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Organization seeks records of A&M lobby group

By Frank Smith
Senior Staff Writer

Texas A&M's newly reorganized chapter of the Young Conservatives of Texas has requested a look at the financial records of a lobby group affiliated with Student Government, to see if the group has used any student service fee money.

Dennis Rudder, chairman of A&M's YCT, said his organization wants to see the 1986-87 financial records of the Legislative Study Group, a branch of Student Government that researches higher education issues and lobbies the Legislature.

"(The records are) going to be used by our state office in making sure things are

being run right," Rudder said.

Alan Moore, LSG director, said his group plans to comply with the request. "This is public record, so they're more than entitled to look at it," he said.

The YCT's University of Texas chapter filed a lawsuit in November 1985 against Attorney General Jim Mattox and the presidents of UT and the UT Students' Association, saying the Students' Association illegally spent student service fee money in buying advertising space for political endorsements in the *Daily Texan*, UT's student newspaper.

The matter was settled out of court in January.

At A&M, the request for records was made by Rudder and YCT Vice Chairman Richard Lonquist in a March 31 letter to Dr. Carolyn Adair, director of student activities. The letter cited the legal accessibility of the records to the public under the Texas Open Records Act.

Adair referred them to Mark Browning, an LSG member who also serves as comptroller for Student Government.

Browning on Wednesday said he has been compiling the records and that he, along with Moore and Adair, would like to meet with YCT leaders when the records are turned over.

Browning said he thinks YCT may be as-

suming the LSG operates the same way as the Texas Student Lobby, the UT student lobby group whose use of student service fees spurred the 1985 lawsuit.

"LSG feels they (YCT) don't quite understand we're not like the TSL," Browning said. "They (TSL) were making political contributions. . . . We just think it's a misunderstanding and hope it can be worked out."

Moore was quoted in the March 27 issue of *The Battalion* as saying LSG is privately funded and non-partisan.

He also said LSG had reimbursed Student Government for all costs incurred during the year that might be tied to student service fees.

Rudder, in a brief telephone interview

Wednesday, cited that article.

"If everything has been taken care of with the funds, then there's no reason for us to file suit like we did with the University of Texas," he said. "We just want to make sure things are being done as the paper reported and as the people are telling us."

State Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan, was successful last week in adding an amendment to the Senate appropriations bill that would allow elected student governments at public universities to use student service fees in lobbying efforts, a measure LSG supports.

No such amendment has yet been proposed in the House of Representatives, but LSG officials say one is expected.



Photo by Chris Lane

Bachelor No. 1 . . .

Becca Prudhomme of Kappa Kappa Gamma asks questions of Jeff Eli-sha, left, of Tau Kappa Epsilon, Thomas DiSalvio of Squadron 10 and Chris Davis of Sigma Alpha Mu during the Aggie Dating Game

Thursday night in Rudder Auditorium. The event was sponsored by Pi Beta Phi and Sigma Alpha Epsilon to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association and Twin City Mission Inc. in Bryan.

Reagan to announce U.S. trade tariffs on Japan in retaliation for violations

NEW YORK (AP) — The United States was expected to slap steep tariffs on a grab-bag of Japanese imports today as part of what international business executives call the most serious trade conflict between the economic powers since Japan's postwar reconstruction.

Nevertheless, the executives said prospects remain remote for the sanctions escalating into a trade war, partly because Japanese officials know their nation could not afford one.

"My personal opinion is the Japanese are smart enough to understand this problem," said Sam Kus-

moto, president of Minolta Corp., maker of cameras and copiers. "They are deeply concerned that any confrontation with the United States is very detrimental to the Japanese."

President Reagan was expected to announce the tariffs today in retaliation for alleged Japanese violation of a 1986 agreement to open its home market to American-made computer chips and to avoid "dumping" chips at unfairly low costs in other countries.

But trade experts say chips are only one factor in the tariffs. U.S. officials are exasperated with Japan's

persistent trade surplus, relatively closed market and failure to stimulate its economy to absorb more of the world's exports.

"We jeopardize both our friendship and the future of the world economy unless we can adapt to changing economic realities," Treasury Secretary James Baker said Wednesday in an unusually blunt speech to a Japanese and American audience at the Japan Society in New York.

Japan, denying violation of the chip accord, says the tariffs violate international trading rules and announced Thursday it would appeal

for relief to GATT, the international trading body in Geneva, Switzerland.

The tariffs are expected to have little economic effect on Japan because they cover just \$300 million worth of goods — amounting to less than 1 percent of the \$58 billion trade imbalance between the nations last year.

The tariffs mark one of the first times the United States has singled out Japan for sanctions instead of agreeing to compromise.

The Japanese seem to be seeking compromise and delay rather than confrontation.

Reagan hopes for agreement about missiles President remains optimistic about meeting with Soviets

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (AP) — President Reagan said Thursday that he is optimistic about reaching an agreement this year to limit U.S. and Soviet medium-range nuclear missiles but that there must be a "substantial agreement" ready for signature before a summit can be held.

"We've narrowed the gap a little more," the president said after meeting for more than an hour with Secretary of State George P. Shultz at Reagan's Rancho del Cielo.

Shultz briefed the president about the Kremlin proposal to eliminate U.S. and Soviet medium-range missiles from Europe. The secretary flew to California after meeting in Brussels with NATO allies following three days of talks with Soviet leaders in Moscow.

Reagan said the Soviet proposal would be thoroughly discussed with America's West European allies.

"It's clear to me . . . the visit was very useful," Reagan said in a brief statement to reporters after his meeting with Shultz.

"I look forward and am hopeful that we can have a summit, but it must be one carefully planned and prepared, and there must be something that we can agree on," Reagan said.

The president added that there would "have to be some substantial agreement that would make it worthwhile to have a summit."

