



Communicator

I Got My W-2, Now What?

Another year ended and another set of 1040 tax forms must be filed. Funny how it comes around every year, isn't it? By now, everyone should have printed out their W2 form through the Garnet Gateway or received it in the mail.

Now is a good time to be looking at your first pay checks of 2010 and results of your 2009 tax filing. Consider the following:

- Do you need to make adjustments to your Federal and State W-4 form?
- Are you eligible for the Earned Income Credit?
- Do you want to increase your contribution to your pension?

- Did your status change in 2009?
- Did you get married, divorced, add a dependent through birth or adoption?
- Did one of your children graduate from college, leave college before graduation, or decide to head out to the work place right after high school?
- Did you take on or leave a second job?
- Did your spouse retire or change his or her job status in any way?

There is so much to think about and consider; this is a great time to make necessary changes.

Every year the tax tables change. This year the dollar point at which we are taxed - 10%, 15% or higher - has been

dropped. Last year the annualized amount was \$7,180. This year it is \$6,050. As a result, you may see an increase in your federal taxes even though your taxable pay has remained the same.

While we cannot offer tax advice, we can discuss the options you have to make sure that you don't "owe" the federal or state government anything in 2010 - unless of course you like owing. In that case, we can let you know how you can give even more money to the government!

Please take the time to look at your paychecks and call us if you have questions. We are here to help!

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Recognition of Attendance

Each year the College recognizes non-exempt staff who used one day or less of sick time in the previous calendar year.

In 2009, there were 16 employees who met the above mentioned criteria for recognition. Eight of the employees being recognized this year were also recognized last year and 2 have qualified for the last four years.

A special thank you is extended to those employees recognized. Your outstanding attendance demonstrates a remarkable commitment to your job and to the Bates community!



"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."

~John Boswell

Accidents, Injuries, Symptoms and Near Misses

If I trip or fall, the first thing I do is look around to see if anyone saw me. It's embarrassing to be caught in a blunder, especially when it results from something I've done all my life, namely walking. I suppose it's probably natural for all of us to want to bury our mistakes and not share them. But in the world of safety it's necessary to expand our thinking and offer wisdom from our mishaps. So, the more generous thing to do is to think about why I tripped or fell. If there is something obviously out of place that I could correct, I should fix it. If there is something beyond my ability to fix, I would create a work order or call Bill St. Pierre at Physical Plant (x6449) and report the condition so it can be repaired. If I am really proactive, I would even take it to the next level and report it to the Safety Committee or to the Safety Department (x8226) so that it could be analyzed for possible additional preventive measures. This assumes that this is only a "near miss"

and that no injury occurred.

If injury results from a mishap at work employees have additional obligations. All injuries, even if they seem minor, need to be reported to our supervisors or managers within 24 hours. This policy protects both you and the College if unforeseen complications arise. Delaying reporting leads to claims being questioned when they are finally reported. Sometimes it's hard to recall the details of what happened, or who was present if we wait. Injuries requiring treatment will fall within the State of Maine's Workers Compensation benefit. Naturally, when we look to our insurance provider for guidance we must provide information which would come directly from the accident/incident report. The more detailed, accurate and timely the reporting, the less chance there will be of problems in administering the benefit. What this means to you as the injured worker is medical treatment for your injury at no cost to you. And, in the more severe cases, there

is entitlement to partial replacement of lost wages if the injury is such that you are forced to miss work beyond a prescribed waiting period.

Sometimes we develop symptoms over a period of time and are reluctant to tell anyone about them for fear they will turn out to be temporary or unrelated to work. Here again, it is a good idea to mention the symptoms to our supervisors and fill out the incident report. This allows supervisors, Human Resources and our Workers Compensation insurance carrier the opportunity to assess the information, to apply their collective experience and wisdom, and to suggest a treatment plan as early as possible.

One goal for all of us is to work safe. When something happens to interfere with this goal we all need to make it our priority to prevent further occurrences and to minimize the personal and institutional impact of an accident. Let's work together to be sure all incidents get reported and addressed.



New Staff—January 2009

Jonathan Anctil, *Custodian*, Physical Plant

Performance Development Timeline Reminder

Mid-Year Review
November '09—March '10

Year-End Review
April '10—July '10

Dates of Interest in February

- 4th **Bi-weekly pay date**
- 11th **Monthly pay date**
- 16th **Wellness Lunch and Learn—Trauma and Fall Risk**
- 18th **Bi-weekly pay date**

Heart Healthy Omega-3



It is becoming well known that omega-3 fatty acids or fats are a healthy fat that is not only good for the heart, but helps brain function, blood clotting, moistens cell membranes and lowers bad (LDL) cholesterol levels in the body. By having a diet rich in omega-3 fatty-acids, the risk of plaque buildup on the inside of the arteries (that leads to strokes or heart attacks) is reduced. Omega-3 fatty acid also helps the body fight inflammation,

maintain weight and metabolism. The American Heart Association advises individuals who are at risk of acquiring or have been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease or similar conditions to increase their intake of omega-3 fatty acids for optimal health benefits.

