

# It's tax time again: three ways you can handle return

by Dave Wilson  
If life is by and large an uncertain proposition there is at least one thing of which we can be assured—about this time of year, we will all receive an ominous looking brown envelope from the federal government reminding us that it is once again time to file our income tax.

And although the certainty with which we can expect our tax forms to appear is indeed a dubious source of comfort, it is a task which each of us must face.

If there is no escaping the fact that each of us must file a tax return, there is at least a little flexibility available to us in the means by which we go about filling them out.

There seem to be three alternatives available to the prospective tax filer: he can enlist the assistance of a professional tax return service; he can consult a professional accountant; and last and not least expensive of all, he can fill out his return himself.

In Midland there are two tax return services—H and R Block, located on Dominion Avenue beside the Post Office, and The Midland Income Tax Service, situated at 246 King Street.

Sid Bossenberry, who runs the H and R Block outlet, notes that the company is largest income tax service in Canada, with agencies located in most towns and cities. Mr. Bossenberry, who boasts ten years experience in the income tax field, claims that H and R Block is capable of handling any tax return, from a business owner's to a commissioned salesman's and from a sub-contractor to an old age pensioner.

Noting that the number of people enlisting the help of the tax service in recent years has in-

creased, Mr. Bossenberry says it is the policy of H and R Block to "inform customers of all possible legal deductions." He also notes that the company is at its busiest from mid-February to mid-April, and suggests that if it is at all possible, tax forms and pertinent information should be brought into the office at the earliest possible date, to avoid being caught in the rush, and to expedite any rebates or tax refunds that may be forthcoming.

If you decide to hire the services of H and R Block, it will cost you a basic charge of \$8, unless you are a senior citizen, for whom the basic charge is \$5. Mr. Bossenberry says that beyond the minimum charge it is impossible to tell whether there is an average fee for the company's services, explaining that the cost of processing each return is based upon the complexity of the individual situation.

The rule here, he says, is that the more factors involved in the return, the more it will cost you to have it completed.

Mr. Bossenberry emphasizes that it is important that all documents pertaining to your tax return be brought to the office. This includes all tax deductible receipts, bills, certificates, and all the necessary 'T' forms distributed by the government. The filing of a return is greatly facilitated, he said, if the customer supplies all this information before work on the return begins.

Mr. Bossenberry also notes that he is hoping to keep the Midland branch of H and R Block open year round, in order to provide tax services 12 months a year, and bookkeeping services during the summer and

the fall. The Midland Income Tax Service opened two weeks ago, and like H and R Block, says it offers a complete range of tax return services. Bev Robinson, who with accountant and owner Bob Grant operate the King Street office says that the company is unsure whether it will stay open past the end of tax season. Until then she says, it will handle all types of income tax, and will also do some bookkeeping.

As with H and R Block, the charge for tax return services varies with the amount of time it takes to complete all the necessary forms. Midland Income Tax Services offers a flat \$5.00 rate for anyone on a mother's allowance, old age pension, or other forms of government assistance. Ms. Robinson says that the company will try to give the customer as many deductions as is possible.

Midland Income Tax Service's hours of operation are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 2 to 6

p.m. Monday to Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

Tax returns can also be completed by a chartered accountant, Eric Fowler, who is associated with the firm of G.H. Ward and Partners, says that a chartered accountant too offers a full range of tax services, but also offers them on a year-round basis. Mr. Fowler, who has 25 years experience as an accountant, thinks that this year round service is important.

"If I were to engage an accountant, in the same way as I would a lawyer for instance, I would expect him to be available whenever I needed him," he comments.

He says that accountants have up to the moment tax knowledge, remarking that the "tax changes that come in every day would astound you." The G.H. Ward company, he notes, has a department that deals specifically with changes in tax law, feeding information to the company's 47 branches

throughout the province. A chartered accountant, explains Mr. Fowler, does his work on a time basis. Therefore, the amount you will pay to have your return completed will be contingent on the amount of time it takes to compile and calculate information. Costs can be kept to a minimum, he says, if the accountant is supplied with all the necessary documents, investment information, and receipts in one package.

The third alternative open to the taxpayer is to fill his return out himself. Ronald Blair of the District Taxation Office in Toronto says that the most important thing for a do-it-yourself tax returner to do is to carefully read the 1977 tax guide supplied with each tax form package. The tax guide, Mr. Blair states, contains a step by step approach to completing your tax forms, and if followed closely enough, will lead to an accurate return.

If you're doing your

taxes on your own, the rule of thumb is to be organized, Mr. Blair suggests. Make sure you have all the necessary 'T' slips in front of you before you begin, and make doubly sure that you have all the receipts at hand to support the

claims you make. Mr. Blair said that the tax guide contains a complete list of the categories under which deductions can be made, and that it is a good idea to check off each one you think you qualify for while reading through the

guide. He cautions that if while going through the tax guide and attempting to correlate all your personal information, you find yourself becoming confused, it may be an idea to "take the whole mess to a reputable tax

specialist." What it may cost to have your return filled out in many cases will be made up by the "relief of getting the mess out of your hair and into somebody else's," and quite often, the discovery of deductions you did not think you qualified for.

One final word of caution—the government likes very much to be paid on time. If your 1977 return is not mailed before April 30, you could be assessed a penalty, and be charged interest on your eventual tax payment.



Harried filer

It's that time of year again. By now most of us have received brown envelopes from the federal government informing us that our income tax returns are coming due. There are three ways in which you can complete your returns. Taking them to a tax

service or to a chartered accountant will cost you money. Filing them out by yourself doesn't cost anything, but, as this harried tax filer shows, he prepared to spend a little on cigarettes and coffee.

Staff photo

## 'You Can't Take It With You' Huronia Players' next production

by Shirley Whittington  
Huronia Players' next production is a Pulitzer Prize winning play—'You Can't Take It With You,' by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart.

The players hope that their interpretation of the comedy about a pleasantly daft New York family may bring them some honours. It is their entry in the Association of Community Theatres

Festival. The play will run for two weekends from February 24 to 25 and March 3 to 4. March 4 is adjudication night.

Race Payne of Bracebridge is directing 'You Can't Take It With You' and he has assembled a talented cast.

Grandpa Vanderhof, the snake collector, is played by Harry Hungate, and his

daughter Penny (who has been writing plays for eight years) is played by Emily Lloyd.

Others in the cast include Richard Gorell, Nancy Penny, Larry Pitz, Cindy Kelly, Stephen Hartnell, John Scott, Dorothy McCallion, Audrey Hamilton, Ed Guthrie, Raymond Holt, Mac Higgins and Sandy Camin.

The play was first produced in 1936 and it

enjoyed a long run on Broadway. James Stewart, Lionel Barry more and Jean Arthur starred in the movie version which can still be seen on TV late shows.

Since each member of the Vanderhof family indulges his or her hobby onstage, everything from snake collecting to ballet and play writing, the play is a lively one. Off stage activity includes the making of fireworks and

Love Dream Candies. Complications arise when granddaughter Alice falls in love and introduces her Beau's conventional family to the profoundly unconventional Vanderhof troupe.

Subscribers are reminded that they must exchange their pre-paid tickets for dated ones at Huronia Office Services or Mac's Milk in Midland and at Gignac's store in Penetanguishene.

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