

# ALPHORN

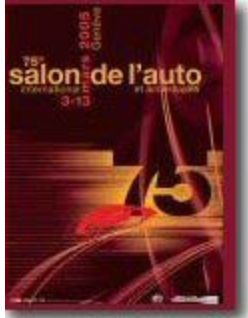
NEWSLETTER

Editor and CLO: Leslie Rhoades, 031.357.7288 - RhoadesLR@state.gov



Issue: February 15, 2005

Photograph by Les Rhoades



[www.salon-auto.ch](http://www.salon-auto.ch)

## Wine & Cheese Night

Kerry Crockett has opened her home for our next event. Junkerngasse 41 (1st Floor). The building is 1-1/2 blocks past the Munster Cathedral. Please join us Friday **February 26 @ 7pm** for a wine exchange event.

Please bring a bottle of your favorite wine and share it with the group. *You can take the #19 Bus, get off at Zytglocke, then walk down Munsterngasse which becomes Junkerngasse just past the cathedral. It's a 5 block walk from the bus stop, and also 5 blocks from the Casino parking garage. There is street parking on my street as well.*



## non-smoking restaurants in Switzerland, specifically Bern & Canton Bern .

[www.eat-smokefree.ch](http://www.eat-smokefree.ch)

Recommended by:  
Gabriela Aebi-Stamatiu

## Sale of English language books at St Ursula's Church

Sat. 26 February from 9.30 until 2.30pm.

Prices start at 2 francs a book. This time there will also be a sale of childrens clothes, toys and equipment. There will be a resturant open serving refreshments and lunches. If anyone would like to donate books they should either bring them along in the period up to Friday 25th, and leave in the lower hall on the windowsill, or call the office on 031 3528567 to arrange to have them collected.

## Female Singers Wanted - Lorrie Scheller

Do you love lush harmonies, exotic melodies, something new and different? I was a member of the Mila Vocal Ensemble for four years in the U.S. We sang Eastern European folk music -Bulgarian, Croatian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Finnish, Latvian, Macedonian, Russian, etc.- in the original languages! The melodies, harmonies and singing style are quite different from Western music, and great fun!

If I can find enough women who are interested, I would like to start a similar group here. My plan is to organize a Saturday workshop to teach some music and explore the possibility of establishing a regular group. If you think this sounds interesting, please contact m. You don't need to have a beautiful voice, just a desire to sing, (although it helps if you can carry a tune!) My phone number is 031 792 1986 after 15.00h or e-mail [scheller@freesurf.ch](mailto:scheller@freesurf.ch) I hope to hear from YOU!

## Hatha-Yoga classes with Suresh Kumar

Suresh is a yoga teacher and traditional therapist. He conducts yoga classes and workshops for corporate staff, professionals, students and offers traditional holistic therapy for psychosomatic disorders. He teaches in English.

Group classes: in Bern, Muri, Gumligen, Steffisburg.

All classes resume from Feb. 14, 2005.

Classical Indian Therapy: one-to-one sessions held by appointment in Steffisburg. For more information on class schedules and exact locations, please contact: Amita Parekh, [yoga@akar-dance.ch](mailto:yoga@akar-dance.ch) by phone: 033/437 90 57.

Leslie Rhoades  
Community Liaison Office  
Hours: Mon- Thur 08:30 - 13:30  
Phone: 031.357.7288  
Fax. 031.357.7344  
e-mail: [RhoadesLR@state.gov](mailto:RhoadesLR@state.gov)

American Embassy.  
Jubilaumsstrasse 93  
3005 Bern CH

# Community NEWS

## Going Global Platform Change

**Going Global** has changed their web platform, requiring all users who registered in 2004 to register their username and password **again**. To register via State's Intranet go to:

<http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/goinglobal.html>.

