It is remarkable that the season has come and gone since I last prepared a judging column! Time flies when you are having fun and, I’m afraid, as you get older!

The National Show
It was a great season for those of you who exhibit and judge. The ADS National Show was in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a relatively short drive for most DSO members. The Grand Ballroom of the Frederik Meijer Gardens served as a great spot for both the show and the banquet. It is a beautiful place, and it promises to be spectacular when all the construction is complete. While the construction didn’t interfere with the show, it was certainly clear that the garden would be a greatly enhanced place soon. Jo Jepsen and Rick Peters did a great job pulling all the necessary elements of the show together.

Most of the team working on preparations for the 2021 DSO National show went to Grand Rapids to help us get ready! My thought is that one of the team did exceptionally well in that regard. Congratulations, Todd, on capturing the King of the Show! His Wyn’s Neon Dream was certainly a ‘dream’ bloom.

At the other extreme, I managed to capture the best entry in the new Micro class at the Show. U2 Ania (shown below) was a new cultivar for me, even though I had been trying to grow it for several years! (Long story!). The good news on that cultivar is that I have a pot root of it for Mike and his team to propagate for us next spring. If all goes as well as usual, Mike should have some great (clean!) U2 Ania stock for us at the spring auctions. I encourage you to grow some of the new Micros and their cousins, Mignon Singles. They are easy to grow and to prepare for exhibition. That winning bloom was never staked or tied. It
was only disbudded when it was cut for the show. It is safe to say that it took a lot less effort to bring that winner than it was to get Todd’s “Dream” ready to go to the show. I have to admit that I do have an ulterior motive here. Once you start on the exhibiting track, it will be an easy transition to becoming a dahlia judge!! You will find a lot more enjoyment of our favorite flower as you go through that enjoyable learning process.

One of our key objectives for the 2021 show is to make it more affordable than recent National Shows have become. Help us to do that by volunteering to help when Jerry provides opportunities to do that!

**Petitti’s Judging Seminar**
The judging seminar at this year’s Petitti’s Show included the evaluation of the Micro “seedling,” Cobequid Celestial Star, which has been introduced. Sharon Swaney, Nancy Riopelle and Jim Chuey are shown judging. The bottom line for that evaluation is that they are analyzed on the same criteria as other formations.

![Petitti's Judging Seminar]

Diminutiveness is the primary characteristic to define the class. For the duration of the 5-year experiment, our guidance from Classification Chair Lou Paradise is to be lenient in the determination of size. That basically means that we should include new cultivars in the Micro class if they come close to meeting the 2” maximum diameter. I translate “close” to mean 2 1/4”. The primary reason for that flexibility is to avoid causing a hybridizer to throw out a great cultivar because it is just a little bit larger than the current Micro definition. Lou wants to err on the inclusive side, at least over the next few years. The question of what to do with a smaller-than-normal Waterlily, for example, is a little different question. Lou would say, I believe, to again err on the side of inclusion. Include it as a MWL if it is close to 2” in diameter. HAVE A GREAT WINTER!