



2005 Meeting Minutes Area 4

- December 20, 2005
- November 22, 2005
- September 27, 2005
- September 8, 2005
- August 23, 2005
- July 26, 2005
- June 28, 2005
- May 24, 2005
- April 25-26, 2005
- March 22, 2005
- February 22, 2005
- January 25, 2005

Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes Conference Call December 20, 2005

Designated Federal Official

- Richard Morris, Wisconsin Local Taxpayer Advocate
- Betty Martin, Tennessee Local Taxpayer Advocate

Committee Members Present

- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Kimberly Chowning, Indianapolis
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio
- Mary Ann Lawler, Michigan
- David Meister, Wisconsin
- Jerry Melchior, Indiana
- Don Miller, Tennessee
- Marie O'Donnell, Illinois
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Allen Scioli, Michigan
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair



Committee Members Absent

- Rashidah Abdulhaqq, Ohio
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Joe Hurr, Ohio
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio

TAP Staff

- Sandra McQuin, TAP Manager
- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Patti Robb, Secretary

Visitors

- Marilyn Luster, TAS Program Analyst , Cincinnati

Welcome – Smedley

Teresa Smedley welcomed everyone to the call. She asked that everyone identify themselves with first and last names when speaking.

Introductions – All

Roll Call – Robb

Quorum met.

Joint Committee Report – Smedley

No Joint Committee report this month as the call is tomorrow. The Joint Committee consists of the chairs from all the area and issue committees, as well as the TAP Chair and Vice Chair. They meet on a monthly basis to discuss recommendations elevated from the area committees. They determine if the issue is ready for elevation. If not, the recommendation goes back to the committee to be further researched or rewritten. They do not discuss issue committee recommendations as those go directly to the IRS program owner.

Annual Meeting, January 10-13, 2006 – Smedley

You should all have received your travel arrangements for the annual meeting. Some pre-read information was also mailed. Each committee, area and issue, will have a four hour meeting at the annual meeting. The TAP members will elect a new chair and vice chair, as well as a new overall TAP chair and vice chair. This is a very important position. The panel needs good leadership and a good spokesperson. Be sure you bring your calendar to the meeting as the committee will be setting up your meeting dates and times for the rest of 2006.

There is an Area 4 dinner scheduled for Thursday night in Washington, D.C. It will give you a chance to meet the rest of the area 4 members. There will also be a social reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday night. This will give you a chance to meet and speak to the members who are running for TAP Chair and Vice Chair. Spouses and guests are invited to both functions.

Public Input

None.

Area 4 Self Assessment – Morris

Each year a self assessment is done by each committee, with all members asked to give their input.



The assessment looks at the recommendations, outreach, other accomplishments, and also disappointments of the year. This assessment is used by the TAP Chair to compile into the TAP Annual Report.

The assessment also includes an evaluation of how the committee operated; best practices, suggestions to improve, cooperation TAP and IRS staff. This part of this assessment is used strictly by our area to improve our meetings and the way we operate.

What is the Committee doing that has no value and should be stopped?

- Deviating from agenda in conference
Richardson – when we get off track, it needs to be handled courteously.
Hoffman – sometimes we do attempt to solve an issue.
Decision: During monthly meetings, subcommittees should report-out on their work to date, not work the issues.
- Counting complaints pertaining to individual as new issues
Delzer pulls the report off the contact database as they are entered. She does not edit or filter anything that has come into TAP. It is up to the area committee to decide if the issue is individual, systemic, or legislative.
Decision: Committee will continue to get the complete new issue report each month.

What would you like the Committee start doing?

- Set ground rules
Decision: Committee will talk about ground rules at the area meeting in January.
- Develop a step-by-step procedure for new members' to use a template for outreach activities.
Decision: there will be an outreach workshop at the annual meeting for all panel members
- Instead of wasting so much time on reports, etc., send out information by email in advance and spend the time on member input and discussion.
Information should be sent out before the meeting instead of reporting out during the meeting. Smedley pointed out that some things need to be discussed. McQuin agreed that there needs to be time for member input on issues other members have worked on. Information would also need to be sent to Delzer early enough so she could send out in time to be reviewed before the meeting. Morris suggested adding more time to the agenda for discussion.
- Committee chairpersons need to be moderators, not directors.
Duquette thought the chair should be a director, not a moderator. That would help keep the meetings on track.
Decision: All agreed.
- More face-to-face meetings.
Decision: This is budget driven. We cannot resolve this at the committee level.
- Ensure all panel members are actively engaged.
It is critical that all panel members are engaged in four areas; 1) conference calls, 2) sub committee work, 3) outreach, and 4) work product. All panel members are volunteers and so it is critical that all must be engaged. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Richardson said if everyone talks, the meeting will be too long. Morris said everyone should feel free to talk during the meeting.
Decision: Would like to reinstate the evaluation/critique of each teleconference. Delzer will send out assessment after calls.

Richardson said a list of acronyms should be provided to new panel members. It will be in the TAP Member Handbook.



If you would like to see the status of any elevated issues, it is on TAPSpeak and is kept updated: Issue Recommendation Summary.

ACTION: Delzer will send a link to TAPSpeak where to find the issue recommendation summary.

ACTION: Delzer will send a link where to find the Joint Committee minutes on TAPSpeak.

New Issues – Delzer

Delzer explained that an issue report is run each month. Last month the returning members of area 4 were asked to go through the issues and indicate their order of interest. Delzer used this information to pare down the list and remove the issues that had little interest. The committee will look at them again at the annual meeting. Please review and decide which issue you would like to work. If you have any more issues, please bring them to the meeting in January; this report is not all inclusive. Delzer said she would explain all the reports at the annual meeting.

Outreach – All

Area 4 had no outreaches reported this month. Please remember to send Delzer an email or the report form when you do an outreach. We need the outreaches reported to the office to add to the database. This is the only way outreaches are accounted for and given "credit." McQuin said there will be an Outreach workshop at the annual meeting and everyone will have training.

Town Hall Meetings – Duquette

Nina Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate, has decided to have a town hall meeting in all seven areas that TAP is aligned to. TAP has been asked to host these meetings. The plan for area 4 is to hold the meeting in Cincinnati, but we haven't been able to determine a date yet. The date for the town hall meeting will need to coincide with Olson's calendar. One question is should we hold our face-to-face meeting in conjunction with the town hall meeting? This will be discussed further at the annual meeting during the calendar discussion.

Office Report – McQuin

Hopefully, orientation will clear up any questions you have regarding TAP.

Because of the holidays, not all the staff will be in the office every day in the next two weeks.

Morris said the new panel members should expect to be contacted by the LTA in their area to arrange to meet and talk.

Closing / Assessment

Happy Holidays to everyone and see you in Washington, D.C.

Meeting Adjourned



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
November 22, 2005**

Designated Federal Official

- Richard Morris, Wisconsin Local Taxpayer Advocate
- Betty Martin, Tennessee Local Taxpayer Advocate

Committee Members Present

- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Mary Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee

TAP Staff

- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst

Visitors

- Marilyn Luster, TAS Program Analyst , Cincinnati
- Marcy Nelson, W&I Communications

Welcome

Morris welcomed Betty Martin who will be the new DFO for Area 4 beginning with the annual meeting in January. Martin is the Local Taxpayer Advocate in Nashville, Tennessee.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 9 members present.

Chair Report — Smedley

Joint Committee Report — No issues were elevated, as the meeting was administrative. Discussion concerned the annual meeting and the new scheduled dates of January 10-13, 2006. The location will remain the same at the Hyatt Capitol Hill.



Status of Elevated Issues — The Form 990 issues were elevated and discussed at the October 6 meeting. The JC agreed to elevate both 990 issues. Very happy that the JC saw the merits of the 990 issues.

Area 4 self-assessment — All sent a copy via mail. The Area 4 self-assessment becomes part of the compiled TAP Annual report. Morris encouraged members of the committee to spend some time with the self-assessment and use as a guide to make improvements for next year.

ACTION: All members to review Area 4 annual self assessment and send comments to Smedley/Delzer by December 2, 2005.

Mentoring — New members have been notified of their selection. Current members are encouraged to mentor a new panel member.

ACTION: Delzer to send out contact information of the new panel members and assign mentors.

Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint (TAB)/Customer Service Questionnaire

Marcy Nelson, of W&I Communications, introduced herself as a member of the TAB Team. Team appreciated the feedback from TAP as 37 responses were received. Handleman did a report consolidating the TAP response and Peg Connell, Accounts Management Filed Director, and Mark Pursley, Director of CARE, did use the report when they briefed Commissioner Everson. TAP feedback is truly from the grassroots and the voice of the customer.

The first request of information was done through the survey. Looking to participate in the TAP town hall meetings scheduled. Other stakeholders and partners will also be engaged for feedback. TAP maybe asked more than once to provide feedback. The report, due March 1, 2006, must outline customer preferences and needs, and how IRS will work to achieve service delivery in the next 5 years. Report will go through Treasury, Office of Management and budget, the Oversight Board and Congress. TAS has a representative on the team and so those concerns can be addressed along the way.

The team is looking at the national research that IRS already has and are currently working on a questionnaire/survey for the town hall meetings. Recognize that good hard data is needed to work with.

TAB really is working in two phases, now preparing the blueprint and then going back to stakeholders to look at the decisions made and how the process is actually going. Costs will also have to be evaluated. Will be looking to TAP for additional feedback through out the process.

Public Input

Marilyn Luster shared outreach opportunities for TAP members at Ohio State classes for tax practitioners.

Discussion of Current Issues

Form 990—Duquette

Very glad that the 990 issues sent forward were elevated. Would recommend that Area 4 look at any new issues that come up during the coming year.

ACTION: In June 2006, 990 subcommittee to review TAP issues to see if any new 990 issues need attention.

What's On TAP--Duquette

No one volunteered to work on this issue other than Richardson. Only work done to date has been to review the old articles. Appeal was made to the retiring folks for an article, but none have been received. Everyone seems to feel the project has value, but not able to get it up and running.



Hafer—Not really sure what the concept is? Shouldn't Communication committee be in charge?

Smedley—The concept was given to the Communications committee to consider. They decided other pressing issues more important and the idea came back to Area 4. Concept envisioned TAP members would pick a month and put articles together and send out to various publications. Area 4 did send out one round of articles last year, but we never were able to follow up with each publication.

Miller—What do we have ready? Tax season is the best shot to get this published. Panel members need to take it on as the staff does not have the time.

Ferd—Good idea to put on agenda for the annual meeting and have time to discuss with the new members and see their interest.

ACTION: Delzer to put What's On TAP on annual meeting agenda for discussion.

New Issues-Smedley

Smedley asked the committee if members wanted to work on or start a new issue now or wait and choose some during the annual meeting?

Behnkendorf—New members would benefit from the issue prioritization process of determining if a TAP issues or legislative. This would help them learn to identify TAP issues.

Morris—In light of the new members needing training on what TAP is all about, may want to spend time at the December meeting getting to know each other with introductions. A good idea to look at the self assessment and take some time to work on improving the committee dynamics. Should spend some time addressing concerns of the committee.

After further discussion the committee agreed to look at the issue list via email and pare down the list to a more manageable number to discuss in January.

Bell-Stampley—With the experience of a teleconference before the annual meeting, new members will have better idea of what is all about before meeting face to face.

Smedley—the Agenda for the December meeting agenda will be a discussion of the self-assessment and the introduction of the new members. This will give them an idea of how the teleconference meeting works.

ACTION: Delzer to email Area 4 issue list for members to prioritize. Members to have their prioritized issue list to Delzer by December 9, 2005.

Outreach

Delzer reminded panel members that if they wished to be reimbursed for travel for outreach, during this period of continuing resolutions, the office needs to know as soon as possible in order to prepare extra paper work.

Office report—Delzer

Robb will be contacting all members to check on their travel preferences for the re-scheduled dates for the annual meeting, January 10-13, 2006.

Next meeting is December 20, 2005, at 10:00 a.m. CT/ 11:00 a.m. ET



Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes

*Conference Call
September 27, 2005*

Designated Federal Official

- Richard Morris, Local Taxpayer Advocate

Committee Members Present

- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Richard Greenberg, Illinois
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- Delford Jones, Indiana
- Leslie Malcolmson, Michigan
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- James Abraham, Ohio
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- May Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Joe Meissner, Ohio
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio

TAP Staff

- Sandra McQuin, TAP Manager
- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Patti Robb, Secretary

Visitors

- None

Welcome

Teresa Smedley welcomed everyone to the call. This is the final meeting for this committee this fiscal year.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 11 members present.



Chair Report

Joint Committee report

Smedley reported on what happened at the Joint Committee face-to-face meeting in Las Vegas. Everyone should have received an email from Gwen Handelman requesting suggested topics to discuss with the Commissioner before the annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Please respond to her to share your ideas.

A draft agenda has been done for the annual meeting. She was pleased that almost all of the TAP members' concerns from last year were addressed. Each committee, area and issue, will have a full four hour face-to-face meeting during the annual meeting. That way each committee will be able to hit the ground running.

Status of elevated recommendations

Smedley thanked all members present for the special meeting held September 9th to look at the issues submitted by the RAL subcommittee. She said she was very impressed by the way the Area 4 issues always sail through the Joint Committee approval process. They are always properly researched and well written. All our Refund Anticipation Loan (RAL) issues were accepted for elevation with grammatical changes only.

The Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, recommendation was not elevated by the Joint Committee. TAP did not do the original work – it was more of a letter to support the Advisory Committee on Tax Exempt and Government Entities (ACT) report. We felt they did a tremendous job and supported all their recommendations. After some editing, this recommendation will be resubmitted for approval to the Joint Committee at the October meeting.

Area 4 Self-Assessment

Smedley compiled all the information from the individual members and the subcommittees. It is not in final form yet, so if you notice something needs to be added or changed, let her know.

Public Input

None

Innocent Spouse Focus Group

Delzer thanked everyone who participated in this call. TAP members from several Areas participated. Michael Chesman and Lisa McLane, of the Office of Taxpayer Burden Reduction, briefed the attendees about the Innocent Spouse improvement process team. They were very receptive of the suggestions made by the panel members. Delzer will follow-up with on the team's progress in four months for an update on how TAP can further contribute.

Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL)

Broniarczyk reported on the call with Bob Weinberger of H&R Block. The call was very informative. As far H&R Block is concerned, their preparers do not get a direct financial benefit for offering RALs. Greenberg said they also talked about the debt indicator and the privacy concerns. The only RAL recommendation that Mr. Weinberger could not support was the one regarding the discontinuation of the debt indicator. Other than considering the IRS response, this subcommittee has completed the work. Smedley thanked the subcommittee for all the hard work.

Form 990

Duquette said two recommendations have been submitted; 1) support of the ACT Report, and 2) that Publication 4221, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organizations, should be sent to all new non profit organizations with their determination letters. Broniarczyk suggested changing the last sentence of recommendation two. Smedley suggested



to remove the comments about what the committee had done previously and re-write the background sections.

DECISION: Consensus reached to make the changes and elevate both recommendations to the Joint Committee for the October meeting.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Duquette reported that he went to Atlanta the week of September 12 for a TY2005 Quality Review of ARPP/VITA Course Materials Review, including Publication 678, Volunteer Assistor's Guide, Student Text, Publication 4012, VITA/TCE Resource Guide, Publication 1155, Volunteer Assistor's and , Instructor Guide. It was a very rewarding experience. The training is broken into basic, medium, advanced, and military. They were very receptive to TAP input and will invite panel members next year. Smedley said that the fact TAP was invited again this year, speaks volumes of Area 4's involvement. Al Vivona, Hal Gadon, and Lyn Sinnamon also attended this meeting. McQuin reminded all that these activities have been a great success, and that VITA will become an issue committee next year.

What's On TAP

Duquette reported that nothing was done this month. Would like the continuing members to join Lovella Richardson and Paul Duquette in this and help write some articles. Also, they will be contacting the exiting members for articles. Smedley reminded them that they will be meeting with the new area members in Washington, D.C., and can bring it up there.

New issues

Tabled for consideration at the November meeting.

Outreach

Remember to send all your outreach reports to Delzer ASAP.

Office Report

McQuin said that the annual meeting was extended by a half day to allow the area and issue committees to have a full face-to-face meeting. We had difficulties in securing hotel rooms for the annual meeting. There is a possibility that you may have to change hotels after the first day of your stay in DC. The staff will unfortunately be staying at a different hotel during the meeting.

National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson is planning town hall meetings for each TAS area. She wants TAP members to host these meetings. Coston asked for volunteers to help with the planning. These meetings will be based on Olson's schedule. They are trying to tie them in with other events, i.e., the LITC conference in Philadelphia. TAP members will introduce Olson, and will also speak about TAP. She has given TAP the opportunity to work with the TAS marketing vendor to do the publicity. Hopefully we will have dates and places set within the next two weeks. We are also hoping to cover rural locations.

Coston will be sending out an email soon asking the continuing members to make a decision as to what issue committee they would like to be on. He will include information about the focus of each issue committee in the email. He is also going to be asking each panel member to evaluate their commitment for the next year. Some members have become somewhat inactive. Please determine whether you want to continue as a TAP member. If not, we will have time to get a replacement for the annual meeting.

McQuin said it is sad to say goodbye to Jim Abraham, Dick Greenberg, Delford Jones, Leslie Malcolmson, Joe Meissner, and Teresa Smedley. She thanked them for their dedication and hard work. They have all contributed to Area 4, the TAP panel, and the IRS. She said we will also be saying



goodbye to Richard Morris as there will be a new DFO onboard next year. He brought a lot of value to TAP.

Morris told the members to keep pushing the IRS. He thanked everyone for their passion and input and said he admired their dedication.

Action Items

All Complete

Meeting Adjourned

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number: 3652

Short Description: Include Pub 4221 in Determination Letters

Date Approved by Committee: 9/27/2005

Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Paul Duquette (Chair), Jim Abraham, Steve Hoffman, Mary Ann Lawler, Leslie Malcolmson, Joe Meissner.

Statement of Issue:

The Advisory Committee on Tax Exempt and Government Entities (ACT) project "IMPROVE" report, "Recommendations to Enhance the Compliance on Newly Formed Charities" dated June 8, 2005, states the following:

". . . the vast majority of exempt organizations want to comply with the requirements of their exempt status. Unfortunately, despite significant educational and outreach efforts by the IRS Exempt Organizations division ("EO"), some charities fail to obtain the information necessary to do so. Too often, newly formed charities pass through these transitions with insufficient guidance. Ill-informed charities, no matter how well intentioned, are more likely to fall into patterns of noncompliance and are at increased risk of manipulation by unscrupulous persons and promoters."

Goal Statement:

To improve the compliance of newly formed charities, by providing additional IRS outreach to the non profit sector.

Proposed Solution:

Include Publication 4221 "Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organizations" with both the initial determination and final determination letters sent to all newly-formed 501(c)(3) organizations, in order to educate them regarding their responsibilities as an exempt entity.

Background, Research, and Analysis:

Area 4 continues to hear from non-profit organizations that have concerns about meeting their filing and record keeping requirements. These organizations are often managed by volunteers and look to IRS for free assistance.



The Exempt Organizations Customer Education and Outreach (CE&O) office develops the strategic direction of the nationwide education and outreach programs for these Exempt Organization customers. CE&O coordinates the development of printed materials such as the new "plain talk" Publication 4221, which is designed to meet the needs of the organizations who have contacted TAP.

Benefits and Barriers, Including Impacts of the Proposed Change:

Publication 4221 is organized as follows:

- a) Why keep records
- b) What records should be kept
- c) How long records should be kept
- d) What federal tax reports and returns must be filed
- e) What disclosures must a 501(c)(3) organization make
- f) IRS assistance

Publication 4221 is not only a well written, "plain talk" guide for newly formed organizations, but could also be beneficial in aiding all 501(c)(3) organizations in achieving compliance.

Barriers would include an increase in the printing budget for CE&O as historically 90,000 determination letters are issued each year, and the current printing budget for this area is inadequate.

Summary and Conclusion:

At a minimum, the IRS should include Publication 4221, with determination letters and, whenever appropriate, with all other correspondence with 501(c)(3) organizations.



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
September 8, 2005**

Designated Federal Official

- Richard Morris, Local Taxpayer Advocate

Committee Members Present

- James Abraham, Ohio
- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Richard Greenberg, Illinois
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- Joe Meissner, Ohio
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- Delford Jones, Indiana
- May Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Leslie Malcolmson, Michigan

TAP Staff

- Sandra McQuin, TAP Manager
- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Patti Robb, Secretary

Visitors

- None

Welcome

Smedley welcomed everyone to the call and thanked them for attending. The purpose of this meeting is to review and approve/disapprove seven issues so there is no formal agenda.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 11 members present.



Issues to be discussed

- **Endorsement of ACT Report, IMPROVE**
Consensus to elevate to Joint Committee.
- **Elimination of Debt Indicator for Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL)**
Consensus to elevate to Joint Committee.
- **Reduce RALs with Enhanced Return Processing**
Consensus to elevate to Joint Committee.
- **Elimination of Electronic Return Originators (ERO) Incentives for Promoting Refund Anticipation Loans**
This will go back to the subcommittee for more work.
- **Enforcement of RAL Provisions of Publication 1345, Handbook for Authorized IRS e-file Provides of Individual Income Tax Returns**
Consensus to elevate to Joint Committee.
- **E-file Advertising and Alternatives to RALs**
Consensus to elevate to Joint Committee.
- **Requiring Display of RAL Information**
Consensus to elevate to Joint Committee.

Smedley thanked the subcommittee for all their time and efforts. Meissner also thanked them for all their hard work.

Area 4 committee members thanked Jim Abraham for all his hard work on all issues as he is unable to be on the next Area 4 conference call. Abraham responded that he would be available as a resource person if needed.

Next meeting September 27, 2005, 11 a.m. ET via conference call.

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Data Base Number:

Short Description: Endorsement of ACT report, IMPROVE

Date Approved by Committee:

Members of Subcommittee: Paul Duquette (Chair), Jim Abraham, Steve Hoffman, Leslie Malcolmson, Joe Meissner, Mary Ann Lawler.

Statement of Issue: TAP supports the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Tax Exempt and Government Entities (ACT) in their report of June 8, 2005, regarding project "IMPROVE."



Goal: To support ACT's efforts to improve compliance among newly-created charities.

Proposed Solution: TAP should draft a letter to Mr. Steven T. Miller, IRS Director, Exempt Organizations, supporting the eight recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Tax Exempt and Government Entities (ACT) to improve the compliance of newly-created charities dated June 8, 2005.

Background, Research and Analysis: In a letter dated September 2, 2003 to Steven T. Miller, IRS Director, Exempt Organizations (EO), TAP Chair Thomas J. Seuntjens addressed eight specific recommendations regarding Form 990 "Return of Organizations Exempt From Income Tax." Mr. Miller responded to Mr. Seuntjens in a letter dated November 10, 2003. In his letter, Mr. Miller stated that "some of your (TAP's) concerns were identified during the initial phases of the Form 990 e-file project. In addition, the Exempt Organizations Customer Education and Outreach (CE&O) office, which coordinates the development of printed and internet-based educational materials, has identified some of these recommendations as ongoing projects." With that in mind, Area 4, at their face-to-face meeting April 2005, decided to revisit the Form 990 issue in order to check recommendation progress to date. The 990 sub-committee research included ACT's June 8, 2005 recommendations to the IRS regarding improving compliance of newly-created charities. They are:

1. Enhance the quantity and quality of EO contacts with charities.
2. Lower the Form 990 filing threshold to \$5,000.
3. Leverage existing information outlets to better educate charities regarding ongoing compliance obligations.
4. Eliminate Form 8734.
5. Encourage consideration of donor-advised funds, fiscal sponsorships and other alternatives in lieu of free-standing exemption for smaller organizations.
6. Improve partnering with other IRS divisions and coordinate the process of reviewing charities within the various newly-established units of EO.
7. Share more information with the states.
8. Suspend exemption under section 501(c)(3) for failure to file Form 990 for three consecutive years.

(Please see attached, ACT's June 8, 2005 project "Improve" recommendations for further detail.)

Benefits and Barriers: "Project IMPROVE seeks to address the interactions necessary between EO and newly-created Code section 501(c)(3) public charities ("charities") during the crucial post-exemption stage. Building on earlier ACT reports and recommendations, Project IMPROVE will recommend a range of alternatives to assist EO in tracking newly-formed charities, in communicating with these charities, and in enhancing compliance levels by addressing the common transitions encountered by charities in their developmental years. Implementation of these recommendations will enhance EO oversight of newly-created charities and will increase the likelihood that these organizations will mature into compliant and productive members of the exempt organizations sector." (ACT's project IMPROVE, page 9)

The obvious barrier to implementing ACT's recommendations is EO's ability to devote the manpower and computer resources, given budget constraints set by Congress.

Conclusion: By supporting ACT, TAP lends additional credence to the recommendations made to the IRS's EO division.



Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number:

Short Description: Elimination of Debt Indicator for Refund Anticipation Loans

Date Approved by Committee:

Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Joe Meissner (Chair), Jim Abraham, Maureen Amos, Bob Broniarczyk, Paul Duquette, Dick Greenberg, Leslie Malcolmson, Teresa Smedley.

Statement of Issue:

Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) are problematic, in that the high fees charged dramatically reduce the refund dollars available to the taxpayer. IRS providing the debt indicator to the third party providing the loan encourages RALs, makes them appear to be endorsed by the IRS, and brings up major privacy issues.

Goal Statement:

The goal is to take the IRS out as the middleman in providing information used to provide loans to taxpayers, based the amount of their federal income tax refund.

Proposed Solution:

The IRS should stop providing the debt indicator to the third party providers of RALs.

Background, Research, and Analysis:

This issue was originally brought to our attention by numerous consumer groups in 2003, which were, and are, concerned about the impact that RALs have on the poorest taxpayers. This subcommittee has spent almost two years researching how RALs work, how they are provided to taxpayers, what the loan process involves, and what the impact is on the taxpayer.

Our research indicates that the IRS terminated the debt indicator in 1994 due to concerns about RAL fraud. However, it was reinstated in 1999 as an attempt to reduce fees associated with RALs, to encourage electronic filing, and because the RAL providers agreed to report loan applicants with indicators of fraud, allowing the IRS to reduce the incidence of fraud.

However, according to a June 2005 report by the National Consumer Law Center (Doc. 2005-14412), the reinstatement of the debt indicator has benefited the RAL industry, by providing them higher profits, while loan costs to the taxpayer have steadily risen to well above the pre-indicator levels. In addition, the research report noted that, not only has provider fraud not decreased, it has actually increased since the reinstatement of the debt indicator. The privacy concern is also a big issue, since there does not seem to be a consensus about whether the IRS providing the debt indicator to third parties violates privacy regulations. Discussions with various IRS officials also seem to debunk the idea that it is the access to RALs that is linked to an increase in electronic filing, since electronic filing has increased at a much higher rate than the growth rate for RALs. The connection may be spurious anyway, since there has been tremendous growth in free file returns, even though RAL availability is limited through the free file system.

Benefits and Barriers, Including Impacts of the Proposed Change:

Benefits of this change would be numerous. Without the debt indicator, the level of approved RALs would likely plummet. Based on figures from the June 2005 NCLC report, between 1994 and 1998 (the time during which the IRS was NOT providing the debt indicator), the volume of RALs approved



dropped by almost half. RALs carry exorbitant interest rates, and prey on those least able to pay back such a loan, in the event that the refund does not materialize in a timely manner. Removing the IRS' middleman status in such loans -- seemingly assisting the loan companies in making huge profits -- would be a benefit for all low-income wage earners, who are the target of such loans. It would also have the positive effect of no longer making it appear that the IRS endorses these loans. In addition, the privacy concerns would be eliminated. We believe the fraud would also decline, since loan companies would be more reluctant to provide loans to those who don't meet usual loan standards, thus saving taxpayer dollars now used to pursue and collect on fraudulent RAL returns.

