

TAX FORMS, LONG VS SHORT

A quick thought before we begin

Ah, spring and the month of April. The chirping of birds, the fresh smell of flowers, the sunny days ... and the time that taxes are due. Yes, it's that time of year, when you put sum 5A into slot 6B, subtract the lesser of 12Z or 11Q from 10C, check the number of boxes entered and enter the number of checkered boxes, and try to figure out if you weight more than last year's tax return. I just did my taxes and when I was done I was happy to see that I'm getting a refund ... look at the money the government is giving to me ... until I though, "Hey, it was MY money to begin with!"

The difference between the short tax form and long tax form is simple.

If you use the short form, the government gets your money.

If you use the long form, the accountant gets your money.

TAX FACTS

The Gettysburg address is 269 words, the Declaration of Independence is 1,337 words, and the Holy Bible is only 773,000 words [I don't know to which version the author was referring]. However, the tax law has grown from 11,400 words in 1913, to 7+ million words today.

There are at least 480 different tax forms, each with many pages of instructions.

Even the easiest form 1040E has 33 pages in instructions, and all in fine print.

The IRS sends out 8 billion pages of forms and instructions each year. Laid end to end, they would stretch 28 times around the earth.

Nearly 300,000 trees are cut down yearly to produce the paper for all the IRS forms and instructions.

American taxpayers spend \$200 billion and 5.4 billion hours working to comply with federal taxes each year, more that it takes to produce every car, truck, and van in the United States.

The IRS employs 114,000 people, that is twice as many as the CIA and five times more than the FBI.

60% of taxpayers must hire a professional to get through their own return.

Taxes eat up 38.2% of the average family's income, that's more than for food, clothing and shelter combined.

LETTER TO THE IRS

H&R Block rep's Note: Sometimes a story comes to our attention that needs no polishing or enhancement to make it a good Block tax story. This is one of those. It is a real letter submitted to the IRS in the midst of 1994 year's weird and bizarre denial of dependents, exemptions, and credits. We believe the letter speaks for itself.

Dear Sirs:

I am responding to your letter denying the deduction for two of the three dependents I claimed on my 1994 Federal Tax return. Thank you. I have questioned whether these are my children or not for years. They are evil and expensive. It's only fair that since they are minors and not my responsibility, that the government (who evidently is taxing me more to care for these waifs) knows something about them and what to expect over the next year. You may apply next year to reassign them to me and reinstate the deduction. This year they are yours!

The oldest, Kristen, is now 17. She is brilliant. Ask her! I suggest you put her to work in your office where she can answer people's questions about their returns. While she has no formal training, it has not seemed to hamper her knowledge of any other subject you can name. Taxes should be breeze; next year she is going to college. I think it's wonderful that you will now be responsible for that little expense.

While you mull that over, keep in mind that she has a truck. It doesn't run at the moment so you have the immediate decision of appropriating some Department of Defense funds to fix the vehicle or getting up early to drive her to school. Kristen also has a boyfriend. Oh joy. While she possesses all of the wisdom of the universe, her alleged mother and I have felt it best to occasionally remind her of the virtues of abstinence, and in the face of overwhelming passion, safe sex. This is always uncomfortable and I am quite relieved you will be handling this in the future. May I suggest that you reinstate Joycelyn Elders, who had a rather good handle on the problem.

Patrick is 14. I've had my suspicions about this one. His eyes are a little close together for normal people. He may be a tax examiner himself one day if you do not incarcerate him first. In February, I was awakened at three in the morning by a police officer who was bringing Pat home. He and his friends were TP'ing houses. In the future would you like him delivered to the local IRS office or to Ogden, Utah? Kids at 14 will do almost anything on a dare. His hair is purple. Permanent dye, temporary dye, what's the big deal? Learn to deal with it. You'll have plenty of time as he is sitting out a few days of school after instigating a food fight. I'll take care of filling your phone number with the vice principal. Oh yes, he and all of his friends have raging hormones. This is the house of testosterone and it will be much more peaceful when he lives in your home. DO NOT leave any of them unsupervised with girls, explosives, inflammable, inflatable, vehicles, or telephones. (I'm sure that you will find telephones a source of unimaginable amusement, and be sure to lock out the 900 and 976 numbers!)

