

Ponderosa Press

Ponderosa Estates Homeowners Association Newsletter

January 2013 Edition



The [Seattle Seahawks](#) are inviting the 12th Man to profess their passion and show support for the team by wearing Seahawks attire or blue clothing to work or school on Friday, Jan. 4 as the team travels to Washington, DC to [play the Washington Redskins on Sunday, Jan. 6, at 1:30 p.m. in the NFC wild card game.](#)

Between 2 and 3 p.m., A 25' by 30' Seahawks 12th man flag will fly along Interstate 405 between

[Register Online](#) and Seatac. At 2:30 p.m., fans may stand along South 188th Street in Seatac near Valley Ridge Park to send the team off to Sea-Tac Airport.

First Aid Course Offered at Fire & Rescue Station in Bonney Lake 1/12/2013 1:30pm- 4:30pm - Basic First Aid (Only)

The course will teach rescuers to effectively treat ill or injured persons in the critical first minutes until emergency medical services personnel arrive. This course meets and exceeds standards set by the regulating agencies for first aid:

Department of Labor & Industries, OSHA, and WISHA. Upon completion of this course, students receive a Basic First Aid card that is valid for two years from the date of issue. For more program information go here [CPR/First Aid](#).

Location

East Pierce Fire & Rescue ([Station 11](#))
18421 Veterans Memorial Dr E
Bonney Lake, WA 98391



Senior Center Offers Tax Preparation Resources

**Tax Preparation with South Sound Outreach

Friday February 15th 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friday March 15th 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Call South Sound Outreach at 253-593-2111 for an appointment. Taxes will be done upstairs in the computer lab.



Tax Preparation with Cyndi Thursdays starting January 17th and ending April 11th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sign up in the programs binder for an appointment for tax help.

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Class on Self Publishing Offered

Friday Jan. 18th from 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM @ the Sumner Library downtown Sumner. Ever wondered about self-publishing? Join three local authors they discuss their experience getting books into print. Ilene Little – “How to Plan a Successful Medical Tourism Trip”, Florence Petheram – “Magic is for When You Need It”, Helena Poortvliet – “The Black Horse of God”. This event is sponsored by The Friends of the Sumner Library



Reduce Stress Through Meditation

Reduce Stress class being offered Tuesday, Jan. 29th @ 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM at the Sumner Library. Discover how meditation can reduce stress-related responses, improve concentration and enhance clarity of thought. Learn meditation techniques with expert Ajili Hodari that can enrich your life personally, professionally and spiritually. This event is sponsored by The Friends of the Sumner Library

The Bonney Lake Senior Center is hosting Chinese New Year

Thursday January 31st @ 10:00 am the cost for the event is \$5.00

Please see any staff member to prepay.



Celebrate the year of the snake! The most important element of the Chinese New Year is the reunion dinner. We will join together with an authentic Chinese meal to bring forth a new year. Contact the Senior Center for info @

http://www.ci.bonneylake.wa.us/section_community/community_resources/senior_center.shtml

Saturday, January 26, 2013

The Three-Month Pantry

Bonney Lake Library 3:00 PM

Save time, money and energy, and prepare for emergencies. Beverly Pogue and Chelli Pogue, from Clear Path Organizing, will help you plan menus, keep within your budget, and make the best use of your food. Especially for 50+, empty nesters, or people too busy to cook. This event is sponsored by Friends of the Bonney Lake Library



Tree cycle with DM Disposal



Posted on December 31, 2012 by Susan @ City of Bonney Lake

DM Disposal offers some advice on disposing of Christmas trees: Don't forget to tree cycle your Christmas tree. Be sure to remove lights, tinsel, nails, staples, and any other decorations. If you subscribe to curbside yard waste, you may place your tree in your yard waste container for pick up on your regularly scheduled collection day. Please be sure the tree fits into the container with the lid closed and can free fall from your cart.

(You may need to cut your tree into pieces to do this.) If you live in the city limits, check to see if your city has a free tree cycle day. Pierce County transfer stations also accept Christmas trees. For locations, visit [piercecountywa.org/tree cycle](http://piercecountywa.org/tree_cycle). **Please remember flocked trees cannot be tree cycled**

View this and other announcements at www.murreysdisposal.com/announcements.aspx.

