



2006 Meeting Minutes Area 7

- December 12, 2006
 - November 15, 2006
 - September 25, 2006
 - August 29, 2006
 - July 26, 2006
 - June 21, 2006
 - May 24, 2006
 - April 6-8, 2006
 - March 15, 2006
 - February 15, 2006
-

Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Area 7 Face-to-Face Meeting Minutes December 12, 2006

Designated Federal Official

John Tam

Attendance

Charles Davidson
Margaret Ferguson
Greg Gurse
David Jones
Thomas Karwin, Vice Chair
Merijane Lee
Iris Sosa
Howard Stahl
Wayne Tanna
Wayne Whitehead
Doug Wilhelm
Gil Yanuck

Absent

Gary Lundberg

Staff

Judi Nicholas, Program Manager
Janice Spinks, TAP Analyst
Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Opening/Welcome/Announcement

John opened the meeting and thanked Allena Kaplan (in her absence), former TAP member, for her hard work as the Area 7 Chair. Tom reviewed the agenda indicating returning members would be providing an overview of the various components of TAP in relation to Area 7.



Overview of TAP by Returning Members:

- **Monthly Tele-Conferences – Iris Sosa**

The full committee meets the third Wednesday of every month at 2 pm pacific time. The agenda along with applicable pre-read materials are generally posted on TAPSpace one week prior to the meeting. The agenda will also contain the applicable call in information. It is important that members inform staff as soon as possible if unable to attend a meeting.

- **Working Issues – Tom Karwin and Wayne Whitehead**

Issues are generally received via phone or outreach efforts and prioritized by the Issue Sub-committee. When an issue is identified as high priority, the issue is assigned to a sub-committee to be worked. The sub-committee members work with the analyst to research the issue and develop a recommendation. Once a recommendation has been completed and approved by the full committee, it is elevated to the Joint Committee for further review and ultimately to the appropriate operating division within the IRS.

Judi stated each member is expected to participate on at least one sub-committee. A document has been prepared for members to use when research is needed by the analyst. This is to ensure that we focus on key issues and that the research being requested will actually advance the issue.

Action: Janice will email a copy of the Research Request Form to the members.

- **Primary Function of Committees – Gil Yanuck**

An area committee works differently from an issue committee. There are six issue committees within TAP; VITA, Ad Hoc, EITC, Notices, Burden Reduction, and the TAC issue committees, all of which receive their objectives directly from the IRS program owners. The IRS provides the issue committees with specific topics to research and work. The intent is to provide a recommendation directly to IRS without approval by the TAP Joint Committee. In addition to the six issue committees, the Communication Committee works on TAP communication issues.

Area committees receive their issues directly from taxpayers. It is also vital to perform outreach. Outreach helps to get the word out about TAP. It also provides an opportunity for taxpayers to provide suggestions to TAP members.

- **Reporting Outreach Information – Margaret Ferguson**

Each member is required to complete a report of monthly outreach activities and provide it to the analyst. Prior to the due date, the analyst will send a reminder notice along with a template outlining the information that is to be reported. Members may submit their outreach report by email to the analyst. At the end of the month, the outreach report is included in the monthly report that is submitted to the Joint Committee by the Area Chair.

- **Member Participation – Doug Wilhelm and Wayne Tanna**

Member participation is vital in order for TAP to succeed. Members should not hesitate to ask for assistance if they are unclear about an issue or process. Partnering with the Local Taxpayer Advocate is a great way of participating in outreach.

- **Face-to-Face Meetings – Greg Gurse**



Members normally have one face-to-face meeting for their respective area. Meetings are typically held in states where members reside. Past Area 7 meetings have been held in San Francisco, Fresno, and Los Angeles.

During a face-to-face meeting, the committee members discuss various issues and topics. In addition, members gather in their assigned sub-committees to analyze issues and develop potential recommendations which could be elevated to the IRS.

In 2007, potential face-to-face locations are Reno, NV, Sacramento, CA, and San Diego; CA. Staff is working on securing a location based on availability and cost.

Decision: The full committee agreed to meet on April 19, 20 and 21, 2007.

Action: Janice will send an e-mail confirming the dates and locations of the meeting.

Area 7 Meeting Schedule for 2007

The members agreed to continue meeting on the third Wednesday of every month at 2 pm pacific time. The next Area 7 teleconference is scheduled for January 17, 2007 at 2 pm pacific time.

Report on Joint Committee Meeting

Tom reported that he attended the Joint Committee teleconference on December 6, 2006. Notes were prepared and can be found on TAPSpace.

Tom also explained that the annual Area 7 Self Assessment report is due on December 31, 2006. The TAP Chair consolidates all reports from each area and issue committee to create the TAP Annual Report.

One issue discussed during the Joint Committee meeting is the issue tracking process. Tom indicated the Joint Committee is hoping to improve this process. The Joint Committee would like to ensure that recommendations submitted to the IRS are monitored and followed up on if TAP does not receive a response. Bernie Coston, TAP Director, is working with IRS executives on the status of recommendations that have been elevated to date.

Setting a Quorum

The full committee agreed to continue with the current quorum of 50% plus 1.

Issue Sub-committee Report

Dave provided a brief overview of the Issue Sub-committee. The job of the Issue sub-committee is to evaluate and prioritize new issues coming before Area 7. Additionally, they recommend to the full committee whether an issue remain active, be dropped, or placed in the parking lot. Lastly, the sub-committee monitors the list of active issues in conjunction with the Chair, Vice Chair and TAP Analyst.

Decision: New TAP member MJ Lee volunteered to join the Issue Sub-committee.

Review of Issues

- **Issue #3831 (Non Qualified Stock Option – Duplicate Reporting) – Doug Wilhelm**

Doug provided a brief synopsis of the issue. After discussion among the committee members, the committee agreed it would take a change in federal law to address this issue, thereby making it a legislative matter.



Decision: The full committee agreed with the recommendation to drop the issue.

- **Issue #3980 (Offers-in-Compromise(OIC) – Trust Fund Recovery Penalties) – Margaret Ferguson**

Margaret reviewed and explained the OIC process. John reviewed the analyst notes and feels that the procedure already exists.

Decision: The full committee agreed that based on the information in the IRM, this is a non-issue and agreed with the recommendation to drop the issue.

Election – Chair and Vice Chair

Area 7 Chair, Allena Kaplan, retired as a TAP member. As such, nominations for a new Chair and Vice Chair were accepted and an election was held.

Decision: Wayne Whitehead was elected to serve as Area 7 Chair and Charles Davidson was elected to serve as Area 7 Vice Chair.

Working an Issue

- **3959 (Form 1040EZ – Filing by IRS) – Greg Gurse & Tom Karwin**

Greg provided a brief synopsis of the issue, indicating obstacles they are faced with involve when the IRS receives W2's/1099's. Members provided varying points of view of the issue.

Greg felt that tax preparers may not like the idea of the IRS generating a preliminary tax return because it could potentially take business away. However, if implemented this suggestion could reduce taxpayer burden.

Decision: After discussing the issue, the committee agreed this issue should be continued and researched further. Greg indicated a meeting will be scheduled with the sub-committee to decide what direction to take this issue.

Action: This issue will be added to the agenda for next month's teleconference.

Closing

John thanked all of the members for their participation and indicated he felt it was a productive meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2006**

Designated Federal Official

John Tam

Attendance

Larry Combs
Greg Gurse
Dave Jones
Allena Kaplan, Chair
Iris Sosa
Wayne Tanna
Wayne Whitehead
Doug Wilhelm

Staff

Bernie Coston, TAP Director
Judi Nicholas, Program Manager
Dave Coffman, Program Analyst

Opening/Welcome/Announcements

John opened the meeting and Allena welcomed the members. Dave took roll and a quorum was met.

Message from the TAP Director

Bernie took the opportunity to thank the members for their participation and the hours put into TAP. He stated that each member of Area 7 has done a fantastic job working issues and being an effective contributor to the success of TAP. Bernie also thanked John Tam and the TAP staff for their hard work.

Bernie acknowledged the retiring members and thanked them for their hard work.