The sole barrier that we see will be the tremendous pressure the loan companies, who are making millions of dollars on these loans, will put on the IRS to not eliminate this debt indicator. They will come up with terrible scenarios of what will happen to these poor people whose loans are denied, attempting to create publicity, which will not put the IRS in a favorable light. However, the IRS is not, and should not be, in the loan business and should resist the political pressure to continue to drive this gravy train for the loan companies.

Summary and Conclusion:

The only moral and logical conclusion to our research on the history of the debt indicator is that it should be discontinued. Research has made it clear that the reasoning behind its reinstatement was based on fallacies, and therefore its continued provision is without merit.

Joint Committee Issue Referral

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Data Base Number:

Short Description: Reduce RALs with enhanced return processing

Date Approved by Committee:

Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Joe Meissner (Chair), Jim Abraham, Maureen Amos, Bob Broniarczyk, Paul Duquette, Dick Greenberg, Leslie Malcolmson, Teresa Smedley.

Statement of Issue: The IRS can significantly reduce the perception that a Refund Anticipation Loan (RAL) is desirable by enhancing the speed in which a return is processed.

Goal: The IRS should embark on a program that will ultimately allow for direct deposit of refund checks within 24 hours of a return's submission.

Proposed Solution: RALs are perceived by the taxpaying public as a way to speed up the receipt of their tax refund. The fees charged for RALs can, in some cases, reduce dramatically the amount of refund received. The IRS can significantly reduce the perception that an RAL is desirable by enhancing the speed in which a return is processed.

IRS should implement procedures to speed up the processing of e-file returns and direct deposit of refunds into taxpayer bank accounts. Initially, the IRS should strive to process returns and direct deposit refunds within 48 hours of submission. Ultimately, the IRS's goal should be within 24 hours of submission.



Background, Research and Analysis: This issue was originally brought to our attention by numerous consumer groups in 2003, who were, and are, concerned about the impact that RALs have on the poorest taxpayers. This subcommittee has spent almost two years researching how they are provided to taxpayers, what the loan process involves, and what the impact is on the taxpayer.

Since an RAL is perceived by the taxpayer as a way to receive their refund more quickly, it stands to reason that reducing the time period between the e-filing of a return and direct deposit of the refund would negate the need for an RAL.

Benefits and Barriers: The benefits include timelier processing of returns and receipt of refunds by taxpayers, reduction of perceived need for an RAL to gain access more quickly to a refund, and the channeling of EITC dollars from loan company coffers to the poorest among us, as intended. The major barriers to our proposed solution are the IRS's ability to devote both the manpower and computer resources to this endeavor given the budget constraints set by Congress.

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number:

Short Description: Elimination of ERO Incentives for Promoting Refund Anticipation Loans

Date Approved by Committee:

Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Joe Meissner (Chair), Jim Abraham, Maureen Amos, Bob Broniarczyk, Paul Duquette, Dick Greenberg, Leslie Malcolmson, Teresa Smedley.

Statement of Issue:

The IRS should make changes to the Publication 1345 to remove incentives that may lead Electronic Return Originators (ERO) to encourage taxpayers to choose the more expensive Refund Anticipation Loan (RAL) option because it is more lucrative to the ERO than the less expensive options available to the taxpayer.

Goal Statement:

The goal is to have EROs who provide taxpayers with access to RALs present all of the available options and potential costs of each, without promoting the RAL option more than the others.

Proposed Solution:

IRS should prohibit EROs from accepting incentives (monetary or otherwise) for promoting RALs to their clients. This would require addition to the language of Chapter 6 in the Publication 1345.

Background, Research, and Analysis:

This issue was originally brought to our attention by numerous consumer groups in 2003, who were, and are, concerned about the impact that RALs have on the poorest taxpayers. This subcommittee has spent almost two years researching how RALs work, how they are provided to taxpayers, what the loan process involves, and what the impact is on the taxpayer.

Our research and discussions with taxpayers indicates that RAL providers do not always provide other than cursory information to taxpayers regarding options available other than RALs to get their refunds faster. We believe that this may occur because the loan companies provide monetary incentives to the



EROs to promote the RAL. Since the ERO is not paid to promote most of the other options, it is logical that they have little incentive to encourage the taxpayers to elect the options that are less expensive for the taxpayers.

Benefits and Barriers, Including Impacts of the Proposed Change:

The major benefit of this change would be to remove the incentive for EROs to exclusively promote RALs to their clients. We hope that this would mean that taxpayers would be given equal information about all of the costs and benefits of each option, and would be better prepared to make an informed choice.

The sole barrier that we see will be the tremendous pressure the loan companies, who are making millions of dollars on these loans, will put on the IRS to not restrict their ability to “reward” the EROs who funnel the clients to RALs. They will accuse the IRS of trade restriction. However, it is well within the IRS power to regulate how EROs conduct their business in relation to electronically filed returns, in an effort to make sure taxpayers are protected from the potentially unscrupulous ERO and reduce the incidence of fraud in electronic filing.

Summary and Conclusion:

Reasonable restrictions on EROs to protect the public are a legitimate form of regulation by the IRS. The proposed restriction eliminating incentives paid to EROs solely to promote RALs to taxpayers would encourage EROs to promote all e-file options, costs and benefits, to the taxpayers they serve.

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number:

Short Description: Enforcement of RAL Provisions of Pub. 1345

Date Approved by Committee:

Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Joe Meissner (Chair), Jim Abraham, Maureen Amos, Bob Broniarczyk, Paul Duquette, Dick Greenberg, Leslie Malcolmson, Teresa Smedley.

Statement of Issue:

Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) are problematic, in that the high fees charged dramatically reduce the refund dollars available to the taxpayer. The IRS should focus more on enforcing the provisions of the Publication 1345 related to RALs.

Goal Statement:

The goal is to have the IRS step up their enforcement of the provisions of Publication 1345 relating to RALs by increasing the number of site visits and imposing penalties on those not in compliance.

Proposed Solution:

The IRS should use the authority provided to them by Revenue Procedure 2000-31 to enforce the RAL provisions of the Publication 1345. We would like to see the number of site visits increased each year. Currently, only 1% of all Electronic Return Originators (ERO) providing bank products are visited. This should be increased, at minimum, to 3% for 2006 and 5% for 2007. Additionally, penalties should be imposed on EROs not in compliance, with increasing severity if there are multiple noncompliance



issues in one site visit or repetitive instances of noncompliance over several site visits to the same location.

Background, Research, and Analysis:

This issue was originally brought to our attention by numerous consumer groups in 2003, who were, and are, concerned about the impact that RALs have on the poorest taxpayers. This subcommittee has spent almost two years researching how RALs work, how they are provided to taxpayers, what the loan process involves, and what the impact is on the taxpayer.

Our research and discussions with taxpayers indicates that RAL providers do not always follow the requirements of Publication 1345, Chapter 6, relating to financial products. Taxpayers have reported that they are not aware that the paperwork they are signing is for a loan, and that they were not informed of other, less expensive, options to get their refunds back quickly.

The IRS has the authority under Revenue Procedure 2000-31 to make site visits to ensure that the Publication 1345 provisions are being enforced, and to impose penalties on those who are not in compliance. However, information provided by the IRS indicates that less than 1% of the RAL providers receive site visits, and rarely are any penalties imposed, even when providers are not in compliance. Knowing that there is so little enforcement action from the IRS may encourage EROs to ignore the provisions of Publication 1345 that are designed to protect taxpayers from unscrupulous EROs.

Benefits and Barriers, Including Impacts of the Proposed Change:

The major benefit of this change would be to encourage compliance with the regulations stipulated in Publication 1345. While voluntary compliance is always the goal, increased enforcement would accomplish the goal of having EROs be more vigilant in staying within the regulations outlined. The benefit would be to the taxpayer, who would be assured of receiving all of the required information to make an informed decision relating to RALs and other bank products. In addition, by enforcing the provisions of Publication 1345, the IRS may reduce fraud in the program by suspending EROs from the program that are habitually not in compliance.

The barrier will be the limited resources that the IRS has available to police EROs. This increase in enforcement will initially require added manpower and other resources be allocated to enforcement. However, the potential reduction in fraud that ERO compliance may generate could compensate for the enforcement dollars spent.

Summary and Conclusion:

The IRS must increase enforcement of the provisions relating to RALs from the Publication 1345. By increasing the site visits, the IRS would make it clear that those provisions will be enforced and those EROs not in compliance will face sanctions, as provided by Revenue Procedure 2000-31.

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number:

Short Description: E-file Advertising and Alternatives to RALs

Date Approved by Committee:



Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Joe Meissner (Chair), Jim Abraham, Maureen Amos, Bob Broniarczyk, Paul Duquette, Dick Greenberg, Leslie Malcolmson, Teresa Smedley.

Statement of Issue:

IRS should direct its current advertising campaign toward educating taxpayers on how they can speed up their tax refunds through the use of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit.

Goal Statement:

Taxpayers, especially low-income and English as a Second Language (ESL), deserve and need to be informed that there are alternative measures available, besides the use of expensive Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL), in order to obtain a speedy tax refund.

Proposed Solution:

Many families, especially low-income and ESL, resort to RAL's because they require speedy return of their tax refunds in order to pay bills and other necessities. Thru the use of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit taxpayers can receive their full refund within a week to ten days, rather than resorting to an expensive RAL. Often, however, these taxpayers are not aware of these alternative measures and thus choose the expensive RALs out of ignorance.

IRS should direct its current advertising campaign toward educating taxpayers on how they can speed up their tax refunds through the use of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit. IRS also could through its outstanding Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC) program, inform low-income ESL taxpayers about these alternative measures to RALs.

Background, Research, and Analysis:

This issue was originally brought to our attention by numerous consumer groups in 2003, who were, and are, concerned about the impact that RALs have on the poorest taxpayers. This subcommittee has spent almost two years researching how RALs work, how they are provided to taxpayers, what the loan process involves, and what the financial impact is on the taxpayer.

Our research and discussions with taxpayers indicates that RAL providers do not always provide other than cursory information to taxpayers regarding options available other than RALs to get their refunds faster. A combination of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit can substantially speed up a tax refund. While it is true that an RAL can provide funds to tax payers within a day or two of filing, use of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit can result in a tax refund within a week to ten days. Moreover, this short wait results in a complete tax refund, rather than a refund eaten up by expensive interest charges and other RAL administrative fees. An advertising campaign could be built around the slogan, "Can you wait a week?" The basic theme would be that this short wait can substantially benefit the taxpayer financially.

Benefits and Barriers, Including Impacts of the Proposed Change:

The major benefit of this change would be to insure that taxpayers, especially vulnerable low-income and ESL taxpayers, are aware that there are alternatives available, besides RALs, for obtaining a speedy tax refund. Furthermore, the taxpayer gets back his or her complete refund rather than one partly eaten up with usurious interest charges and administrative fees. Moreover, by using these alternative measures, the taxpayer avoids the risk that after having used up the RAL funds, the taxpayer for whatever reason does not receive his or her anticipated refund from IRS. As a side benefit, direct deposit also can encourage taxpayers to establish bank accounts which can provide many advantages to taxpayers and help them avoid expensive check cashing outlets.

The main burden is the time, expense, and planning of such advertising campaigns. RAL providers, of course, may lose some income. To the extent, however, that RAL providers may lose some business, this is only the result of knowledgeable taxpayers exercising their freedom of choice to select alternatives to expensive and risky RALs.



Summary and Conclusion:

IRS already conducts extensive advertising campaigns to educate taxpayers. Use of IRS advertising to promote the combination of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit not only meets various goals IRS has established (such as increased e-filing), but also benefits taxpayers, especially low-income and ESL, to know the choices available to them besides the use of RALs. Furthermore, such alternatives result in taxpayers obtaining their full tax refund, without running the risks inherent in a Refund anticipation Loan. IRS should therefore emphasize in its advertising the use of early filing, e-filing, and direct deposit as alternatives to RALs.

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number:

Short Description: Requiring Display of RAL Information

Date Approved by Committee:

Members of Subcommittee/Author(s): Joe Meissner (Chair), Jim Abraham, Maureen Amos, Bob Broniarczyk, Paul Duquette, Dick Greenberg, Leslie Malcolmson, Teresa Smedley.

Statement of Issue:

Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) are widely used by many taxpayers, especially low-income and English as a Second Language (ESL) families who are applying for their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The IRS must insure that taxpayers are aware that RAL's are a loan, not the taxpayer's refund, and these involve substantial risks to the taxpayer.

Goal Statement:

The goal is to insure taxpayers are aware that RAL's are an actual loan which carry substantial risks to the taxpayer.

Proposed Solution:

Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) are widely used by many taxpayers, especially low-income and ESL families who are applying for their EITC. These loans, requiring usurious interest charges and other high administrative fees, dramatically reduce the refund dollars available to the taxpayers. Even worse, if for some reason the taxpayer does not receive back the originally anticipated refund, the taxpayer-- whose financial resources are usually limited and who has often already spent the RAL funds--faces the significant burden of paying back the loan. The IRS must insure that taxpayers are aware that RAL's are a loan, not the taxpayer's refund, and these involve substantial risks to the taxpayer.

IRS should develop a large-size poster for use by Electronic Return Originators (ERO), that would provide a prominent display of basic information to taxpayers about RALs. This prominent display would state the following: "An RAL or 'Refund Anticipation Loan' is a loan. It is not the taxpayer's actual refund. Furthermore, if the taxpayer fails to receive back his/her anticipated refund, the taxpayer must still pay back the entire RAL with interest."

ERO's would be required to display this poster in a prominent location at their business site. This requirement for a prominent display of basic information about the RAL should be added to Chapter 6 in the Publication 1345.



Background, Research, and Analysis:

This issue was originally brought to our attention by numerous consumer groups in 2003, who were, and are, concerned about the impact that RALs have on the poorest taxpayers. This subcommittee has spent almost two years researching how RALs work, how they are provided to taxpayers, what the loan process involves, and what the impact is on the taxpayer.