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10 Tips for Taxpayers Part 1

An article written by Kay Bell for Bankrate.com

It's said the only constant in life is change, and that's definitely the case with taxes. That was made very clear during the tax debates associated with the "fiscal cliff." But all the tax-rate-increase and spending-cut chaos that accompanied fiscal cliff discussions is just part of the picture. Here are 10 tips for taxpayers in 2013.

Tip 1: Get ready to wait

Remember the delays in 2011 when some taxpayers had to wait until mid-February to file their returns because of the late passage of tax laws? Expect the same in 2013. Congress waited until Jan. 1 to pass new tax laws, and the Internal Revenue Service needs time to reprogram its computers to account for the changes. Former IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman, who completed his term just before the presidential election, warned about delays as far back as March 2012. In November, acting IRS Commissioner Steven Miller wrote to the leaders of the House and Senate tax-writing committees, alerting them that the filing of tax returns by as many as 69 million taxpayers could be delayed, some possibly as late as March 2013, because of procrastination by Congress. Most of the inconvenienced taxpayers would be those affected by the alternative minimum tax.

Tip 2: Watch out for the 3.8 percent Medicare investment tax

Several new taxes created as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, popularly known as Obamacare, take effect in 2013. The major new tax is a 3.8 percentage point surtax on investment income earned by wealthier taxpayers. Single taxpayers making at least \$200,000 and households making \$250,000 or more would see this tax added to their investment earnings. Unearned income that will be subject to the new tax includes interest, dividends, capital gains, annuities, royalties and rents. Distributions from individual retirement accounts are exempt from the surtax, but since they are taxable (at your ordinary income tax rate), the retirement account money could increase your adjusted gross income and possibly push you into the Medicare surtax area.

Tip 3: Take note of the 0.9 percent Medicare payroll tax increase

In addition to the Medicare surtax on investment income, individuals who make more than \$200,000 (\$250,000 for joint filers) in 2013 will see a new 0.9 percent Medicare payroll tax taken out of their paychecks on the amounts earned over their filing status thresholds. Self-employed workers will have to figure the added payroll tax on their earnings, too.

Tip 4: Monitor your medical expenses

A major shortcoming of the itemized medical expenses deduction is that you must rack up enough qualified costs to be able to claim the amount on Schedule A. In 2013, again as part of the health care law, you'll need even more. For the 2012 tax year, you can deduct only the amount of medical and dental expenses that exceed 7.5 percent of your adjusted gross income, or AGI. In 2013, you must have qualified medical expenses that are more than 10 percent of your AGI. Taxpayers age 65 or older, however, can still use the 7.5 percent threshold through 2016.

If you plan to get around the higher deduction threshold by using a flexible spending account, or FSA, to pay for unreimbursed medical costs, that's still a good 2013 tax strategy. But as you learned when you signed up for your medical FSA during your workplace benefits enrollment period, you can only put up to \$2,500 into the account. So, plan accordingly for expenditures of this reduced amount.

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10 Tips for Taxpayers Part 2

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Tip 5: Determine whether your insurance rebate is taxable

Last fall, health insurers issued more than \$1 billion in premium refunds to nearly 13 million consumers. The payments, officially known as medical loss ratio, or MLR, rebates were required by the Affordable Care Act in cases where health insurers did not spend at least a certain percentage (generally 80 percent to 85 percent) of the prior year's health insurance premiums on health care services. The rebates issued in August 2012 covered premiums collected for the 2011 plan year. And in some cases, the rebates are taxable. The general tax rule is that if you got a tax break for the money and then got some of it back, the Internal Revenue Service wants to collect its portion. So, for example, if you paid for your medical insurance and itemized those premiums as part of your medical deductions, at least a portion of the rebate is taxable. The IRS has a frequently asked questions Web page with more on the various insurance rebate payment methods and taxability issues.