Once you have created your user name and password via the Intranet, you may access the Going Global pages on any Internet-connected computer anywhere. For information on using your **Going Global** Career Guides go to: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/flo/employment/UsingYourGoingGlobalCollection1-05.pdf>

## Summer Programs and Opportunities

### FROM FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOTE: *This program is **not** limited to Fairfax County residents only.*

It's time to be thinking about summer programs and opportunities students, as some programs have early deadlines. There is options that can provide an enriching experience and at the same student make more informed decisions for the future. Opportunities and study trips, academic programs on college campuses, volunteer/service programs, internships, and paid jobs in a field thinking about exploring for a future career.

Please take a moment to check the extensive list of possibilities FCPS website in the Student Services section by clicking on this

[www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/SummerOps4Students/index.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/SummerOps4Students/index.htm)



## The Bunche Electronic Library

The Bunche Electronic Library is a global initiative to bring the 21st Century resources of the First Federal Library to the desktops of all Department of State employees worldwide at: <http://BuncheElectronicLibrary.state.gov>. These resources include expert information, professionals who can provide you with a wide range of information and research services. To contact an expert or send a message, click on **Ask a Librarian** on any page of the Bunche Electronic Library Website or send a message to [library@state.gov](mailto:library@state.gov).

**AFSA has published its annual Tax Guide** for members in the February issue of the Foreign Service Journal. This guide to general federal and state tax provisions for Foreign Service employees is designed to be a reference tool and may save you from making costly mistakes on your tax returns. This valuable resource is now also available online at: [www.afsa.org/taxguide.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/taxguide.cfm)

### Cables:

**Consular Associate Program - STATE 010945** on the "Changing Roles in the Consular Associate Program as the Program Continues." Important information for family members interested in the Consular Associate Program.  
**FSI/NFATC – FSINFATC 000138** on Distance Learning Courses Open to Employees and Eligible Family Members.

### Guidance and Career Services 2005 Summer Opportunities for Students

This site contains information about a variety of summer enrichment and personal development opportunities submitted to career centers in Fairfax County high schools. Such programs include internships, college courses, volunteer opportunities, study abroad, summer camps, and other study areas. Visit your career center for applications and additional information about these opportunities or visit the contact information provided.

[www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/SummerOps4Students/index.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/SummerOps4Students/index.htm)

Department of  
special services

## **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT No. 13/05**

**OPEN TO:** All Interested Candidates (as defined below)  
**POSITIONS:** MRV-Clerks (temporary – until the end of September 2005)  
FP 09-01 / LCP 03-01 (no benefits)

Note: all ordinarily resident applicants must be residing in Switzerland and have the required work and residency permits at the time of application.

**OPENING DATE:** February 10, 2005  
**CLOSING DATE:** February 25, 2005  
**STARTING DATE:** o/a March 1, 2005  
**WORK HOURS:** 30 - 40 hours/week

### **DUTIES:**

Primary duties will be verifying data and data entry on computer, responding to inquiries and correspondence from the public, as well as packaging and mailing visas.

### **REQUIRED QUALIFICATION:**

1. Education: High School Diploma or Swiss equivalent
2. Prior USG experience: none
3. Language: English and German level IV, French level III
4. Other criteria: n/a
5. Skills: Familiarity with Microsoft applications and data entry
6. Abilities: The ability to work in an office environment

### **SELECTION PROCESS:**

It is essential that all candidates address the required qualifications above in the application. When equally qualified, candidates will be given preference in the following order: Eligible Family Members, U.S. citizen veterans, and all others.

### **ADDITIONAL SELECTION CRITERIA:**

1. Management will consider nepotism/conflict of interest and budget in determining successful candidacy.
2. Current employees serving a probationary period are not eligible to apply.
3. EFM's who currently hold a PIT/FMA appointment are ineligible to apply for advertised positions within the first 90 calendar days of that appointment.

**TO APPLY:** Interested candidates for this position should submit the following:

1. Application for Federal Employment (OF-612); or
2. A current resume or curriculum vitae that provides the same information as an OF-612; plus
3. Any other documentation that addresses the qualification requirements of the position as listed above.