Our research and discussions with taxpayers indicate that RAL providers do not always provide other than cursory information to taxpayers regarding the nature and risks of RALs to get their refunds faster. Many taxpayers, especially low-income and ESL taxpayers are often not aware that an RAL is a loan which carries substantial risks for the taxpayer if they do not receive back the refund they had anticipated and against which they have borrowed the RAL. Taxpayers who are considering an RAL have every right to be fully informed about the true nature and risks of these RALs.

Benefits and Barriers, Including Impacts of the Proposed Change:

The major benefit of this change would be to increase taxpayer awareness, especially among ESL and low-income taxpayers, about the true nature and risks of an RAL. This would provide them the information they need in order to make an informed choice about signing for an RAL.

IRS would pay for the development, printing, and distribution of this poster. This would be a part of IRS's advertising efforts. EROs might lose some revenue when taxpayers choose not to sign for an RAL, but this would result from taxpayers exercising their right to choose not to "buy" an RAL.

Summary and Conclusion:

Reasonable guidance to EROs to protect the public are a legitimate form of regulation by the IRS. The proposed requirement for providing a prominent notice about the nature of an RAL and its risks protects vulnerable taxpayers and helps to insure that they have the information they need to make an informed decision.



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
August 23, 2005**

Designated Federal Official

- Richard Morris, Local Taxpayer Advocate

Committee Members Present

- James Abraham, Ohio
- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Richard Greenberg, Illinois
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- May Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Leslie Malcolmson, Michigan
- Joe Meissner, Ohio
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Delford Jones, Indiana
- F. Patrick Matthews, Wisconsin

TAP Staff

- Sandra McQuin, TAP Manager
- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Patti Robb, Secretary

Visitors

- Allen Scioli, Michigan

Welcome

Smedley welcomed everyone to the call. She announced that she will do the Joint Committee report and Steve Hoffman will run today's meeting.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 14 members present.



Area 4 Chair Report -- Smedley

- Joint Committee Report
 - TAP Director Bernie Coston will be sending out exit surveys to the departing panel members. Please complete and return.
 - The Joint Committee approved the newly revised ethical conduct form.
 - Each chair will be giving a brief synopsis of their committee's accomplishments for the past year while at the final face-to-face in Las Vegas in September.
 - Coston announced that National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson will be conducting town hall meetings nationwide to gather information from taxpayers on how their future customer service needs will be met. TAP has been invited to play a major role in this effort by acting as the host of these events. Seven meetings will be conducted and correspond with the TAP area configuration. The tentative dates are December 2005 through March 2006. He is asking for volunteers to serve on a planning committee. If anyone is interested, please submit your name to Smedley and she will forward to Coston. McQuin said there may be some travel involved but most of the work would be done via conference calls.

McQuin noted that the December meeting will be held in Philadelphia in conjunction with the LITC conference. The January meeting will be held in New Orleans in conjunction with the ABA convention. The names must be sent to Coston by Friday, August 26.

ACTION: Volunteers: Paul Duquette, Bob Broniarczyk, Larry Behnkendorf: Smedley will send names to Coston.

- Smedley said she shared the Area's concerns about TAPSpeak with the Joint Committee. The Communication Committee asked that everyone be patient while they try to improve the program. There are some items that are only on TAPSpeak, for example the rosters. Panel members' personal information (address and phone numbers) should not be put on the public website. They will decide at a point in the future whether they will continue to use TAPSpeak. If you experience specific problems, please send the information to McQuin who will forward to the Communication Committee. Smedley ensured Area 4's opinion is officially on the record though. Several members said they talked about TAPSpeak at their monthly issue committee meeting and they do not want to use it either. McQuin again asked members for specific examples of difficulties encountered in TAPSpeak. The Communication Committee will try to work with the vendor to solve problems. Duquette said some email notifications of new documents on TAPSpeak are identified as spam on some panel members' computers.
- **Area 4 Self-Assessment – Smedley**

If you haven't done a committee self assessment yet, please get it done and send it to Delzer. She is going to add the outreach report to the compiled report. Volunteers are needed to review the accomplishments of each sub committee and write a report:

 - VITA – Don Miller
 - Innocent Spouse – Teresa Smedley
 - Lien Processing – Teresa Smedley
 - Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL) – Joe Meissner
 - W-4 Issue – Teresa Smedley
 - Just-In-Time – Teresa Smedley
 - Form 990 – Paul Duquette
 - What's On TAP – Duquette and Richardson

These reports should be a brief synopsis of what occurred during the year.



Delzer will have the issues that were put in the parking lot.

Disappointments – everyone should complete as well.

Committee Assessment – everyone should do a committee assessment. Same with staff, IRS cooperation, and the Chair.

ACTION: These self assessments are due to Delzer by September 6.

ACTION: Delzer will send out a reminder on September 1.

Delzer sent out a copy of last years self assessment as an example.

Public Input

Allen Scioli commented that the meeting has been good so far. He is interested in getting involved. Asked how subcommittees are selected; how are issues brought forward; and, how the committee decides which issues to work.

Discussion of Elevated Issues--Smedley

- *Innocent/Injured Spouse Focus Group*— Delzer said there will be a conference call this coming Friday, August 26. There are fifteen TAP members from across the country so have a good mix of participants. IRS wants input on how the forms look and work, as many claims are received from taxpayers who do not qualify for the program.

Discussion of Current Issues

- *Refund Anticipation Loans*— Meissner — Sent out a report for review before the meeting. There is another conference call this Friday, August 26. If we can wrap up and write up the final report, we can review on September 8, 11a.m. ET to approve. Then it can be sent to the Joint Committee for elevation at the September meeting. Duquette is unable to be on the September 8 call so will send comments via email.
- *Form 990* — Duquette — Looking to see need improvement in the determination letters. IRS developed a plain language publication for 501(c) 3 Organizations. Looking to see if IRS will write more of these for other types of organizations and if such publications are sent with the determination letters.

ACTION: Duquette will send his recommendation regarding the ACT report before the September 8 call so it can be discussed.

- *VITA* — McQuin — Received a response from Sue Sottile, Director, W&I Strategic Planning and Development, this morning. They want to schedule a meeting to discuss the issues shared to date. McQuin will ask Sottile for tentative conference call dates. W&I is reorganizing and so SPEC is going through transition. Mark Pursley, Director, Customer Assistance, Relationships and Education (CARE) has committed that TAP will have SPEC employees to work with in regard to VITA issues. The week of September 12, four TAP members people will look at Publication 678, Volunteer Assistor’s Guide and the student test/re-test in Atlanta
- *What’s On TAP* – Duquette/Richardson – retiring members should write up their experiences while in TAP. We also have several generic articles that need some updating. And we need a publishing plan. McQuin said the biggest barrier is the time it takes to get articles ready and



then contacting publishers. Duquette said everyone could contact one or two people (publishers) in their areas. Smedley said the staff is too busy so the members need to work this issue. Delzer sent some articles out but if you don't follow up with the publishers, nothing happens. McQuin thought it was a good idea for each member to identify places in their own state.

ACTION: Smedley will write an article for What's On TAP.

Outreach

Please be sure to send Delzer your final outreach report for the fiscal year. The final outreach report will be run in October for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Office Report—McQuin

Area 4 members, Bob Broniarczyk, Adrienne Bell-Stampley, and Dick Greenberg, will be at the Tax Forum in Chicago next week along with McQuin.

Action Items – Smedley

Smedley will research current phone options and report results at August meeting. Smedley called the IRS toll free number and got three options in the first menu. One would think you should be able to press "0" in the second level to get to speak to an operator but you can't. It is difficult to get to an operator, but it can be done. Don't know how much TAP can change, but recommend keeping this issue in the parking lot.

Closing/Assessment/Meeting Adjourned

September 8, 2005, is the next conference call (to discuss the final RAL report and Form 990 report) and September 27, 2005, is our regular scheduled conference call. Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m., ET

Next meetings:

September 8, 2005, 11 a.m. ET.

September 27, 2005, 11 a.m. ET.



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
July 26, 2005**

Designated Federal Official

- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst

Committee Members Present

- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Richard Greenberg, Illinois
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- May Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Leslie Malcolmson, Michigan
- Joe Meissner, Ohio
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- James Abraham, Ohio
- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- Delford Jones, Indiana
- F. Patrick Matthews, Wisconsin

TAP Staff

- Patti Robb, Secretary

Visitors

- John Vang, Cleveland Legal Aid Intern

Welcome

Smedley welcomed everyone to the call and thanked the members for taking the time to participate.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 12 members present.

Area 4 Chair Report -- Smedley

- Joint Committee Report — TAP Director Bernie Coston sent out a National Office update report. He announced that the Annual meeting scheduled for November 2-4, 2005, will be held



in the Hyatt at Capitol Hill. National Taxpayer Advocate Nina Olson and Commissioner Everson will attend. The Commissioner will be meeting with the members of the Joint Committee the morning of November 2. That speaks highly of what he thinks of TAP.

Area 4 will have two more meetings; August and September. We will not be meeting in October so we need to elevate our issues within the next month we want to get credit for them this year. Joint Committee will meet in October. Non continuing members will be receiving exit surveys. Please complete them and return them to National Office. It is valuable feedback.

Our Forms and Publications issue was presented to the Joint Committee. They discussed it, suggested some minor grammatical changes, and approved elevating it. Area 4 has a very good record with elevated issues. Analyst Delzer sent out the handout written by Judi Nicholas on Elevating Recommendations for Changes to Forms, Instructions, and Publications. Smedley said it is very helpful.

The Communication Committee recommended using TAPSpeak as a primary form of communication. Not exclusive but primary. Delzer ensures everyone is notified when she puts any information or articles on TAPSpeak. She sent out the agenda, minutes, and other information for this meeting via email, as well as putting it on TAPSpeak. Smedley said when you get the information via email; you tend to delete the message with the link from TAPSpeak. Some of the committee members said they haven't received the email message from TAPSpeak.

ACTION: Delzer will check email addresses used by TAPSpeak.

Smedley pointed out that National Office spends a lot of money on TAPSpeak so we need to use it or we will lose it. It was pointed out that the IRS is spending a lot of money and effort to maintain and enhance TAPSpeak. The majority of those who participated in the teleconference felt these limited IRS resources could be better used for other, higher priority TAP activities (e.g. more face-to-face meetings). Duquette said it takes much longer to open a document in TAPSpeak than it does when it comes via email. Delzer pointed out that if you don't want to use TAPSpeak, you need to let the Communication Committee know. Smedley said you can find everything on TAPSpeak. If you cannot locate the agenda/minutes for a current meeting, you can pull it up on TAPSpeak. Information is also on improveirs.org. A poll was taken and only one person would like to use TAPSpeak, everyone else preferred email. Smedley will forward Area 4's preference to the Communication Committee.

- What's On TAP — This was the brainchild of prior TAP members Larry Lexow and Bob Meldman. The Joint Committee decided this program should go national so they told us to put it on hold so they could develop it. It was assigned to the Ad Hoc Committee to manage, but they had other priorities so nothing happened. We did send a couple articles out but we aren't sure how many were actually published. The articles have to go through a National Office analyst for approval before being distributed. The Joint Committee eventually reassigned this program to the Communications Committee. They put it in the parking lot. Do we want to take this program back into Area 4 or should we leave it in the parking lot. We could set things up now so it would be ready for the upcoming filing season. Greenberg said this should be a priority item for Area 4 at the annual meeting in November. Smedley said it's a good opportunity for retiring members to write and give to continuing members – sum up the past few years. Delzer will resurrect all articles already written. They can be updated as needed. If you want to write an article, there is a canned opening and closing paragraph to be used. You would only have to write a couple paragraphs for the middle.

ACTION: What's on TAP Subcommittee: Duquette and Richardson.

ACTION: Greenberg to write an article for What's on TAP.



ACTION: Delzer to send out copies of old articles to Area 4 and the canned opening and closing paragraphs.

Public Input

None

Discussion of Elevated Issues--Smedley

- *Innocent/Injured Spouse* — Delzer said IRS is looking at redoing the Form 8857, Request for Innocent Spouse Relief. She has the name of the program owner and will send all Area 4 recommendations to her.
- *W-4 EZ Response* — The Payroll Issue committee was tasked with looking at the Form W-4 process from the employee/employer point of view. We also gave input. A response was received from SB/SE. They are aware that the form needs revision but it is not a current priority. They will contact TAP again before going forward with this project.

Discussion of Current Issues

- *Refund Anticipation Loans*—Meissner emailed a recap of what has been going on:
 1. We continue to do research and talk to people about RAL's.
 2. At the MLI meeting in Washington, D.C., we talked to people with TAP from around the country about RAL's and the problems these can cause for low-income families.
 3. We do have a deadline in order to get an approval of our recommendations. We must as a subcommittee finish our work before August 23 which is the crucial meeting for Area 4 TAP to consider our recommendations.
 4. Our subcommittee needs to have a telephone conference call sometime next week August 1, or no later than the week of August 8th.
 5. I am completing a final draft of our work which will be sent to everyone before August 1st. I have been greatly aided in this work by John Vang who is a Law Student and Legal Intern with us for this summer.
 6. The Final Draft will contain an analysis of RAL's, the problems they cause, and ways of dealing with these problems. It will also contain some twenty possible recommendations for dealing with RAL's and helping the taxpayers who may need these.
 7. We had been told that attorneys from the national TA office would talk to us by conference telephone. We have received no word about this.
 8. We were also told that H&R Block people wanted to talk to our subcommittee. Again we have not heard anymore about this.
 9. I did send the TA, Nina Olson, a full set of all the materials that we have gathered, researched, and analyzed in our work. I also left a message with her office on the progress we have been making.

The subcommittee will meet and submit a final report at the August meeting.

- *Form 990* — Duquette said the subcommittee met and discussed the letters that go out to new non-profit organizations. It is a very hard read so this issue should be worked. IRS is mandating e-filing for larger non-profits organizations. Duquette has read the report from Advisory Committee to TEGE (ACT) and they already have made some recommendations.



