



THE Tax Tipper

December 15, 2013

We take your taxes personally!

Issue 39

Inside

What's Happening	2-3
Just Asking ... Just Answering	4
Did You Know?	5
It's a Photo Finish	5

President and Founder
 Neel Roberts
 PTC Canada
 Box 1347
 Vulcan, Alberta
 T0L 2B0

Phone 866-485-2683
 Fax 866-485-2761
taxes@ptccanada.com
<http://ptccanada.com>

Our Readers Respond

Neel, thank you for all your help. PTC Canada's informed assistance and guidance have been appreciated over the years.

Val Webster
 Director, Shareholder Services
 Ledcor Industries Inc., Legal
 Edmonton, Alberta

Check out our [Media Room](#). We make press now and then! Ever wondered what folks say about us? Check out our [testimonials page!](#)

As usual, we [welcome your comments](#) on the **Tax Tipper!**

Christmas Message

Dear Clients and Friends,

As I put the final touches on my preparations for the Christmas season, I look back on 2013, and it's hard to believe that 2014 is just around the corner. I can honestly say that my shopping is done, and I feel good that it's ready to be packed in my suitcase for Toronto with the family. I'm one of those guys who does it all year round, as I promised myself years ago that I wouldn't take part in the December 24th, 5:55 p.m. lineups. That's a vow I've kept, and it's paid off big time. From the office window overlooking my farm, I can see my frozen pond and the snow blanketing the prairie fields. To the west are the ice-capped Rocky Mountains where the sun sets in the late afternoon. You don't need any more proof that winter has been here for a while even though the solstice is still a few days away. What I do like about the short days is the increased time to check out the night sky. As an amateur astronomer, I find it breathtaking to probe the heavens on these clear nights while sipping a warm beverage on the deck.

Whatever your pastimes for the holidays, be sure to make time for family, friends and those that matter. I actually take my work with me and sometimes meet other professionals, because I simply love my work. It seems almost abnormal these days to sit back and relax by yourself even for a few hours, but Christmas can provide opportunities to do so. When I started PTC Canada 15 years ago, I realized how important my clients' time is to them—and it's becoming scarcer even as the tax laws are becoming more complex. That's why the [PTC website](#) is set up and updated the way it is—

so a person can get going right away. You can do everything without even so much as a phone call, proving that service has come a long way since 1988 when the internet was just getting going.

Earlier in the year, when many tax professionals met with the CRA as we do annually, we got a glimpse of how CRA will be interacting with both the public (you) and practitioners in a few years. The proposed model is to move almost everything online, with tax centres eventually disappearing and most services being centralized. In other words, it will be very much like the [ING banking](#) model. This is exciting for me and for clients who have been doing their taxes virtually. They will adapt very easily to this development, which will be phased in over the next few years. If the truth be known, I foresaw this two decades ago before it was even an idea, and I started offering it to my clients in the mid-2000s. It has been an unqualified success, and those of you who have been with me for a while using this service are well prepared to move into CRA's new way of interacting with taxpayers in the future.

With the New Year getting closer by the day, I ask you again to help out where you can this holiday season. Many charitable institutions struggle to keep up helping those in need despite the many who donate, so you can make a difference. In our small town of 2,000, a significant minority depend on our community outreach as a matter of life and death. Chilly winters can be especially trying, and I am delighted that many of my clients, friends and family give heartily. Canadians are among the most generous people in the

Neel's Message, continued

world, and having lived in Canada all my life, I'm proud of that. Apart from receiving a tax deduction, you can feel that someone in need has benefited. Check out Mark Victor Hansen's book *The Miracle of Tithing*. I recommend it at this time of year because it is very well written on the "non-economic" areas of giving. I have been tithing for years, and I can't tell you how many times it has faithfully rewarded me. Thank you for doing this.

Before closing, let me share a story about communication. I think we can all agree that good communication can make a world of difference, especially when the young ones ask.

Explaining It in Kids' Terms

A man reflects on the many Christmases he has shared with his family as they open gifts. One Christmas morning when the kids were little, he read them the nativity story out

of the big family Bible. A few years later when the youngest son was finally able to talk, the boy asked him what a stable was. The dad thought about a creative way to expound to his son in terms he could understand, and finally it dawned on him.

"You know your older sister's room?" he asked his eager son.

"Yeah," the son replied.

"It's kind of like that but without the stereo," described the dad.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and enjoy the last **Tax Tipper** of the year!



Neel Roberts
President and Founder

What's Happening

Clients Already Booking 2014 Appointments

Clients are taking advantage of the space available for the 2014 tax season without the worry of being left behind. There's generally no cost and we can flex you within reason. Are you all ready to file your 2013 return? We have been ready to roll for a few months, thanks to the help of our speedy software developers. Simply contact me with all your information and you may have your refund in January. Unfortunately, E-File does not start until Monday, February 10, 2014, so all early returns will be paper-filed with the usual 4 to 6 weeks turnaround. There is still a slight advantage, especially if you're expecting a large refund!



standards as to what they are worth at a particular time. So it is the taxpayer's responsibility to prove the worth of the transaction. Most transactions will be subject to taxes but some may not, so check out the CRA webpage on exemptions. For further information, contact the general enquires line at 1-800-959-8281.

Tax Rules Apply to Digital Currency Like Bitcoins

The CRA recently issued a bulletin about tax implications for virtual currency like bitcoins. While there is no law against non-governmental currencies, the CRA takes the view that such transactions fall under the barter regulations. Digital currencies can be hard to evaluate since there are no official



Are You "Tax Preparation Volunteer" Material?