Heather is an alien. She slid through a time warp and appeared quite by magic one year. I'm sure this one is yours. She is 10 going on 21. She came from a bad trip in the sixties. She wears tie-dyed clothes, beads, sandals, and hair that looks like Tiny Tim's. Fortunately you will be raising my taxes to help offset the pinch of her remedial reading courses. Hooked on Phonics is so expensive the schools dropped it. Good news! You can buy it yourself for half the amount of the deduction that you are denying! It's quite obvious that we were terrible parents (ask the other two) so they have helped raise this one to a new level of terror. She cannot speak English. Most people under twenty understand the curious patois she fashioned out of valley girls/boys in the hood/reggae/yuppie/political doublespeak. I don't. The school sends her to a speech pathologist who has her roll her R's. It added a refreshing Mexican/Irish touch to her voice. She wears hats backwards, pants baggy and wants one of her ears pierced four more times. There is a fascination with tattoos that worries me but I am sure that you can handle it. Bring a truck when you come to get her, as she sort of "nests" in her room and I think

that it would be easier to move the entire thing than find out what it is really made of. You denied two of the three exemptions so it is only fair you get to pick which two you will take. I prefer that you take the youngest, I still go bankrupt with Kristen's college but then I am free! If you take the two oldest then I still have time for counseling before Heather becomes a teenager. If you take the two girls then I won't feel so bad about putting Patrick in a military academy. Please let me know of your decision as soon as possible as I have already increased the withholding on my W-4 to cover the \$395 in additional tax and to make a down payment on an airplane.

Yours Truly,
Bob

NOTE: The taxpayer in question added this caveat at a later date: "Rats, they sent me the refund and allowed the deductions."

IRS AUDIT

For those of you who are not in the United States, the IRS is the Internal Revenue Service. These are the folks to whom we pay our taxes every April 15th.

The owner of a small New York sandwich deli was being questioned by an IRS agent about his tax return. He had reported a net profit of \$80,000 for the year.

"Why don't you people leave me along?" the deli owner said. "I work like a dog, everyone in my family helps out, the place is only closed three days a year. And you want to know how I made \$80,000?"

"It's not your income that bothers us," the agent said. "It's these travel deductions. You listed six trips to Florida for you and your wife."

"Oh that," the owner said smiling. "It is a legitimate business expense because we also deliver."

IRS QUESTIONS

This comes from an IRS employee who answered thousands of IRS-directed questions from an often-confused public. She kept a special list for the strangest of these calls.

Caller: I want to know if I should file married or single.

IRS: Are you married?

Caller: Well, sort of ...

IRS: What?

Caller: Well, we did get married, but we're not counting on it.

Caller: I got a letter from you guys and I want to know what you want?

IRS: What does it say?

Caller: Just a minute, I'll open it.

Caller: I'm a bookkeeper and I need to know if ten \$100 bills make a thousand dollars or only ten hundred dollars.

IRS: It's the same amount.

Caller: So why do I get a different answer every time I move the decimal point?

Caller: What does the law say about people who are renting to relatives and taking a loss on the property?

IRS: You are required to charge them fair market value.

Caller: It's very fair. If we rented to someone else we could get a lot more.

Caller: Could you please send me some of those WD-40's?

PRISON LIFE VS FULL-TIME JOB

In prison you spend the majority of your time in an 8' X 10" cell. At Work you spend most of your time in a 6' X 8' cubicle.

In prison you get three meals a day. At work you only get a break for one meal and you have to pay for that one.

In prison you get time off for good behavior. At work you get rewarded for good behavior with more work.

At work you must carry around a security card and unlock and open all the doors yourself. In prison a guard locks and unlocks all the doors for you.

In prison you can watch TV and play games. At work you get fired for watching TV and playing games.

In prison they ball-and-chain you when you go somewhere. At work you are just ball-and-chained.

In prison you get your own toilet. At work you have to share.

In prison they allow your family and friends to visit. At work you cannot even speak to your family and friends.

