

Excerpt from Region 2  
Spring/Summer  
Newsletter (Page  
numbers are different.)

# Hite of Perfection

By Nikki Schmith

With contributions by Judy Davisson, Sharon Fitzpatrick, The Oakland Press, and his daughter, Gloria Hite.

In 1968, Howard Hite registered his first three cultivars. MACHU PICCHU, SING TOY ALLAH, and ANGELUS BELLS. Thirty-five years and 125 cultivars later, the contributions to the daylily community made by Howard and his family is almost indescribable. Whether it was sharing a “Cherry Bounce” beverage under the shade trees at his home during the 1985 convention or seeing Howard with the pollen-filled stamens in his mouth as he pattered around the garden, we all have memories of this hybridizer, father, husband, grandfather of 7 grandchildren, great-grandfather of 13 great-grandchildren, entrepreneur, and friend.

Howard died of congestive heart failure on January 21 in Treasure Island, Florida while wintering with his daughter, Gloria, also a daylily hybridizer. A week before his passing, just before his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, he submitted what is his last registration, CHRISTINE WALSER HITE (Hite, H. 2003), named after his mother.

Throughout his life-long work with daylilies, Howard had two goals: to grow a blue daylily and to live to be 100 years old.

“I’d like to see his dream of a blue daylily turn up one of these days,” said Gloria Hite. “He was my father, he was my friend, and he was my rock that was always there.” Gloria plans to stay involved in her father’s work, and to maintain the nearly complete collection of his introductions she has amassed.

“Every morning, I go out in the garden and look and see what is blooming,” Howard Hite said in an August 2002 interview with The Oakland Press. His daughter pushed

him in his wheelchair through the garden each day to see the new varieties. He pointed out and recommended crosses for Gloria each day, keeping her on her toes during the morning walks.

During the 2001 Southern Michigan Hemerocallis Society’s exhibition show, where one of his seedlings earned the AHS Rosette, Howard was evaluating all of the seedlings and recommending names for them. Most of



ANGELUS BLUE SKIES

Howard’s introductions are named after exotic geographic locations, for example, INDONESIA, CORSICA, and DELHI. Howard also chose the prefixes ANGELUS and SYLVAN LAKE for some of his introductions, and he named many of them after family members.



AABAA



ANGELUS ANGEL



*Howard Hite  
at the 2001  
Southern  
Michigan  
Hemerocallis  
Society's Corn  
Roast.*

Sharon Fitzpatrick of central Ohio remarked to the AHS Daylily E-mail Robin about some of her favorite Hite cultivars. She wrote:

- **ANGELUS BLUE SKIES** – Closest thing I have ever seen to a blue daylily. Flower is the color of a hosta bloom.
- **LUMINA** – Flower is a huge yellow tetraploid. Scape resembles a daylily tree.
- **GLORIA HITE BEST** – Howard was ahead of the hybridizing game with purple-edged white. GHB is in the gene pool of Richard Norris's FLIGHT OF THE RAVEN
- **AABAA** – Tall well-branched red tetraploid that laughs at the sun.
- **ANGELUS SPANGLES** – One of the best-eyed Spider Variant flowers in my garden.

Very few people know the fun-loving side of Howard Hite. He loved to sing and was once spotted at a club picnic at his Lake Angelus home, sitting alone in a lawn chair behind his garage singing away. Truth be told, he was hiding from folks that wanted him to sell a few daylilies long after his "selling hour" had passed and, as he explained, he was "busy" enjoying a little "Cherry Bounce." Now what is "Cherry Bounce"? Well, it looks like punch and is a concoction brewed from real cherries harvested from the Hite cherry tree. It includes a whole lot of vodka, and a secret ingredient gathered from annual sojourns to Florida for the winter. Legend has it that the brew got its name because it had the ability to make people who ate the cherries on the bottom of the glass bounce off the walls of the garage where it was traditionally served during summer parties. Some AHS members will remember Bus 4 pulling up to the Hite residence during a Region 2 summer meeting. It was very late in the day, and a pelting rain had

obviously spoiled the garden tour...yet someone boarded the bus and explained that "Cherry Bounce" would still be served in the garage. About half the people on the bus quickly dashed through the downpour, making a beeline to the garage, leaving the remaining half on the bus looking very puzzled. I've heard that Gloria Hite is safeguarding this secret family recipe and will be continuing the Hite tradition including the singing of a few tunes!