Issue Report

- **#3633 (TAC Services – Transcripts)**

Wayne W. explained that the tax transcripts were discontinued in October 2003, when the IRS wanted to refocus the efforts of the walk-in staff. Taxpayers are directed either to: order transcripts by phone, email or drop off Form 4506T (Request for Transcript of Tax Return), or use the Transcript Delivery Service over the internet, which is currently only available for certain practitioners. This issue was introduced in 2005 by the Area 5 committee and a recommendation was elevated to the Joint Committee, where it was approved and elevated to the IRS. However, the IRS did not implement the recommendation because of the volume of tax law assistance needed, and the redirection of the resources to resolve compliance and collection issues.

During the subcommittee meeting, the members recommended that a "user fee" be implemented for transcripts. Janice is researching the recommendation to determine if it would require legislation.

Action: Janice will contact Doug and Wayne when research is complete. The full committee will discuss this issue further during the next teleconference.



- **#3687 (Toll-free and TAC Help for the Self-Employed)**

Wayne explained that the individual made a broad statement when he submitted his issue. The individual stated that self-employed taxpayers are having difficulty receiving consistent and accurate answers from IRS employees, either over the phone or in person. The sub-committee discussed the issue and questioned whether the individual speaks for all self-employed taxpayers. In addition, the sub-committee felt that maybe the individual was shopping around for an answer that he or she wasn't getting.

After reviewing and discussing the comments, the sub-committee recommended a letter be sent to the individual thanking him for contacting the IRS and that improvement in this area are on going.

Decision: The Committee members agreed that the issue be dropped and a letter be sent to the taxpayer.

- **#3731 (Form 1099 – Fillable PDF Format)**

Wayne T. explained that Area 1 and Area 3 are already working on a similar issue that involves other fillable forms. The subcommittee felt that since two other area committees are working on this issue, the issue should be dropped.

Decision: The Committee members agreed to drop this issue.

- **#3959 (Form 1040 EZ – Filing by IRS)**

Greg explained that the subcommittee had some questions including whether this issue is legislative. Janice completed research and found that it was not legislative. The sub-committee is doing additional research to see how many 1040 EZs are filed electronically. In addition, Janice explained that W2s are not received by the IRS until the following year via the Social Security Administration. Greg stated that the sub-committee is still deciding if this is an issue that can be worked with a recommendation that could be elevated.

Action: Janice will continue to research this issue.

Issue Sub-Committee Report

Dave J. reported that the sub-committee reviewed three issues; #4000, #3189, and #3920.

Issue 4000 - F. 2290 Payment Schedule

The sub-committee reviewed issue #4000 and recommends that the issue be dropped since it would require legislation to make a change.

Decision: The Committee members agreed that issue #4000 could be dropped

Issue 3189 - IRS certified mail receipt

The sub-committee recommended the issue be dropped with a letter to the taxpayer educating them on IRS mail procedures.

Decision: The Committee members agreed that issue #3189 could be dropped.

Issue 3920 - Form 1099 B

The sub-committee reviewed the issue and felt that legislation was required to make the suggested changes.

Decision: The Committee members agreed that issue #3920 could be dropped.



Joint Committee Report

Allena sent an email that provided a summary of the Joint Committee meeting. Allena asked if there were any questions regarding her email. There were no questions.

Annual Meeting Update

Judi explained that the annual meeting dates were posted on the TAPSpeak calendar and agenda for the meeting is close to being finalized.

Larry indicated that he and Paul Brubaker, TAP Vice Chair, will not be running for the TAP Chair or Vice-Chair positions. Members are encouraged to announce their candidacy for either Chair or Vice Chair. If members have questions, they are welcomed to contact Larry.

2007 Face-to-Face Meeting – location & dates

Judi announced that Marla is looking into Reno, Sacramento and San Diego as possible sites for the 2007 Face-to-Face meeting. At this time there is no further information.

Frequency of Meetings

Tom explained that during the Joint Committee meeting, a question arose on the frequency of committee meetings. A suggestion was made that area committees meet every other month with the expectation that sub-committees meet during the alternate months. The Joint Committee wanted to see if this was worth pursuing with hopes it will help reduce the workload of staff and provide the committees opportunity to work additional issues.

Allena suggested that the committees schedule meetings as needed rather than scheduling meetings every other month. Doug felt that members could accomplish more work if meetings are scheduled every other month and use the committee meetings to report on progress. Bernie explained that committee meetings are required to have a federal register posted 30 days in advance. He suggested that committee meetings be set in advance so that federal register notices are posted timely with the option to cancel a meeting if needed.

Decision: The committee decided to continue the current meeting pattern and will adjust, ad hoc, based on issues being worked. This will be discussed further at the annual meeting for a final determination.

Mentors for New Members

Allena explained that there are eight returning members and four new members. She asked for volunteers to be mentors to the new members. Judi explained that Dave J. has volunteered via email. Tom suggested that the returning members encourage the new members to contact them if there are questions. Judi suggested the returning members provide guidance once a new member is placed in a sub-committee. The new members will have an opportunity to work along side a returning member and get familiar with the issue process.

Decision: All members agreed with Judi's suggestions.

Issue Process

The committee discussed the possibility of working more than 3 issues at a time. Members felt that there should be no reason for the committee to work multiple issues at one time. However, staff felt that when committees take on 7 or 8 issues at one time, prioritizing research could be difficult when one or two of those issues are complex. In addition, the analyst supports additional committees where research may also be needed. A suggestion was made that committee members continue with working 3 issues at one time with hopes that if an issue becomes a non issue, it could be dropped and another issue could be taken on in its place.



Further discussion ensued regarding sub-committees and working issues. A decision was made that an issue champion will serve as a sub-committee lead. Further, a champion will not work an issue "solo".

Member Comments/Other Business

Allena explained that the self assessment is due at the end of December. Allena solicited comments from members and asked that those comments be emailed. Allena also explained that she will provide a draft before November 30.

No other comments were discussed. John thanked the members and closed the meeting.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Teleconference
September 25, 2006**

Designated Federal Official

- John Tam

Attendance

- Larry Combs
- Margaret Ferguson
- Dave Jones
- Allena Kaplan, Chair
- Tom Karwin, Vice Chair
- Iris Sosa
- Wayne Whitehead
- Doug Wilhelm
- Gil Yanuck

Absent

- Greg Gurse
- Wayne Tanna

Staff

- Judi Nicholas, Program Manager
- Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Opening/Welcome

John opened the meeting. Allena welcomed the members and announced that she will be ending her term, as a TAP member, the end of November. Tom reviewed the agenda and no changes were made. Roll call was completed and a quorum was met.

Issue Report

- **#3552 (Form SS-4 – Electronic Application)**
It was brought to the committee's attention that many of the changes in the recommendation had been made by the IRS recently. Iris recommends that using certain common symbols should be added to the current enhancements. A discussion about how to elevate the suggestion followed.

Doug suggested the recommendation could acknowledge that there were a large number of deficiencies on the form which were corrected by the IRS. The recommendation from issue # 3552 would recognize a few that weren't corrected.



Decision: After further discussion, the full committee agreed to rewrite the recommendation and elevate it through the Joint Committee.

Action: The sub-committee will rewrite the recommendation to allow special characters, such as the number symbol (#) and periods (.) to be put into the address field. Additionally, the sub-committee recommends a feature where the user can roll their mouse over a section where a hyperlink to instructions will appear.

Decision: The full committee agreed to elevate the recommendation without further review. Tom will take recommendation to the Joint Committee face-to-face meeting in Dallas.

- **#3363 (TAC Mail Procedures)**
Tom explained that Dave found no reference to a "duty officer" in the Internal Revenue Manual. Tom will edit the referral to delete any reference to a duty officer.

Decision: All agreed to forward the recommendation to the Joint Committee in time for their October face-to-face meeting.

Action: Allena asked the members to communicate with the staff and other members, a week before a meeting, if they are unable to attend a meeting. The absent member should ask another member to provide an update on the absent member's issue. This will help keep the committee informed.

- **#3633 (TAC Services – Transcripts)**
John thought this issue was worked by another area committee. The other committee made a recommendation to W&I to revisit this issue and W&I responded negatively. John asked if the committee wanted to continue spending time on the issue since the IRS had already replied to the suggestion. Allena explained that an issue can be reworked and stated in a different way. TAP also has an opportunity to address the objections given by the IRS.

Decision/Action: Judi will review the status of the issue and report to Area 7 during the next teleconference. The full committee agreed.

