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**Safe Money Retirement & Estate Planning Strategies**

Eric D. Patrick, Esq

763-7631 or 800-338-9392



**Eric D. Patrick, Esq.**

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**The Road Best Travelled**

A queen had a great highway built for her kingdom. Before it was opened, she decided to have a contest.

She told her people that whoever traveled a mile on the highway the best would receive a box of gold.

On the day of the contest, many subjects showed up. Some drove fine chariots, others rode their most handsome horses, and some walked in their best shoes.

About a half mile from the starting place, though, they all came across a pile of rocks that forced them off the road and through the mud.

When they reached the finish line, they all complained to the queen about the obstacle.

Then a beggar hobbled up to the end of the route, carrying a heavy box. “Excuse me, your majesty,” he said. “I found this on the road. Maybe you could find the person it belongs to?”

“Where did you find this box, old man?” the queen asked.

“It was beneath a pile of rocks in the middle of the highway. I stopped as I was walking to clear them away, and found this at the bottom.”

The queen told him to open the box, and the beggar was delighted to find it filled with gold. “But why?” he asked.

“The person who travels the highway the best,” the queen told the beggar and her people, “is the one who improves it for the next traveler.”

IMPORTANT!

Effective 1/1/15 Pennsylvania’s newly enacted Power Of Attorney Law is in force. The new law, among other things, relieves banks and other institutions from legal liability in the event they rely in good faith on an invalid power of attorney. **While powers of attorney done prior to this date are still valid, it’s a good idea to review yours now to make sure it still reflects your wishes.** Call me at 763-7631 if you’d like to discuss how this change could affect you.

**​**

**Health in the News**

**Monthly Quiz**

*New Year Quiz*

1. Who first recognized January 1st as the beginning of the New Year?
2. To ring in the New Year in Spain, it is traditional to do what on each chime of the clock?
3. One of the most popular New Year’s traditions is the toast at midnight to ring in the New Year. Why is it called Toasting?

*(Answers found on page 3)*

**Did You Know?**

The most commonly forgotten item for travelers is their toothbrush.

You take over 23,000 breaths every day.

Gold never erodes.

A piece of paper cannot be folded more than 7 times.

The opposite sides of a dice always add up to 7.

More people die from falling coconuts then from shark attacks.

Sound travels 3 times faster through water than in air.

You use 72 different muscles while speaking.

Avocados have the most calories of any other fruit.

**Don’t skimp on knee care**

Taking care of your knees is important to your mobility and your overall health. It’s also beneficial to your bank balance. Avoid undue stress in all those areas with these three tips, from the Nerd Wallet website:

* Surgery is expensive. Even if your insurance covers most of the cost, you could end up paying thousands of dollars for surgery or replacements. The average price tag is reportedly more than $50,000.

* You’ll stay healthy longer. Strong knees allow you to exercise and maintain a healthy weight, which can hold off some of the side effects of old age (like dementia) and help you remain independent as you grow older, cutting back on the need to pay for assistance in daily activities.

* Bad knees contribute to other problems. Problems in the knees can cause pain in your back, hips, and other areas, requiring other kinds of expensive and time-consuming treatment: medication, hip replacement surgery, and so forth. Keeping your knees in good shape can pay off for your entire body.

**Disk damage: Watch your back**

 A herniated spinal disk can cause severe pain. Spinal disks act as cushions between your vertebrae, and if they become damaged or slip out of place, they can irritate surrounding nerves. The result: weakness, numbness, and/or pain in arms, legs, or back.

Watch for these risk factors to assess your vulnerability:

* Age. Spinal disks degenerate over time, becoming less flexible and more likely to tear as you grow older.

* Weight. Extra pounds put more of a strain on your lower back.

* Lifting. If your job (or your personal life) requires you to do a lot of heavy lifting, be sure to pick objects up properly to avoid injury.

* Genetics. The Mayo Clinic website points out that some people inherit a tendency to develop disks that herniate easily.

**Who Wants to Win Free Tickets to the Movies?  
  
Problems in the knees can cause pain in your back, hips and other areas.**

Answers to Quiz

1. The Romans
2. Eat a grape
3. Float toast on wine to remove acidity

**Thought of the Month…**

“[Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every New Year find you a better man.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/benjaminfr141046.html?src=t_newyears)”  
- Benjamin Franklin

”[The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/melodybeat676229.html?src=t_newyears)”

*-Melody Beattie*

Referral Corner

I want to thank you for your referrals over the years. We always ask our clients, “If they can just refer us one client per year, it would help us immensely.” We are grateful to everyone who’s referred someone our way, and we always love to have new people become part of our inner circle of friends and family.

**Simply send them this newsletter, and have them bring it in or call and we will give you and them a pair of tickets to the movies.**

1. **True (B) False**

***Email To Answer*** [***eric@consumers-insurance.com***](mailto:eric@consumers-insurance.com)

The first person with the correct answer to the Question of the Month will receive a pair of tickets to the movies – just for reading this newsletter.

Many times the actual answer will be IN the newsletter so you will want to read the whole thing to make sure you have the correct answer.



**Caprese on a stick**

Original recipe makes

16 skewers

**Ingredients**

1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved

1 (.6 ounce) package fresh basil leaves

1 (16 ounce) package small fresh mozzarella balls

Toothpicks

3 Tablespoons olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

**Directions**

Thread a tomato half, a small piece of basil leaf, and a mozzarella ball onto toothpicks until all ingredients are used. Drizzle the olive oil over the tomato, cheese and basil, leaving the end of the toothpick clean. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Serve immediately.

*\*Thanks www.allrecipes.com*

**The 3 legal ways to build a Tax Free Retirement (Part 2)**

**The 3rd option** is found within IRS Code 7702. It provides tax deferred growth and tax free access to cash value built up inside a life insurance contract. You have to be careful with this because if not done correctly you can lose your tax benefits, and your money.

There are 3 different types of life insurance contracts that can provide tax advantage retirement cash flow…

All life insurance contracts are backed by the strength of the underwriting company and historically there hasn’t been a stronger industry for security and guarantee’s than the life insurance industry. So one positive for these contracts is they are typically very safe.

**The 1st is Whole Life**; Whole life is great for people looking for guaranteed growth every year. Plus it gives you almost immediate access to your cash value from the start of the policy. These are two nice benefits. The downside is the growth in the cash value is relatively low, usually 3-6%.

**The 2nd is Variable Life**; these were really popular in the 90’s. In these plans money goes into sub-accounts invested in the stock market so you’ve got the potential of growth higher than whole life, but you have total exposure to loss. Over the last 10-15 years, because of the 2001 & 2008 downturns in the market, these have been problematic for many policy owners.

**The 3rd is a new option called Indexed Universal Life (IUL)**; with an IUL you can grow your money potentially double digits in good years because the interest credited to your cash value is linked to the performance of major indices like the S&P 500. You earn this growth up to a cap, for example 15% but the contract is guaranteed to never go negative. So you have the possibility of double-digit interest on the good years and simultaneously protected from any losses in the bad years.

You also can win the tax battle because your money is growing tax deferred and you can pull money out without a taxable event using a loan provision. It also gives you the life insurance for your family’s piece of mind. One last benefit is because you’re pulling money out through a loan provision the IRS does not consider it as income so typically you can still qualify for lower health care costs and higher social security benefits.

**NOTE: IF YOU MISSED PART 1 just email me and I’ll send it to you: eric@consumers-insurance.com**

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