

Battle Royal For Victory in Popularity Poll Sweepstakes

‘Great White Hope’ KO’s ‘Elvis’ in Final Round

BY JOE MUSSACHIA*

When I went to the post office the day after Christmas to post the Popularity Poll ballots to our SLI members, I had no idea of the battle royal that was on the horizon. From the first ballots received, which arrived the day-after-New Years, all the heavy weights weighted in, and the battle was on. ‘Peaches and Wine,’ (Pryor R97), ‘Great White Hope’ (Haymon R99), ‘For Dad’ (Pryor R96), ‘Red Velvet Elvis’ (Vaughn R96), ‘Feliciano Hills,’ (O’Connor R87)—they were all accounted for. For the next two months my first stop when I got home from work was the mail box, to see how the contest was going today.

Then some new contenders came on the scene. ‘My Friend Dick’ (Faith R98), ‘Honey Galore’ (Betzler R99), ‘Longue Vue’ (Haymon R99), ‘Zydeco’ (O’Connor R99), and ‘Garnet Storm Dancer’ (Pryor R94) all checked in. The lead changed at least once a week over the next two months.

As March 1 neared, two contenders were pulling away—‘Red Velvet Elvis’ and ‘Great White Hope.’ I received 3 ballots the last day, tallied the votes, and am pleased to report that the Charles W. Arny Jr. Award winner by one vote is ‘Great White Hope.’

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Popularity Poll. I really enjoy all the notes that I get. It keeps it personal. We had 99 members voting, which is about one-third of the membership. This makes for a good representative ballot. We had 22 States and Australia voting.

Here are the ten irises receiving the most votes in the poll:

Great White Hope	35
Red Velvet Elvis	34
Longue Vue	30
Feliciano Hills	30
My Friend Dick	29
Peaches in Wine	29
Garnet Storm Dancer	29
Bubble Gum Ballerina	26
For Dad	25
Rokki Rockwell	25

While I had all the numbers, I decided to do some analysis. The oldest cultivar getting votes is ‘Dorothea K. Williamson’ (registered in 1918). The newest cultivar with the most votes is ‘Enviably’ (Faith R2002), 9 votes. The cultivars before



‘Great White Hope’



‘Red Velvet Elvis’



‘Longue Vue’

The author is a resident of Gray, La. He has been active in SLI for several years, most recently as master of our popularity poll

1970 getting 10 or more votes are 'Dixie Deb' (Chowning R50), 12, 'Delta Star' (Granger R66), 10, 'Black Widow' (MacMillan R53), 13, and 'Clyde Redmond' (Arny R70), 14. The Cultivars from 2000 to present getting 10 or more votes are 'Henry Rowlan,' 19, 'Night Thunder,' 16, 'Raspberry Rilla,' 10, and 'James Faith,' 11.

Then I decided to look at the voting results by hybridizer. I counted the hybridizers with 10 or more cultivars on the ballot. (I don't know why I chose 10 as the magic number but it did give some interesting results.) Starting with the largest number:

John Taylor of Australia had 39 cultivars receiving a total of 211 votes, or 5.5 votes per cultivar.

Dunn with 37 cultivars, 178 votes, 4.8 per cultivar.

Pryor with 29 cultivars. 283 votes, 9.7 per cultivar.

Morgan with 20 cultivars, 181 votes, 9.1 per cultivar.

Arny with 15 cultivars, 66 votes. 4.4 per cultivar.

Haymon with 15 cultivars. 240 votes 16 per cultivar.

Mertzweiller with 14, 141 votes. 10.1 per cultivar.

Rowlan with 13 cultivars, 63 votes, 4.8 per cultivar.

Durio with 11 cultivars, 151 votes, 13.9 per cultivar.

O'Connor with 10 cultivars, 94 votes, 9.4 per cultivar.

The last thing I looked at was popularity in the northern states (Missouri is northern). We had 21 members voting. Here are the top 8 cold weather favorites:

'For Dad'	9 votes
'Red Echo'	8
'Love Me Do'	7
'Garnet Storm Dancer'	6
'Jazz Hot'	6
'Peaches in Wine'	6
'Professor Neil'	6
'Willow Mint'	6

This years Popularity Poll ballot listed 279 cultivars from 40 different hybridizers. We had 66 write-in votes for irises from 21 different hybridizers. Next year we will be dropping 14 old cultivars and adding 24 new write-ins.



'Felician Hills'



'Peaches in Wine'



'Red Echo'



'Professor Neil'

Photo by Patrick O'Connor



'Bubble Gum Ballerina'

Photo by Richard Sloan



'Garnet Storm Dancer'