ACTION: Delzer to send Form 990 Committee Members ACT recommendations report.

- *VITA* — Miller had conversations with McQuin who spoke to Coston and Sue Sottile on how to organize. There is an extremely good chance that *VITA* will become an issue committee next year. Sottile has received about ten issues to date and will prioritize. McQuin will set up a conference call around the middle of August and will share the vision for this new committee with the Area 4 subcommittee.
Delzer mentioned that SPEC will be reviewing the test and retest of the training materials around September 12 and we will be asked for input again. Some of you may be asked to go to Atlanta or to review the materials at home. The fact that that they are asking for our input again makes this a huge success! Delzer will keep you updated as thing progress. Schneider said he has been out of the loop and hasn't received the information.

ACTION: Delzer will follow up on continuing work with SPEC and inform VITA Committee members.

New Issues-- Smedley

- Contact ID 3349 – drop
- Contact ID 3527 – drop
- Contact ID 3533 – drop
- Contact ID 3528 – drop (refer caller to Circular 230)
- Contact ID 3580 – Caller expressed frustration with using the IRS Help Line (800-829-1040) menu. Caller suggests that there should be an option for callers to choose and get directed to an IRS operator, who will assist them in getting to the right area to answer their question. Smedley will call the toll free number to see if getting an operator is an option.

ACTION: Smedley will research current phone options and report results at August meeting.

- Contact 3538 – Schedule D / Capital Loss Carryover – this issue will be put in the parking lot as a priority issue for next year.

Outreach-- Smedley

Please be sure to write up a report and send to Delzer after an Outreach is completed.

Office Report-- Delzer

There will not be any committee meetings held in October. The Joint Committee will have a meeting to wrap things up in October.

All interviews have been completed for the new panel members. We are waiting for them to return their fingerprints and tax check waivers. Coston is hoping to send his selection recommendations to Treasury by August 8.

Action Items--Delzer

All completed.



Closing/Assessment/Meeting Adjourned

The annual meeting is scheduled for November 2-4, 2005. As things solidify, you will be contacted for your travel preferences.

It was a good meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m., ET

Next meeting August 23, 2005, 11 a.m. ET.



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
June 28, 2005**

Designated Federal Official

- Sandy McQuin, TAP Program Manager

Committee Members Present

- James Abraham, Ohio
- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Richard Greenberg, Illinois
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- May Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Leslie Malcolmson, Michigan
- F. Patrick Matthews, Wisconsin
- Joe Meissner, Ohio
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- Delford Jones, Indiana

TAP Staff

- Mary Ann Delzer, TAP Program Analyst

Welcome

Smedley welcomed everyone to the call and thanked the members for taking the time to participate.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 15 members present.

Area 4 Chair Report -- Smedley

At the Joint Committee meeting, Handelman reported on the meeting with the Commissioner. Written report was also emailed to TAP members. Meeting had no impact on the Commissioner's decision to close numerous TAC offices, but there was agreement to meet a couple of times a year. Suggestion was to meet with the Commissioner at the time of the annual meeting, and then once mid-way into the year.



Issue Referral Form has been changed again and the new version should be approved at the next Joint Committee meeting. Sub-committee that worked on the re-write did use feedback from IRS program owners as to what they wanted to see. Should have the final approved version for the next meeting.

Joint Committee also has a subcommittee to give staff recommendations on ways to improve the annual meeting. Recommending to increase the meeting by adding one half day. Waiting official word on dates of the annual meeting. Also recommending that committee reports be shorter and just give the highlights of the year. Want to make sure adequate time for each committee to fully meet. Would also like to see more opportunity to socialize.

Received schedule of when form and publication changes are due. Very helpful in determining when TAP needs to send recommendations forward.

ACTION: Delzer to forward forms and publications time table to panel members.

Appears the Communications committee will not be adapting "What's on TAP." Have not gotten the official notice that they are not going to adopt the idea. Next month Area 4 should consider whether to pursue the idea just in Area 4.

Public Input

None

Discussion of Elevated Issues--Smedley

- *Innocent/Injured Spouse*—No additional news on the issue.
ACTION: Coston will follow up on Innocent / Injured Spouse recommendation that has not received a response.
- *Just in time*—IRS has decided that Package X will be discontinued. No more paper. Everyone will need to go to the internet to download forms. Duquette shared that the SBSE committee discussed this issue at length. Recommendation was made to Coston that IRS offer the Package X for sale through another venue, i.e. government printing office. Area 4 should consider this a success story. Area 4's recommendation was to stop producing the product, if it can't be out in a timely manner. Why waste money to send if not timely. This decision will save \$1.8 million dollars.

Discussion of Current Issues

- *Refund Anticipation Loans—Meissner*
Have been collecting materials such as ads on "e-file free today, cash tomorrow." RAL's are promoted with "instant cash." Sub-committee is waiting to schedule a teleconference with the TAS attorneys and a representative from H&R Block. McQuin stated that she expected printed materials by the end of the week, and then the calls can be scheduled. Subcommittee had talked about a survey/ questionnaire to the LITCs. Have enough research already and this process may take several months to carry out. Need to recommend a way to help people understand what RALs are and how the process really works. Educate taxpayers on what the alternatives are. Ways to improve the loan documents and state RALs are a loan. List alternatives to the loans.



ACTION: Meissner to email draft report on RALs to subcommittee before the July meeting.

- *Customer Service—Behnkendorf*
The issue is that not all forms are available at the TACs and every form and accompanying instruction should be available to taxpayers. This would reduce incentive to go to a paid preparer. IRS needs to provide better service to the taxpayer.

DECISION: Recommendation was approved with one change: eliminate the attachments regarding the forms stock list.

ACTION: Smedley to include "Availability of Current Tax Forms and Instructions" recommendation in the Area 4 monthly annual report for June.

- *Form 990—Duquette*
Research has been received by the subcommittee from Delzer. Subcommittee members need to read and then discuss possible direction to take on the issue.

ACTION: Duquette to set Form 990 conference call.

- *VITA—Miller*
Completed the action item to email to all TAP members describing committee, soliciting ideas and membership. So far have only received anecdotal reports. Several people from other Areas are interested in joining the VITA committee. Smedley suggested that with the additional people, members could divide into sub-subcommittees. McQuin agreed that that would probably be the way to go. Then could look at various issues, broader topics, if divided into sub-subcommittees.

Schneider reported on the two task forces that he and Duquette participated in, in Atlanta. Duquette worked on revising the administrative guide for VITA/TCE. Schneider participated in the rework of the comprehensive problems in the student manual. Two people from AARP also participated. Impression was that IRS did listen to the TAP members. He also stated that a new separate publication will be produced for the comprehensive problems. Instead of creating a new test, will revise this for the new filing season.

Duquette shared that he felt his input on was appreciated. Since returning from Atlanta, have had conference calls to wrap up and complete the work. Feel it will be a much better publication with input from the field.

Miller stated that next steps will be to review the information received from Pursley and get the new people up to speed.

Greenberg asked why most of the partners listed are from the DC area. Is that because these are central organizations sponsoring from DC?

Miller questioned whether IRS really knows who all their partners really are? McQuin stated the partner list may reflect the way TEC was organized.

New Issues-- Smedley

Held over to July.



Outreach-- Smedley

Held over to July. Please review the written report received. Continue to send outreach reports to Mary Ann Delzer.

Office Report-- McQuin

Area 4 and 5 interviews completed today. Thank you to all who helped with interviewing. Your cooperation made life easier for us, especially your willingness to help at the last minute. You will be pleased to know that we have wonderful candidates. Be reassured someone adequate is there to back you up.

Will be talking with the Chicago folks individually about the Tax Forums. All four have been registered and will be contacting you to set a schedule to staff the booth.

Action Items--Delzer

Only two action items still need to be discussed:

- **Delzer to schedule conference call with Billy Hubbard to discuss successful VITA Coalition.**

Delzer will follow up after discussion with Sottile about direction of the VITA Subcommittee.

- **Pursley will research E-file rejects and extended time to file.**

Delzer will put issue in the parking lot for future consideration.

Closing/Assessment/Meeting Adjourned

Duquette asked about the dates of the Annual Meeting. McQuin stated the hope is to lengthen the meeting. If possible, travel would be on Nov 1, with the meeting to begin at noon on Nov 2. Orientation will be the morning of Nov 2. The hotel is the Hyatt at Capital Hill.

Next meeting August 23, 2005, 11 a.m. ET.

Joint Committee Issue Referral Form

TAP Committee: Area 4

TAP Database Number: 3350

Short Description: Availability of Current Tax Forms and Instructions

Date Approved by Committee: 6/28/2005

Members of the Subcommittee/Authors: Larry Behnkendorf, Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Paul Duquette, Donna Hafer, Mary Ann Lawler, Donald Miller, Lovella Richardson

Statement of Issue: Not all current tax forms and instructions are available at IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC). Taxpayers should be provided with correct hard copy forms and instructions needed to comply with current filing obligations and tax laws.



Proposed Solution: Every IRS walk-in taxpayer assistance site should supply customers' requests for a paper copy of any IRS form (with its instructions) needed to prepare the current year's tax return. This would save time, expense, and frustration for taxpayers, and they would feel that the IRS is trying to help them comply with tax laws and deadlines.

Background: Taxpayers have complained to improvers.org that not all required tax forms are available at IRS walk-in sites. IRS IRM Procedure 21.3.4.9 (12-01-2004) lists ways that taxpayers can receive IRS forms and instructions that are not available at walk-in sites. No provision is made to receive a paper copy on site or in a timely manner without customer access to a computer. Prior years' forms are available in hard copy at IRS walk-in service centers, but not all current ones.

Analysis of the Issue: IRS walk-in sites have a standard stock list of forms they provide at the request of taxpayers. The taxpayer is told to go on-line to access them, call the toll free number to request them, or buy the CD-ROM (which is generally not available timely). The taxpayer cannot walk out of the IRS walk-in site with the required forms and instructions. This may influence the taxpayer to go to a fee based tax preparer for the forms in an accessible and timely manner or miss tax deadlines. It also shifts costs and resource requirements to the taxpayer. Not all taxpayers have the capability of acquiring tax forms on-line.

Benefits and Barriers: Providing all current year forms and instructions to taxpayers generates minimal printing cost to the IRS. Despite easy access to equipment, software, and trained personnel already in place, IRS TAC employees have been instructed not to give taxpayers copies of many requested forms. If taxpayers have all current year forms and instructions needed to meet their filing obligation and deadlines upon leaving the TAC, compliance increases.

Barriers would include the time spent by TAC employees accessing and printing the requested forms and instructions from the internet or the CD-ROM. Obviously, this is time not spent with other taxpayers.



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
May 24, 2005**

Designated Federal Official

- Richard Morris, LTA, Wisconsin

Committee Members Present

- James Abraham, Ohio
- Maureen Amos, Illinois
- Robert Broniarczyk, Illinois
- Paul Duquette, Wisconsin
- Richard Greenberg, Illinois
- Donna Hafer, Kentucky
- May Ann Lawler, Michigan
- Leslie Malcolmson, Michigan
- Donald Miller, Tennessee
- Lovella Richardson, Tennessee
- Ferd Schneider, Ohio
- Teresa Smedley, Indiana, Area 4 Chair

Committee Members Absent

- Larry Behnkendorf, Michigan
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley, Illinois
- Steve Hoffman, Ohio, Area 4 Vice-chair
- Delford Jones, Indiana
- F. Patrick Matthews, Wisconsin
- Joe Meissner, Ohio

TAP Staff

- Sandy McQuin, TAP Program Manager
- Mary Ann Delzer, TAP Program Analyst

Welcome

Smedley welcomed everyone to the call and thanked the members for taking the time to participate.

Roll Call

Quorum was met with 12 members present.

Review Agenda

Two additions were made to the agenda regarding the discussion of elevated issues: Lien Processing and Just in Time.



Area 4 Chair Report

Smedley shared the highlights of the Joint Committee meeting May 13 & 14 in Chicago.

Regarding TAP recruitment, all applicants will be interviewed by phone. Tentatively this is scheduled for the weeks of June 13 and 20.

ACTION: Panel members interested in participating on the interview teams should contact McQuin.

The “What’s on TAP” communication strategy will be discussed by the Communication Committee for possible nationwide implementation.

The announcement that the VITA subcommittee will reside in Area 4 was announced.

Discussion was held around how the election for TAP chair will be handled in November. If there are more than 5 candidates, a run-off election will be held.

The TAP annual meeting will be November 2-5 at a Capital Hill Hotel.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The May minutes were approved with corrections:
Miller was erroneously listed as a member of the RAL subcommittee.

An action item for Mark Pursley to be added with the items he has agreed to provide the VITA subcommittee; General guidelines that IRS developed for partners’ responsibilities, 2005 Quality Assurance results for VITA, IRS assessment of partners, IRS 2006 plan for the VITA program.

Discussion of Elevated Issues

- Innocent/Injured Spouse—(Delzer) No additional news on the issue
ACTION: Coston will follow up on Innocent / Injured Spouse recommendation that has not been received a response.
- Lien issue—(Smedley) Call with program owner was May 2. Concerns cited in recommendation appear to be addressed in the new process.
DECISION: Close elevated Lien issue.
- Just in Time—(Smedley) Original elevated issue addressed timeliness of Package X to preparers, VITA training materials, Forms 5500. This year Package X was timelier. Form 5500 may still be a concern, but would need to be worked now as a separate issue. Issues surrounding availability of VITA training materials should be worked by the VITA Subcommittee.
DECISION: Close elevated Just in Time issue.
- Refund Anticipation Loans—(McQuin) Article in Memphis paper received attention from H&R Block and Robert Weinberger would like to talk with the committee about their RAL program. Olson would like committee to have briefing with TAS attorneys on the issue as well.
ACTION: McQuin to schedule conference call with TAS attorneys to discuss RALs. Request written materials ahead of time.
ACTION: McQuin to schedule conference call with Weinberger, H&R Block, to discuss RALs.
ACTION: Meissner to prepare RAL survey for the Low Income Tax Clinics.