- **Incentive Sub-committee**
Tom explained that the issue has been on hold due to Dave's workload. The sub-committee has some open questions that have not been answered.
- **#3959 (Form 1040EZ - Filing by IRS)**
Allena provided the report and found that Area 2 has a similar issue in their parking lot. Sonny Kasturi, TAP member from Area 2, has agreed to work with Area 7 on this issue. A teleconference will be scheduled in an effort to continue work on this issue.

Tom explained that Sonny sent a suggestion to the IRS office of Taxpayer Burden Reduction. Sonny suggested that the IRS fill out tax returns for taxpayers that have simple reporting requirements. Sonny received the following response from the IRS:

The idea of a "return free" tax system has been a topic of discussion, both in Congress and in the tax community at large. However, there is currently considerable opposition to having IRS prepare returns for taxpayers. In April 2006, Congresswoman Melissa A. Hart (R. Pa) introduced a bill called the "Tax Return Choice Act of 2006," whose purpose is "to limity the development or implementation of a return free tax system." Her bill has the support of several different groups including the Americans for Tax Reform and the Computer and Communications Industry Association. In April 2006, then Treasury Secretary John Snow told Congress that "we (IRS) aren't tax preparation people; we aren't software people. There's a private market out there who does that well."



IRS will currently compute the tax on simple returns after the taxpayer completes certain items on Form 1040. See Publication 967, *The IRS Will Figure Your Tax*, for more information.

Action: Dave and Doug have agreed to work with Tom, Allena, and Greg.

Sub-committee Next Steps/Goals

Allena reviewed the next steps:

- Request the analyst email discussion leaders, a week before the meeting, to ask if he/she plans to attend the teleconference. If not, to have leader designate someone to give the report.

Allena also suggested that other members participate in taking leadership of issues. Allena noted that Margaret and Tom are leaders of two issues. Wayne explained that he and Doug are working with Margaret on a couple of issues in which they are waiting for additional research.

Joint Committee Report

Prior to the teleconference, Allena e-mailed her notes from the Joint Committee teleconference to all members. Allena asked if there were any comments or questions. There were no questions asked or comments made.

Issue Sub-committee Report

Dave will review issues on the October sub-committee teleconference and will have a report during the next Area 7 teleconference. Dave indicated that a decision to drop two issues was not noted in the August minutes.

- 3775 – Dropped
- 3809 – Dropped

Margaret joined the call late and reported on the following issues:

- **#3633 (TAC Services - Transcripts)**
Margaret explained that Dave C. sent some information on a recommendation that was previously submitted. The next step is to find out if the committee would like to move forward. Margaret was not sure how to pursue the issue. Dave Jones felt that the issue sub-committee can review the issue during their next teleconference.

Decision: The issue sub-committee will review issue # 3633 during their next teleconference.

- **#3687 (Toll-Free and TAC Help for the Self-Employed)**
Margaret indicated that there was no new information to report.

NTA 2007 Objective Report

Judi took a few moments to highlight the National Taxpayer Advocate's Objectives Report to Congress.

By law, the National Taxpayer Advocate (NTA) must submit two reports to Congress each year -- the Annual Report to Congress and the Objectives Report. The Objectives Report is delivered each June and contains the goals and activities planned by the NTA for the coming year. The report also identifies the priority issues that NTA, Nina Olson, will address in the coming fiscal year. In the 2007 Objectives Report, the NTA plans to look at the rules governing the use and disclosure of tax return information by return preparers, the requirement for partial payments with the submission of offers-in-compromise, non-hardship effective tax administration offers-in compromise, and the private debt



collection initiative, to name a few. In addition, Nina's report provides goals and activities planned for the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.

Judi felt it was an informative document and suggested that members take the time to read the report.

Member Comments/Other Business

Tom asked Allena to ensure Sonny Kasturi is included in the teleconference for issue # 3959 (Form 1040EZ – Filing by IRS).

Action: Allena will forward Sonny's contact information to Greg Gursej.

Closing

John thanked everyone for their hard work and the meeting was adjourned.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Teleconference
August 29, 2006**

Designated Federal Official

- Judi Nicholas

Attendance

- Larry Combs, CA
- Margaret Ferguson, CA
- Greg Gurse, AK
- Dave Jones, CA
- Allena Kaplan, CA, Chair
- Iris Sosa, CA
- Wayne Whitehead, CA
- Gil Yanuck, NV

Absent

- Tom Karwin, CA
- Wayne Tanna, HI
- Doug Wilhelm, CA

Staff

- Dave Coffman, Analyst
- Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Welcome/Roll Call

Judi opened the meeting and Allena welcomed the members. Roll was taken and a quorum was met. Gil reviewed the agenda.

Joint Committee Report

Allena asked if there were any comments on the Joint Committee report that she e-mailed to the members. No comments were made.

Issue Subcommittee Report Out

Dave Jones provided a review of issues that are currently being worked or considered by Area 7.

- **#3379** – (Estimated Tax Instructions) The subcommittee suggests that the issue be dropped since it unique to the taxpayer's situation.
Decision: All agreed and Dave will send a letter to the taxpayer with the panel's decision.
- **#3708** – (EITC – Enclosure with Utility Bills) Doug Wilhelm was absent and unavailable to provide a report out. **Decision:** Issue will be discussed during Area 7 September meeting.



- **#3775** – (Toll Free Number – Making other Toll Free Numbers Available) The subcommittee suggests that the issue be dropped.
Decision: No decision made during this meeting.
- **#3567** – (Publication 8160-E) The full committee recommends the issue dropped.
Decision: All agreed and Dave will send a letter to the taxpayer with the panel’s decision.
- **#3809** – (Lowered Allowable National Expense Standards)
Action: Dave Jones will research his notes to see if the subcommittee has recommended that the issue be dropped. He will let the full committee know so it can be discussed during a future meeting.
- **#3554** – (Power of Attorney Problems)
Action: Dave Coffman will complete further research.
- **#3955** – (TAC Offices – Lunch Hours) The subcommittee has proposed that the issue be put into the parking lot.
Decision: Issue will be placed in the parking lot.

Issue Report Out

- **#3552 (Form SS-4 Electronic Application) - Iris Sosa**
Iris reported that the referral has been completed and will be forwarded to the Joint Committee.

TAB Phase 1 Blueprint Report

Allena asked Judi to comment on the relationship between TAB and the IRS. Judi explained that TAB, which is the Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint Team, was formed as a result of the IRS’ effort to close some of the 68 Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC) around the country. Congress asked the IRS to study the closure and provide a blueprint for customer’s services for the next five years. TAB consists of employees of the IRS that represent all operating divisions, the lead being Wage and Investment (W&I). TAB has contacted certain stakeholder groups for feedback on IRS services. TAP was included as one of the stakeholders.

Phase one of the report consists of data and demographic gathering. TAB will be using this data in the phase two report, in which they will start making some operational recommendations.

Minutes of the Oversight Board Meeting

Allena reviewed the minutes dated January 25 and February 8, 2006 by Paul Brubaker, TAP Vice-Chair. Gil noted that this discussion closely relates to the TAB but it does not solve the issue. Allena expressed that she was looking for specific solutions of what can be done. Judi explained that phase two of the TAB report will show some solutions. The TAB team needs to complete their research of identifying preferences of customers before they can submit a recommendation. While Judi agreed with Gil, she informed the members that they can expect to see additional information in the report which is due in October.

Allena asked the members to read both the minutes of the Oversight Board meeting and phase one of the TAB report.

Issue Report Out - Continued

- **#3687** (Toll Free and TAC Help for the Self-Employed)
Margaret explained that Dave Coffman is researching the issue. At this time there was no additional information to report.
- **#3633** (TAC Services – Transcripts)
Margaret informed the committee that Dave has completed additional research on this issue. This issue is similar to one that was previously submitted to IRS but was not accepted by IRS. The committee felt it was still worth working.

Action: Margaret will let Dave know what additional information is needed to determine if the committee should move forward on the issue or have it dropped.

Action: Dave will search for the referral that was worked and elevated by one of the other area committees. He will provide Margaret with the referral information.

