

Kansas



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# The Informer

## *The President's Message*

July 2016

Hello Kansas NATP Chapter & friends:

This year's tax filing season may seem somewhat distant except for all of those returns on extension that are yet to be completed as time has rapidly moved into Summer. After catching up on medical & other appointments/procedures, family get togethers, etc.; a renewed focus is now necessary to get through the information provided to determine what additional information is needed. And addressing all the clients calling & bring in notices for current & prior years plus helping new clients seeking help for prior year returns yet to be filed due to major festering issues that the client is looking for a miracle. Also now we are reassessing what is needed to be able to significantly improve our operations and tax knowledge. One way is to be positive (positive people are 31% more productive (Success Magazine, Aug. 2016) is to read *The Optimistic Workplace*, a book by Shawn Murphy. "Workplace optimism is the belief that good things will come from hard work."

As I have said before, although it is an enjoyable & challenging business, it takes a lot more than a basic understanding of

income tax rules and the latest software to make a tax business profitable. In order to gain clients, be efficient and knowledgeable in the vast tax industry there are always major challenges, i.e. computer problems, ID Theft/Scams, weather induced building damage, owners/employees/family major health issues or other reasons for moving on.

Fortunately you and thousands of other National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP) have come together to be tremendous resources to help us know better how to address these issues. The 2016 NATP National Conference in Indianapolis, August 8-12, provides a great opportunity to meet & discuss with others the challenges we are facing. But NATP provides a great many other ways that you can learn from others how best to deal with these situations &/or avoid them. I.E.. Chapter contacts from education events that you can call/email, to social media contacts that you can ask others for their suggestions, and NATP Research, Chapter Leadership Advisor, National/Chapter Board Directors, Education Presenters, IRS Liaison contacts, Vendors, website education, etc.

The Board Members, Committee Chairpersons and other



*From the Sunflower State.*

leaders of the Kansas Chapter of NATP, have been busy working with the Internal Revenue Service and others in arranging for the KS NATP/IRS Tax Symposium, August 25, 2016 again at the Johnson County Community College. You can register on-line at [natptax.com](http://natptax.com). Hope to see you at this event.

The Symposium is a very economical way to gain CPE credits, tax knowledge, and an opportunity to ask questions of IRS (including the Taxpayer Advocate representative-make an apt.) & other presenters. Register by going online at [natptax.com](http://natptax.com) and go to Chapters, you will see so much in the way of resources that the Chapters and members have.

If you are hunting for something, feel free to call and ask the National staff (800-558-3402) or Kansas Board Members & Officers (see contact info. listed in this newsletter) for help in finding what you need.

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## MEET A BOARD MEMBER

### Vonda Nail - TaxWorks



Hello, My name is Vonda Nail and I am an Enrolled Agent. I became involved in Taxes out of necessity. My husband Joe was a Wichita Police Officer and I needed to work hours that he was not working. We have 3 boys and it was difficult to pay a baby sitter, so I took the H&R tax course and begin working for them in 1982. I was able to work hours that Joe could be home to watch the boys. It was a perfect fit.

I have always liked working with numbers and it did not take long for me to realize that preparing taxes is what I wanted to do. I love talking with clients, I have met some of the nicest people and of course a few that I would have preferred avoiding! But all in all I really enjoy what I do. During my 16 years at HRB I managed an office and taught many different levels of tax preparation to the public. In 1998 I opened "TaxWorks" located in West Wichita. Now that my husband is retired from the WPD he and I work together at the office. He manages the front desk, greeting clients, making appts., keeping our computers in tip top shape, and generally keeping me on track. I do the preparation of Taxes and payroll, he says I am the brains of the operation, but I could not do it without him. Our youngest son Daren helps with payroll during tax season. TaxWorks prepares between 600-750 tax returns a year depending on how hard I want to work!

Joining NATP has been a great experience. NATP has provided me with tax support, resources, and a group of wonderful members that I am privileged to call my friends.

Joe and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary in June this year. We have 3 wonderful boys: Derek who works at Cessna and has 2 children Jayda (15) and Drake (12), Dustin who is a K-9 Officer for the WPD and his fiancé Amie they have 2 children Teagan(15) and Camden(13), & Daren our youngest who is a Firefighter for the WFD. We love spending time at Grand Lake fishing and boating with our children and grandchildren and of course taking rides on our Goldwing Motorcycle!