- Customer Service—(Delzer) Recommendation will be ready for full committee consideration in June.
- Form 990—(Duquette) Previous response received from Miller was reviewed. Awaiting research requested from Delzer.
ACTION: Delzer to complete Form 990 research as requested.
ACTION: Duquette to set Form 990 conference call.
- VITA—(Miller) Notes from Memphis meeting have been sent out. Awaiting materials promised by program owner.
ACTION: VITA Sub-committee to email Miller with thoughts on further recommendations on VITA.
ACTION: McQuin to contact Sottile for requested VITA information.
ACTION: Delzer to schedule conference call with Billy Hubbard to discuss successful VITA Coalition.
ACTION: Miller to prepare email for all TAP members with invitation to join VITA subcommittee.
ACTION: McQuin to check on dates for writing of the VITA test materials.

New Issues

Committee agreed to table until June meeting.

Outreach

Smedley requested panel members to report to Delzer on outreach activities.

Office Report

McQuin reported on several activities:

- Staff is ranking the 400+ applications this week.
- Phone interviews will be conducted and panel members are asked to volunteer to participate.
ACTION: Committee members to email McQuin if interested in participating in telephone interviews.
- Handelman met with the Commissioner and she will be sending an email to all members with a synopsis of the meeting. Commissioner expressed his interest in meeting with members of TAP at various intervals during the year.
- Tax Forum in Area Four will be in Chicago, August 30-31, 2005, at the Hilton on Michigan Avenue. A great opportunity for panel members to attend.
ACTION: Illinois panel members to email McQuin if interested in attending the Chicago Tax Forum.

Action Items

Delzer reviewed the action items not yet discussed during the meeting. Items still open include:

- Committee members should email Delzer with the number of outreaches you commit to do individually.
- Coston will follow up on Innocent / Injured Spouse recommendation that has not been received a response.



- Delzer to post to TAPSpeak materials received from Pursley.
- Delzer to research no change rate/cycle time on EITC audits.
- Delzer to forward issue to Denise Fayne of Forms and Publications for her consideration.
- Pursley will research E-file rejects and extended time to file. If confirmed to be legislative, Delzer to forward on legislative form.

McQuin discussed the item concerning the Form 5500. This form is actually owned by the Department of Labor, but is used by IRS, SSA and Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation. Commissioner is for a mandatory e-filing requirement. Currently public comment is being sought on the issue.

ACTION: McQuin to email website link for public comment of Form 5500.

DECISION: Keep Form 5500 issue in the parking lot.

McQuin shared that she did talk with Bader of the Office of Taxpayer Burden Reduction for SBSE about the issue concerning non-compliance in the construction industry. SBSE has and does do projects in this area. In regard to creating immediate benefits to filing, this was part of RRA '98. One example is writing check to "U.S Treasury." IRS is continuing to look at these types of issues.

Closing/Assessment/Meeting Adjourned
Next meeting June 28, 2005, 11 a.m. ET.

***These minutes were approved by the TAP Area 4 Committee on Date xxxx**



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Face-to-Face Meeting
Memphis Marriott Downtown
April 25-26, 2005**

Present

- Jim Abraham
- Maureen Amos
- Larry Behnkendorf
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley
- Bob Broniarczyk
- Paul Duquette
- Dick Greenberg
- Donna Hafer
- Steve Hoffman
- Delford Jones
- Mary Ann Lawler
- Leslie Malcolmson
- Joseph Meissner
- Don Miller
- Lovella Richardson
- Ferd Schneider
- Teresa Smedley, Chair

Absent

- F. Patrick Matthews

Staff Present

- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Sandy McQuin, TAP Manager
- Richard Morris, DFO
- Patti Robb, Secretary

Guests

- Donna Wess, Memphis LTA
- Bessie Franklin, Systemic Program Analyst
- Stephanie Young, Senior Analyst
- Dave Flom, Commercial Appeal Newspaper

Welcome / Review Agenda

Smedley welcomed all to the only face-to-face meeting of the Area 4 Committee.

Morris told everyone that they should be hearing from their Local Taxpayer Advocate.

Area 4 Chair Report / TAP Director Report

Smedley stressed the importance of the outreach reports. They are needed so they can be compiled



for the TAP Annual Report. She said that there is a new committee in TAP monitoring the issues that have been elevated and closed. Malcolmson said that when the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) comes to an issue committee, the committee eventually makes a recommendation. The issue is then closed, but the committee doesn't actually know the outcome. We recommend that the issue stay open until we see an outcome or see it come to fruition. If we don't see a firm resolution, it will stay open and be monitored to see the outcome of the recommendation. You will be hearing more from this committee.

McQuin said that recruitment opened on April 1 and will close April 29. At this point, we have very few applicants from Indiana. We contacted applicants from Indiana whose applications were still in draft status and encouraged them to finalize them. As of last Friday, April 22, we still had 300 plus applications in draft.

Coston said we got approval from the Commissioner to have the annual TAP meeting in Washington, D.C. There are currently two hotels interested in hosting the meeting scheduled for November 3-5, 2005. We will also be looking at the agenda to identify more time for the area and issue committee breakouts. Also, we not are taking the month off after the annual meeting. That one month delay was really noticeable.

- Measurements committee – we started looking at what we want to measure. Volume does not drive us, quality does. We will be building our foundation by looking at the organizational profile.
- The TAP staff will be meeting the week of the Joint Committee meeting in May. We are going to look at what drives TAP and then will come back to TAP members and do the same thing.
- Jim Abraham submitted a legislative form and it will be implemented very soon. TAP does not work legislative issues but this is an avenue for members to send the legislative issues and comments forward. The issue will be entered on the System Advocacy Management System (SAMS) database. We can track them this way. We cannot elevate recommendations for legislative issues but the NTA can bring them up in her annual report to Congress. One of the ways she identified her top 20 issues is using SAMS. If you do identify a legislative issue, check the NTA's top 20 list in the report to Congress to see if it has already been mentioned.
- We are still looking at whether the TAP term will be two or three years. The current Charter (which has not been approved at this time) will recommend a three year term. This will work as far as filling one-third of the panel each year. However, we will probably never get to exact numbers.
- Be aware of what TAP was founded on. Make sure your voice is heard and heard effectively. Because of your voice, phone service in the TACs was not discontinued. You were sent the NTA's and the Commissioners comments on closing some of the TACs. Both were sent so you wouldn't be biased. The Joint Committee decided to write a letter to the Commissioner expressing their disappointment at not being contacted for their opinion regarding the closing of the TACs.
- Telefile is going to be done away with completely.
- The Communication Committee is looking at internal and external ways to get the word out about TAP.

Memphis Campus Advocate Report

Donna Wess, Memphis LTA, said there are two types of work in TAS; individual (ICW) case work and systemic work. ICE – sometimes the taxpayer is not treated fairly. We can issue a Taxpayer Assistance Order (TAO) in that instance. The NTA can deal with the systemic problems. If you lose the ability to interact face-to-face, it can be a bad thing. Not everyone has electronic ability and that's where TAS comes in. We are there to break log jams. We are now measured under balanced measures. The NTA ensures that balance exists. What is happening in campuses that will affect you? Right now, some campuses have no work and some have lots of overtime due to the reorganization. The types of work in Memphis right now:



1. One out of every three cases is related to a criminal investigation case. That's probably because of the large volume of people going to bad preparers. However not every taxpayer is innocent in these cases. Stolen identity is a new issue too.
2. Combined annual wage reconciliation is another type of case
3. EITC reconsideration cases
4. High income non-filers – we will file returns for these taxpayers. This usually gets their attention.

Conversation With Mark Pursley, Director, Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) Regarding VITA Issues

As a result of the Area 4 VITA inquiries, Mark Pursley asked Area 4 to take over (be the repository) of TAP VITA issues. The VITA subcommittee will be the centralized place for all VITA issues. Pursley will be the Program Owner for this subcommittee and that is a good thing because he really is the actual decision maker and is very knowledgeable about this issue.

VITA Subcommittee Members:

- Donald Miller
- Paul Duquette
- Dick Greenberg
- Teresa Smedley
- Jim Abraham
- Maureen Amos

Sottile said Coston identified Area 4 as the VITA committee. With issues being consolidated, it will be much easier to respond. The questions and recommendations should be coordinated with Sottile and Pursley. We want this subcommittee to be a sounding board on issues for IRS. This will be a hybrid committee. Coston said that Area 4 seemed to be a catalyst for this issue. They already elevated three recommendations so it should be a good fit. Copies of issues and recommendations would be provided to the Joint Committee but the subcommittee will work directly with Pursley.

Pursley said he has read the recommendations already sent forward.

Don Miller wrote most of the recommendations. He works at a large VITA site and noticed a definite fall off in support from the IRS. The IRS used to arrange for instructors, but now it is left up to the site coordinator to do it. The IRS is also not much help in locally publicizing the VITA site. The sites used to provide forms and publications as a service but last year had a difficult time getting them. We finally had to get help from our local Congressman to get them. Miller said he has spoken to ten to twelve people from other VITA sites and they had the same experiences.

Pursley said that prior to 2000, the business model was a direct model. Revenue agents and revenue officers were allocated to provide support; volunteers, training, software, computers, etc. It was a labor intensive model and they processed 1.1 million returns. SPEC was created in 2000. We adopted a partner or intermediary model and there were shared values. We expanded to include financial literacy. Partners would have initiative to support these and it would enhance the substance of these programs. This year we will do more than 2.1 million returns. We have greatly expanded the capacity of partners and have a broader array of bases. We do not have the wherewithal to provide training to everyone and there is a narrow window for training.



There is:

1. community based voluntary preparation
2. military based voluntary preparation
3. AARP
4. tax law training
5. software training

Everyone wants training in the same time-span. We do not have the resources to train everyone. Now we have "train the trainer." We would train the partners and they in turn would train the volunteers. As far as resources, our overall staff count is reduced. Monies spent have been steady or increasing. We have decreased the amount of time spent training. We support 280 community base coalitions and the demands have expanded dramatically. Resources have not. Only in a relative sense has it gone down.

Miller said the business model makes conceptual sense. Part of the problem may be finding a strong partner. TCE seems to work very well because AARP is a strong supporter.

Pursley said you need a partner to take a strong leadership role. A significant number of coalitions have finished their fourth filing season. There needs to be a driving force. The organization needs to see a business value worth investing in.

Greenberg asked how you know VITA sites have volunteers strong enough to train to certification.

Pursley said they endorse the VITA test. A volunteer must take the training and test before they gets put on the list. One element of our quality is to check names if a volunteer is at a site. We do have a formal checks and balances. In about 98 percent of the cases, we have found volunteers are certified. If they aren't certified, they are removed from tax preparation. There are over 14,000 sites.

Miller asked if there is a document that describes duties.

Pursley said yes there is and he will send it out to the committee.

Miller said that local IRS offices did not know where the VITA sites are and the hours in many cases.

Pursley said based on the survey, less than 4 percent of individuals learned about the VITA site from publicity. The majority (over 40 percent) is by word of mouth. Posters, flyers, and media are a distant third. Many of these sites currently work to their capacity. If the IRS attempted to increase publicity, would the sites be able to accommodate more filers? The feedback we got is we are turning away more folks than are filling our chairs. We defer to partners regarding publicity. Regarding hours and publicity services, it is very hard because of all the variables in play. There is so much flux in the program. The best source of information is the partner itself. You need enormous diversity and ability to reach a great many people.

Schneider said we need to recruit local partners. Is there a system in place that would have an interest in supporting low income?

Pursley said yes, there is a strategic partnership. He will share the list of national partners. They provide strategic information structures, access and local support through affiliates. They are a critical and key part of the program.

Miller said it would help if we knew what the partners and the IRS can provide.

Pursley said these are general guidelines and not specific. The territory manager has discretion how to apply their resources. Things can change dramatically from year to year.



Meissner said he works with LITC and asked about VITA filling out Schedule C.

Pursley said our policy is not to do returns if we are not trained and we do not train to do Schedule Cs. We train in basic, wage earning and pension.

Meissner asked if VITA sites are trained enough to recognize retirement savings credit.

Pursley said issue should be recognized by trained volunteers.

Greenberg said he has been with AARP for 14 years and just recently have had trouble getting forms.

Pursley replied that our general position is providing services. In terms of resource materials, SPEC supplies those; however, they are shifting to obtaining forms electronically.

Abraham mentioned that there is a very short window after April 15 to e-file. Due to rejects, they do paper returns the last two weeks of the filing season. Is there any way to extend beyond the seven days to resubmit rejects? He said he submitted this issue before but was told it is legislative.

Pursley responded that he didn't know but would find out. AARP has done an extraordinary job. As we go through our assessment process, he would like to share with you. Have formal partners and would like to provide you with training, product development, and tap into your insight by sharing.

Smedley said that three Area 4 panel members were involved in improving training materials last year. Can we do it again this year?

Pursley said yes, that is a win-win situation. That would probably be late May or early June. Sottile said she would be in touch with McQuin.

Miller said the subcommittee will discuss this during the breakout session this afternoon. We will be getting information from Pursley so should put off making decisions until we receive these materials.

Pursley offered to call in during the subcommittee conference calls.

Coston said this is a unique opportunity.

ACTION: Pursley to provide the VITA subcommittee the following:

- **General guidelines that IRS developed for partners' responsibilities.**
- **2005 Quality Assurance results for VITA**
- **IRS assessment of partners**
- **IRS 2006 plan for the VITA program**

ACTION: Delzer to post to TAPSpeak materials received from Pursley.

Discussion of Current Issues

- **Form 990 – Delzer**
Haven't done much since we reopened this issue. Duquette has volunteered to be the chair of this subcommittee. We sent recommendations and received a response from Steve Miller, Exempt Organization. Feel the recommendations were never implemented. Team - Duquette, chair, Abraham, Malcolmson, Meissner, Lawler, and Hoffman



- **Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL) – Meissner**
There are 12 million RALs every year. Two-thirds are low income. \$1.5 billion lost in interest (200% to 700%); charges for processing and check cashing charges. \$35 billion given per year in EITC.