- **#3363** (TAC Mail Procedures)
Allena provided a brief description of the issue. Dave will research the IRM and provide Tom with information to strengthen the basic argument of the referral. Allena is hoping to include the completed referral in the next monthly report.
- **Incentive Subcommittee**
Tom was not available to provide a report.
- **#3959** (Form 1040 EZ – Filing by IRS)
Greg explained that the subcommittee is waiting for additional research. There could be two additional area committees working issues related to this. The subcommittee is also waiting on data related to the number of 1099 and W-2 forms submitted between January and March. Dave explained that getting this particular information has, so far, been a challenge. Dave informed the members that the requested information may not even be available.

Action: Dave will continue searching for the requested information.

Next Steps – Goals

Allena express her feelings to the full committee that she would like the members to continue making as much progress as possible.

Member Comments

Allena asked the members if there were any additional comments before closing the meeting.

Gil felt that today's meeting is typical of some of the difficulties the committee has in trying to address all the agenda topics in one hour. Gil suggested that the committee re-evaluate the amount of time allocated for each meeting. Judi explained that an hour is not the limit. If members feel that they are being rushed through their topics, a consensus of the full committee can be taken to extend the meeting to 90 minutes. Judi also suggested that the committee could re-arrange their agenda so that issues are discussed at the beginning of the teleconference while other topics, such as the Joint Committee report, TAB report, etc, could be discussed toward the end of the meeting. An added benefit to this would be members that are unable to stay for the full length of the meeting. Topics requiring a decision would be presented earlier in the meeting.

Dave Jones suggested that issues requiring a quorum be put at the beginning of the agenda. Judi felt that was a great idea and Dave Coffman could arrange the agenda accordingly.



Allena asked the members if they found the information on the Oversight Board meeting and the TAB report useful. Some members felt that, even though they may not be able to provide a direct response to the reports, there is value in receiving this information.

Wayne provided some insight on conducting an effective meeting. Wayne explained that there should be a stellar opening, a dynamite closing, and the ability to keep the two elements as close as one can.

Margaret appreciated receiving the status of issues prior to the meeting. She felt it was a refresher.

Allena asked Judi about delays on correspondence sent to taxpayers when a suggestion the taxpayer made was dropped by the committee. Judi explained that letters will be sent out timely once the new analyst comes on board. The office has been short-staffed while one analyst has been working with four committees. A new analyst will be selected for the current vacancy within the next two weeks and will begin working in either late September or early October.

Wayne informed the committee that a teleconference was held to provide feedback and suggestions on the upcoming new member orientation, scheduled for December. Judi added that the staff is exited about the input that they received. The input will enhance future TAP member orientations.

Action: Judi will provide the minutes from the New Member Orientation Suggestions teleconference.

Neither Judi nor Dave will be available for the meeting scheduled for September 20th. Dave suggested scheduling an alternative meeting date.

Action: Judi, Dave and Allena will discuss possible meeting dates and propose their selection to the members via email. The members will then have a chance to indicate their availability.

Closing

Judi closed the meeting. Next meeting to be announced.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Teleconference
July 26, 2006**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- John Tam

Attendance

- Larry Combs
- Margaret Ferguson
- Greg Gurse
- Dave Jones
- Allena Kaplan, Chair
- Tom Karwin, Vice Chair
- Iris Sosa
- Wayne Tanna
- Wayne Whitehead
- Gil Yanuck

Absent

- Doug Wilhelm

Staff

- Judi Nicholas, Program Manager
- Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Opening/Roll Call

John opened the meeting and Allena welcomed the participants. The members reviewed the agenda and roll was taken. A quorum was met.

Allena indicated that she had pictures of the outreach parade that some of the members participated in and will have them posted to TAPSpeak. Judi also suggested that the pictures could also be posted on TAP website.

Joint Committee Report

Tom provided a written report to the members on items that were discussed during the Joint Committee meeting. Allena asked the members if there were questions regarding the report. No questions were asked. Allena suggested that members contact Tom if they have questions.

Allena clarified that the end of the term for committee Chair and Vice Chair is November 30.

Issue Sub-committee Report – Dave Jones

Dave explained that the sub-committee reviewed and prioritized ten issues, two of which they recommended be dropped. Dave Coffman has agreed to send follow up letters to the taxpayers informing them the reason the issue was dropped.



Decision: The committee concurred with the sub-committee's decision about the disposition of the issues reviewed.

Issue Reports

- **3552 (Form SS-4 Electronic Application) Iris Sosa/Allena Kaplan**
Iris explained that she is writing the recommendation for changes to the website application. The written recommendation will be sent to Dave Coffman when completed.

Action: Iris will send a courtesy copy of the recommendation to Allena and Judi.

Action: Allena will include recommendation with her August 10 monthly report to the Joint Committee.

- **#3687 (Toll-Free and TAC Help for Self-Employed) Margaret Ferguson**
Margaret will provide a report on this issue during Area 7 August meeting.
- **#3379 (Estimated Tax Instructions) Wayne Tanna**
Wayne will provide a report on this issue during Area 7 August meeting. Wayne will contact Dave Coffman for additional information.
- **#3363 (TAC – Mail Procedures) Tom Karwin**
Tom has completed a draft of a recommendation that was developed last year. The committee suggested that IRS revise the policy for receiving and retrieving mail brought to walk in sites. The recommendation would have IRS field employees designate someone to accept packages, on their behalf, when they are away from the office. Tom felt there would be no cost to the IRS to implement the plan.

John liked the idea and observed that when a taxpayer walks into a TAC office, they do not draw a distinction between whether they are in a W&I office or SBSE office. The taxpayer just sees it as the IRS office. John suggested that in the W&I procedures, it should direct or refer the taxpayer to the appropriate business unit within the IRS. Judi agreed and explained that most agents are in SBSE or LMSB.

Tom would like a copy of the IRM/Directive that provides the package/mail procedures for revenue officers to reference it in the recommendation. John stated that the recommendation should suggest that W&I include "accepting packages for other business units" in their instructions to employees to help reduce the burden to taxpayers.

Margaret explained that normally there is a "Duty Officer" available when the agent is out of the office. Judi suggested that the recommendation include a reference to the duty officer.

Action: Dave Coffman will send a copy of the IRM reference to Tom.

Tom also suggested that it should be noted in the recommendation that if the IRS does not provide a clear back up plan, and is responsible for the taxpayer missing the deadline, then the IRS should provide an automatic extension of the deadline.

Action: The members will provide additional comments to Tom's recommendation via email.

- **#3633 (TAC Services – Transcripts) Margaret Ferguson**
Margaret will provide a report on this issue during Area 7 August meeting.



- **Incentive Sub-committee – Tom Karwin**
Tom explained the IRS is conducting inquiries for ways of improving the service. Dave is working on researching this issue further.
- **1040EZ Study Sub-committee**
Greg explained that the sub-committee will be having a teleconference on July 27.

Elections

Allena explained that the Joint Committee discussed options about when to hold elections for TAP Chair and Vice Chair. Allena sent an email with suggestions to all committee members.

Decision: The committee agreed with the suggestions contained in the email.

Sub-committee Next Steps/Goals

Allena asked the members to continue working on issues.

Gil asked if members reviewed the posting of the IRS Oversight Board's minutes on TAPSpeak. He observed that many of the items discussed are issues being looked at by TAP committees.

Action: Dave Coffman will email to all members, web links for the following documents:

- Beth Tucker's testimony on Burden Reduction
- TAB Blueprint Report
- Nina Olson's Report to Congress

Allena said that time will be allocated to discuss these topics during the August meeting.

Closing

Allena thanked the members for their participation and John closed the meeting.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Teleconference
June 21, 2006**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Judi Nicholas

Attendance

- Larry Combs, CA
- Margaret Ferguson, CA
- Greg Gurse, AK
- Dave Jones, CA
- Allena Kaplan, Chair, CA
- Tom Karwin, CA
- Iris Sosa, CA
- Wayne Tanna, HI
- Wayne Whitehead, CA
- Gil Yanuck, NV

Committee Members Absent

- Doug Wilhelm, CA

Staff

- Dave Coffman, Analyst

Welcome/Announcements

Allena welcomed the members. The members reviewed the agenda. Roll was taken and a quorum was met.

Joint Committee Report

Allena produced a report from the Joint Committee that was e-mailed to the members. Allena indicated that Tom will be attending the Joint Committee face-to-face meeting in Denver.

Issue Sub-committee Report

Dave Jones provided a review of the issues that were worked in the sub-committee.

