

## **The JUDGE's Corner**

**Ron Miner - baronminer@aol.com**

Have you all taken a look at the new Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD)? Remember how 301 used to be a formal decorative white? That is one class that I used to be able to remember, because it included Baron Dalton. Now if you look in the current book, you will find that B Dalton is in class 3001. Your American Dahlia Society officially switched to a four-digit classification system this year. The DSO will be using it in our shows this year.

Don't be intimidated by the new numbers. They are logical and provide some benefits that weren't available in the 3-digit system. Take a look at page 12 in the CHD for a quick summary. Perhaps the only substantive change (besides needing to get used to a new numbering system!) is that incurved cactuses will now be in a class separate from straight cactuses. That is a good example of the flexibility that is the key benefit of going to four digits. You can expect additional changes like that in the future, now that the numbering system no longer limits the separation of classes.

Plans for judging seminars and workshops for our 2011 season are just in the formative stages at the moment. If you have ideas or suggestions, please let me know. We are planning on starting some more seedlings for you to grow this summer and I plan to incorporate seedling judging into the Petitti Show again this year. That project is an easy and fun way to move from grower to exhibitor and judge—and maybe have the opportunity to name a new cultivar for your spouse! Plan to join us!

I hope the DSO judges out there have made better progress than I have on getting to work on the judges' tests! Sometimes I think I have procrastination down to a real art form. Nevertheless, now is the time to get out that Guide to Judging Dahlias and get started on the judge's test I sent to you by email last fall. If you've lost it or if you have questions on the accreditation process, please let me know as soon as possible. It is important that you spend some time working on the test before we get into growing season! In the spring, we will all have more fun things to do!

Have a great spring!!