Tip 6: Note your company health coverage's value

One more health care act tax provision will show up on your 2012 Form W-2 that your employer is required to send you by the end of January. In Box 12, you'll see how much your workplace-provided medical coverage is worth. Don't worry. You don't have to include the amount, which will have the explanatory code DD next to it, on your tax return. It's for informational purposes only. The IRS will use this data to help it enforce the eventual individual coverage mandate (effective in 2014), as well as collect the so-called Cadillac tax on more expensive workplace insurance Plans (effective in 2018).

Tip 7: Pay your 2010 Roth IRA conversion taxes

If you converted a traditional IRA to a Roth account in 2010, you were able to spread any conversion tax payments equally over two subsequent Tax years. Your first payment was due with your 2011 tax filing. The second half is due with your 2012 return.

Tip 8: Maximize your workplace retirement plan

Speaking of retirement savings, don't overlook your 401(k) plan. Your contributions are made via payroll deductions before your withholding Taxes are calculated, so in addition to saving for retirement, you shave a bit off your tax bill. Many companies make matching contributions to Employee accounts. That's basically free retirement money. And the total earnings in the account grow tax-deferred. Each year the IRS reviews the maximum amount that workers can contribute to their 401(k)s and, if warranted, adjusts the contribution levels for inflation. In 2013, you can contribute up to \$17,500 to your 401(k). If you're 50 or older, you can add an extra \$5,500, allowing a worker who is closer to retirement to contribute as much as \$23,000 in a 401(k). And if your company offers a Roth 401(k) option, the fiscal cliff tax bill also now allows plan participants to convert to that type of retirement savings at any time. You no longer have to wait for one of the three qualifying events -- a job change, retirement, or turning 59 ½ -- to roll your regular 401(k) into a Roth 401(k), which eventually provides tax-free distributions. Remember, however, if you do roll over your workplace retirement account, you'll owe tax on the converted money. Continued on next page...



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10 Tips for Taxpayers Part 3

Tip 9: Find a tax professional

Tax laws change every year. And too often, the changes are made late in a tax year, giving you very little time to adjust. If 2013 is the year you decide to get professional help in deciphering the late-breaking and convoluted tax laws and filing your return, start searching for a tax pro now. You have plenty of time to determine which tax professional best fits your tax needs and then thoroughly check out the tax adviser before hiring.

Tip 10: Take your time

Here's one more adage to keep in mind as an important tip for taxpayers: Haste makes waste. That can be true and costly when it comes to taxes. Although the filing deadline is April 15, you can get more time to finish your tax forms. If you need it, take it by filing for an extension with Form 4868. Remember, if you owe a tax bill, you must send in that amount (or close to it) by April 15 or you could end up owing more in late-payment penalty charges.



Fireplace Safety Tips to have a Safe Burning Season



During cool weather, many families look forward to the warmth and ambience of crackling fires in their home fireplace. But before you light a fire, there are some tips to consider:

Get the Fireplace Ready

Past fires may have left soot deposits inside your chimney, so it is always a good idea to have it swept before use. Also, take a look up the flue. Make sure that it is clear of obstructions and debris. If you notice any cracks in the mortar or crumbling cement, this is a warning sign that the chimney may need repair and you should contact a professional. Another area to check is the fireplace damper. Make sure it works properly and fits snugly so that your fireplace won't allow cold air in or heat out.

Choosing Firewood

Be sure to replenish your wood supply. Well-seasoned firewood is easier to start, produces more heat and burns cleaner, reducing the amount of dangerous buildup. There are a few things you can look for to tell if wood is seasoned or not. Well-seasoned firewood generally has darkened ends with cracks or splits visible, it is relatively lightweight and makes a clear "clunk" when two pieces are knocked together. "Green" wood has a much higher water content, making it harder to start and less efficient when burning.

Buying Firewood

Firewood can harbor insects, such as the Emerald Ash Borer Beetle, a species that feeds on ash trees and has killed millions of trees across the U.S. Because of insects like these, it's important that you not move firewood, and instead purchase it close to where you plan to use it. Also, make sure that the firewood you purchase is from local resources. At the end of the season, be sure to burn all the wood that you have ordered, so that any insects or larvae in the wood do not have the chance to spread.