Team – Meissner, chair, Schneider, Greenberg, Smedley, Abraham, Amos, Duquette, Broniarczyk, and Malcolmson.
- **Customer Service – Behnkendorf**
The subcommittee has had one call so far. They identified some issues and are gathering information: call center transferring calls; loss of support for VITA; little space on computer files for historical data; forms not available in TAC sites.

Team – Behnkendorf, chair, Duquette, Bell-Stampley, Hafer, Miller, and Richardson.
- **VITA – Miller**
The subcommittee has met once. Delzer said this issue was being worked in another area but Area 4 will coordinate. Will talk to Billy Hubbard, Tax Specialist in SPEC, and Mark Pursley, Director, SPEC. Will come up with a list of recommendations during the breakout sessions this afternoon.

Sub-Committee Breakouts

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Welcome / Announcements / Review Agenda

Smedley said she hoped to review sub-committee accomplishments today.

Discussion of Elevated Issues

- **Lien Processing – Smedley**
There is a conference call on May 2 at 2:30 pm ET. This will be a briefing on centralization. Panel member David Cain from Area 2 will be on the call.
- **Innocent / Injured Spouse**
Still don't have an answer to our recommendation to change the name. Regarding previous suggestion for improvement to Form 8827, Dave Harris, of TAS Systemic Advocacy, requested a copy of Area 4 recommendation. He is working on a team re-writing the form and wanted to present TAP input.

ACTION: Coston will follow up on Innocent / Injured Spouse recommendation that has not been received a response.

New Issues/Review of Parking Lot

2618 – How many “no changes”? How long are they taking on average? This could be a possible notice clarity issue too. Dick Greenberg will take this back to the Notice Committee. Leave in parking lot for now. Review data and update.

ACTION: Delzer to research no change rate/cycle time on EITC audits.

ACTION: Greenberg to share EITC audit issue with the Notice Committee.

2967 – Drop from list.



2971 – Put on legislative form and follow-up from what Mark Pursley is doing. Drop from list.
ACTION: Pursley will research E-file rejects and extended time to file. If confirmed to be legislative, Delzer to forward on legislative form.

3118 – Drop from list. Respond to taxpayer if contact information is available. Area 3 is working this issue.

3130 - Keep in parking lot.
ACTION: McQuin will research to get current status and will report back to the committee.

3198 – Keep in parking lot.
ACTION: Delzer will research EITC and military pay issue and report back at the May meeting.

3200 – Send this issue to the Notice Committee. Respond to the taxpayer with this information.

3203 – Drop.

3204 – Give this issue to the SB/SE Committee. Ask them to give us their response. If we don't feel the response is adequate, we can address it at that time. Keep this in the parking lot.
ACTION: McQuin will contact the SB/SE program owner regarding non-compliance in construction industry.

3205 – Give to SB/SE. Drop.
ACTION: McQuin will contact the SB/SE program owner regarding creating immediate benefit to filing.

3206 – Keep in parking lot.

3411 – Drop.

3459 – Drop.

3461 – Drop. Respond to person to contact broker.

3487 – Delzer will write to the taxpayer. Drop.

3488 – Keep in parking lot (Just-in-Time issue)

3489 – This issue should go to Forms and Pubs to work.
ACTION: Delzer to forward issue to Denise Fayne of Forms and Publications for her consideration.

Sub-Committee (Breakouts) Reports

- VITA Sub-committee – Discussed a conference call with Billy Hubbard. Certification process? Mark Pursley will send information regarding contracts. The volunteers will develop a test in Atlanta. Committee: Bell-Stampley, Abraham, Schneider, Broniarczyk, Miller, Richardson, Meissner, Hafer, and Amos.
ACTION: Delzer to set up a conference call with Billy Hubbard.



- Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL) Sub-committee – Spoke to Betty Martin. The Direct deposit indicator was explained. Have had contact with Randy Swartz, Director, LITC. They are doing a questionnaire and will send to Swartz for his approval. They are looking for RAL ads and looking for ideas about RALs. The Direct deposit indicator seems the best possibility. A summary will be written and sent to the Area 4 members in the next couple weeks.
- Customer Service – Many issues identified were not viable to work. One issue however was identified to work – lack of form availability in Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC).

New Issues

Greenberg said that the IRS states that the average taxpayer spends 29 hours to complete their tax returns. SB/SE has been looking at this. These numbers are over inflated. They (IRS) are coming out with a new formula. These numbers are figured by OMB. The IRS is going to use a new contractor to do the formula for the amount of time taken to complete returns.

ACTION: Greenberg will write up this issue and Delzer will put it in the parking lot until the new formula comes out.

Outreach Report - McQuin

Each individual will come up with an individual strategy. A member from the new Communication Committee will work with each member and committee to develop goals. Outreach can be talking to a neighbor or to a group in your community, at tax forums, LITC sites, etc.

Do you want yours to be formal or informal? When a Local Taxpayer Advocate (LTA) has an outreach, see if you can be included. You need to identify outreach opportunities in your own community. Don Miller suggested getting the strategy developed by the Area 3 Committee last year.

Maureen Amos, Communication Committee, said as they see IRS articles, they are trying to contact the author to follow-up with an article on TAP. If Ad Hoc does not follow up with What's On TAP, Area 4 would like it back. A lot of hard work went into these articles. We identified several publications that were willing to publish our articles. Abraham and Amos are on the Communication Committee and will bring this up to them and report back.

ACTION: Delzer will email the press release template to members.

ACTION: Delzer to send members copies of the Area 3 communication strategy.

ACTION: Committee members should email Delzer with the number of outreaches you commit to do individually.

ACTION: All committee members should complete a speaker report for each outreach and send to Delzer and Smedley. It is important to send these reports to Delzer so she can add them to the database. These reports are used for the annual report.

Office Report – Coston

Bernie thanked everyone for their time and for meeting in Memphis this week. He noticed the rapport between the new and old panel members and cannot tell them apart. He said he is ecstatic that the transition is going so well and applauds the old members and thanked them for their time and dedication. You have set the standard for the new panel members. You are a testament as to how we evolved. It is up to TAP to ensure the voice of the citizens is heard. Keep up this great job. Smedley thanked Coston for coming and said she was comfortable that the new members will pick right up where the old members left off and they will keep right on going. Greenberg said the Citizen Advocacy Panel (CAP) came to be because of RRA98. Then the new administration expanded it to all 50 states



and Puerto Rico and changed the name to Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP). TAP has proven itself and will continue to do so. He said he has a great respect for everyone he has ever met who works for the IRS. They are hard working and very dedicated.

Closing

Morris - it was a great meeting. A face-to-face meeting is a great help.

Broniarczyk - you get much more done at a face-to-face meeting.

Bell Stampley – appreciates being part of the panel. And it helps to meet face-to-face.

Amos – it was a pleasure meeting everyone. The face-to-face really helps to build relationships.

Hafer – feels more connected now. The November meeting was a bit overwhelming.

McQuin – is in awe of all you do as volunteers. A face-to-face meeting means so much more.

Donna Wess – this meeting was great. I learned so much and hope to get together with everyone again.

Abraham – is grateful that Nina Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate, approved the legislative form he devised to elevate legislative issues to her attention. He said he will never forget the staff.

Hoffman – said a face-to-face is so much more beneficial than a conference call.

Miller – agreed with Hoffman and added that two face-to-face meetings would be even more beneficial.

Malcolmson – volunteers a lot and is so impressed with TAP. Thanks to all.

Richardson – impressed with the knowledge and expertise of everyone on the panel.

Delzer – thanked everyone for their attention to all the emails she sends them.

Meissner – has been on the Panel for three years and feels like there is a lot of work to be done yet. Taxes are the lifeblood of the US. Many dreams come with everyone when you join TAP. Everyone finds a way to contribute. It is very positive and rewarding. He thanked the IRS staff. They were always responsive, particularly Delzer. She responds immediately.

Jones – agrees with Meissner and Abraham. He thanked his fellow panel members, the staff, and the Chair.

Behnkendorf – was glad to have a chance to get together. They made a lot of progress.

Duquette – TAP is one leg of a three legged stool. VITA and TCE are the other two legs. He feels he is contributing something.

Schneider – the collective energy has caused him to want to do more. He said he couldn't wait to go home and get some things done. The meeting inspired him.

Lawler – there is great value in a face-to-face meeting. Feels reinvigorated with the panel.



Smedley – being the Chair has been easy. The staff and you make the job easy. This Area will come up with good options. Thank you for making me look good. The energy has been palpable these past two days. And we still have six months to go.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
March 22, 2005**

Present

- Jim Abraham
- Maureen Amos
- Larry Behnkendorf
- Bob Broniarczyk
- Paul Duquette
- Dick Greenberg
- Donna Hafer
- Steve Hoffman
- Delford Jones
- Leslie Malcolmson
- Joseph Meissner
- Don Miller
- Lovella Richardson
- Ferd Schneider
- Teresa Smedley, Chair

Absent

- Bell-Stampley, Adrienne
- Mary Ann Lawler
- F. Patrick Matthews

Staff Present

- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Sandy McQuin, TAP Manager
- Richard Morris, DFO
- Patti Robb, Note taker

Welcome / Review Agenda

There are no changes to the agenda.

Roll Call

Quorum met.

Chair Report

- **Joint Committee Report** — If you have identified any recipients for the TAP annual report, please forward the names to Delzer.

ACTION: Everyone needs to identify recipients for the TAP annual report. We will compile a master list and will use the list for recruitment too. Email your list to Delzer.

National Office is still looking for feedback on the recruitment process.



ACTION: Please send your comments on feedback and recruitment to Delzer. She will consolidate and forward.

- **Face-to-Face Meeting Planning** — Robb did a roll call and asked each member if they were attending, if they were driving or flying, and if they planned to take the Campus tour. The meeting dates are April 25-26, 2005. Travel to Memphis on Sunday, April 24 and if possible, travel home Tuesday evening. If flights are not available on Tuesday evening, then you will return home on Wednesday, April 27, 2005.

Public Input

None

Discussion of Elevated Issues

- Lien Processing — McQuin stated Received response from SBSE that program owner is available to talk with Area 4. Was invited to the conference call and not able to attend.

ACTION: Delzer will contact Lien Processing program owner to arrange conference call with the committee.

- Innocent/Injured Spouse — Still waiting for IRS response.

Discussion of Current Issues

Area 4 Subcommittee Assignments

- **Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL)**
Joe Meissner, Chair, Maureen Amos, Jim Abraham, Leslie Malcolmson, Robert Broniarczyk, Delford Jones

The subcommittee met yesterday. They are still gathering information and updating materials. Looking to approach LITCs to gather information on their experiences. Delzer is looking into the policy of the IRS regarding the debt indicator. We plan to make recommendations and stay within the scope of TAP.

- **Customer Service Training / Record of Contact**
Larry Behnkendorf, Chair, Donna Hafer, Lovella Richardson, Donald Miller, Paul Duquette, Adrienne Bell-Stampley

The subcommittee met yesterday and identified some issues. Who can answer what questions on the toll-free? Asking to see the telephone transfer policy. When taxpayers call following up on prior calls, there is no narrative found on the computer file to assist the employee. Problem with timely responses as taxpayers just receive stall letters. Committee needs subject matter experts (SME) for these issues and McQuin has forwarded this request to Coston.

- **Penalty and Interest**
Pat Matthews, Chair, Dick Greenberg, Ferd Schneider, Steve Hoffman, Teresa Smedley

The subcommittee met and discussed the issue. The penalty and interest calculations IRS gives taxpayers is not sufficient for taxpayers to determine the accuracy. Change in law will require IRS to include complete penalty and interest calculation with notices. Contractor is currently working on the draft of this attachment. Committee closing the issue.



ACTION: Delzer to secure draft of Penalty and Interest attachment for consideration by Area 4.

- **Form 990 – Revisited**
Jim Abraham, Leslie Malcolmsen, Paul Duquette, Joe Meissner (chair still needs to be identified)

Delzer asked if the committee wanted to revisit this issue. Recent Senate hearings indicated that the Form 990 needs reworking. Malcolmsen said they already made their recommendations and received a response, but should review to see what has transpired. Abraham said he would like to look at this issue again.

New Issues

Miller did an outreach to about 120 people involved in VITA and the number one complaint was the declining support from the IRS to the VITA and TCE sites. Is this a budgetary problem? It is starting to affect the volunteers to these programs. Smedley asked if the IRS runs and gives grants to VITA? McQuin said there is no monetary grant, as the idea is to be a partnership. Schneider said that TCE is co-sponsored by AARP and funded by them. No national group has partnered or sponsored with VITA.

Don Miller, Chair, Ferd Schneider, Dick Greenberg, Teresa Smedley, Jim Abraham (volunteered by Dick Greenberg) Leslie Malcolmsen, Maureen Amos, Paul Duquette

ACTION: Miller and Delzer will schedule a conference call to for the VITA subcommittee.

ACTION: Contact ID 3453 – If caller left contact information, Delzer will respond. The Olympia Fields, Illinois, office is no longer a walk-in office.

Outreach (see [Attachment One](#))

Morris reiterated the mission of TAP, to solicit and collect new issues. Panel members are not to express their personal thoughts while representing the Panel.

Meissner – Met with LITC Coalition.

Broniarczyk – Spoke to senior citizen group and they would like to see publications and forms in large print.

Smedley – Spoke at a local rotary club to about 25 people.

Jones – Attended meeting of his State Legislature.

Office Report

McQuin gave an update on recruitment. The application will be available on-line on April 1. We are trying to steer applicants to apply on-line as opposed to using the paper application. We will be sending members information and posters. We will be recruiting from every state so we can build up the alternate pool. We may be coming to request your help when we start interviewing. All interviews will be done by telephone this year due to budget concerns.

Greenberg asked what has happened to What's On TAP?

ACTION: McQuin will follow up with the Communication Committee regarding dissemination of What's On TAP.

Miller asked where we are as far as measuring TAP?

ACTION: McQuin will follow up on TAP Measurements team.



