and get the system with the best value for the cost. This is not a magical solution but can make the job of managing an organization more efficient and versatile. We need to ensure the necessary fields are in the contact database so information can be accessed as needed. **Alli Richards moved, and Dan Baulig seconded to approve access to the database with a non-disclosure agreement to consultant Mary Loftess so she can help us move forward with this process. The motion passed unanimously.**

Genome Project Update

Mark Oldenkamp provided a brief overview of the genome project. He stated the executive committee has had discussions about the genome project a few times in 2025 as noted in the minutes of the executive committee meetings held in the first few months of 2025. Dr. Alex Harkess provided a report on the genome project including Zach's progress and the three major dissertation chapters that Zach plans to produce. Dr Harkness outlined the next step in this research would cost approximately \$350,000 to fund a post-doctorate position for three years. Ron Miner has had some contact with an attorney who would be able to represent us if we wanted to continue to this next step. The next step was not in our initial plan. Kristine Albrecht has raised the additional \$6,000 needed to fund Zach's doctoral work. The recommendation from the executive committee is to not continue with trying to obtain funding for post-doctorate work. The executive committee recommends reframing what our initial plan was, informing our members and donors what has been accomplished and that we should be proud of being a part of what Zach has accomplished. We would be interested in working with researchers to support their efforts for additional research. Ron Miner believes Dr. Harkess and Zach have the potential to develop relatively valuable information from the work they have done as a second step. One of the keys for the ADS supporting that future work was for Dr. Harkess to identify some low-hanging fruit, i.e., easy targets for additional research to clarify the easiest, valuable things to achieve but Dr. Harkess states he cannot answer the question so Ron agrees that the ADS should not continue with this project at this time.

Judging

Bob Schroeder stated the tests for both the candidate and accredited judges is currently available online. The senior test is complete and is ready to be put online. All tests are open-book tests, designed to be taken online with a passing score of 85%. **Alan Fisher moved, and Terry Schroeder seconded to approve the senior test to be put online. The motion passed unanimously.**

Bob presented information about some changes to be made to the reinstatement requirements which primarily consisted of changing words such as may, can, could to must, will, etc. so there is no question about the meaning. He also presented a new document about censuring, demoting, or removing of a judge. After some discussion, it was proposed to establish an accreditation review board to work with the accreditation coordinator to review issues that are not able to be resolved by the accreditation coordinator and the local society or conference judging accreditation coordinators. **Brad Freeman moved, and Mel Epstein seconded to create an accreditation review board consisting of five members to include the judging accreditation chair, the 2nd vice-president and three other senior judges recommended by the committee and approved by the president. The motion passed unanimously.** Bob is to work with Alli to form the committee and to come back to the July board meeting with recommendations for the committee members. After discussion and feedback, the proposed reinstatement rules including the proposal on censuring, demoting, and removing judges was not resolved. This was deferred to a future meeting.

There was a question about clarifying whether the year of 2020 counted due to the pandemic and that there were not any shows that year. Bob stated the board voted that 2020 was to be a non-year so did not count.

Communication Coordinator

Mark Oldenkamp reported they had someone identified to take on the position of the communication coordinator but the person was unable to take on that position.

Improvements to Image Library

Mark Oldenkamp reports the image library chair will work with trial garden, seedling bench and hybridizers to provide information to both the image library chair and webmaster. It was suggested to include information as to where to purchase the new introductions. It was suggested that perhaps there could be one place where pictures could be posted and anyone who needed them could take them from there.

Advertising

Mark reports the advertising position has been open for some time and we have not had anyone express interest in filling that position. Please keep an eye out for anyone who might be a good fit for that position. There was discussion about advertising in the *Bulletin* may be obsolete. It was felt that content was more important to the members. Brad stated we can add additional pages for a negligible cost, if needed.