- Issue 3485 – Non-profit Organization Filing Requirement
This issue is on hold pending background research by Doug Wilhelm.
- Issue 3779 – Fraud Hotline – Leaving Messages
The sub-committee has recommended the issue be dropped because there was not enough information from the caller.
- Issue 3809 – Lowered Allowable National Expense Standards
This issue is on hold pending additional research by Dave Coffman



- Issue 3830 – Require Brokers to Withhold Taxes on All Sales
The sub-committee recommends the issue be dropped because brokers may not know the cost basis of the stocks and funds sold.
- Issue 3831 – Non-qualified Stock Options – Duplicate Reporting
The sub-committee has put the issue on hold until their July teleconference.
- Issue 3881 – Form 3949-A
The sub-committee recommends the issue be dropped. Research shows that a Social Security number is not required to report an alleged fraud.
- Issue 3943 – Audits – Claiming Business Mileage
This issue is on hold pending additional research by Dave Coffman
- Issue 3364 – Income Rounding
This issue has been placed in the parking lot
- Issue 3567 – Publication 8160-E
This issue has been placed in the parking lot

Dave Jones concluded that the committee has ten active issues and seven new issues, of which three were recommended to be dropped.

Judi asked if it would be helpful for members to receive, prior to the meeting, a list of issues and what the sub-committee is recommending rather than reviewing each issue during the call.

Decision: The members agreed and Dave Jones will provide a chart that will list the issue number, issue name, a brief description, and the sub-committee's recommendation as a pre-read document prior to the Area 7 meeting.

Decision: All recommendations made by the sub-committee will be approved by consensus of the full committee.

Issue Report

- **Issue 3552 – Form SS-4 Electronic Application**
Iris explained the recommendation and suggested that issue 3552 be elevated to the Joint Committee.

Judi informed the members that, before a referral is elevated to the Joint Committee, all members of Area 7 should have a chance to review and approve the referral. Iris explained that she provided Allena with a draft. Allena replied that she is on the Joint Committee Quality Assurance Sub-committee and she has made necessary changes.

Action: Iris will send the referral to Dave Coffman. Dave will forward the document to the full committee with a response date.



Other Active Issues Review

Dave Coffman briefly reviewed the list of Area 7's active issues.

- Sub-committee A is the issue owner of issue #3579. Dave explained that further research is required.
- Sub-committee B is working on issue #3687.
- Sub-committee C has the following issues:
 - #3379 – Dave recently sent research to the sub-committee
 - #3731 – Research is being gathered on this issue. Dave noted that this issue may actually involve legislation
 - #3773 and # 3775 – Dave is working on the research for this issue

Judi explained that she had a conversation with Nancy Ferree, Florida TAP Program Manager for Ad Hoc. The Ad Hoc issue committee has been charged with a strategy and action plan that was developed by the Taxpayer Advocate Service to deal with the issue related to financial literacy. Judi recommend that Area 7 forward issue #3773 (Education – Tax Law Education in Schools) to the Ad Hoc committee.

Decision: Members came to a consensus and agreed with Judi's recommendation that #3773 be forwarded to the Ad Hoc Committee.

- Other Assigned Issues:
 - #3363 – Additional information was recently sent to Tom
 - #3483 -- Dave is trying to find a "master plan" for electronic services
 - #3633 – Margaret is working on this issue. She has recently contacted Dave for more information.

New Lead for Sub-committee "A"

The members discussed a possible lead/chair for Sub-committee A, to replace Mavis Smith.

Decision: Greg has agreed to take the lead.

Incentive Sub-committee Report

Tom informed the committee that Gil has forwarded information regarding an IRS program which is designed to solicit input from taxpayers. Judi stated that the Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint (TAB) team is looking for input from taxpayers as they start formulating their operational recommendations for the second phase of their report. Gil asked how Area 7 could use the TAB information. Judi replied that the TAC issue committee is working jointly with Mark Pursley, who is providing the issue committee with information from the report.

After further discussion, Judi suggested that the members of the sub-committee meet to continue discussing this issue.

Decision: Tom, Doug, Dave Jones and Gil will meet and provide their input to the full committee at a later date. Dave Coffman will set up a meeting time via email.

Sub-committee Next Steps/Goals

Allena expressed her goals for the committee. She suggested that issues that are not waiting for research, should be actively worked and a report should be shared (via e-mail) prior to the next teleconference.

Decision: All agreed and the sub-committees will work with Dave Coffman to continue working on those issues that are not waiting for research.



The committee discussed an issue that Tom raised – a Form 1040EZ drafted for taxpayers by the IRS. Dave Coffman replied that the issue has been loaded onto the database. Judi suggested that the next step should be to identify and decided on a sub-committee to work the issue or work the issue as a whole.

Decision: Sub-committee A has agreed to work the issue. Dave will gather information from the State of California regarding their program and provide the information to Sub-committee A for discussion. (Allena, Gil, Greg and Tom)

July committee Meeting

The members discussed new dates for their July meeting.

Decision: The next Area 7 meeting will be on July 26, 2006 at 11:00 am (Pacific time).

Member Comments/Other Business

Allena announced that she is organizing a parade in her hometown of Anaheim, CA. She also indicated that there are additional convertible cars available to drive in the parade and it would be a great opportunity to have a TAP banner and TAP members in one of the convertibles.

Decision: Wayne Whitehead and Iris Sosa will have additional conversations with Allena regarding their participation in the parade.

Closing

There were no public comments. Judi closed the meeting.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Teleconference
May 24, 2006**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- John Tam, Local Taxpayer Advocate, Oakland, CA

Attendance

- Larry Combs, CA
- Dave Jones, CA
- Allena Kaplan, CA (Chair)
- Tom Karwin, CA (Vice-Chair)
- Mavis Smith, CA
- Iris Sosa, CA
- Wayne Tanna, HI
- Wayne Whitehead, CA
- Doug Wilhelm, CA
- Gil Yanuck, NV

Committee Members Absent

- Margaret Ferguson, CA
- Greg Gurse, AK

Staff

- Dave Coffman, Analyst
- Cathy Johnson, Analyst/Note taker

Opening

John opened the meeting.

Welcome/Announcements

No announcements

Review Agenda

Tom verified that everyone received the agenda and asked everyone to try to stay within the time constraints.

Roll Call

Dave took roll call and a quorum was present.

Joint Committee Report

Allena noted that the Joint Committee report was sent to all members via e-mail. The report emphasized the meeting that Larry had with the commissioner.



Allena informed the committee that Margaret will provide input, as a tax preparer, to the committee chairs that are working on the five issues assigned to TAP by the commissioner. Allena provided Margaret e-mail addresses for each of the chairs. If any other committee member wants to provide input on the five issues, please let Allena know and she will provide e-mail addresses for the chairs working the issues. Comments are welcome from all TAP members. Dave J. has some input on VITA issues.

Action: Allena will provide Dave J. the e-mail address for the committee chair working the VITA issue.

Issue Report Out

#3552 (Form SS-4 Electronic Application) -- Iris Sosa:

Iris briefly explained the issue. The online application for an employer identification number (EIN) will not accept certain inputs. The error messages do not inform the user which input error is causing the problem. Iris is having some problems with the barriers/benefits part of the Joint Committee referral. Allena offered to help identify the barriers. Discussion continued with possible suggestions, such as instructing the user (directly on the application) that special characters may not be used.

Action: Allena will work with Iris on the barriers section of the Joint Committee referral.

Subcommittee Workload Review -- Dave Coffman:

Dave C. updated the committee on the active issues currently assigned to Area 7. Most were discussed at the last face-to-face meeting and much research is still needed on these issues:

- #3579 (Form 990 EZ) – Dave C. is still researching this issue.
- #3687 (Toll-Free and TAC Help for the Self-Employed) -- Dave C. is still researching this issue.
- #3379 (Estimated Tax Instructions) – Dave noted that some research has been completed. He has found some information about a letter (CP13) and rounding on Form 1040ES.
- #3731 (Form 1099 – Fillable PDF Format) -- Some research has been completed, but Dave C. is trying to find out more information on the Form 1099 format.
- #3773 (Education – Tax Law Education in Schools) – This issue needs basic research.
- #3775 (Toll-Free Number – Making Other Toll-Free Numbers Available) – Some information has been found about the tab on the irs.gov web site, but Dave is trying to get more information on Publication 4255. Dave J. noted that his local taxpayer assistance center provided him a sheet of IRS numbers. Dave J., convinced that this is not really an issue, will write up his thoughts on this subject and share them with the committee. Doug noted that if too many numbers are offered, taxpayers will stop calling the 1-800-829-1040 number.