Meeting Adjourned

ACTION ITEMS:

Members:

1. **1. Identify recipients for the TAP annual report. We will compile a master list and will use the list for recruitment too. Email your list to Delzer.**
2. **Please send your comments on feedback and recruitment to Delzer. She will consolidate and forward.**

Delzer:

1. **Will contact the taxpayer to see if he has received his 1040 package in the mail.**
2. **Will contact Lien Processing program owner to arrange conference call with the committee.**
3. **To secure draft of Penalty and Interest attachment for consideration by Area 4.**
4. **Miller and Delzer will schedule a conference call to the VITA subcommittee.**
5. **To Contact ID 3453 – If caller left contact information, Delzer will respond. The Olympia Fields, Illinois, office is no longer a walk-in office.**

McQuin:

1. **Will follow up with the Communication Committee regarding dissemination of What's On TAP.**
 2. **Will follow up on TAP Measurements team.**
-



Attachment One

Speaker Reports for Area 4

Report from 02/01/2005 to 03/17/2005

Member(s)/Staff Assigned:			Miller		Delzer
Date of Entry:		2/10/2005	Organization:		Tellico Village Homeowners
Date of Event:		2/10/2005	Site of Presentation:		
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	60
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					
Audience mostly retired, mid to upper income people.					

Member(s)/Staff Assigned:			Miller		Delzer
Date of Entry:		2/13/2005	Organization:		IRS Employee, retired
Date of Event:		2/13/2005	Site of Presentation:		
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	1
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					



Member(s)/Staff Assigned:		Miller		Delzer	
Date of Entry:	2/15/2005	Organization:		Tellico Village Chrysler Club	
Date of Event:	2/15/2005	Site of Presentation:			
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	20
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					
Retired, professional Chrysler employees.					

Member(s)/Staff Assigned:		Miller		Delzer	
Date of Entry:	2/16/2005	Organization:		Episcopal Church	
Date of Event:	2/16/2005	Site of Presentation:			
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	7
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business	Discussion Group	
	Discussion Group				
Speaker Comments:					



Member(s)/ Staff Assigned:			Miller		Delzer
Date of Entry:		2/26/2005	Organization:		IRS Employee, retired
Date of Event:		2/26/2005	Site of Presentation:		
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	0
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		

Member(s)/ Staff Assigned:			Miller		Delzer
Date of Entry:		3/3/2005	Organization:		IRS Employee, retired
Date of Event:		3/3/2005	Site of Presentation:		
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	1
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					



Member(s)/Staff Assigned:		Broniarczyk		Delzer	
Date of Entry:		3/7/2005		Organization:	
				Alumni of the Romeoville Police Department	
Date of Event:		3/7/2005		Site of Presentation:	
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	30
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					
I explained the history of TAP, what TAP is, what TAP isn't, some elevated recommendations, and a question and answer period. Also, I distributed bookmarks and pens. The group was surprised and appreciative of the fact that 100 volunteers would expend their time and energy to improve the IRS on behalf of all citizens. Also, their main concern was that RAL's for EITC recipients should be prohibited by the government.					

Member(s)/Staff Assigned:		Miller		Delzer	
Date of Entry:		3/7/2005		Organization:	
				Technical Society of Knoxville	
Date of Event:		3/7/2005		Site of Presentation:	
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	15
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					
This is a group of professional people (mostly engineers and scientists and a couple CPA's). About 15 people were present. Many of these folks are pretty adept with numbers and complex calculations but even they complained about the complexity of the forms and instructions. I realize this is nothing new and is a common complaint across the country, but I think it's particularly telling coming from a group like this. Many of them prepare their own returns and were not aware of the existence of Pub 17. Those who were suggested that the IRS should publicize it more since it's a big help to those who do their own returns.					



Member(s)/Staff Assigned:		Broniarczyk		Delzer	
Date of Entry:	3/10/2005	Organization:		Grand Haven Homeowners Assoc.	
Date of Event:	3/10/2005	Site of Presentation:		Grand Haven Lodge	
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	200
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					
I explained the history of TAP, what TAP is, what TAP isn't, some elevated recommendations, and a question and answer period. Also I distributed bookmarks, letter openers, pads, and pens. The group was appreciative of the fact that TAP exists and the toll free number were they could contact TAP with their IRS concerns. Many questions were asked but the most prevalent was what are the guidelines necessary to be eligible for EITC.					

Member(s)/Staff Assigned:		Miller		Delzer	
Date of Entry:	3/10/2005	Organization:		TN Ruritan Club	
Date of Event:	3/10/2005	Site of Presentation:			
Subject/Purpose of Program:					
Type of Presentation:			Type of Group:		Total Audience:
Fair/Expo Booth	Seminar	Forum	Individual	Other	19
Media Interview	Speech	Other	Business		
Speaker Comments:					
This is a service club like Kiwanis, Lions etc. Again, I heard the complexity complaint -- specifically about Sch. D page 2 and the Sch D Tax Worksheet. Also the Instructions for Form 1040. Re Sch D page 2, it's been improved over prior years with the addition of the Worksheet but there may be room for a little more simplification for those whose only Cap Gains are from selling securities. I'll give this a little more thought and if I can come up with something a bit more specific, I'll table it as an issue.					



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
February 22, 2005**

Present

- Jim Abraham
- Maureen Amos
- Larry Behnkendorf
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley
- Bob Broniarczyk
- Paul Duquette
- Dick Greenberg
- Donna Hafer
- Steve Hoffman
- Joseph Meissner
- Don Miller
- Lovella Richardson
- Ferd Schneider
- Teresa Smedley, Chair

Absent

- Delford Jones
- Mary Ann Lawler
- Leslie Malcolmson
- F. Patrick Matthews

Staff Present

- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Sandy McQuin, TAP Manager
- Richard Morris, DFO
- Patti Robb, Note taker

Welcome / Review Agenda

Smedley welcomed everyone.

Roll Call

Quorum met.

Chair Report

- **Joint Committee Report** — There was some concern about the lack of response from the IRS to elevated issues. Committees are to review their issues and responses received. Schneider expressed frustration at the lack of progress in the committee. Abraham said a lack of issues is part of the problem.

The Joint Committee also discussed the meeting satisfaction survey and how to use them. A discussion followed and it was decided it was valuable feedback. Delzer will consolidate all responses and share it with the whole committee.

ACTION:

- 1. If anyone would like to volunteer to work on a team to identify ways to measure TAP, please let Delzer know. She will forward your name to TAP Director Coston.**
- 2. Everyone needs to identify recipients for the TAP annual report. We will compile a master list and will use the list for recruitment too. Email your list to Delzer.**
- 3. National Office is looking for feedback on the recruitment process from last year. Also comment on whether a telephone interview would work. Please send your comments to Delzer. She will consolidate and forward.**

Abraham designed a form to use when elevating legislative issues to NTA Nina Olson. He said he presented it to the Joint Committee during the last conference call. He is going to make a minor revision and will present the final version to the Joint Committee during their next conference call.

- **Face-to-Face Meeting Planning** — Robb did a cost evaluation for a face-to-face meeting in Memphis. Delzer is working on setting up a visit to the Memphis Campus (service center). One option discussed was to travel in Sunday afternoon or evening, meet all day on Monday and until noon on Tuesday, then visit the Campus on Tuesday afternoon and travel home that evening.

ACTION: Delzer will work on setting up a visit to the Memphis Campus. Meeting dates are April 25-26, 2005. Travel to Memphis on Sunday, April 24.

Public Input

None

Discussion of Elevated Issues

- Lien Processing — waiting for response
- Married Filing Separate Income Reporting — IRS response accepted by consensus
- Innocent/Injured Spouse — waiting for response

ACTION: Delzer will send list of subcommittee and members.

Discussion of Current Issues

Area 4 Subcommittee Assignments

- **Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL)**
Joe Meissner, Chair
Maureen Amos
Jim Abraham
Leslie Malcolmson
Robert Broniarczyk
Delford Jones
- **Customer Service Training / Record of Contact**
Larry Behnkendorf, Chair
Donna Hafer
Lovella Richardson
Donald Miller
Paul Duquette
Adrienne Bell-Stampley



- **Penalty and Interest**
Pat Matthews, Chair
Dick Greenberg
Ferd Schneider
Steve Hoffman
Teresa Smedley

New Issues

1. Taxpayer stopped in the Milwaukee TAC office. Needed several forms and out of those, five were not available. He was told to go home and download the forms. This issue was assigned to the Customer Service subcommittee.
2. Taxpayer from Illinois upset that he has not received his 1040 package in the mail. They were mailed out to Missouri, why not Illinois? Delzer said the IRS sent the forms to the Post Office to mail out. It was up to them to get them delivered. You may not get the forms in the mail depending on how you filed last year.

ACTION: Delzer will contact the taxpayer (#2 issues) to see if he has received his 1040 package in the mail.

Outreach

Please remember to submit outreach reports for each outreach done. They will be added to the minutes after each meeting.

Meeting Adjourned

ACTION ITEMS:

Members:

1. **If anyone would like to volunteer to work on a team to identify ways to measure TAP, please let Delzer know. She will forward your name to TAP Director Coston.**
2. **Everyone needs to identify recipients for the TAP annual report. We will compile a master list and will use the list for recruitment too. Email your list to Delzer.**
3. **National Office is looking for feedback on the recruitment process from last year. Also comment on whether a telephone interview would work. Please send your comments to Delzer. She will consolidate and forward.**

Delzer:

1. **Delzer will work on setting up a visit to the Memphis Campus. Meeting dates are April 25-26, 2005. Travel to Memphis on Sunday, April 24.**
2. **Delzer will contact the taxpayer (#2 issues) to see if he has received his 1040 package in the mail.**
3. **Delzer will send list of subcommittee and members.**



**Area 4 Committee Meeting Minutes
Conference Call
January 25, 2005**

Present:

- Jim Abraham
- Maureen Amos
- Larry Behnkendorf
- Adrienne Bell-Stampley
- Bob Broniarczyk
- David Cain
- Paul Duquette
- Dick Greenberg
- Donna Hafer
- Steve Hoffman
- Delford Jones
- Mary Ann Lawler
- Leslie Malcolmson
- Patrick Matthews
- Joseph Meissner
- Don Miller
- Lovella Richardson
- Ferd Schneider
- Teresa Smedley, Chair

Staff Present

- Mary Ann Delzer, Program Analyst
- Sandy McQuin, TAP Manager
- Richard Morris, DFO
- Patti Robb, Note taker

Guests

- Bob Meldman

Welcome / Review Agenda

Smedley welcomed the new members to their first meeting. She asked all to identify themselves before speaking.

Roll Call

Everyone present. Quorum met.

Announcements / Approve Minutes

The Joint Committee conference call was Wednesday, January 7, 2005.

- Director Coston explained to the Joint Committee that there was a change in the TAS alignment. TAP will mirror the Areas in TAS. Area 4 will be losing David Cain, West Virginia, as that is now part of Area 2. However, we will be gaining the members from Tennessee, Donald Miller and Lovella Richardson.



- There was also an announcement that there were a few changes made to the charter. You will all be receiving one copy of the 2004 annual report. You can contact the office for availability of more copies.
- Due to budget constraints, each committee will only have one face-to-face meeting this year. We have to decide when and where to have it. DFO Morris suggested that the meeting be in Memphis as it has a campus. The original dates discussed were April 24-26 or August 28-30. Schneider that since we only get one chance for a face-to-face, lets not waste a half day traveling – we should meet for two full days. McQuin pointed out that the August meeting will conflict with the Tax Forum in Chicago.

ACTION: Delzer will notify the committee when decision is made concerning attendance at the Tax Forums.

The committee decided to move the meeting to Memphis, but will choose the dates during the February meeting.

ACTION: Robb will prepare a cost estimate for the Memphis meeting.

Public Input

None

Discussion of Old Issues

Prior issues that area 4 addressed were explained.

1. Lien Processing – waiting for response
2. Married Filing Separate Income Reporting – waiting for response
3. Innocent/Injured Spouse – waiting for a response
4. Notification of Non-Requesting Spouse – response received
After discussion, committee accepted IRS response and agreed to close issue.
5. Innocent Spouse Outreach - Meldman recommended that our concerns go to the American Bar Association (ABA) as individuals. TAP cannot address the ABA. Meissner and Meldman are going to write a joint letter as individual taxpayers. This issue is closed.
6. Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) –A subcommittee will this issue; Meissner (Chair), Amos, Abraham, Broniarczyk, Malcolmson.
ACTION: Committee members to send to Meissner experiences they see related to RALs.
7. Just-In-Time – Issue was elevated but did not get a full response. It should have been broken down and sent to different owners. Put in the parking lot and monitor what happens this year. Revisit in May. Abraham said he received his VITA information early this year.
ACTION: Revisit the Just-in-Time issue in May.

New Issues

Since so many new issues are to be considered, will do selection via-mail.

ACTION: Delzer to send email to committee to rank new issues to be worked. Committee members to reply by COB February 3, 2005.

Outreach Report

The outreach report was tabled due to time constraints. All outreach efforts should be sent to Delzer on the report form or via email.

Office Report

McQuin reminded everyone that they **must** get preauthorization before incurring any expenses or you will not be reimbursed. This is a new procedure and all travel must be approved ahead of time.

Issue Committees – if you would like to change from your current issue committee, there is a new “internal” communication committee forming. You will need to notify your issue committee manager by Monday, January 31, 2005.



Maureen Amos and Warren Wong came to Milwaukee for orientation on Friday, January 21, 2005, since they were unable to attend the annual meeting in Washington, DC. "What's On TAP" may be incorporated into the new communication committee.

The TAP annual report can be found at www.improveirs.org

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting is February 22, 2005, 10:00 a.m. CT/11:00 p.m. ET.

ACTION ASSIGNMENTS

- **Delzer will notify the committee when decision is made concerning attendance at the Tax Forums.**
- **Delzer to send email to committee to rank new issues to be worked. Committee members to reply by COB February 3, 2005.**
- **Committee members to send to Meissner experiences they see related to RALs.**
- **Robb will prepare a cost estimate for the Memphis meeting.**