

The GOOD, the BAD and the UGLY.

Do you remember that old western starring Clint Eastwood?

This tax season was our version of the GOOD, the BAD and the UGLY. And we are so glad it is over. No one here has ever experienced such a terrible tax season. We are not the only ones to give this tax season a failing grade. It's an industry-wide assessment of 2019.

In short, nothing went right this year. The unprecedented, massive changes in the tax law was the major problem. The IRS didn't issue final guidance on many of the hundreds of new laws until late January, and that meant our tax software wasn't ready when you started bringing in your documents. By mid-February, we were already behind and we never caught up. It went from BAD to downright UGLY.

Because of the new laws, almost everyone had a question.

- Why am I paying taxes for the first time ever?
- Why is my refund *so* small?
- Why are you *so slow* this year?
- What's happening with my return?

We always enjoy talking with you and reviewing your returns. We believe it's an important part of our relationship with you. But we just didn't plan on spending far more time this year than in past years, all because of the tax law changes. And if we were talking, we weren't working on a return. It's a trickle-down effect. Well, actually, it was an avalanche.

Hopefully, the few proposed tax law changes for the new tax year won't be so onerous and we can write off 2019 as an anomaly.

There were GOOD moments this year, of course. We enjoyed meeting and working with each of you. We like to share in your milestones – one of our clients, an 80-year-old bachelor, got married! And several families added new little tax deductions this year.

But there were sad times, too. Three long-time clients and friends passed away. And Keith's mother died in September. It's these times that we are so thankful for the wonderful memories.

Our promise

We've listened to your complaints, and we will be better in 2020. That's a promise. Your top complaints:

- We did not communicate well with you.
- We didn't keep you posted on the progress of your returns.
- We didn't tell you that you needed to make a payment with an extension until the last moment.
- And we were so darn slow.

We are in the process of hiring an additional CPA/Enrolled Agent as well as administrative help to solve some of those issues. And we are considering adding the ability to text you about the progress of your return, for those who have a smartphone.

So, looking ahead....

We have our questionnaires on our website (www.jkassociatetax.com) now. For Keith's clients who want an organizer, we hope to put them in the mail within days, probably by the time you read this.

If you didn't get one, please let us know by emailing Cheryl at Cheryl@jkassociatetax.com and putting ORGANIZER in the subject) or simply call us at 410-884-0317.

However, we encourage you to use our questionnaires instead of the organizer. They give us a lot of information the organizer doesn't.

Keith tries to keep a list of those clients who want the organizer but every year we realize we've forgotten someone. For those who use our portal, we hope to put the letters there (if I can figure out the technology) as well as on our website.

Speaking of the portal, thanks to all who used it – or even attempted to use it. Our goal is to do as much electronically as possible to save you a trip here to our office. But, as always, do what is easiest for you.

A heads up ...

The fourth-quarter estimated tax payments are due Jan. 15. If you think you need to pay estimated taxes and need a voucher, let us know.

Call us at 410 884 0317.

And some great news!

One of our key tax preparers, Nancy Jo Lame, will need new business cards soon. Nancy Jo already has a Ph. D (astrophysics) and is an Enrolled Agent. Within days, as soon as she gets written confirmation, she is adding CPA to her list of credentials. Congratulations, Nancy Jo!

The end, finally

The final returns (those on extension) were filed by Oct. 15 so the 2018 tax year is officially finished. Did you hear our sigh of relief?

We are looking forward to working with you again. Soon! Tax season is just around the corner. Happy New Year!

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