

Lawndale Tribune

AND LAWNDALE NEWS

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Chinese Delegates See American Education in Action in Lawndale



On November 9, Lawndale Elementary School District (LESD) had the honor of hosting Chinese principals from the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education as part of a larger international cultural collaboration with the theme Curriculum Development and School Culture. The photo shows the group at Will Rogers Middle School. They also visited Jane Addams Middle School. The guests enjoyed a comprehensive overview of the campuses and got a first-hand look at the excellent educational programs offered at each school. Photo provided by LESD

Nobody Really Knows When Tax-Filing Season Will Start, IRS Included

By Rob McCarthy

Nearly every taxpayer knows that April 15 is the deadline for filing federal and state tax returns, or requesting an extension. But what about the first day to file those returns and, hopefully, wait for a refund?

Even the Internal Revenue Service doesn't know when it will begin accepting 2017 federal returns, according to a bulletin released last week. The bureau said the start date depends on what Congress decides about "extender" tax breaks that expired at the end of last year.

Opening day for tax-filing season typically falls on a Monday after Martin Luther King Day, according to spokeswoman Cindy Hockenberry with the National Association of Tax Preparers. Not knowing the first day of e-filing next January isn't a problem yet for the group's members, she said. "It would be if we get to January 5 without a start date for e-filers," Hockenberry noted.

This year, the IRS didn't start accepting electronically filed federal tax returns until January 23. In past years, the date has been set as early as January 16, giving tax preparers an extra week in what is a long and grueling tax season for them each year.

No matter which January date the IRS selects, federal refunds won't be issued until mid-February at the earliest next year, said Hockenberry with the 23,000-member tax preparers association.

The IRS needs Congress to decide whether to extend four tax breaks for individuals and another dozen for businesses that expired on December 31, 2016. Typically, Congress waits until late in the year to approve a package of temporary tax extensions, and this year is no exception with the House and Senate working

feverishly on a tax plan that President Trump wants on his desk before Christmas.

The four individual tax breaks waiting for a congressional thumbs up are:

Mortgage insurance premium: This affects homebuyers who can't make a standard 20 percent down payment on a home or condo. The deduction for the amount of the insurance premium had been on the books since 2017. Known as PMI, these policies protect lenders in case buyers default on their mortgages. The tax savings can be in the hundreds of dollars per year, tax experts say.

Debt forgiveness on a home loan: The housing crisis is over, and so is this tax break as of December 31. The Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act of 2007 helped underwater homeowners who lost their homes to a short sale or foreclosure. The act, which allows for the exclusion of forgiven mortgage debt from income, was extended several times in the past.

Medical expenses for seniors: People 65 and older and their spouses could deduct medical expenses that exceeded 7.5 percent of their adjusted gross incomes. Without the tax extension, the threshold for deducting medical bills would rise to 10 percent and leave seniors with higher tax bills.

Tuition and college fees: This tax break to make a college education slightly more affordable for students and their families disappeared last year. The tuition and fees deduction reduced a person or family's taxable income by \$4,000--which they could claim even if they didn't itemize their deductions.

Energy-saving home improvements: As of January 1, homeowners no longer could claim a 10 percent tax credit for energy-efficient improvements. The credit had a lifetime limit

of \$500, so for some homeowners an extension won't lighten their tax liability come January when e-filers can submit their 2016 federal and state tax returns.

The average federal refund last year in California was \$2,810, according to the IRS. As for the exact date when a tax preparer, enrolled agent or certified public accountant can hit the send button, the IRS said it expects to make an announcement later in the year. Until then, the IRS advises the public and tax professionals to ignore anyone claiming January 22 or after MLK Day is the official date. "Any speculation about refund dates in 2018 is premature," the IRS said in a November 3 bulletin. Once Congress recesses for the holidays, the IRS will make updates to its system that would include any tax break extensions lawmakers approve.

Congressionally-approved tax breaks for individuals and businesses renew on a two- or five-year basis, though federal lawmakers recently made a number of deductions permanent for teachers who purchase school supplies, people 70 1/2 and older to withdraw \$100,000 from their individual retirement accounts without ballooning their tax bills, and for companies to claim a research credit.

For the second year in a row, state and federal returns won't be due on April 15. Because the 15th falls on a Sunday next year, filers will have an extra day to complete and mail or e-file returns to the IRS and California Franchise Tax Board in Sacramento. Nine in 10 returns last year were electronically filed.