### **SUBMIT APPLICATION TO**

American Embassy, Human Resources Office  
P.O.B., 3001 Bern  
e-mail:ReidG@state.gov

## When an Emergency Strikes, Will You Be Ready to Save a Life?



While you can't predict when an emergency will occur, you can be prepared. In less time than you think, American Red Cross training can give you the vital knowledge and skills you'll need to respond to a life-threatening situation with confidence.

### Red Cross training will teach you to:

- Care for conscious and unconscious choking victims
- Perform CPR
- Give first aid
- Treat sudden illnesses

Mark your calendar today for the next training session:

**Date:** Thursday, February 24, 2005

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Annex Conference Room

Reserve your space by Thursday, February 17, 2005

**Price:** SFR40-SFR60 depending on portions of course desired.

With Red Cross training, you can make a difference and save lives. Register today by contacting Sandra O'Brien at 031-351-7734 or via e-mail at [o'briensl@state.gov](mailto:o'briensl@state.gov)



*Together, we can save a life*

After the smashing success of last year, the FSN Association is organizing another sledding day adventure!! For those who went, need I say more? For everyone else, here's your second chance to join us for a...



## Sledding Day in Grindelwald!

Saturday, February 26, 2005

The FSN Association is organizing a sledding day in Grindelwald for all Embassy employees and their families

**Meet at 11:45 am at the Grindelwald Grund railway station (see map on back)**

**Itinerary:** From Grindelwald Grund we'll take the cogwheel railway to Kleine Scheidegg and get off at the interim stop, Alpiglen, where we first indulge in a yummy Swiss cheese fondue for lunch. Afterwards, we'll hit the sledding run, taking us in some 15 minutes down to Brandegg, another interim stop of the cogwheel railway. The sledding aficionados of course are free to hop on the next train up and repeat the exercise. The others can work on their sun tan on the terrace of the restaurant Brandegg, offering a breathtaking view of the Eiger mountain. Finally, when we've all had enough, the braver souls can sled all the way down to Grindelwald; those who can do without the extra kick of a few steep stretches can take the nostalgic cogwheel railway from Brandegg back down to the starting point.

Bring gloves and heavy boots!! Sleds can be rented in Grindelwald for 12 Swiss francs.

Price of train ticket Grindelwald Grund-Alpiglen: Fr. 12.40 full price; Fr. 6.20 half price

Price of train ticket for the whole afternoon: Fr. 22.00 (as many rides as you like)

**The FSN Association's Sledding Day – Be there or be square!**

---

RSVP to Christian Kreis, ext. 283 or e-mail by February 24, 2004

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

We'll be \_\_\_\_\_ persons for the sledding day and we'll need \_\_\_\_\_ sledges

We'll be \_\_\_\_\_ persons for the fondue lunch

# Red Shamrock IN CONCERT



St. Patrick's Day Party

## March 12



### American Embassy Annex

★ Also ★

Prime Rib or Salmon Fillet  
**DINNER** Menu price includes concert performance

**SOLD OUT!**  
General Admission Available

**Time:**  
17:30 Bar opens  
18:00-20:00 Dinner  
20:30 Band Performance

Ticket Price:  
CHF 30.00 Adult / CHF 10.00 Children  
child's menu, hamburger or hot dog plate

➔ **Tickets for Concert General Admission**  
CHF 5.00 Sold at the door

**You must make reservations  
for this event: Dinner or Concert.**



Les Rhoades by phone or email  
031.357.7288 RhoadesLR@state.gov

**red SHAMROCK** [www.redshamrock.ch](http://www.redshamrock.ch)

Sponsored by Community Liaison Office and American Employee Association

# What's Going On



CBT TOURS      2005 tours      trip information      registration      about us



CBT Tours  
European adventure vacations, offering distinctive, affordable cycling and other travel adventures to beginners and enthusiasts alike.

