

**Family Living
Focus**

by
Patricia L. Powley
Dauphin Co. Extension



**Getting Records Organized for
2001 Tax Year**

Income tax time is over and I've found many people frustrated because they couldn't find certain important records that would have helped them itemize their expenses or prove their contributions.

Was this a problem in your household?

If it was, here are some tips to help you organize your records for 2000 so that you'll breeze through tax time in 2001.

For Your Active Records: Establish a record keeping system as simple as using a shoebox as your file. It's very compact and easy to use. It certainly saves on the expense of a filing cabinet and doesn't take up much room.

In your shoe box, place some envelopes (legal size works best) and label them as follows: Mort-

gage/rent, electric, gas heat, water, trash, telephone, credit card (s), contributions, taxes, etc. Label an envelope for each kind of expense that you have. In the envelopes you will place statements, payment receipts, tax information, and so forth regarding those expenses.

I'm not suggesting that you keep money in the envelopes — just expense records/statements.

When it's time to do your taxes, take your box with you — everything will be at your fingertips. All the stress you might be feeling now will not be there — I guarantee it!

Put the envelopes for January, February, March, April, and the remaining months towards the back of your box. In these envelopes keep everyday grocery store, gas, department store, and similar receipts

These receipts help you track spending, so that if you're trying to save money and there doesn't seem to be any — this might be the place to look. Spending habits show up when you're trying to keep some kind of record. This is another organization technique that really helps to make a difference in the way you plan your spending in order to stretch your paycheck further.

For Your Permanent Records: Another area that needs organization in many homes is the more permanent, very important papers such as birth certificates, car titles, and military records. These important records should be kept in a home safe or a safe deposit box at the local bank. If you need assistance getting this kind of information together, a booklet titled "Getting Organized" can be helpful to you. "Getting Organized" is a 48-page bound workbook with current information and easy-to-complete forms designed to help keep tab on the many parts of personal and financial matters. Some of the records in "Getting Organized" summarize, so playing "hide-and-sort" through a lot of records to come up with figures or information isn't necessary.

Some records measure financial progress or the value of household possessions. Simple

**Leukemia Society of
America Changes Name**

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Expressing deep concern about a dramatic and inexplicable rise in lymphoma rates during the last 25 years, the Leukemia Society of America is changing its name. The new name, The Leukemia &

Lymphoma Society, along with a tag line, Fighting Blood-Related Cancers, was crafted to provide a clear statement of the breadth of the diseases the Society fights. In revealing the new name, the Society hopes to raise the level of awareness of blood-related cancers. These cancers, for which there is very little known about cause or prevention, effected an estimated 632,000 Americans last year.

Statistics from the National Cancer Institute show that from the mid-70s into the 90s, lymphoma rates rose by more than 70 percent, which made it the third fastest rising cancer in the country during that period. It currently has one of the highest incidence rates among all cancers in the U.S.

retrievable lists save tears, time, trouble, and dollars. Guidelines at the beginning of the booklet spell out where and how long to keep records, and identify the important papers. Fill-in forms concern the information that is important to keep on vehicles, real estate improvements, investments, insurance, inventories and financial records (credit cards, taxes paid, etc.).

Forms also highlight the essential information that must be included and if the form needs safekeeping in a safe deposit box. The forms are easy to complete and the decisions of what to include, where to keep it, etc have already been made.

This very valuable booklet, "Getting Organized," can be obtained from your local county Cooperative Extension office for \$3.



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