This year, Congress is the one procrastinating on income taxes. By doing so, it has put added pressure on the preparers, tax law trainers and business software developers to be ready for next season's opening day. •

Weekend Forecast

Friday
Partly
Cloudy
67°/54°



Saturday
Partly
Cloudy
71°/51°



Sunday
Partly
Cloudy
71°/55°



PETSPETS **Pets** PETSPETS

Precious Pooches



Sully

We are looking for volunteers to help with our pet adoption fairs which are held every Saturday at the Petco located at 537 N. Pacific Coast Highway Redondo Beach 90277, from noon-3:30 p. m. If you are interested in volunteering and can commit to at least one Saturday a month, please contact us at info@msfr.org. You can also visit all of our Miniature Schnauzers & Friends rescues at the adoption fair or check out our website, www.msfr.org. If you have any questions about a particular dog's availability you can email us at info@msfr.org. Schnauzers! Bet you can't adopt just one!

"Hi, my name is **Sully**, just like the pilot that landed the plane on the Hudson River back in 2009. Well, I'm no pilot...but for an eight-month-old male Miniature Schnauzer mix, I did my best to steer my sister in the right direction while we were on the streets. There was a very kind person who saw us scrounging for food in the alley and fed us for about week. We realized that being on our own was not only unsafe, but that for youngsters like us we needed real homes to thrive. That's how we ended up at an LA County shelter as strays. Luckily, the nice folks at MSFR rescued us and are helping us find our forever homes. I'm pretty much a work in progress--don't know what a leash is for--but I'm a quick learner and respond well to affection, kindness and chicken! I'm more outgoing than my sister, but I still would do best in a home with another dog because I love to play and need a pal to show me the ropes. I'm only 14 pounds, so I don't take up a lot of room, I'm very eager to please and could

be your best friend."

If you're interested in Sully, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

"They call me **Roz**...and at 16 pounds, I'm considered the 'big' sister. I'm an eight-month-old female Miniature Schnauzer mix who was rescued from an LA County shelter with my brother. We had been living on the streets and looking for food when a really nice person saw us and started feeding us. After about a week it was decided that this is not the way young pups should be living. It became clear that we needed a loving family and it wasn't very safe being alone on the streets. That's how we ended up at the shelter as strays until we were



Roz



Nemo

rescued. I'm working very hard at socializing, but I have to admit I'm sorely lacking in the manners department. I don't know how to walk on a leash yet, but I'll figure it out before too long because I'm really quite smart. At first I was very skittish and I'm still the shiest one. However, it didn't take long for my foster family to see how well I respond to TLC and chicken! Show me some affection, a piece of chicken and I'm all yours! I really would love to find a family that already has a dog because I've always had my brother with me and I'm going to need a friend to keep me company!"

If you're interested in Roz, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

"Okay, don't laugh at what I'm about to tell you. I'm a tiny, 12-pound, 2.5-year old male Schnoodle (Miniature Schnauzer/Poodle mix) named, wait for it...**Nemo**! My brother--he's not a fish either--and I were surrendered by our previous owners to an LA County shelter. We were discarded like old shoes--not even a reason for why they no longer wanted us. No second chance--just gone! My brother got adopted immediately and I also had a family that was supposed to adopt me, but they backed out at the last minute. I think that I'm beginning to get a rejection complex after all of this. Can you blame me if I'm a bit timid at initial introductions and don't want to get too attached? That said, it didn't take long--only a couple of days--to warm up to my foster family and now they see what a great guy I am. I have an adorably sweet face, big soulful eyes and fur like a Poodle. That means I'm a non-shedder and I can sit right next to you without getting hair on your clothes. I think I'd be the perfect companion, so come visit me at our adoption fair."

If you're interested in Nemo, please email info@msfr.org for more information. •

*Be kind. Save a life.
Support animal rescue.*

Happy Tails



Ozzie's smile says it all!

We're absolutely thrilled to congratulate **Ozzie** and his new family. Ozzie was formerly known as Neo, our rescue from January 2016 who had to have his leg amputated due to a severe injury. He was rehomed in February 2016, but sadly his adopter fell upon financial hard times. She had to relocate with family members and couldn't take Ozzie with her. Fortunately, we were able to find him a great home with a wonderful

family in a short amount of time. His folks have had four Schnauzers and Ozzie joins a four-year-old male Schnauzer named Phoenix who was rescued from a shelter when they were visiting friends in Arizona. Talk about big hearts! Ozzie is now living large with his happy new family in their home at the beach and the one in Palm Springs. Best of luck to everyone and we wish you many great adventures. •

THE YELLOW DOG PROJECT.com

If you see a dog with a **YELLOW RIBBON** or something yellow on the leash, **this is a dog who needs some space**. Please do not approach this dog with your dog. Please maintain distance or give this dog and his/her person time to move out of your way.






There are many reasons why a dog may need space:
HEALTH ISSUES
IN TRAINING
BEING REHABILITATED
SCARED OR REACTIVE AROUND OTHER DOGS

THANK YOU!
Those of us who own these dogs appreciate your help and respect!
Illustrated by Lili Chin www.doggedrawings.net

Pets can get loose or lost through mishaps and travel quickly. Microchip: it works!