European cycling tours, custom adventures and first-rate, superior service at affordable prices. Offering travel adventures through ten European countries

- Austria
- Belgium
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- France
- Germany
- Holland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg

**www.cbttours.com** - "One of the 50 Greatest Trips on our Planet" - *Bicycling Magazine*



"One of the world's 10 best biking tour operators"  
- Arthur Frommer's



Ruetiweg 98a, Rueti Postfach 162  
3072, Ostermundigen [info@skiddies.ch](mailto:info@skiddies.ch)

"Skiddies is a fun and exciting destination offering wholesome entertainment for families and children and an opportunity to do so something together."

## A breath of fresh air

Switzerland's first-ever oxygen bar has opened in the capital, Bern, offering relaxation and an almost pure whiff of O2.



The O2 Oasis bar is a rather inconspicuous little room tucked away beside a flower shop. Visitors get to pick the scents they wish to inhale from a bistro type menu card, with Zen, Chillin', Death by Chocolate and Hazelnut Coffee topping the list. After you've settled down on the recliner, the O2 is pumped through the scent of your choice through a plastic tube inserted into the nostrils. There's nothing to stop you switching from one scent to another - the delivery station acts as a kind of jukebox, with selection by buttons. Each minute costs a franc.

# Beating the Relocation Blues

## Some handy tips to help you get the most out of your new life abroad!

Just what are “Relocation Blues” and how can they affect you and your family? Whether you have moved half way around the world or just to the other end of your home country you are now being confronted with different ways, different habits, a different language – or at least a different accent - on a regular basis! Food in the supermarkets is not the same, the water tastes different – and if you have relocated away from the UK you may now be driving on the WRONG side of the road!! These are all major lifestyle changes and once the move itself has been completed and the excitement is over, you can find yourself feeling lethargic, tired, miserable or just out of sorts – the so-called “Relocation Blues”. So what steps can you take to reduce these feelings of confusion and disorientation?

### 1. What you are going through is 100% normal!

Consider what you have done – moved to a new home in an unfamiliar community, met new people in every part of your life, started a new job (or are supporting a spouse who has started a new job), sent your children to a new school, tried to communicate in a foreign language – and had to unpack all those boxes in time for the first visitors! Any one of these experiences alone can be stressful – but all of them together can be simply overwhelming! The initial excitement and feeling of adventure may have disappeared pretty fast and left you asking yourself “What have we done?”.

The initial euphoria has worn off and you are now in a period of transition – a time of adjustment, learning, discovery and exploration. It is normal to feel deflated, tired, and even lonely during the initial stages of re-adjustment - but don't expect too much of yourself too soon. I'm sure that even Pollyanna had some grey days! Be patient with yourself – and sooner or later with a few new contacts, a healthy eating plan and a bit of local support, you will soon be enjoying life in your new surroundings!

### 2. Don't be afraid to say “I don't understand”

Nothing promotes a feeling of isolation in a new community more than not being able to communicate! Staying positive can be very difficult if you are all on your own at home all day with no company and no one calling.

Language classes at a local school will bring you into contact with other people in exactly the same boat as you and provide you with not only new contacts, new friends and a new intellectual challenge – but also help you to understand what is going on around you! But above all – let people know if there is something being said that you don't understand. This isn't a reflection on your intelligence – it is just a fact! Learn two sentences in the local language as soon as you can – something like “I've just moved here from XYZ, do you speak (my language)?” and “Thank you very much for your help”. You'll be amazed how far you can get with just a little knowledge – and how many people there are in your new area that do speak your language – be it with words or ways.

### 3. Keep looking ahead – not back!

It may be that you “had” to move rather than being asked “would you like” to move. In this situation it is easy to feel resentful and concentrate on what you are missing and have left behind rather than all the new opportunities now available to you.

One way to get round this and keep the whole family focused on their new home rather than hankering after the old one, is to set your children, your self and your spouse regular tasks that involve the new destination – find out the name of its highest mountain, learn a word in the new language, join a gym or meet a neighbour. Then set aside a regular time when the

continued on next page

Keep looking ahead....not back!

whole family gets together and each person “reports back” on what they have found out or done. In this way everyone focuses on where you are now and not on where you were – and at the same time as looking forward you’ll be collecting lots of additional useful and relevant information about your new home every day!