In prison, all expenses are paid by taxpayers, with no work required. At work you get to pay all the expenses to go to work and then they deduct taxes from your salary to pay for the prisoners.

In prison you spend most of your life looking through bars from the inside wanting to get out. At work you spend most of your time wanting to get out and inside bars.

In prison you can join many programs, which you can leave at any time. At work there are some programs you can never get out of.

In prison there are wardens who are often sadistic. At work we have managers.

HOW TO ANNOY THE IRS

Well it is tax time again boys and girls. So cough it up if you haven't already! But no one says you have to go gentle into that dark night. Here are some hints on how to annoy the IRS if you owe them money...

1 – Always put staples in the right hand corner. Go ahead and put them down the whole right side. The extractors who remove the mail from the envelopes have to take out any staples on the right side.

2 – Never arrange paperwork in the right order, or even facing the right way. Put a few upside down and backwards. That way they have to remove all your staples, rearrange your paperwork and re-staple it (on the left side).

3 – Line the bottom of your envelope with Elmer's glue and let it dry before you put in your forms, so that the automated opener doesn't open it and the extractor has to open it by hand.

4 – If you're very unfortunate and have to pay taxes, use a two or three party check. One top of paying with a three party check, pay one of the dollars you owe in cash. When an extractor receives cash, no matter how small an amount, he has to take it to a special desk and fill out a few nasty forms.

5 – Write a little letter of appreciation. Any letter received has to be read and stamped regardless of what it is or what it's on.

6 – Write your letter on something misshapen and unconventional. Like to back of a burlap sack.

7 – When you mail it, mail it in a big envelope (even if its just a single EZ form). Big envelopes have to be torn and sorted differently than regular business size ones. An added bonus to the big envelope is that they take priority over the other mail, so the workers can hurry and deal with your mess.

8 – If you send two checks, they'll have to staple your unsightly envelope to your half destroyed form.

9 – Always put extra paper clips on your forms. Any foreign fasteners or the like have to be removed and put away.

10 – Sign your name in ink on every page. Any signature has to be verified and then date stamped.

These are just a few of the fun and exciting things you can do with the IRS. These methods are only recommended when you owe money.

NOAH'S ARK - A MODERN TALE

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said: "In six months I'm going to make it rain until the whole earth is covered with water and all the evil people are destroyed. But I want to save a few good people, and two of every kind of living thing on the planet. I am ordering you to build an Ark," said the Lord.

And in a flash of lightning He delivered the specifications for an Ark.

"OK," said Noah, trembling in fear and fumbling with the blueprints. "Six months, and it starts to rain" thundered the Lord. "You'd better have the Ark completed, or learn how to swim for a very long time."

And six months passed.

The skies began to cloud up and rain began to fall. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard, weeping. And there was no Ark.

"Noah," shouted the Lord, "where is my Ark?" A lightning bolt crashed into the ground next to Noah, for emphasis.

"Lord, please forgive me," begged Noah. "I did my best. But there were big problems. First I had to get a building permit for the Ark construction project, and the plans didn't meet Code. So I had to hire an engineer to redraw the plans. Then I got into a big fight over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system. My neighbors objected claiming I was violating zoning by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission. "Then I had a big problem getting enough wood for the Ark because there was a ban on cutting trees to save the Spotted Owl.

Then the carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now we got 16 carpenters going on the boat, and still no owls.

"Then I started gathering up the animals, and got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me taking only two of each kind. Just when I got the suit dismissed, EPA notified me that I couldn't complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed Flood.

Then the Army Corps of Engineers wanted a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

And the IRS (The tax authorities) has seized all my assets claiming I'm trying to avoid paying taxes by leaving the country, and I just got a notice from the state about owing some kind of use tax.

"I really don't think I can finish the Ark for at least another five years," Noah wailed. The sky began to clear. The sun began to shine. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up and smiled. "You mean you're not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked, hopefully. "Wrong!" thundered the Lord. "I fully intend to smite the Earth, but with something far worse than a Flood. Something Man invented himself."

"What's that?" asked Noah.