### Tammy Harmon - Harmon Financial & Tax Services, LLC



Greetings from Topeka! My name is Tammy Harmon, and I am married and have two awesome and active kids. My husband Greg is the Director of Special Education for his school district, and spends his free time umpiring college baseball (and the kids) and catering BBQ. My daughter Emily is 11 and my son Grant is 6. They are forcing me to like sports since every week is now filled with soccer, softball, baseball, basketball or karate. (My childhood athletic abilities consisted of almost making it a fourth of the way around the PE mile run without walking, so this sports thing has been a new experience.) Emily loves animals, especially our two cats, Peanut Butter and Jellie. (Yes, I let her name them.) Grant makes me have mild heart attacks and reminds me to keep my health insurance up to date while racing his bicycle at the BMX track.

I never intended to focus on taxes as my career, but life is full of surprises, so here I am. I originally moved to Topeka from Salina to attend Washburn University with the idea of eventually going to law school there. I soon realized however that I wanted to focus on something a little more black and white (like tax law, ha), so I turned to numbers. I graduated with a finance degree in 2000, and decided to look at investments for a career choice. Without an established office, door knocking and cold calling did not prove to be my forte. I moved on to become a bank examiner for the state, and then worked for a financial planning company preparing financial plans and preparing tax returns. In 2007, I took the plunge and opened my own tax practice (and have been wondering about the sanity of my decision ever since).

## *Important Dates to Remember for 2016:*

WHAT	DATES	WHERE	<i>EDUCATIONAL</i>
NATP National Convention	August 8-12, 2016	Indianapolis	
IRS Symposium	August 25, 2016	Johnson County Community College	<i>SEMINARS</i>
Board Meeting	September 16, 2016	Via Phone	
Annual Meeting	October 24, 2016	Holiday Inn East (Kellogg & Rock Rd)	
NATP 1040	October 25, 26, 2016	Holiday Inn East (Kellogg & Rock Rd)	
NATP 1040	November 7, 8, 2016	DoubleTree Overland Park	<i>MEETINGS</i>
Fall Seminar	November 9, 2016	DoubleTree Overland Park	

All seminars: Registration 7:00 a.m. Seminar 8:00 a.m. If you have a suggestion for a topic for these seminars, please contact Tim Graham or Tim Cain. Their phone numbers are located on the last page of this publication.

President's letter (continued from page 1)

KS-NATP will again be offering tax seminars as a part of the Annual Meeting October 24 at the Holiday Inn East in Wichita (Kellogg & Rock Rd.) and the Fall Seminar November 9 at the DoubleTree in Overland Park. You will be able to register online for those events as the time approaches. These KS-NATP events provide the opportunity to get State (KS, OK & MO) updates (no CPE with certain exceptions) as well as Federal sessions for CPE. The NATP 1040 workshops are held in the two days following the Annual Meeting and the two days leading up to the Fall Seminar.

If you have issues with what you see happening or not happening and you have suggestions, please let me or another Board of Director know so we can have a chance to address the issue.

Again, I encourage all our KS-NATP members to develop contacts amongst as many of our KS NATP Board of Directors & Chairpersons as possible. Be a mentor to each other. KS NATP wants your tax business to be successful.

Have an enjoyable Summer!!

Tim Cain, President of KS NATP

## News from your Kansas Chapter

Hello from your Kansas Chapter of NATP.

The annual Kansas Tax Practitioner Symposium, featuring speakers from IRS and your chapter, is just around the corner on August 25th.

Great topics. Great price for continuing education. Same great location: Johnson County Community College, Regnier Center, Room 101, 12345 College Blvd, Overland Park, KS. Go to the Kansas Chapter ([ksnatp.com/education](http://ksnatp.com/education)) for a list of topics, speakers and their bios.

**Have an unresolved issue with IRS?** Reach out to Traci Willnerd, Kansas Taxpayer Advocate, to schedule a one-on-one appointment in a private setting. If you want to set up an appointment you must do so in advance by calling 316-651-2114. This is a great opportunity to work that case you just can't close.

A registration form and early bird pricing is available at the Kansas Chapter website (referenced above). Or, register online at NATP's (<http://www.natptax.com/Chapters/Pages/KansasChapterEducation.aspx>), on the Chapter Education page.

Questions? Email us: [kansasnatp@gmail.com](mailto:kansasnatp@gmail.com) or call 785-827-1304. We hope to see you there!

## Some of the Most Unusual and Strange Taxes Throughout our History

By Vonda Nail

Did you know that in Ancient Egypt, cooking oil was taxed, and on top of that, people had to buy their taxed cooking oil from the Pharaoh's monopoly, and were prohibited from reusing previously purchased oil.