#### 4. Be ready for differences

Differences exist between one town and another, between one part of a town and another – and of course between one country and another. Be ready for these – expect them and embrace them! Try to think of every difference as nothing more than that – just something which is done differently here from the way it is done where you come from. This doesn’t make one way right and the other wrong – simply different!

Make a game out of it and get your children to actively “spot the difference” whether you are in a restaurant, in the park or just walking along the street. Get everyone in the family to try as many of the new ways, new foods, new activities as possible – and encourage your children to tell their friends back home all about their new life - in a positive way!

Just make sure they don’t over do it though – otherwise you’ll be inundated with visitors all eager to explore the great new place you’ve been lucky enough to move to!!

#### 5. Set realistic expectations – and don’t worry if you have a blue day!

No one can be 100% cheerful, positive and go-getting all the time – especially when they’ve had their long-time support network whipped out from under their feet and can’t even tune in to their favourite day time soaps for a quick fix of “unreality TV” anymore!

Don’t worry – it is perfectly normal to feel despondent and even deflated after all the excitement and chaos of the move itself. Suddenly the house is quiet, the children are off to their new school, your spouse is busy with his or her new job and you are left at home with nothing more than a stack of empty boxes!

Now is the time to dig out your “What I’m looking forward to” list and remind yourself of all the things you are waiting to discover, to do, to find out and to experience. If you haven’t got such a list already – start one now – where would you like to go, what would you like to do? Perhaps try some new sports, explore places of interest, learn the language, visit particular museums and art galleries, take up a new hobby? Once started

your list will take on a life of its own as you meet new people and enjoy new experiences and you’ll soon begin to wonder if you’ll be able to stay here long enough to do all you’ve got planned!

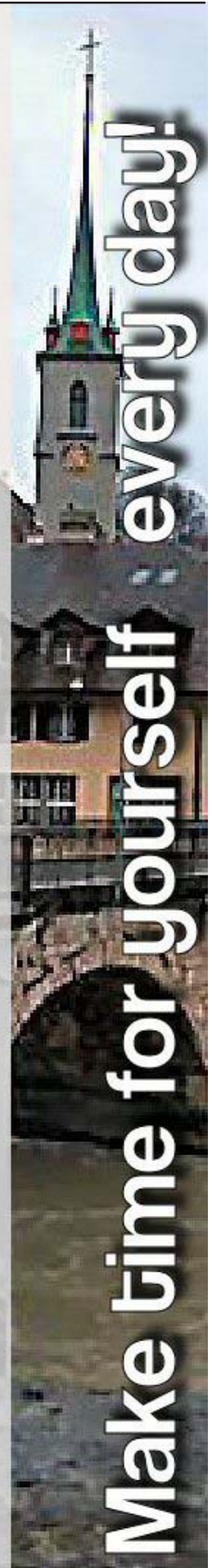
#### 6. Get involved

At last! Your new home is laid out as you want it, your possessions have survived the move and are proudly displayed once again, the children have met some locals down at the swings, your spouse is off on his first business trip with the new company and you’ve sent out your new address cards. But now what?

Now is the time to get involved in your new community and make some new contacts and friends! If your relocation company hasn’t already given you one, ask for a list of local clubs, associations and societies which are of interest to you and involve the international community. Even if you aren’t a “club” kind of person normally, the activities of the local International Women’s Club or International Men’s Club will bring you into contact with other international families and provide you with some initial contacts in your new area.

You might feel too shy to try to meet some of your immediate neighbours by simply knocking on their doors – but how about having a small “get to know you” cocktail party one evening? You’ll be amazed how people will open up to you if you make the first step and before you know it you will be a part of your new neighbourhood and helping to welcome the next new arrivals!

continued on next page



## 7. Make time for yourself – every day!

Superman and Superwoman exist only in the movies – and most likely never had to move an entire family across two continents and settle into a completely new environment anyway!

