

Curing the Filing Headache

Jared Nielsen

Filing taxes can be a real pain, especially if you have never filed before. Here are a few tips and suggestions to help when you file your taxes this year.

First, you want to make sure that it is necessary that you file. You can get this and other information from this IRS page: www.irs.gov/individuals. Remember that if you have had taxes withheld from your paychecks, it is probably a good idea to file since you are likely to get a refund. Because state tax rules vary by state, you will need to go to your home state's department of revenue website to get filing details.

The easiest way to file your taxes is to use an online tax program. The good news is that both TurboTax and TaxACT have options for federal filing that does not cost anything if you meet certain requirements, which are easily met by most college students. These programs often have state options as well, but the availability and cost of these varies by state. The "Free File Home" link on the IRS page described above gives a list of online programs that offer Free State filing for almost every state.

From the first time I saw a 1040 form, I dreaded ever having to file taxes. Electronic tax filing

programs, however, make the whole tax-filing process much simpler. They tell what information you need to enter and then make all the calculations and sort everything out for you. When finished you can print out a copy of your completed 1040 and mail it in to the IRS. The programs usually give step-by-step information on how to do this.

For filing federal taxes I recommend using TaxACT (www.taxact.com). This free program makes filing taxes as easy as possible. Be careful, though: they will often try to get you to buy extra stuff. Just click "No thanks," and never give out your credit

card info.

Once on TaxACT's main site you can click "Start free return," where you will be prompted to register. From this point you will be directed to a welcome screen, where helpful video tutorials guide you through the entire process of filing your federal taxes. Basically you will need to enter in a lot of information, which TaxACT (or other program) will prompt for. Before sitting down to do your taxes make sure you have the necessary information: your social security number, home address, and W-2 forms, which are sent to you by your employer. It is also good to have records of any

money used for tuition or education costs, as this might help increase your refund.

There are many "how to" websites with tax filing instructions you can visit if you are having problems. Just Google search "tax filing how" and that will bring up a plethora of relevant results.

Filing taxes will take a bit of time, but these tips should help improve your experience. Finally, if you are still having a hard time, please don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail and I will be glad to help. My address is nielsenja@montreat.edu. Good luck and Godspeed with your 2010 tax filing!

New Wellness Coordinator for Tobacco Free Campus

Montreat Staff



Margaret Hurt is the new Wellness Coordinator for Montreat's Tobacco Free Campus grant. The grant

is funded through the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund and helps to encourage our students and staff to enjoy a tobacco free campus, better understand the impact of tobacco use, and to access resources such as the free Quitline to end tobacco use. Hurt will work closely with the Tobacco Free Campus Action Team in the planning and implementation of activities and initiatives.

She has an extensive variety of work in non-profit

settings, as well as in grant writing and administration. Professionally, she has held several positions in development, event management and program development. Hurt is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, where she received a degree in Communications

"I am looking forward to this opportunity to become involved in the college's life, to learn more about grant administration, and how our state supports heart health

and healthy lifestyles," said Hurt, "I hope to be part of raising awareness and positive changes amongst our college community."

Hurt is "diligent and personable, talented and engaging. Her heart for the health of our community and experience are great assets to Montreat College," said Keri Boer.

Hurt is married to Maury Hurt, and is the mother of three children, ages 8, 6 and 3 years. She enjoys the

outdoors and exercising, spending time with her family, and making a positive difference in her community. Come by and meet Mrs. Hunt, share ideas you may have. You may reach her in the library 2nd floor office, or at mhurt@montreat.edu.

Seeds

Andrea Thompson

We talk a lot about community here at Montreat. The Residence Energy Challenge (REC) will be an excellent opportunity for this. It mirrors the Water Conservation Dorm Competition that took place during the fall 2008 semester. The principles are the same; you try to save as much energy as you can! The REC begins 8:00 am on February 15th (this upcoming Monday). There will be a kick-off event featuring an acoustic band, games, and food. In all fairness to the varying number of residents in each dorm, every dorm will be competing against itself. A dorm's current electricity use will be

compared to its history of electric use over the last two years. Then we compare results between the dorms, and the dorm that saved the most energy wins. There will be a grand prize for the winning dorm and other prizes for individuals. Weekly movie showings will take place in Belk as well as several convocation credit opportunities. Posters and tip cards will be distributed to give you good ideas.

Here's one tip from Michael Bloch at www.greenlivingtips.com: "Reduce electricity bills by as much as 10% simply by unplugging appliances or switching devices off at the power point they are connected to when not in use.

Standby, also known as phantom power loads, are responsible for an incredible amount of electricity consumption nationally. Practically every electronic device that you plug into a socket continues to consume electricity after you've switched the device off. Examples include phone charges, notebook power adaptors, microwave ovens, game consoles, CD players, video players, and DVD players.

An easy way to turn off these electronics is to have them hooked up to a power cord with a switch to easily flip electricity on and off. The goal of the competition is not just

money savings. Its purpose is to foster and develop lasting habits of responsible energy use. After a period of 60 days, the REC ends on April 16th at 8:00 am and celebrations begin!

SEEDs has taken on the task of raising \$1000 for the Green Campus Task Force as they implement a comprehensive recycling program this spring. During the REC there will be a Penny Drive between the dorms. Day students will also have a chance to compete. Meanwhile, several recycling bins are already in place around campus. It's hard to see the benefits of recycling. Who knows where it goes? Asheville

has its own recycling facility named Curbies. They are willing to take plastic (#1-7 as noted on the bottom of the item), glass bottles, paper of all kinds, aluminum cans, steel/tin cans, and empty aerosol cans. It's easy to recycle here at Montreat because we can mix all these recyclables together in one bin. It uses 90-97% less energy and reduces air pollution by 95% to recycle an aluminum can than to create a new one. That sounds like a good reason for recycling to me! If you have questions about recycling email me at thompsonae@montreat.edu.