

SUMMARY OF THE 2017 NATIONAL DAHLIA SHOW

After two years of planning by the Central States Dahlia Society, September 9, the opening day of the 51st National Dahlia Show, finally arrived. And what a day it was! The Chicago weatherman delivered clear, sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-70s. The near-perfect weather guaranteed that the Chicago Botanic Garden would attract many visitors, and, indeed, it did. Close to 14,000 visitors, some 40% greater than a typical fall weekend, came to the Garden. While it is impossible to know the exact number who found their way to the dahlia exhibition area, it seemed as if almost all of them dropped by to pay us a visit. It was easy to tell from their comments, that those who did were not disappointed.

Nichols and Burnstein Exhibition Halls were overflowing with spectacular blooms. By “official” count, a total of 2,421 blooms were on display. Nichols Hall, the site of the main competition, contained 1,828 blooms. These were exhibited by some 60 ADS members. The balance of the blooms were on display in Burnstein Hall, the site of the traditional CSDS flower tower and the artistic design competition. There were 36 artistic design entries. Also, there were over 100 entries in the photographic competition. The dahlia boutique which offered a wide variety of dahlia-themed items, such as, quilts, pillows, tablecloths, etc. was a very popular attraction for the show’s visitors. The CSDS membership table was also a very popular stop for the Garden visitors. In all, 61 people became new CSDS members and 11 of them also joined the ADS.

Garden officials who toured the show said it was “the most spectacular show” they have ever staged. Since the Chicago Botanic Garden hosts flower shows on an almost weekly basis during the growing season, this is a true compliment to all who participated in its organization and, of course, those who exhibited their flowers.

A complete listing of the winners appears elsewhere in the issue of the Bulletin and has been posted on the ADS website. However, a few entries deserve a special mention. An AC Casper, entered by Harriet Chandler and Jim Chuey from the Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society, was judged to be the Best-in-Show. In the artistic design competition Cindy Soule from the Minnesota Dahlia Society received first prize for her entry with the theme “Transportation,” and the “Navy Pier” entry by Rangamma Jasti of the Central States Dahlia Society was the “People’s Choice” winner. Elva Sellens from the Douglas County Dahlia Society was awarded first prize for the Best Image of Show in the photographic competition.

On Saturday evening, more than 150 registrants, who came from near and far including Canada and Australia, attended the awards banquet at the Renaissance Hotel. Preceding the banquet there was a cocktail hour with entertainment by Michelet Innocent, a balladeer from Paris. Welcoming remarks were made by Linda Kudelka, Don Dramstad, and Randy Foith, Presidents of the Central States Dahlia Society, the American Dahlia Society, and the Midwest Dahlia Conference, respectively. During the evening, a lovely dahlia-themed quilt, created by CSDS’s-own Romaine Campise, was auctioned.

After everyone enjoyed his dinner, Jerry Landerholm hosted the awards portion of the evening. The ADS President’s Award was presented to John Thiermann (his home society is the Dahlia Society of Wisconsin). The ADS Gold Medal was awarded to Rosemary Zatkovich (Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society). ADS silver medals, recognizing dahlia ambassadors, were presented to Frank Campise (CSDS),

Charles Craig (Dahlia Society of Wisconsin), Dan Kaplan (CSDS), and Roger Stevens (Dahlia Society of Wisconsin) for their contributions to the ADS. CSDS members Fred Brill, Jim Kassner, George Koons, and Charlene Meyers were recognized by the ADS for their contributions to the success of the 2017 National Show. The contribution of each ADS medal winner appears elsewhere in this Bulletin and on the ADS website.

Brent Grant, a member of the Greater Philadelphia Dahlia Society, greeted the banquet guests and invited everyone to attend the 2018 National Show. This will be held at the Longwood Gardens from September 20 – 23, 2018. Brent told us that, in conjunction with the show, Longwood Gardens will be doubling the number dahlias planted in its gardens to two thousand. Sounds like it will be another great show! Mark your calendars and save the date!

All three sightseeing tours were well attended. The Friday tour visited the S.C. Johnson facility in Racine, WI to see the iconic Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings, snacked on assorted candy treats while riding the Jelly Belly Express, and enjoyed lunch at the world-famous Mader's restaurant in Milwaukee. While in transit, a spirited trivia game broke out and helped to shorten the journey. Sunday's tour featured an eye-popping garden tour as well as a delicious, plentiful BBQ at the home of Steve Meggos. Monday, we headed south to downtown Chicago and visited Navy Pier and Millennium Park and took a boat tour on Lake Michigan where they heard both the history of the city and of many of the buildings that create its impressive skyline.

Finally, if you were unable to attend or those of you who did and would like to pay a follow-on visit, you can take an on-line tour at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhAgi8ZEqbc>