If you are the primary care-giver in your family, it is very easy to take on everyone else's settling-in issues – and forget about your own! Set regular amounts of time aside just for you - whether this be time for a weekly massage, a monthly haircut, a daily sit down with a huge cup of red bush tea it doesn't matter – the important thing is to make sure you always have time to reflect, draw breath, regroup and take care of yourself!

Don't know where to go for a decent haircut? A quick call to your relocation agent will certainly point you in the right direction – but what about calling one of the members of the International Women's group that speaks your language and asking her - make a new contact and get some useful information all in one go!!! Make sure everyone knows when your "me" time is – and that they respect it. There's nothing worse that settling down for an hour with a cup of tea and a good book only to find someone banging on your door because their shirt suddenly and urgently needs ironing!

## 8. Every thought of hiring a coach?

If not this might be the time to think about it! Working with a coach who specialises in expatriate issues can be a very effective way of reducing the negative impact an international move can often bring with it.

Some relocation companies (such as Le Concierge GmbH) also offer expatriate coaching courses and private coaching alongside their standard relocation packages.

Other Life Coaches (such as Krissy Jackson of Now Women Life Coaching - Shah-Jackson) include expatriate issues as well as healthy eating and living in their lifestyle programmes.

Ask about the background, training and experience of the coach plus the coaching models used to make sure you hire the best coach for you and/or your family.

Above all make sure that the chemistry is right and you have a good rapport with your chosen coach – remember that this is someone who is going to help you get on track to get the most out of your new life and so really needs to be someone you feel comfortable with!

## And finally ....

... extract the maximum enjoyment from every new situation you find yourself in, every new opportunity which comes your way and every new challenge which rises up to meet you. And when the time comes to "go home" try not to be too down-hearted about going back nor focus only on the things you'll be leaving behind in your foreign home!

This article was written by Nicki Auf der Maur of Le Concierge Expatriate Services GmbH an escapee from British weather and British Rail specially for Now Women Life Coaching - Shah-Jackson.