New Society Coordinator

Mark reports there is a person he plans to approach to fill this position but he is open to considering other candidates as well. He feels this should not be difficult to fill as there are some good resources available for this coordinator to use.

ADS Reps Duties

There is a handbook available for ADS Reps that was put together several years ago. It is felt it needs to be reviewed and updated. Hopefully, this can give ADS reps a better understanding of their responsibilities.

Alan Fisher stated the education and outreach committee will be looking for members. This will be talked about on Sunday.

GroupVine Online Structure and Training

Mark reports one of the challenges to GroupVine is that a member can be added to GroupVine but they need to respond to the email(s) sent to them by GroupVine. Unless they respond to this email, they will not be added to GroupVine. They also have to acknowledge that they have said they want to be a part of the group they are being added to. They will receive a separate email for any sub-group to which they are being added.

Google Workspace is another area where training is needed. It was difficult when we had changes in officers or other board positions at the beginning of the year. When positions are changed, the profile for that position is not updated automatically.

Micro Module

Since micros are now a permanent classification for the ADS, Heidi Zierdt put together a module explaining micros. Heidi shared the module. She noted that in 2019 when micros were added as a 5-year trial and added to the CHD, there were only 21 micro varieties. As of 2024, there were 33 micro varieties with more on the way for 2025. Micros are a size AND a form. It's a new size classification for sized dahlias, identified as MC, such as Irish Gnome, MC-FD-Y, 5002. There are both fully double forms, such as micro stellar, MST and open-centered forms, such as micro peony, MPE. However, there is no micro ball as a ball type dahlia that measures up to 2" is classified as a pompon. There is also no micro single as a single that measures up to 2" is classified as a mignon single. On page 16 of the 2025 CHD is the full list of classification numbers and abbreviations. Remember the only difference between a micro and its full-sized counterpart is size; the form definition still applies. Things to remember about micros

- There is size and form.
- Need to learn new abbreviations.
- There is one new size class.
- There are nine new forms.
- The same judging standards apply.

Membership Benefits of the ADS

There was an open discussion about the benefits of the ADS. Some of the benefits provided included:

- Access to ADS Publications including 3 Bulletins and the annual CHD
- Coordination of judges accreditation and classification.

Suggestions were shared on how to help members see the value of ADS

- QR codes are being used by many societies to provide information. This could include a link to the ADS website.
- Some societies are giving tubers to new ADS members.
- On the "Join" page of the website there is information about reasons to join the ADS.
- If a local society is looking for a program, let them know you would be happy to come to provide information about the ADS.

Virus Update

Brad provided some information about the virus program. The challenge in the virus research is due to the behavior of the dahlia mosaic virus. WSU looked back at the test results from 2015 and 2016 to start to understand how the DMV started to mutate. WSU is not doing any virus testing this year but if someone wants to have virus testing done, they can get it done through Agdia, www.agdia.com. We have a contract with WSU so there is the opportunity to do research other than just virus through them.

Bulletin Content

Pat Looney stated she was disappointed she was unable to attend the spring planning this year. She is working hard and doing a good job with the *Bulletin*. She is embracing the idea of forming a team of writers, utilizing proofreaders and others to support her in the editor position.

Signature Line

At the last meeting, a standard template for signature line to be used with emails was developed. It should consist of your name, position, ADS logo, and the dahlia.org email address. The ADS logo files are on the Google drive. Phone numbers are optional.

There is also letterhead in the Google drive, shared drive, American Dahlia Society, ADS Letterhead. You must download the file you want to use into a Word document.

There was discussion regarding branding. Branding provides consistency across the organization which helps you to recognize whether something has actually come from the organization.

At the end of the meeting, there was a silent and live auction with proceeds to be split between the ADS and the New Mexico Dahlia Society.

After the auction, there was a presentation, "Dahlias in Semi-Arid and Desert Conditions," by Linda Holmes-Cook.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 pm MDT.

Respectively Submitted,

Terry Schroeder, ADS Secretary