Shultz arrived at Reagan's ranch about 7:30 p.m. CST.

As they posed for pictures, Shultz was asked if he had obtained any sort of commitment by the Soviets to attend a summit in this country later this year.

He replied, "I'm going to discuss that with the president."

Shultz left foreign ministers from nine North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries behind in Brussels

to ponder whether the Soviet proposal should be accepted.

It would mean the elimination of about 50 shorter-range Soviet nuclear missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and also could involve the dismantling of about 85 other Scaleboard and Spider missiles in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev offered to include those weapons, which have a range of 350 to 600 miles, in a treaty to scrap medium-range U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles except for 100 warheads on each side.

By offering to eliminate the shorter-range missiles in East Germany and Czechoslovakia — and

"I look forward and am hopeful that we can have a summit, but it must be one carefully planned and prepared and there must be something that we can agree on."

— President Ronald Reagan

those in the Soviet Union over a year's time, as well, if details can be worked out — the Soviets are causing NATO to re-evaluate the alliance's nuclear capability.

Not only would U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles, with a range of 600 to 3,000 miles, be withdrawn, but the United States would not be able to deploy new or modified shorter-range rockets if all of the Soviets' are withdrawn as well.

Shultz stopped short of specifically endorsing the Soviet proposal at a news conference in Brussels after explaining it to the NATO foreign ministers behind closed doors.

The ministers represented Britain, Canada, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain.

Shultz told reporters "we have the prospect for a good INF (Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces) agreement and we have the basic elements in place."

IRS creates W-4A to cut through confusion

New tax form simplifies filing process

By Christi Daugherty
Staff Writer

Remember the old Coke, New Coke, Coke Classic fiasco? If so, then you'll notice something familiar about the Internal Revenue Service's current situation.

We'll call it the old W-4, New W-4, W-4A Classic situation, which by its very nature was considerably more severe than the problems of the soft-drink company, because when the IRS has a problem, it conceivably affects almost every American wage-earner.

The problem started when the U.S. Congress developed and passed the idea of tax reform, and snowballed from there.

Bob Branson, IRS public affairs officer in Austin, said the IRS did what it was supposed to do, but Congress didn't know what it was getting itself into.

"Congress told the IRS that too many people get refunds, and too many people are over-withheld, so you design a withholding system that's accurate," Branson said. "So the IRS designed a new withholding certificate intended to be more

accurate, as Congress wanted, because the old didn't take into account a whole lot more stuff, it just asked how many dependents — and there you were.

"We did what we were supposed to do — we became more accurate. Unfortunately, nobody could fill out our form," Branson said.

The new W-4As are a response to the veritable explosion of displeasure over the difficulty of the instructions, he said, and those have been condensed down from four pages to one page — front and back — but the page actually submitted is identical to the old new W-4.

"We figure that 45 million taxpayers will need to use only the front page — they won't even flip to the back (where the instructions for itemized deductions and filing jointly are located)," Branson said. "And therefore they'll avoid that added confusion."

But in becoming more simple, he said, the form becomes slightly less accurate than its predecessor, the new W-4.

It doesn't take into account substantial non-wage income, like stock

dividends or the interest from large bank accounts, he said. But even so, the form is considerably more accurate than the old W-4, he said.

Dr. Lorence Bravenec, an A&M accounting professor, said he had not filled out the new W-4A but,

"These (new tax forms) are perhaps not as easy as people would like, but it's probably as easy as (the IRS) can make it."

— Alfred Martin, Bryan accounting firm member

"the old (new) W-4 was just impossible to work with."

He agreed with Branson that the front of the form, which contains seven lines with instructions for figuring withholding allowances, is considerably easier than the more complicated deduction instructions on the back.

"It's simpler, except the problem with this form is that the worksheet

is on the back; you have to know what they're driving at. If you don't know that, you're lost," Bravenec said.

An example of the simpler instructions on the front of the page:

A. Enter a "1" for yourself if no one else can claim you as a dependent.

C. Enter "1" for your spouse if no one else claims your spouse as a dependent.

An example of the deduction instructions:

4. Enter an estimate of your 1987 adjustments to income. These include alimony paid and deductible IRA contributions.

8. Divide the amount on line 7 by \$2,000 and enter the result here. Drop any fraction.

Line 8 causes the most apparent confusion, as it seems a rather pointless action that Branson described as "one of those algebraic things." And even Bravenec had to work at it before he could figure it out.

But what it is, he decided, is a way to equate itemized deductions

with tax exemptions. In that, \$2,000 worth of itemized deductions in excess of standard deductions is equal to approximately one withholding exemption.

Got it?

No problem.

Alfred Martin, with the Martin, Thompson & Amos PC accounting firm in Bryan, said the new forms are infinitely better than the old, and perhaps are the best that can be expected. Martin added that, in general, most people should be able to fill out these forms without much help.

"If they can read, they can fill it out," Martin said.

He said he felt the IRS blundered with the first revision but has made an admirable recovery with the W-4As.

"I think some change in the W-4s was necessary, but they made a rather unhealthy stab at it the first time," Martin said. "But tax laws are so complicated it's hard to make these forms simpler."

"These are perhaps not as easy as people would like, but it's probably as easy as they can make it."

Ring orders to be taken until April 24

The deadline for ordering class rings for the spring semester is 4 p.m. April 24.

If eligibility information has not already been submitted for verification, students should give the information to the Ring Office, 119 Pavilion by Monday.

Students using mid-term grades to meet the required 92 hours should also submit a mid-term grade report.

Students are required to pay the total cost of the ring by cash or check when they order.

Summer ring orders will begin May 4 for students who meet requirements. Students who meet requirements at the end of the spring semester can order their rings after final grades are posted.