

**Tenant Tips**  
**An occasional newsletter to help.**

**New Year's Resolutions:** AT YOUR BANK: 1- open a "Christmas"/reserve account at your bank with instructions to "sweep" a little into it each month for next Christmas; 2- open a SEP-IRA account if you qualify so as to be making deductible contributions all year; 3- open a Health Savings Account and make monthly deductible contributions all year; AT YOUR EMPLOYMENT: 4- Increase your claimed dependants up to 15 (which is legal even if you don't have that many) so that you don't make an interest-free loan to Uncle Sam and can instead use it to pay down credit cards or fill that Christmas account. But, don't increase the dependants so much that you owe a lot of tax either. WITH YOUR CREDITORS: 5- Adjust your pay date to be after your income date; 6- Never consolidate debts as that prevents your monthly payments going down when you pay down or pay off one of your debts; 7- start lay-a-way accounts at stores which do not charge you interest before you finish paying for an item as lay-a-way is far cheaper than using credit card with always hi-interest. 8- File IRS for 4868 to automatically extend until Oct. the filing of your tax return (but that does NOT delay payment of your tax) so as to be able to somewhat average tax from one year to the next by last minute deductions to an IRA in Oct. 9- Develop multiple streams of income!

**CAR COSTS**

**Cracked Windshields** need not be replaced IF they are less than the size of a dollar bill & can be repaired by experienced crack-fillers BUT the National Insurance Crime Bureau claims 25% increase in questionable claims by scam/inexperienced crack-fillers who get your insurance info with its personal data and use same to file a fraudulent claim & more.

**Car Insurance Savings By Classes & Avoiding Even Your Insurance Deductible:** From a senior AAA driving course, I learned that you CENTER the mirrors by touching your head on your right car pillow and your left head touching your left window. Startlingly, but this shows you the lanes on your right and left sides. Ask about your insurance company's free classes. Ask about NOT insuring your car stereo.

**Towing Insurance "Terrors":** Some don't cover break-downs on National Forest or State Park roads or dirt roads. Some demand towing to their own circle of repair shops which have paid the tower to bring you to them like a spider in her web and high costs! Will they leave you standing at the fix-shop who hired them to bring you there even after closing with 10° temp rather than taking you to home or motel like I was stuck with even with AAA? In large cities you NEED 100 mile even more towing to get back to your cheaper mechanic or home! Must you keep about \$7/mile towing charge with you in car? Trip interference payment for motels, ambulance etc.? Do they pay up to some fixed amount rather than actual towing cost and do you have to pay and seek reimbursement? Big Ones are: AAA; Signature Nationwide Auto Club; Driver Shield; internet shows dozens of them. Are you insured regardless of what car like a rental you are in or only your car? RVs included? How many "services" are covered & can the tower take you home & next AM cost you one of your credits by picking up car and only then take it to mechanic?

**Rental Car Terrors:** Even the counter-sellers don't seem to know that ONLY their insurance covers in an accident: towing from accident to repair place; storage for rental over week-end; profit of rental company lost during repair; rental company's administrative costs more than

several hundred finding towing of car to "their" mechanic; actual repair costs; and whatever other "costs" are thought up. BUT, their insurance is very expensive.

**Junk-yards** are wonderfully organized and saving with used parts on your used car.

### **CHANGE**

**Without Change There Can Be No Improvement:** Startlingly, I first heard this from an IBM vice president charged with encouraging hundreds of its managers. Think on this! What changes will you really do this year?

**New Habits:** 1- Regularly, shop FIRST at discount stores; 2- Budget. For just 1 week write down absolutely everything you spend, and you'll probably be surprised. Before your other stores; 3- Bake, perhaps with internet recipes your own cookies & snacks for work to save several much; 4- try eating at grocery delis, & hospital/government-building cafeterias rather than "fast-food" chains for cheaper and healthier food.

**A minute saved is another minute for you!** So, don't waste it listening to gossip, internet surfing, reading personal e-mails. Don't fritter your life away.

**Out of Season Buying Saves** like Christmas cards AFTER Christmas, and winter clothing at the season's end (be sure to buy big for growing kids); cheap property tax-sales in Feb.

**Carbon Monoxide Batteries** **MUST** be replaced to save lives!!

**Medicines Are Less Expensive in Canada & Mexico** and can bought through [www.CanadaDrugs.com](http://www.CanadaDrugs.com); --. Wallgreens and Costco and Wallmart pharmacies are helpful too. I know a druggist who buys medicine in Tijuana, MX cheaper than he can buy it wholesale here!

**Hidden Expenses Are Bleeding YOU!** Solution - for even a single week write down EACH dime's of expenditure and you'll probably be surprised. Is that surprising expenditure really so important to you OR could you get it far cheaper in another way? **Splurge on what is important to you and be "stingy" on all else.**

**Consolidate Debts - Never** because your monthly payments won't decrease when you pay off one of them, as it would if you kept them separate, even though its easier to be late or miss a payment when you have a bunch.

**Ask Your Utility What Your furnace, water heater, electric room heater, light bulb costs per hour to run.** Surprisingly, central gas costs about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of central electric! 100 watt bulbs costs ~ 3¢/hour but central heat ~ \$.97/hour & portable elect heater \$.23/hr. **Save Heating Costs** replacing furnace filters; opening shades and curtains in daytime and closing them at night; applying for utility company discounted rates for large families or low incomes; install under-door etc. insulation.

**Boring but helpful** is keeping track of every dime for just a week to know where to try!