There was a long pause, and then the Lord spoke:

"Government."

SHERLOCK AND THE IRS

A stockbroker received notice from the IRS that he was being audited. He showed up at the appointed time and place with all his financial records and then sat for what seemed like hours as the accountant pored over them.

Finally the IRS agent looked up and commented, "You must have been a tremendous fan of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

"Why would you say that?" replied the broker.

"Because you've made more brilliant deductions on your last three returns than Sherlock Holmes made in his entire career."

NEW YORK CITY DRIVING RULES

1- Turn signals will give away your next move. A real Long Island driver never uses them. Use of them in Massapequa may be illegal.

2- Under no circumstances should you leave a safe distance between you and the car in front of you, or the space will be filled in by somebody else putting you in an even more dangerous situation.

3- Crossing two or more lanes in a single lane-change is considered "going with the flow."

4- The faster you drive through a red light, the smaller the chance you have of getting hit.

5- Never get in the way of an older car that needs extensive bodywork.

6- Braking is to be done as hard and late as possible to ensure that your ABS kicks in, giving a nice, relaxing foot massage as the brake pedal pulsates. For those of you without ABS, it's a chance to stretch your legs.

7- Electronic traffic warning signs are not there to provide useful information. They are only there to make Long Island look high-tech, and to distract you from seeing the state police radar car parked on the median.

8- Never pass on the left when you can pass on the right.

9- Speed limits are arbitrary figures, given only as suggestions, and are apparently not enforceable during rush hour.

10- Always slow down and rubberneck when you see an accident, or even if someone is just changing a tire.

12- Throwing litter on the roads adds color to the landscape and gives Adopt-a-Highway crews something to clean up.

13- It is assumed that state police cars passing at high speed may be followed in the event you need to make up a few minutes on your way to work, or the beach.

14- Heavy snow, ice, fog, and rain are no reasons to change any of the previously listed rules. These weather conditions are God's way of ensuring a natural selection process for body shops, junkyards, and new vehicle sales.

PESKY TELEMARKETER

The phone rang as I was sitting down to my anticipated evening meal and, as I answered, I was greeted with, "Is this Wilhiam Wagenhoss?" This didn't sound anything like my name, so I asked, "Who is calling?"

The telemarketer said he was with The Rubberband-Powered Freezer Company or something like that and then I asked him if he knew Wilhiam personally and why was he was calling this number. I then said, off to the side, "Get really good pictures of the body and all the blood."

I then turned back to the phone and advised the caller that he had entered a murder scene and must stay on the line because we had already traced this call and he would be receiving a summons to appear in the local courthouse to testify in this murder case.

I then questioned the caller at great length as to his name, address, phone number at home, at work, who he worked for, how he knew the dead guy and could he prove where he had been about one hour before he made this call. The telemarketer was getting very concerned and his answers were given in a shaky voice.

Then I proceeded to tell him that we had located his position at his work place and the police were entering the building to take him into custody. At that point, I heard the phone fall and the scurrying of his running away.

My wife asked me, as I returned to the table, why I had tears streaming down my face and so help me, I couldn't tell her for about fifteen minutes.

My meal was cold, but oh-so-very enjoyable.

MIRROR, MIRROR

Have you ever been guilty of looking at others your own age and thinking, "surely I can't look that old?" Well... You'll love this one!

I was sitting in the waiting room for my first appointment with a new dentist. I noticed his DDS diploma, which bore his full name.

Suddenly, I remembered a tall, handsome, dark-haired boy with the same name had been in my high school class some 40 odd years ago. Could he be the same guy that I had a secret crush on, way back then?

Upon seeing him; however, I quickly discarded any such thought this balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate. Hmm, ...or could he?

As he examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended Morgan Park High School.

"Yes. Yes, I did. I'm a Mustang," he gleamed with pride.

"When did you Graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1959. Why do you ask?"

"You were in my Class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely. Then, that ugly, old, wrinkled son-of-a-gun asked, "What did you teach?"

WHY ARE MEN HAPPIER?

Men are just happier people—What do you expect from such simple creatures?

Your last name stays put.

The garage is all yours.