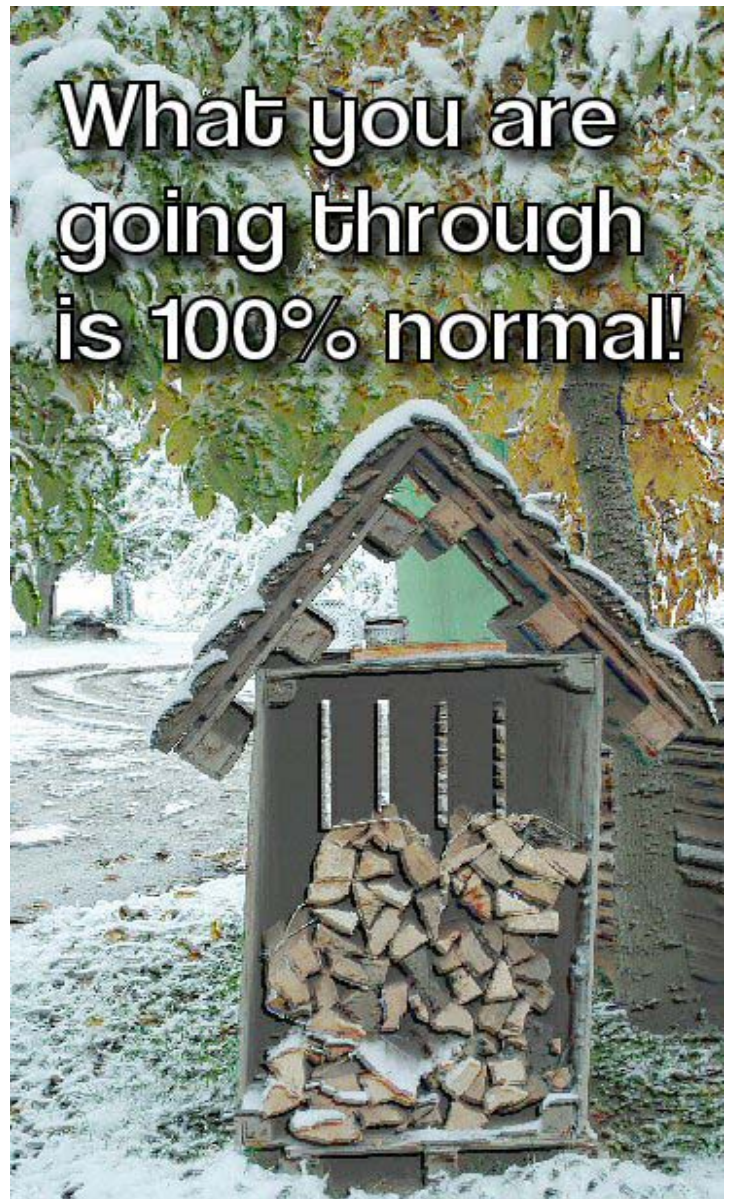
Phone: +41 41 783 16 80

Mobile: +41 76 418 28 29

Fax: +41 41 783 16 81

Mail: [info@leconcierge.ch](mailto:info@leconcierge.ch)

Web: [www.leconcierge.ch](http://www.leconcierge.ch)



# TAX TIME: WHAT'S NEW FOR 2004?

These changes are discussed in more detail in Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax For Individuals and on the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)



## Child Tax Credit.

Taxpayers with a credit amount more than their tax could get a refund of the difference, up to 10% of the amount by which their 2004 taxable earned income exceeds \$10,750. This percentage was raised to 15% for 2004, meaning a larger refund for many of these taxpayers.

## Combat Pay

Some military personnel receiving combat pay get larger tax credits because of two law changes. The new law counts excludable combat pay as income when figuring the Child Tax Credit and gives the taxpayer the option of counting or ignoring combat pay as income when figuring the Earned Income Tax Credit. Counting combat pay as income when calculating these credits does not change the exclusion of combat pay from taxable income.

## Sales Tax Deduction

Taxpayers who itemize deductions will have a choice of claiming a state and local tax deduction for either sales or income taxes on their 2004 and 2005 returns. Optional tables may be used to determine the deduction amount for those who did not save receipts. Sales taxes paid on motor vehicles and boats may be added to the table amount, but only up to the amount paid at the general sales tax rate. Taxpayers will indicate by a checkbox on line 5 of Schedule A which type of tax they're claiming.

## Sale of Personal Residence Acquired in a Like-kind Exchange

Taxpayers who convert rental property to a principal residence should know that a tax law change may limit their

ability to exclude gain on the sale of that residence if they obtained the property through a like-kind exchange. Generally, a taxpayer can exclude up to \$250,000 of gain on the sale of a home, provided the individual has owned and used it as a principal residence for two out of the five years before the sale. The exclusion is \$500,000 for a married couple if both meet the use test. The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 does not allow any exclusion if the taxpayer sells the home within five years of acquiring the property through a like-kind exchange. The new law applies to sales after October 22, 2004.

## Standard Deduction

The amount you can deduct for each exemption has increased from \$3,050 in 2003 to \$3,100 in 2004. You lose all or part of the benefit of your exemptions if your adjusted gross income is above a certain amount. The amount at which the phase-out begins depends on your filing status. See the worksheet found on page 33 of the Form 1040 Instructions.



[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## Unclassified: For Sale or Wanted

**FOR SALE:** Two (2) Siemen Gigaset 200 Cordless Telephones for use in Switzerland. They each come with charging cradles, original boxes, and manuals; 60,00 Francs for both. Contact David Maniquis at 031 357 7340 or e-mail.

**Do you have  
something *to* sell?**



**FOR SALE:** We have various items for sale plus an auto: Ford Fiesta sport model, 1300 cc, 1993, 130000km, very cheap on gas, Childrens rooms, bunk beds, massive pine, desk, Bodenseeschrank, Messing / raughglas salontisch, call Monika 031 829 3479

Pictures and Price at: [www.rascal.ch/us/for\\_sale/for\\_sale.html](http://www.rascal.ch/us/for_sale/for_sale.html)