At the last SMHS general membership meeting Howard attended, we were raffling off door prizes at the end of the meeting. Members had signed their name next to a number on a piece of paper upon arrival at the meeting for this purpose. As the president, I was handing out the door



**CREEPY CRAWLER**

prizes and needed someone to pick a number for the winner. Howard was sitting near the front of the crowd, 98 years strong, the only life member in the audience on that

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**ANGELUS SPANGLES**

*The Hite of Perfection (continued from page 11)*

particular night; so, I asked him to pick the winning number for me. Number “27!” Howard shouted. I looked at the paper to see who had won the door prize. Twenty-seven was Howard’s number. He had picked his own number. Yes, he had picked his OWN number! He sure stumped me! I didn’t think Howard would remember what number Gloria signed him up next to, let alone did I think he would choose his own when asked. Boy he made a fool out of me. Taught me a thing or two about a 98 year old that night.

Howard was not only a pioneer in the daylily world. The Detroit-based photography company he started and maintained for 60 years grew to include branches throughout the metropolitan area. It was the first in the state to offer overnight photo developing. He retired in 1987, and that gave him more time for the daylily hobby for which he was known as an expert around our country.

In the words of a fellow Southern Michigan Hemerocallis Society member, “...we have lost another lion...”

The loss of legacy, any legacy, affects each one of us in a different way. For me, I will look at the Hite cultivars in my garden with a little extra reminiscence and think that wherever Howard is, he is with his wife Eleanor, in a field of blue daylilies, sharing a “Cherry Bounce.” ☺

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*Once Again: A Big Thank You to LeaAnn and Don Williams (continued from page 7)*

description, the color, followed by filling out the purchase order. Needless to say, each time the Region 2 E-mail Auction was held, almost all daylilies listed on the electronic auction pages sold out during the few days the auction was active. After a year or so, it was clear that the traditional mail-in auction proceeds had dried up, and the decision was made to discontinue it.

The work Don has put into the designing and maintaining of the Region 2 web site has been exemplary. Lea Ann has worked tirelessly to solicit plant donations, to find the right images so the successful bidders would not be disappointed by off-color later on, to complete all the record-keeping tasks, and to make sure that the plants were delivered and the money collected..

And if you thought that this job was not big enough, you are right. Lea Ann had again, already, reminded and asked Region 2 members to donate auction plants for the symposium in Cleveland. She made the cards containing the cultivar descriptions, and she and Don kept track of the auction records. It takes so much money to break even and to raise funds for the Region 2 activities, that one fund raiser seems to follow the next one.

None of us can really know just how much effort and time both of them have spent working for our region during these last years, and they have done it all without a penny of compensation. They have done it for the love of daylilies and for us Region 2 members. ☺

**So, once again, a big Thank-You Lea Ann and Don!**



<b>Region One 2003 Fall Festival</b> October 3-4 Omaha, Nebraska	<b>Region 2: Join us in Omaha on October 3-4 for a fabulous program!</b> <b>Special guests:</b> Mark Carpenter— <i>Daylilies of Jack Carpenter's Lily Farm</i> ; Harlan Hamernick ( <i>Bluebird Nursery</i> )— <i>Companion Plants</i> ; Gary Schaben & John Becker's Hybridizing Program; Gary Schaben & Don Lovell— <i>Conversions to Tetraploids</i> ; & Kyle Billadeau— <i>Photography. Slide shows of Pop Poll Winners &amp; Region One Gardens. Musical entertainment by the Unusual Forms. Auction.</i> <b>Location:</b> Days Inn Bellevue • 1811 Hillcrest Dr. (Hwy 370 and Hillcrest) • Bellevue, Nebraska <b>Registration:</b> \$65.00 by September 20, 2003; \$75.00 to September 29; Youth (17 & under) \$40.00 <b>Information:</b> David Hansen, 2507 Franklin St., Bellevue, NE 68005-5408 <dlhansen@radiks.net>
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<b>YOU ARE INVITED to the Region One 2003 Summer Regional</b>	
<b>Hosted by the Cedar Valley Iris and Daylily Society (CVIDS), Fort Madison, Iowa—July 11-12</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Best Value Inn • (800) 423-2693 or (319) 372-7510 • Hwy 61 West • Fort Madison, Iowa 52627	
<b>Registration:</b> \$65.00 postmarked by June 24. \$75 postmarked after June 24. <b>Youth:</b> (17 and under) \$45 by June 24; \$55 after June 24.	
<b>Mall to:</b> Ken Messer • 2300 Mississippi River Road, Keokuk, IA 52632. Specify rib eye or chicken; checks payable to CVIDS.	
<b>Questions?</b> Contact Ken Messer at (319) 524-1976 or (319) 795-0421; or e-mail <kmesfam@mchsi.com>	
<b>Guest Speaker:</b> <b>Ted Pettit</b> • <i>Terrific daylilies &amp; eye-popping seedlings!</i> • <i>Water Features</i> • <i>Garden Judges Workshop 2</i>	