The following are a few foods which tend to be rich in omega 3:

- Fish- Salmon being one of the most rich, also tuna, cod, halibut and many shellfish

contain omega 3.

- Nuts and Seeds - Flaxseed and walnuts are known to be some of the best sources for omega-3.
- Vegetables - such as cabbage, cauliflower, kale and collard greens are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids, as are brussels sprouts and soybeans.
- Supplements – such as fish oil and cod liver oil.

Congratulations to Professor Jim Hughes!

The Dean of the Faculty is pleased to announce that Professor Jim Hughes is the 2009-2010 recipient of the Kroepsch Award for Excellence in Teaching. The Kroepsch Award is given “in recognition of outstanding performance as a teacher during the previous twelve-month period.”

Students and recent alumni who nominated Jim wrote:

“Professor Hughes has the ability to walk students through the complex study

of economics in a way that is not only understandable but also pertinent and relatable. He is held in very high regard by his students.”

“Professor Hughes was an inspiration to me while I was at Bates. While he was my direct professor, he encouraged me to succeed and was truly interested in my well-being...”

“...he encouraged me to think outside the box...”

“...he manages to be incredibly humorous while conveying important points. Hughes challenges students to actually understand the material rather than just robotically spit back the material.”

“No gimmicks, no fanfare, yet is able to make the materials interesting and relevant to students. Had a great ability to get his students to understand the material.”

Congratulations, Jim, on the recognition of your work!

Aetna HRA/Wellness Program Incentive Update

Congratulations to the 171 employees who have participated in the Health Risk Assessment Incentive with Aetna. For their participation, they have received a \$25 gift certificate through Aetna’s relationship with gift certificate vendor, GiftCertificate.com

Many employees have be-

gun their Wellness Program which when completed will earn them another \$50 gift certificate from Aetna. To earn the \$50, employees must complete the 30 day wellness program evaluation. It is important to note on your calendar when the 30-day period is up so that you can access your

Aetna Navigator Account and complete the evaluation within the required time frame.

For a more complete report on the College’s progress towards our goal, please go to <http://www.bates.edu/PreBuilt/hr/hr-hra-progress-report.pdf>



Everybody Has a Story—Cindy Visbaras



Each month, the Communicator will feature a story about a randomly selected employee on campus. Learning about our colleagues helps to build community and is interesting—because everybody has a story!

Who has worked for Bates for 25 years, but is known to few? Cindy Visbaras! You might ask yourself: in this small community, how can that be—and who is Cindy Visbaras???

Cindy joined the Bates Community 25 years ago as a part-time employee and has been a full-time employee in the Health Center since 1986. Cindy says that because her work as a Health Educator is focused solely on the students, she doesn't get out to meet other employees that often.

Most of Cindy's career has been in college health; she came to us from Loyola University in Chicago. She enjoys working with young adults and helping them work through the challenges that they face at this stage in their lives. She grew up in New Jersey and moved to Maine to be near her family after having her first child; her parents had moved to Maine from New Jersey when she was in high school. Childrearing days behind her (her daughters are now 22

and 26), she focuses on her passions in life: creativity and an ardent love of nature.

Cindy has been fortunate in that she has created the opportunity to weave her knowledge in health education with her love of creativity. She recently received a grant from the Harvard Center to create an Expressive Arts program at the Patrick Dempsey Center for Cancer Hope and Healing. This program involved using different art mediums to help people cope with the transitions in their lives. She has also volunteered for Seniors Plus and presented a similar workshop for their clients. Cindy guides individuals through journal writing, painting and collage work and personally enjoys quilting and making jewelry. She frequently gets her inspiration from the outdoors and cites her favorite place as a stand of pine trees near her home.

Outdoor adventures are not, however, limited to Maine. Cindy has traveled extensively in the United States and

abroad; having experiences that few can claim. Adventures include swimming at the Great Barrier Reef, weatherizing homes in Puerto Rico, visiting family in Sweden and hiking the Grand Canyon. She is even brave enough to share an embarrassing travel moment: when she returned to the Grand Canyon recently with her family to show them the trail that she hiked, she was so excited, she didn't realize there was a thin layer of ice on the trail and ended up sliding down quite a distance. A humbling experience to say the least—she had to crawl back up to the (laughing) group on her hands and knees!

Chuckles aside, what you should know about Cindy is that she has been described as “the nicest person” on campus and while I only spent an hour with her, I'm inclined to agree. She's a warm, open individual with a sense of humor that is delightfully unassuming. Thank you, Cindy, for sharing your story (and photos from your trip!)