Action: Dave Jones will e-mail his thoughts on issue # 3775 to all Area 7 members.

- #3363 (TAC – Mail Procedures) – Dave C. noted that the research reports were sent to Tom.

Action: Tom will write up a recommendation (Joint Committee Referral) for issue # 3363.

- #3552 (SS4 Electronic Application) – This was previously discussed. Iris is working on a Joint Committee referral.



- #3633 (TAC Services – Transcripts) – Currently assigned to Margaret, Dave C. does not have an update on this issue.
- # 3483 (ETLA Website) – Dave C. noted that his is trying to locate some sort of “master plan” for IRS electronic services.
- # 3567 (Pub. 8160E) – Dave C. informed the committee that this problem is currently being addressed by IRS. He stated that it might be best if this issue is placed in the parking lot for 90 days, monitoring the issue to determine if the problem will be resolved by IRS. Dave C. will address this at the next Area 7 Issue Subcommittee meeting.

Allena asked about the Incentive Subcommittee’s progress. Dave C. stated that the subcommittee consists of Doug, Tom, Dave J., Gil and Mavis. Tom noted that the issue was identified and some research was needed by staff – particularly whether or not the IRS could provide incentives to the public for their suggestions. If the IRS could not provide such incentives, research is needed to determine if other non-governmental agencies could provide the incentives.

Tom reminded the committee that the concept is modeled after a program in California known as “There Ought to be a Law.” There is a public meeting regarding this program tomorrow in Tom’s town. Tom intends to attend the meeting to learn the mechanics of the program, number of proposals received, etc. Tom also learned at the Communication Committee meeting that one member stated that a similar issue being worked by either the IRS or the SB/SE Burden Reduction Issue Committee of TAP.

Action: Dave C. will provide Tom that member’s e-mail address.

Subcommittee Next Steps

Allena commented on the workload of each of the subcommittees.

- Subcommittee A: Currently has one active issue (#3579) in the research stage.
- Subcommittee B: Issue #3687 is still in the research stage. Issue # 3552 is being worked by Allena and Iris.
- Subcommittee C: Dave J. will submit his thoughts on issue # 3775. Dave C. is researching issue # 3483. Issue # 3363 will be referred by Tom, using the research report provided by Dave C.
- Incentive Subcommittee: Still waiting for research.

Issue Subcommittee Report: Dave Jones

Dave J. provided a brief synopsis on the subjects discussed at the last Area 7 Issue Subcommittee meeting. The Issue Subcommittee raised the following recommendations to the Area 7 Committee members:

- #3859 (Package X – Continuing to Provide Hard Copies) – The subcommittee believes that, while the Package X is available via CD for a fee, taxpayers and tax professionals may get all forms from the IRS web site for free.

Decision: The committee decided to drop this issue.



- #3829 (Changing Reporting Requirements / Simplification of Form 1040) – Dave J. stated that changing the reporting requirement of Form 1040, or a radical change of the form (and phasing out the accompanying schedules) would be too impractical for most taxpayers. Dave C. noted the possible length of Form 1040, which would include all information currently contained in the schedules, may be far too long and confusing for most taxpayers, increasing taxpayer burden.

Decision: The committee decided to drop this issue.

Other Business

Dave C. informed the subcommittees that if they decide to hold a teleconference, he can set up the call. Allena informed the subcommittees that a conference call can also be arranged by using their AT&T calling cards.

Concerns were raised on the amount of time spent working issues and re-prioritizing the active issues. Dave C. offered to share his research in part, recognizing that the research provided may not fully address the subcommittee's request.

Decision: Dave C. will share research as it's received. Subcommittees will then inform Dave when the research provided is sufficient to make a recommendation.

Closing

John closed the meeting.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel
Area 7 Face-to-Face Committee Meeting
Los Angeles, CA
April 6, 7 and 8, 2006**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- John Tam, Local Taxpayer Advocate

Attendance

- Larry Combs
- Margaret Ferguson
- Greg Gurse
- Dave Jones
- Allena Kaplan, Chair
- Tom Karwin, Vice Chair
- Mavis Smith
- Iris Sosa
- Wayne Tanna
- Wayne Whitehead
- Doug Wilhelm
- Gil Yanuck

Staff

- Judi Nicholas, TAP Program Manager
- Dave Coffman, Program Analyst
- Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Opening and Welcome

As DFO, John Tam opened the first face-to-face Area 7 meeting for 2006. Allena welcomed the members and reviewed the agenda. Roll call was taken and a quorum was met.

Outreach Discussion

Allena explained that the committee is off to a running start. Members provided insight on their outreach activities. Gil had the opportunity to speak about TAP on the radio and television. Larry will soon be giving a speech regarding TAP.

Judi stated that TAP has received many applications in response to the recruitment drive. People interested in becoming TAP members have until the end of April to submit their applications. Ranking of applications will be completed the end of May and interviews will take place in June. Allena felt it was important to continue outreach to get the word out about recruitment and TAP.

Outreach Workshop

Gil gave a presentation about outreach and shared some of his outreach experiences. When informing the public about TAP, they're often surprised that TAP exists. Gil felt that members should focus on different groups to ensure all parts of the public know about TAP. He noted that, many times, he has to explain the difference between TAP and the Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS). By using the



outreach toolkit, members can both prepare for their events and communicate an effective message about TAP.

Gil cautioned members to be prepared when doing television interviews. Often, interviewers will ask about a subject that is not related to TAP. Gil explained that members should stick to their message even though they may be steered in another direction. Judi added that the staff is available to assist and prepare members for interviews.

Gil also suggested that members could get the audience interested in TAP by discussing hot topics or using the success stories in the outreach toolkit. Margaret asked how a member might explain that TAP does not work legislative issues. Judi suggested that members can inform their audience that such issues are not within TAPs scope; however, TAP can receive legislative issues and elevate them through the National Taxpayer Advocate.

Joint Committee Report Out

Allena reviewed highlights from the March Joint Committee teleconference. Larry Combs, TAP Chair, will meet with Commissioner Everson on April 20. The Commissioner has made a commitment to meet with TAP members twice a year. After the meeting, Larry will provide all members a summary of their discussion.

Allena re-announced that TAP has started the recruitment process and the deadline for submitting applications is April 28. Members suggested last year's applicants should be contacted and asked to reapply.

Gwen Handelman, former TAP Chair, has completed the TAP annual report. Judi asked members to email Dave C. with a list of suggested recipients.

Action: Members will email Dave with suggestions of names and organizations that should receive an annual report.

Area 6 is preparing to host a Town Hall meeting with Nina Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate (NTA). The meeting will take place in Fargo, ND on April 25, 2006.

The TAP Annual Meeting will be held in Washington D.C. during the week of December 11-15, 2006 at the Hyatt Capitol Hotel. No other details were provided.

The Joint Committee has decided to have their face-to-face meetings in Denver and Dallas. However, dates for the meetings were not selected.

Dave – Pipeline Processing Presentation

Dave gave a presentation on how an issue is processed within TAP. Dave reiterated that TAP does not work legislative issues; however, members may elevate them to the NTA.

Dave provided an overview of the process by which an issue is worked within an issue committee. Issue committees receive their issues directly from the IRS. Each issue committee has a program owner, which provides the members with a specific task or issue to work. An issue committee's final recommendation is made directly to the IRS. It does not need to be reviewed by the Joint Committee. For an area committee, each issue must be reviewed by the Joint Committee before it's sent to the IRS.

Dave provided the members with a copy of the Joint Committee Issue Referral Form Check List. Dave reviewed the form and explained that the list was created to assist committee chairs on submitting a referral to the Joint Committee.



Gil Yanuck - Issue Number 3444

A suggestion was made that the toll-free automated refund line should provide the option to speak directly to an actual IRS employee, if the caller has questions. However, after further research and discussion with John Tam, Gil concluded that the toll-free automated refund line was designed to give taxpayers to a quick and easy method to check on their refund. Taxpayers needing further assistance can call the general IRS assistance line.

Gil recommended that the issue be dropped.

Decision: Consensus was made to drop the issue. Dave will draft a response letter to the taxpayer advising them of TAP's decision.

