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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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TAX CHEAT PLEADS GUILTY

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that Mari Ayn Sailer, 27, of Laurel, Maryland, pleaded guilty on April 13, 2004, to filing a false claim against the United States and scheming to defraud a federally insured bank.

In a Statement of Facts provided to the Court as part of the plea agreement, the defendant admitted that in April, 2002, she electronically filed six fraudulent claims for refunds of 2001 federal income taxes, totaling \$501,927. Four of the individuals in whose names she claimed refunds were deceased, and four of the W-2's accompanying the false returns listed Giant Foods as the taxpayer's employer although none of the corresponding individuals worked at Giant Foods in 2001. Sailer intended to be the recipient of all the claimed refunds. She used her own current, and her immediate past addresses on four of the six returns, as well as the address of her then boyfriend. In May and June 2002, Sailer obtained a \$42,613.10 refund anticipation loan check issued in anticipation of the 2001 federal income tax refund to her as a result of one of the fraudulent, electronically filed claims in her own name. Sailer endorsed the check over to her boyfriend, with the expectation that he

would deposit the check and obtain the proceeds. Due to the amount of the check and previous suspicious activity in this account, the banks contacted each other and subsequently an investigation was initiated which revealed the extent of Ms. Sailer's fraudulent scheme.

Ms. Sailer faces a maximum sentence of 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for the false claim charge and 30 years imprisonment and \$1,000,000 for the bank fraud charge. United States District Judge J. Frederick Motz, who accepted Ms. Sailer's guilty pleas, has scheduled sentencing for June 25, 2004. Ms. Sailer was released under the supervision of the United States Pretrial Services office.

The case is a result of a one year investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney P. Michael Cunningham