

Weekend WJS  
1/28-29/05

# FIVE BEST

*IRS on your mind? Tax expert Randy Blaustein declares these books to be major assets*

## 1 The IRS Problem Solver

By Daniel J. Pilla  
Regan Books, 2003

Daniel J. Pilla provides nine valuable secrets to winning your audit—but bear in mind that the general rule is never try to handle an IRS audit yourself (it's like trying to perform your own brain surgery). Another important rule: Never walk into an audit without knowing the issues. Anticipate the questions you are likely to be asked and be prepared with the documentation that will be needed to resolve the matter in your favor. The author supplies plenty of sample form letters—requesting an abatement of penalties, for instance, or asking for the release of a levy placed on your salary—that could be used to respond to almost anything the IRS throws at you.

## 2 Confessions Of a Tax Collector

By Richard Yancey  
HarperCollins, 2004

A reminiscence of the author's 12-year career as a revenue officer (a field employee of the IRS's Collection Division), this book reveals how the officers are taught to impose their will on delinquent taxpayers. Mr. Yancey recalls the advice about the opposition offered by a senior revenue officer shortly after he was hired: "Find where they are. Track what they do. Learn what they have. Execute what they fear." This book is replete with stories about the nuts and bolts of collecting taxes from people who either don't have the money or simply don't want to pay. "Never enter a taxpayer's kitchen," one training manual cautioned

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## 3 Doesn't Want You to Know

By Martin S. Kaplan  
Wiley, 2003

This is the ninth edition of Martin S. Kaplan's book, significantly updated since the certified public accountant began a decade ago unveiling information that other tax professionals were afraid to discuss publicly for fear of IRS retaliation. Mr. Kaplan does a compelling job of explaining how to tell if the IRS suspects you of criminal tax fraud. He also lays out how the Criminal Investigation Division proves the critical element of "willful intent" when taxpayers refuse to make specific records available or submit false invoices to support a tax-return item. The author reveals his trade's secrets—for example, how companies designated "S" corporations can be used by shareholders for deductions that are unlikely to attract the IRS's scrutiny.

## 4 Tax This! An Insider's Guide to Standing Up To the IRS

By Scott M. Estill  
Self-Counsel Press, 2000

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The author, a former IRS senior trial attorney, tells you how to level the playing field and win when dealing with the IRS. The advice (for individuals and businesses) is accompanied by citations of IRS code and regulations, useful for readers who want more information on a particular issue. Taxpayers who owe the IRS money will find here all the instructions they need on the important questions. One chapter, titled "Fight the IRS in Court," offers readers a primer in ways to represent themselves in Tax Court. Mr. Estill's advice—forceful and direct—is research the law, be organized, stand when speaking and, not least, don't ever interrupt the judge.

## 5 J.K. Lasser's Your Income Tax 2006

By J.K. Lasser Institute  
Wiley, 2005

The current incarnation of the Lasser franchise, so beloved by taxpayers, encompasses some 816 pages on every possible detail concerning the preparation of your 2005 personal income tax return. One chapter, devoted entirely to the IRS, includes such matters as your odds of being audited and the average itemized deductions for 2003 (medical, taxes, charity, interest) based on adjusted gross income. It also offers good basic information about preparing for an audit and handling one. And the authors explain how to recover the costs of a tax dispute if the IRS took an unreasonable position that forced you to incur legal fees and other expenses in order to win your case.

Mr. Blaustein is the senior tax partner at R.B. Blaustein & Co. in New York and the author of "How to Do Business

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