

2013 Fall Board Meeting of the American Iris Society Report of General Counsel

IRS Group Exemption for the AIS. Name and address changes were submitted to the IRS for all subordinate organizations included within the AIS group tax exemption. In addition, the Bluegrass Iris Society was submitted to the IRS this year to be included in the group exemption.

The AIS submitted the following affiliates to the IRS for inclusion last year, yet the IRS failed to include them in the 2013 list of subordinate organizations sharing the AIS tax exempt status:

Wisconsin Iris Society
Yakima Valley Iris Society
Society for Louisiana Iris

Based on prior records maintained by Bob Plank, it appears to be a recurring problem that the IRS fails to include every group we have identified in any specific year. The IRS does not provide an explanation and, as a general matter, the groups are submitted again the next year and then recognized by the IRS.

In reviewing our prior records, I noticed that one affiliate has been repeatedly submitted and not included by the IRS: the Iris Society of Minnesota. No explanation for the omission has ever been made. Bob Plank's records show that this affiliate has been submitted yearly since 2009. I included it again on the 2013 list. I have asked Susan Boyce to provide me with contact information for this affiliate and I will follow up with that.

I also filed a Form 2848, Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representation with the IRS in order to allow them to communicate with me as general counsel for the AIS. The form was rejected several times and finally accepted, again for poorly-explained reasons from the IRS.

Longfield Gardens. At the spring board meeting, I learned that AIS copyrighted information was being included in packages of iris sold by Longfield Gardens at Costco in northern California. I contacted Longfield and asked for an explanation. Longfield flatly denied using any AIS material. By that time, I had received the actual packaging materials and I wrote again to Longfield including all the materials and asking again for an explanation. I have had no response to that letter. In both letters to Longfield, I insisted that they stop violating the copyright but did not make a monetary demand.

At this point, I do not have any evidence that Longfield is continuing to violate the copyright. If the Board or the Intellectual Property Committee wishes me to take further action, I will await that direction.

Policy Manual. I would like to continue to encourage the AIS to compile its policies into a central location so that they can be easily referenced.