The Holiday Newsletter
Faucher Law

Trumping the IRS, Trekking in Texas, Treasures in Golden Gate Park

These Are A Few Favorite Things Of 2017

Before I get to the more festive, elf-friendly items, I begin this year's list with the memorably merry outcome of a case. My client is the executor of his deceased dad's estate, which included part ownership in a private, closely-held land holding company. The land in this holding company was purchased decades ago, and almost none has been sold over the years, which made its valuation the source of considerable disagreement between the Internal Revenue Service and us. The IRS said we had been naughty, that we had undervalued the land on my client's estate tax return. When agents threatened my client with an audit, I suggested that we hire a valuation expert to support our claim.

JOHN FAUCHER'S BEST OF YEAR LIST

Concert	Vin Scully narrating Aaron Copeland's *Lincoln* at the Hollywood Bowl, along with Beethoven's 9th
Wine	Denner's *Mother of Exiles* red blend, Paso Robles
Sport	Taking up Fencing: "En garde!"
Restaurant	*Old Place Restaurant*, Agoura Hills, California
Movie	*Wonder Woman*
TV Show	*Vietnam*, Ken Burns
Sight	Dozens of bison and their calves creating a traffic jam in Yellowstone National Park

My client initially hesitated at the hefty up-front cost of valuation expert James Lisi of the Mentor Group. However, Lisi's detailed 70-page analysis made such a strong case that the value of the company's land assets was actually 35 percent below the fair market value, the IRS relented. We didn't even have to speak with any auditors. *Nice!* The best wins often come from avoiding the fight in the first place. The moral of this story is that it can be invaluable to invest in seemingly pricey experts because the IRS auditors and attorneys may have trouble competently arguing against credible, sophisticated analyses, which can make for a very happy new year.

And now for a couple of less legal favorites on my list:

Favorite book: *News of the World*, by Paulette Jiles

In 1870 Reconstruction Texas, martial law prevails, the Army is still chasing Kiowa Indians, and Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd, a 70-year-old retired veteran, makes his living traveling to read newspapers to audiences in rural Texas towns. Circumstances require him to return a 10-year-old girl abducted by the Kiowa to her family. She's fierce, wants to return to the tribe and, after four years of living with the Kiowa, is well on her way to becoming a warrior herself, as demonstrated in her daring responses to the harrowing situations she and Kidd face during their 500-mile trek through Texas. Kidd and the girl develop an unlikely and deep attachment. Jiles's portrait of Kidd as a protector and teacher is a welcome example of heroic masculinity at a time when the headlines are full of predatory men. Also, it's set it Texas, where I began my career with the IRS – so what's not to love about this book?

Favorite Outing: DeYoung Museum, in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

You can't beat the Bay Area for a short getaway from Southern California. Golden Gate Park is a wonderful oasis of green in a dense and crowded, though beautiful, city. The DeYoung has been recently renovated – and the result is a modern gem. We saw paintings, yes, but even more interesting were the collections of domestic objects: table settings, teapots, sideboards designed by some of California's greatest artists of a century ago. An exhibition of embroidered cloth pointed to the painstaking work in that particular art form. I was reminded of how lucky I am to live in this great state, despite all the recent wildfires – it's a short drive from our office to the devastating Thomas fire. I'm especially thinking of fellow Californians who have been affected and wish everyone a safe new year. **JDF**

WELCOME TO FAUCHER LAW

John D. Faucher worked for 10 years as an IRS trial attorney, and has been in private practice since 2008. He and his team speak the legal language. They know the **tax and bankruptcy** systems and can help you get the best results. Have other legal issues? Call us. We'll find the lawyer who's right for you, your friends or family.

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Have Your Elf A Merry Little Christmas

. . . or whatever seasonal celebration in which you partake

The tradition of sending out holiday newsletters may be getting trounced by tweets, email blasts and Facebook posts, but at Faucher Law it's still one of our favorite things. So, in this end-of-the-year issue of the Newsletter, **I put on my elfin thinking cap** and reflect on some of the highlights of the year, including the outcome of a case that made me and my client merry, a gift-worthy book, and a getaway to San Francisco.

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