End of Day Announcements

The committee concluded their first day by reviewing the agenda for April 7, 2006.

As DFO, John Tam closed the meeting.

April 7, 2006

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- John Tam, Local Taxpayer Advocate

Attendance

- Larry Combs
- Margaret Ferguson
- Greg Gurse
- Dave Jones
- Allena Kaplan, Chair
- Tom Karwin, Vice Chair
- Mavis Smith
- Iris Sosa
- Wayne Tanna
- Wayne Whitehead
- Doug Wilhelm
- Gil Yanuck

Staff

- Judi Nicholas, TAP Program Manager
- Dave Coffman, Program Analyst
- Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Opening and Welcome

John Tam opened the meeting.



Subcommittee Break Out

The members broke out into their assigned subcommittees to discuss their assigned issues. This took place during the first five and one-half hours.

Review Remaining Issues

The entire committee met to review the list of remaining issues.

3073 – TAP Speaker/Outreach Kit

Area 7 Panel members would like to be more prepared during outreach opportunities.

Decision: The committee agreed to drop this issue. An outreach toolkit is now available to all members.

3267 – TAP Member Outreach Coordination

There is no method in place to coordinate outreach efforts by TAP members located in the same geographic area.

Decision: The committee agreed to drop issue. It was agreed that TAP members in the same area should coordinate their outreach plans so efforts are not duplicated.

3363 – TAC Mail Procedures

Action: Tom and Judi will meet to discuss this issue further.

3482 – Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) Due to Stock Options

The AMT taxes the value of incentive stock options at exercise rather than the value of the stocks at the time of sale.

Decision: The committee agreed to drop issue. The issue legislative and is not within the scope of TAP.

3483 – ETLA Website

According to Government Accountability Office, the IRS plans to eliminate the Electronic Tax Law Assistance system. Further, usage of the system has declined due to Internet placement of the site on www.irs.gov in an effort to decrease the demand on IRS resources.

Decision: The committee has decided to leave the issue in active status. Additional research is needed and Tom Karwin will continue to champion the issue.

Action:

- Committee would like a more interactive site.
- Dave C. will research to find out what the IRS future plan is for the site.

3492 – TAC Closing

The IRS has chosen to close 68 Taxpayer Assistance Centers, citing budget constraints.

Decision: The committee agreed to drop the issue. The IRS has decided to continue its research before making a decision to close the centers.

3503 – Form 940 Telefile

Discontinuing the Form 940 TeleFile program is creating an undue hardship for certain taxpayers.

Decision: The committee has agreed to drop the issue. The committee felt that they should not work an issue in which funding has been discontinued

3512 – Form 941 Telefile

IRS is discontinuing TeleFile for the annualized Form 941.

Decision: The committee has agreed to drop the issue. The committee felt that they should not work an issue in which funding has been discontinued.



3577 – Depreciation Schedules Processing

The IRS no longer requires a depreciation schedule with the individual tax return (when the taxpayer claims depreciation expense).

Decision: Issue Dropped

3582 – 941 Telefile

Repeat issue as 3512.

Decision: Issue Dropped

3633 – TAC Services Transcripts

The refusal of TACs to provide a transcript of returns is creating inconvenience and frustration for taxpayers.

Decision: All members have agreed to have Margaret champion the issue.

3774 – Communication – IRS adopting an online Chat

The IRS has not adopted “online chat” as a method of communication with the public.

Decision: Issue dropped

3776 –Service/Compliance – Balance

The IRS does not utilize an appropriate balance between services offered and compliance.

Decision: Issue dropped. The committee felt that it does not have the ability to provide comment on IRS budget.

3777 – TAC Offices – Location

Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC) are not always located in the most accessible areas where those in most need of their service reside. The criteria for determining the location of a TAC does not always result in the best location for taxpayers.

Decision: Issue dropped. The committee felt that it does not have the ability to comment on policy and budget issues within the IRS.

3778 – Toll-Free Number – Customer Service

The IRS, especially the IRS toll-free line, does not have a customer service focus.

Decision: Issue dropped

Subcommittee Report Out

Each subcommittee had the opportunity to provide a report out on the issues that were discussed and worked.

Subcommittee B

#3687 (Toll-Free and TAC Help for the Self-Employed)

The subcommittee considered the caller’s fears and frustrations encountered when trying to get into compliance. The subcommittee suggests that IRS institute a program which reduces or eliminates the fears of non-compliant taxpayers, bringing them into compliance without fear or intimidation. An ideal solution is believed to be a button or link on the www.irs.gov home page that says something like “If you haven’t filed your taxes for several years, click here”. The link would take the user to an area with answers to basic questions tax filing questions and information about taxpayer’s rights. Focus of the recommendation would be on closing the tax gap with minimal cost.

Decision: The committee agreed to pursue as high priority and keep this as an active issue.

3692 (Appeals – Contacting Appeals Officers)

Decision: The committee has agreed to drop the issue and provide a letter to the taxpayer with a contact number that assists taxpayers in locating their Appeals Officer.



#3772 (E-file – Receiving Timely Software for E-file Program).

Decision: The committee has agreed that this issue be dropped. Updates due to tax law changes are beyond the control of IRS and/or the preparers of the tax software. Software updates are necessary in case a mistake is found. The committee feels that there’s no way around this.

Subcommittee C

#3731 - Form 1099 – Fill-able PDF Format

Form 1099 is not available in a fill-able PDF format. The subcommittee decided on additional research:

- How many parts are to a 1099 and where do they go?
- If handwritten 1099s are acceptable, why would PDF fill-able forms not be acceptable?
- How difficult is it to assure the multi-part form in PDF on IRS.gov. prints out?

Decision: The committee agreed with the recommendations for additional research.

#3773 - Education – Tax Law Education in Schools

The IRS should provide tax law education in schools

Decision: The committee would like the following information:

- The sub-committee would like the current status of IRS efforts to educate youth about taxes.
- Has IRS developed other initiatives since 2003?

#3775 - Toll-free Number – Making Other Toll-Free Numbers Available

The IRS does not make the public aware of toll-free taxpayer assistance numbers, other than 1-800-829-1040

Decision: The committee agreed that additional research is needed. The subcommittee had the following ideas about where the number might appear:

- www.irs.gov web site
- Form 1040 family of instructions
- Publication 17 – back page

#3379 - Estimated Tax Instructions

The IRS instructions for Estimated Tax Payments fail to inform the taxpayer to round the payment to the nearest dollar amount.

Decision: The sub-committee is interested in the following information prior to making a decision:

- The policy for issuing for CP13 and a copy of the letter.
- What does the Form 1040ES instructions say about rounding?
- What is the IRS check cashing policy?

Subcommittee A

#3579 – 990 EZ

Part 5, Line 35 of Form 990 EZ, as it relates to business activities, is incorrectly worded. It implies an intent which contradicts other parts of Form 990 EZ.

Decision: The committee agreed to submit the correction for the taxpayer via the number provided in Publication 17.

Action: Dave C. will send a letter to the taxpayer informing him/her of the action taken.



#3669 – Notices – Timeframes

The IRS does not always allow sufficient mailing time when providing taxpayers timeframes for responding to notices.

Decision: The committee agreed with the subcommittee that the issue should be closed. This issue is legislative in nature and is not within the scope of TAP.

Action: Dave C. will send a letter to taxpayer to contact his/her congressional leader.

#3745 – IRS Toll-Free Line – Info about VITA, TCE and irs.gov

The IRS toll-free number (800-829-1040) does not provide a list of VITA or TCE sites. It also does not provide information about accessing the IRS web page (irs.gov)

Decision: The committee has agreed to drop the issue.

Action: Dave C. will send letter to the taxpayer to inform him/her that the number was intended to provide VITA/TCE information close to the caller's home instead of a comprehensive list. Taxpayer may contact SPEC for a comprehensive list.

#2771 – EFTPS – Educating Practitioners about Website

Many practitioners are not aware that, for those practitioners who electronically file, there is an IRS internet site to look up estimated tax payments.

Decision: The committee has agreed to close this issue.

Action: Dave C. will send a letter to the taxpayer that will explain that the service is available and provide information on where to find it.

End of Day Announcements

The committee concluded their second day by reviewing the agenda for April 8, 2006.

DFO, John Tam closed the meeting.

