

Filing income tax returns no exception for students

By LAURIE WILLIS
Staff Writer

Just because you're a student doesn't mean you don't have to file taxes, and the April 15 deadline will be here before you know it.

Betty Francisco, a local H&R Block office supervisor, says a number of students believe they don't have to file their tax forms because they are students.

"It's an unfortunate misconception," she said. "Filing isn't based on whether you're a student but on how much you make."

This year students will be able to receive help on their tax returns. Beta Alpha Psi, an honorary accounting group, will conduct a program designed to help college students and low-income, elderly people fill out their 1985 income tax forms.

Volunteers Income Tax Assistance is a nationwide program sponsored by the federal Internal Revenue Service, said Debbie Rider, vice president of Beta Alpha Psi.

Rider said 20 volunteers, members of the organization or accounting majors who have completed tax classes, must pass a tax test to be involved in the program. Although students will be qualified to answer most questions, she said a hotline number to the IRS would be at their fingertips.

When filing their income taxes, most students use the 1040EZ form because it's the simplest form for people who haven't made a lot of money. Students making at least \$1,100 last year will have to file a North Carolina return.

Students making \$3,340 must file a federal return.

Francisco said it was advantageous for students to file early. Most employers mail W-2 forms by Jan. 31, leaving 2 1/2 months for students to file their returns.

When the April 15 deadline passes, anyone who hasn't filed is subject to penalty — a minimum of \$100 and interest daily until they do file the return. Extensions are granted for 120 days — until Aug. 15 — to send in all of the forms. Requests for extensions, as well as any money owed, is due by April 15.

"Most students who should file do," Francisco said. "They don't try to evade it."

David Hoffman, associate professor in the UNC School of Business, said people who did shorthand calculations and thought they owed money when they received their W-2 form usually waited until the last minute to file.

These people think they have a lot of money to pay so they procrastinate, he said. "Then there are those people who wait to the last minute even though they are going to get money back."

Alice Thomas, a freshman from Southern Pines, said her mother helped her with her returns, and she filed on time.

"Filing's a pain," she said. "But I wanted my money back."

The seminars sponsored by Beta Alpha Psi will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 7 and 10 and April 2, 7 and 9 in the Student Union.

Local firm offering to file tax returns electronically

By TODD GOSSETT
Staff Writer

For the first time, residents in the Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville area will have the opportunity to file their income tax returns electronically and possibly receive quicker refunds.

For a fee, Tax Savers Inc., of the Research Triangle Park, will take completed tax returns and file them with the Internal Revenue Service. Once filed, the tax return is electronically checked for problems.

Paul Overhauser, president of Tax Savers Inc., said that every return would go through 109 different checks to detect any problems that would cause an IRS agent to order an audit.

"The numbers are then electronically transmitted to the IRS's computer, which is the same one used to print out the refunds," Overhauser said.

With fewer people handling the returns, they should be returned quicker. Overhauser could not say how much sooner the refunds would be returned than those handled by IRS agents, and he pointed out that there are still people who have not received their tax refunds from 1985 due to a computer problem. As a result, he said it was hard to compare the speed of the returns at this point, but he estimated the Tax Saver refunds would be returned in 2 1/2 to three weeks.

Overhauser added that there would not be any layoffs at the IRS due to Tax Savers handling returns. "In fact,

I believe they may have added a few jobs to oversee the electronic filing program," he said.

Overhauser said many Tax Savers customers had expressed worry that their returns might get lost among the computer systems.

"To inform our customers that the IRS has received their return, we get official verification from the IRS and pass it on to the customers," he said.

Overhauser said that out of the approximately 372,000 returns filed in the Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville area, he expected between 60,000 and 100,000 returns to be filed with Tax Savers. That figure represents between 25 and 50 percent of the returns that will have refunds.

The Tax Savers system is in use in only five cities throughout the country: Raleigh, Durham, Fayetteville, Cincinnati, Ohio and Phoenix, Arizona.

"These cities were chosen because they have good demographics and best represent the country as a whole," Overhauser said.

He added that possibly 10 to 12 more cities would be added in 1987 and that the system would be available nationwide by 1988.

The cost for using the Tax Savers system varies with the type of return you file. For the 1040EZ the cost is \$14.95, for the 1040A the cost is \$19.95, and for the long form the cost is \$29.95.

"The cost is tax-deductible, so the IRS is essentially paying for your return," Overhauser said.

No English allowed for new-dorm suite

By JEAN LUTES
Staff Writer

A UNC student and the UNC housing department are working on a proposed project that would provide special area housing for students with a strong commitment to speaking foreign languages.

The students would live in a suite in the new Katherine J. Carmichael dorm and would speak only the foreign language while in the dorm.

Ideally, a graduate student in the foreign language being studied would live with students, "organizing get-togethers and promoting interaction in the foreign language," said Jose Polo de Bernabe, a professor in the romance languages department.

Senior Cathy Noesen, who is working with the housing department on the project, said she was trying to initiate an agreement between housing and the language department for a permanent set-up, "so the base we allocate would be strictly for one language that would be spoken throughout the living area."

In addition, a course may be built around the project, giving participants academic credit.

Sixteen spaces in the new dorm have been proposed, though that number could increase if interest is substantial enough, Noesen said. "We've contacted several of the language departments, and we're assessing their interest," she said.

Jan Dennis, assistant to the director of University housing, said nothing was definite yet and that the amount of

interest displayed would determine whether or not the project will succeed.

"Students could draw support from each other to create a living-learning center," she said. "If we can get interest from students and administration then we will try to make it a reality."

Any student with a strong interest in studying a foreign language is eligible to apply for the special housing.

The faculty has been "very responsive," de Bernabe said.

Spanish teaching assistant Karen Vasquez said: "I think it's a very good idea. A lot of students have trouble finding contact with a language outside the classroom, and this would solve that problem."

Noesen said she urged interested students to contact the foreign language department immediately. Students must sign up in 238 Dey Hall by 5 p.m. today to get more information and express interest in the project.


Union to televise Tutu's Sunday mass from Duke Chapel

Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu's service from Duke Chapel Sunday will be broadcast live at 7:30 p.m. on big-screen television in the former Fast-break area of the Student Union.

Tutu was awarded the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts on behalf of blacks in South Africa.



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