*What would happen if McDonald's couldn't reuse their oil!*

During the Middle Ages, European governments placed a tax on soap. It remained in effect for a very long time. Great Britain didn't repeal its soap tax until 1835.

*Oh my what a smelly world this would be if people quit buying soap!*

In 1705, Russian Emperor Peter the Great placed a tax on beards, his hope was to force men to adopt the clean-shaven look common in Western Europe.

*The US should try this, maybe it would do away with the national debt!*

In 1660, England placed a tax on fireplaces. The tax led to people covering their fireplaces with bricks to conceal them and avoid paying the tax. It was repealed in 1689.

*Do you think that the chimney might give it away!*

In 1712, England imposed a tax on printed wallpaper. Builders avoided the tax by hanging plain wallpaper and then painting patterns on the walls.

*It might be cheaper to pay the tax rather than paying the installer extra for his art work on the plain paper?*

In the 1700's, England placed a tax on bricks. Builders soon realized that they could use bigger bricks (and thus fewer bricks) to pay less tax. Soon after, the government caught on and placed a larger tax on bigger bricks. The brick taxes finally were repealed in 1850.

*Doesn't matter what country it is, they can find a way to tax the people!*

In 1696, England implemented a window tax, taxing houses based on the number of windows they had. That led to many houses having very few windows in order to avoid paying the tax. Eventually this became a health problem and ultimately led to the tax's repeal in 1851.

*What a great idea, can you imagine how many windows are in the Whitehouse?*

England has a tax on televisions. If you own a television in your home, you must pay an annual fee, formally called a television license, for each television you own. This money is used to finance programming on the BBC. Color televisions are taxed at a higher rate than black and white televisions. Interestingly enough, if a person is blind and owns a TV in his or her home, he or she still has to pay the tax, but only half of it. Failure to pay this fee is subject to criminal penalties. There were 155,000 convictions and fines in 2012 alone.

*Here in the US there is a Television in every room, maybe another way to pay off the national debt!*

## DON'T ENGAGE WITH SCAMMERS

by Terri Ryman

I'm sure you read and heard numerous horror stories about folks being scammed out of thousands of dollars by "IRS" phone calls. TIGTA (the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration) has been contacted by roughly 1.2 million taxpayers regarding scamming calls received demanding cash be sent immediately or they would be arrested. You and I know that the IRS doesn't operate this way, but many older taxpayers are eager to resolve any problems they might have with the taxing authorities. These are your clients that typically pay the amount due on an IRS letter BEFORE bringing it to you, because they are so scared of being "hailed off to jail"!

We've all received these calls, and clearly some scamming efforts are more successful than others. It seems like the perpetrators should at least understand that IRS does not stand for Inland Revenue Service. And even though government workers hail from all walks of life, it is rare that they wouldn't have at least a basic grasp of English.

Since over \$36.5 million has been stolen from over 6,000 individuals in the recent two years, more folks are able to determine that the calls are not legitimate and have not been bilked of their retirement funds or savings accounts. Although there is tons of advice being disseminated over TV, the radio, and the internet, the best advice is still Hang Up! Do not engage these folks, ever. (continued on next page)

Here are some reasons why:

- 1) When continuing to interact with the scammer (even if you are just blowing a whistle into the phone) you have just given the crook two pieces of information: now they know that they've called a working number AND you are likely to answer the telephone. What difference does this make? Because getting money from you is only part of their goal. ID theft isn't only about getting your money or stealing your refund check, it is an entire industry now-a-days. Most often you don't have all pieces of your identity stolen at the same time. Your profile is being assembled chunk by chunk. Your information may be store, repackaged, and subsequently sold from one thief to the next. The very fact that you answered the phone and continued speaking to the scammer is valuable to the folks that might try to contact you again, or even sell your telephone number to the highest bidder!
- 2) You may accidentally give out more information about your phone number when you tell scammers to stop calling you. If you make seemingly innocent comments such as "Stop calling my house!" or "Don't call me at my job!" or even "This is my cell phone!", you have inadvertently added to the ID Theft database. Now, not only do these people know that this is a good number and that you'll answer it (see Point 1), now you've given the scammer even more information about you (it's your home, work, or cell number). Remember the stolen information lists mentioned above? If someone was making calls off of such a list, you have accidentally made your phone number more valuable.
- 3) You may have just confirmed your name, the fact that you are a taxpayer, and even worse, possibly your SSN when you tell the caller that you KNOW you don't owe any taxes. Often these callers are professional thieves that make a living doing this. And they know ways to get what they want. It is very easy to confirm or give out additional personal information, even when you are not intending to. Say a scammer tells you "According to our records Janet Blinker with SSN 567-89-0123 owes \$6,000." And you immediately blurt out "That is a lie! I always pay my taxes." Now, not only does the thief know that the phone number is good (see #1), they also have a name that goes with it. And since your reply DID NOT include "That's not my Social Security Number," that may be an indication that they have a correct SSN for you. You have now become an even more valuable commodity to the scammer, since they now have the name AND SSN of a taxpayer claiming to be current on taxes, indicating that you have a job or other taxable income, and have enough assets to pay all bills regularly.
- 4) By making threats, you are often providing addition valuable information. Although it is tempting to respond "I'll track you down, I'm an attorney" or "You can't do this! My husband George is a policeman," or even "My Dad is a Marine and knows how to find you!" But here you are again, giving out even more personal information about yourself and your family, and helping them build your profile. Law Enforcement Officials know that each piece of data is matched to other data about you. And now, you are not just a phone number. You are Janet Blinker, SSN 567-89-0123. You are an attorney, and your father is a marine. You live at 888 Pine Street, Wherever, USA 99999 (because they can match up your address with your phone number). Your husband is a policeman and is named George. All of this data, particularly when it is matched with additional data which can be located in other places (Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites) or even recent hacks (such as Anthem, Target, and others).
- 5) Even with the best intentions, you might be breaking the law. But the scammer called you, correct? That may be a moot point. According to Federal law and in most States, you are allowed to record telephone call conversations with the consent of only one party to the call (i.e. you). But there are twelve states that require the consent of both parties to record a call (CA, CT, FL, IL, MD, MA, MI, MT, NV, NH, PA, and WA). Of course there are always exceptions. These include emergency situations, investigations by law enforcement, or certain illegal activities (you would think that these scamming callers would be part of this category, but the guidelines are unclear). The IRS, TIGTA and Law Enforcement advice does not include recording the call. So if you have not been directed to record calls like this, don't engage AND don't record.
- 6) Scammers have no conscious. They never feel bad about what they are trying to do. So even though it might make YOU feel better to tell them off when they call, it doesn't bother them. These callers are thieves; they go after vulnerable people (including the elderly, immigrants, and students) that they can use their bullying tactics on. They scare folks into giving up information or money by using threatening language. Don't waste your time threatening them, using bad language, or telling them off. They have probably said, and heard worse. You won't phase them one bit, and might inadvertently tip them off to additional information about yourself and your family.

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# Kansas



National Association  
of Tax Professionals

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# "Here to Serve"



## Attention:

We are seeking a few individuals that might be interested in writing to the newsletter. If you are interested please contact Nolin Christensen via phone (316) 522-2880 or email [nchristensen@cox.net](mailto:nchristensen@cox.net)

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**Tim Cain**— Regional, Govt. Relations

**Nolin Christensen**— By-laws, Newsletter

**Susan Fesler**— Nominating

**Mary Giesler** - Membership, Scholarship

**Tim Graham**— Education

**Leahann Snow** - Chapter Weekly

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The best response if you receive a call from a scammer, or someone you suspect is a scammer, is to just hang up. This is especially true if they are claiming to be the IRS and you know you do not owe tax. You can report such calls to TIGTA at 1.800.366.4484. Or you can go to IRS.gov to report such activity (<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/tax-scams-how-to-report-them>).

Additionally, you can contact the FTC's Complaint Assistant at this link: (<https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/GettingStarted?NextOID=216&Selected=t#crnt>).

Remain alert and protect your personal information with strong passwords that are changed regularly. Don't fall for the scammers and their bag of tricks. Additional information can be found <https://www.irs.gov/uac/newsroom/irs-states-and-tax-industry-announce-new-steps-to-help-public-to-protect-personal-tax-data>. This is the IRS, States, and the Tax Industry's announcement of new steps to help the public protect personal tax data.

### Member Get a Member

Do you know someone who might be interested in NATP and all the benefits for members?

You might want to check out National's "Member Get a Member" campaign. You could win a \$15 or \$30 gift card, a free membership, or even \$1,000 in cash!

Just put your name on NATP Membership Enrollment forms in the "Who recommended your to NATP?" line and hand them out to non-member tax professionals. When they join...you win!!