April 8, 2006

Designated Federal Official

- John Tam, Local Taxpayer Advocate

Attendance

- Larry Combs
- Margaret Ferguson
- Greg Gurse
- Dave Jones
- Allena Kaplan, Chair
- Tom Karwin, Vice Chair
- Mavis Smith
- Iris Sosa
- Wayne Tanna
- Wayne Whitehead
- Doug Wilhelm
- Gil Yanuck



Staff

- Judi Nicholas, TAP Program Manager
- Dave Coffman, Program Analyst
- Marla Ofilas, Note Taker

Opening and Welcome

John opened the meeting.

Incentive Program Proposal

Tom informed the group of his proposal for an incentive program which would recognize taxpayers' suggestions that have resulted in exceptional IRS improvements. Tom's proposal is based on the "There Ought to be a Law" program in California.

Decision: The committee decided to explore this issue by forming a subcommittee to develop a business case for the suggestion. The subcommittee will consist of Doug, Tom, Dave J., Gil and Mavis.

Referring Non-TAP Issues

Allena led a brief discussion on referring non-TAP issues to proper areas within IRS. Non-TAP issues are often encountered during outreach events.

Action: Judi will ask Marla to order copies of Publication 4255 for the members.

New Issue

Dave C. introduced the newest Area 7 issue to the group. He read the "Brief Description of Problem" for contact #3831.

Action: The Issue Process Subcommittee will include this issue in the review at their next meeting.

Announcements

Allena reminded everyone to follow through with Dave C. on their subcommittee research and action items.

Decision: Subcommittee facilitators will report on the progress of the issues at the next Area 7 meeting.

Action: Dave C. will provide the action items to the subcommittee facilitators by the end of next week.

Next conference call will be on May 17th at 2:00 Pacific Time. A request was made to move the time to earlier in the day.

Action: Dave C. will send an e-mail to all members asking them for their availability on May 17th.

End of Meeting Assessment

Allena asked the group to comment on the meeting.

Larry noted that there was too much sidebar discussion.

Margaret enjoyed the face-to-face discussions. She found them good for cementing relationships.



Judi noted that working in subcommittees was an effective way to tackle some of the issues.

Doug observed that Area 7 loses a tremendous amount of energy and forward movement from one year to the next. Allena suggested that Area 7 set some goals early in the year.

Wayne W. said that more information could be disseminated during the orientation about issues that the TAP can work, instead of focusing on the issues that TAP cannot work.

Tom asked about a potential new issue: The IRS would generate a preliminary tax return for taxpayers who would normally prepare a Form 1040EZ form, the IRS would prepare the form for the TP and send it to them for their approval. Tom added that there's already some information about a similar program being done with the state.

Action: Dave C. will load this on the database.

Closing

John noted that this has been a very productive meeting. He recognized the passion and energy of the members in completing their tasks. John closed the meeting.



**Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes
Area 7 Committee Meeting
February 15, 2006**

Designated Federal Official

- Judi Nicholas, TAP Manager

Committee Members Present

- Greg Gurse, AK
- Dave Jones, CA
- Allena Kaplan, CA (Chair)
- Tom Karwin, CA (Vice-Chair)
- Iris Sosa, CA
- Wayne Whitehead, CA
- Doug Wilhelm, CA
- Gil Yanuck, NV

Committee Members Absent

- Larry Combs, CA
- Margaret Ferguson, CA
- Mavis Smith, CA
- Wayne Tanna, HI

Staff

- Judi Nicholas, TAP Manager
- Dave Coffman, TAP Analyst
- Cathy Johnson, Note Taker

Other Attendees

- None

Opening/Welcome/Roll Call

Judi opened the meeting. Allena welcomed the members, especially the new members. Dave took roll.

Agenda Review/Facilitation of Meeting

Allena reviewed the agenda and informed the members that the agenda, which lists the call-in number and access code, is sent prior to the meeting for all members to review. Allena added that the facilitator will keep the meeting on track and every effort will be made to keep this meeting to an hour.

Training

Allena stated she'll send an e-mail to all committee members, summarizing the pipeline processing training that was presented at this morning's Joint Committee meeting. This training examines the process used to move an issue through the TAP from the grass roots level through Joint Committee. The information presented in the training is beneficial for both new members and returning members.



Action: Allena will forward the information presented in the pipeline processing training to all committee members.

Joint Committee Report

Judi explained that Allena will report on the Joint Committee activities via e-mail prior to the Area 7 meetings. Time will be given during each Area 7 meeting for members to ask questions, get clarification or provide input to Allena's report.

Face-to-Face Meeting

Judi announced that the face-to-face meeting will be in Anaheim, California. The location was chosen based on input from the members. The staff will start working on lodging, air and meeting room accommodations. The agreed dates for the meeting will be April 6th, 7th and 8th. Travel to the meeting will be on April 6th (meeting will start at 1:00 pm). Members will meet all day on the 7th and the meeting will conclude on the 8th about noon.

Concerns were raised about the different Los Angeles area airports and the amount of time it may take to get from the different airports to the hotel. Judi explained that, while some area airports may be more convenient than others, the decision will be based on cost.

Issue Subcommittee Report & Proposal

Dave Jones reported on the February 8th Issue Subcommittee meeting (conference call).

Dave J. informed the members of the following subcommittee decisions:

- Subcommittee teleconferences will take place on 1st Monday of the month at 9:30 am (Pacific time)
- The subcommittee will review and suggest issues to be worked based on:
 - The impact to the taxpayer
 - The amount of analyst time involved
 - The level of difficulty or complexity
 - The availability of a member to actively champion the issue
- The subcommittee recommended that Area 7 actively work the following issues:
 - 3444 Refunds and the automated toll line
 - 3552 Electronic application of SS4
 - 3445 Payroll tax education
- This will add to the existing Area 7 active issues which are:
 - 3363 TAC -- Mail Procedures (Currently assigned to Tom, this is close to being completed)
 - 3567 Pub 8160E
 - 3483 ETLA Web site

Decision: Area 7 decided to pursue #3444, #3552 and #3445 as active issues.

Some members asked about researching active issues. Judi stressed that there is **no expectation** that members do research. The staff will complete the research. If a member has time to do research, and they are so inclined, there is nothing that precludes them from doing it.



Allena asked about the prioritization of Area 7 issues. Dave Coffman explained that in the last subcommittee meeting, all active issues were reviewed. While some were in an active status, they were not being worked by the committee. The subcommittee reviewed all active issues and determined which took top priority. For the next subcommittee meeting, all issues will be prioritized.

Issue Champion Selection

The committee discussed how the issues should be worked – in subcommittees or with issue champions. Allena suggested that the three issues might be best worked with issue champions. Each champion could determine the scope of the problem and recruit other members to assist in working the issue.

Decision: The three issues (#3444, #3552 and #3445) will be worked by issue champions.

Allena asked for volunteers to champion these issues.

Decision: The following members agreed to champion the issues:

- #3444 – Gil Yanuck
- #3552 – Iris Sosa
- #3445 - Wayne Whitehead

Action: Each champion will review the issue and contact Dave C. for research needs. They will also let Dave know whether or not they would like help from other members on the issue.

Outreach

Judi asked the members to set some personal outreach goals for the year.

The goals should include:

- The type of outreach events planned (newsletters, individuals, groups).
- A numerical goal for events

Specific events do not need to be named, only the type of event. If anyone needs assistance in forming their outreach goals, they should contact the staff.

Judi reminded everyone that they must contact her prior to incurring any expenses.

Action: Dave C. will e-mail members, asking them for their outreach plans for the year.

Judi also informed the members that she's expecting the business cards to arrive at the office about mid-March. Also, outreach marketing materials should be arriving in the TAP offices soon. Samples of the marketing materials are on TAPSpeak. Members should contact the office when they need outreach materials, or they can keep some on hand.

Action: Judi will e-mail the members when the first shipment of marketing materials is received at the office.

Gil suggested that TAP adopt a program which recognizes members that have completed significant outreach events.



Action: Judi will elevate Gil's suggestion for TAP member recognition for outreach events.

Allena suggested that members may want to write a spreadsheet for their outreach plan. She wrote one last year and it served as a great incentive for her to reach her outreach goals.

Member Comments/Other Business

Allena asked the participants for input on today's meeting. Wayne W. noted that it's important that everyone be on time and be prepared.

Closing

Judi closed the meeting.