Wedding plans take care of themselves.

Chocolate is just another snack.

You can be President.

You can never be pregnant.

You can wear a white T-shirt to a water park.

You can wear NO shirt to a water park.

Car mechanics tell you the truth.

You never have to drive to another gas station restroom because this one is just too icky.

You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt.

Same work, more pay.

Wrinkles add character.

Wedding dress \$5,000. Tux rental - \$100.

People never stare at your chest when you're talking to them.

The occasional well-rendered belch is practically expected.

New shoes don't cut, blister, or mangle your feet.

One mood all the time.

Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds flat.

You know stuff about tanks.

A five-day vacation requires only one suitcase.

You can open all your own jars.

You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness.

If someone forgets to invite you, he or she can still be your friend.

Your underwear is \$8.95 for a three-pack.

Three pairs of shoes are more than enough.

You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes.

Everything on your face stays its original color.

The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades.

You only have to shave your face and neck.

You can play with toys all your life.

Your belly usually hides your big hips.

One wallet and one pair of shoes one color for all seasons.

You can wear shirts no matter how your legs look.

You can "do" your nails with a pocketknife.

You have freedom of choice concerning growing a mustache.

You can do Christmas shopping for 25 relatives on December 24th in 25 minutes.

No wonder men are happier!

Send this to the women who can handle it and to the men who will enjoy reading it.

BLONDE JOKES

Two blondes living in Oklahoma were sitting on a bench talking and one blonde says to the other, "Which do you think is farther away, Florida or the moon?" The other blonde turns and says "Helloooooo, can you see Florida?"

CAR TROUBLE

A blonde pushes her BMW into a gas station. She tells the mechanic it died. After he works on it for a few minutes, it is idling smoothly. She says, "What the story?" He replies, "Just crap in the carburetor." She asks, "How often do I have to do that?"

SPEEDING TICKET

A police officer stops a blonde for speeding and asks her very nicely if he could see her license. She replied in a huff, "I wish you guys would get your act together. Just yesterday you took away my license and then today you expect me to show it to you!"

RIVER WALK

There's this blonde out for a walk. She comes to a river and sees another blonde on the opposite bank. "Yoo-hoo!" she shouts, "How can I get to the other side?" The second blonde looks up the river then down the river and shouts back, "You ARE on the other side!"

AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A gorgeous young redhead goes into the doctor's office and says that her body hurts wherever she touches it. "Impossible!" says the doctor. "Show me." The redhead took her finger, pushed on her left breast and screamed; then she pushed her elbow and screamed even more. She pushed her knee and screamed; likewise she pushed her ankle and screamed. Everywhere she touched made her scream. The doctor said, "You're not really a redhead, are you?" "Well, no" she said, "I'm actually a blonde." "I thought so," the doctor said. "Your finger is broken."

KNITTING

A highway patrolman pulled alongside a speeding car on the freeway. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that the blonde behind the wheel was knitting! Realizing that she was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the trooper cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled "PULL OVER!" "NO!" the blonde yelled back; "IT'S A SCARF!"

BLONDE ON THE SUN

A Russian, an American, and a Blonde were talking one day. The Russian said, "We were the first in space!" The American said, "We were the first on the moon!" The Blonde said, "So what? We're going to be the first on the sun!" The Russian and the American looked at each other and shook their heads. "You can't land on the sun, you idiot! You'll burn up!" said the Russian. To which the Blonde replied, "We're not stupid, you know. We're going at night!"

IN A VACUUM

A blonde was playing Trivial Pursuit one night. It was her turn. She rolled the dice and she landed on Science & Nature. Her question was, "If you are in a vacuum and someone calls your name, can you hear it?" She thought for a time and then asked, "Is it on or off?"

FINALLY, THE BLONDE JOKE TO END ALL BLONDE JOKES!

A girl was visiting her blonde friend, who had acquired two new dogs, and asked her what their names were. The blonde responded by saying that one was named Rolex and one was named Timex. Her friend said, "Whoever heard of someone naming dogs like that?" "Hellooooooooooooooooooooo.....," answered the blond. "They're watch dogs."