Have you ever considered a profession preparing taxes but lack the experience?

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) is an excellent way to get started, as the qualifications are minimal. If you want to pursue a career in the tax industry, this experience can be very helpful. Many professionals actually started here before going into practice full-time. I even heard a rumour that they have a free meal at the end of the season but you have to bring your own ketchup. Don't let that discourage you. For further information, contact the general enquiries line at 1-800-959-8281 or drop by your local tax centre!



Conservative Government Continues to Cut Red Tape



The Harper Government continues to cut red tape and assist small businesses with their enterprises. Some of the [highlights outlined by the Minister of Revenue for 2013](#) are:

- [A new CRA Red Tape Reduction Action plan webpage](#) that gives businesses up-to-date information on the CRA's progress.
- [A new online mail service for Canadian small businesses](#). Businesses can now communicate with the CRA online, which will help streamline their interactions with the CRA.
- [The My Business Account online enquiries service](#). Businesses or their representatives can ask the CRA tax-

related questions about their accounts online and they will receive answers online and in writing.

- [A one-stop-shop webpage for business services](#). Businesses can now easily find information and service options relevant to their tax situation.
- [Agent ID for the CRA's business enquiries telephone service](#). Now, when a business owner calls the CRA, the agent who answers provides an ID at the beginning of the call. The Agent ID number provides increased accountability for business calls to the CRA, ensures a consistent experience for callers, and makes it easier for business owners to give feedback on CRA services.

For further details, check out the [information bulletin](#) or [Red Tape Reduction webpage](#), or call the business line at 1-800-959-5525.

Just Asking ... Just Answering

Freeman on the Land: Legitimate Sovereignty or Lawless Vagabonds?

Real People with Real Questions About Real Situations



Dear Neel,
I've been approached about joining [Freeman on the Land](#), and I'm not sure whether it's a fraud or a genuine movement. Some things seem to make sense, but I have no idea how to tell. Can a person actually not pay taxes and get a whole bunch of free things just because they are natural to the country?

Tom H.

Dear Tom,
When someone promises something of considerable value for free, alarm bells should sound right away. [Freeman on the Land](#) recently got press when a [landlord in Calgary had to evict deadbeat tenants](#) who claimed embassy status on her property while refusing to pay rent. While I'm not directly familiar with this caucus, it seems to come out of the [Sovereign Citizen Movement](#), which believes it is optional to acknowledge the elected government and its laws and they have no obligation to comply.

While some conspiracy theories may have some validity if studied carefully, you can be sure that this movement is a complete fraud and publicly dangerous. In 2012, Alberta Justice John Rooke [lambasted the Freeman idea in a 185-page ruling](#), exposing it for what it really is and creating a set of rules for dealing with people who wreak havoc in our courts. In

a later, similar case, Rooke said that the litigant "is not entitled to simply make up what he wants the law to be." This is at the centre of Freeman values, and it won't fly, even if there is some validity.

Personally, I find those involved in this movement irresponsible. Not only do they not pay taxes, but they are also more interested in their perceived rights than in their obligations, and they refuse to pull their weight, [arrogantly taking other people's property](#) whenever they feel like it.

This is nothing new. In fact, it's one of the oldest tricks in the book. While some of their ideas may be interesting, like understanding how the legal system works, their philosophy can't possibly function in any system.

In short, Freeman is a scam that preys on the vulnerable and uninformed. Recognized independent organizations like the [Canadian Taxpayers Federation](#) and [Fraser Institute](#) study government policy and criticize issues publicly where appropriate. Neither of them, or any established federal or provincial political party, gives any credence to the Freeman movement. So you can feel confident that it's a hoax that will ultimately find its way into the hall of shame. My hope is that there will be minimal casualties along the way. I applaud you for taking the time to look into this.

Merry Christmas and the very best for the New Year!

It's a Photo Finish!

Have You Hugged Your Tiger Today?



Courtesy www.socialgreetings.net

Believe it or not, our larger feline friends can actually show thankfulness like this. Not long ago, a rescued lion showed his gratitude by doing even more, as you'll see in this [news video](#). Of course, we know this is not for the faint of heart. Some people think our four-legged friends can be more precious than the two-legged variety, but that depends on the individual. This Christmas, let's include our furry family members in our holiday celebrations, whether big, small, scary or tame!

[Send us your fascinating photo or story.](#)

Did You Know?



... the Germans were the first to make an artificial Christmas tree out of dyed goose feathers?

The first artificial Christmas trees were wooden, triangular-shaped pyramids lit by candles. They were developed in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1747 by the German Moravian Church. A century later, feather trees were developed in Germany using green-dyed goose feathers. They were a response to Germany's continued deforestation and became increasingly popular during the early part of the 20th century. Eventually, these feather trees made their way to North America, where they became popular there, too. So, natural Christmas trees in the United States were actually pre-dated by artificial trees. Now that's "down" to Earth!

All materials are the exclusive property of PTC Canada and are for information purposes only. Individuals and entities should seek personal advice from qualified professionals before taking further action, as PTC Canada and its associates assume no liability whatsoever for this resource.

[Click here to unsubscribe to this newsletter](#)

The **Tax Tipper** is professionally finished by Joyce Gram and Elizabeth Kendler of Gram Editing Services.

www.gramediting.com Email: email@joycegram.com