

InComplete THOUGHTS

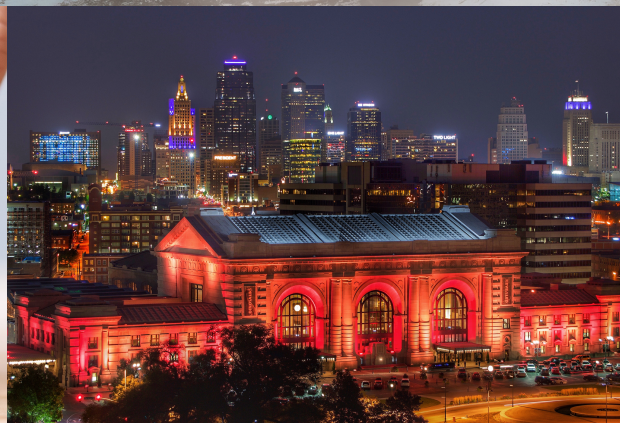
A Newsletter
about life, death,
and things
in between...



January 2024

Inside the Issue

Vol 10



IN CONTEMPLATION

The staff at Complete Estate & Probate Law contribute and discuss what's on their mind..

THINGS TO KNOW

We share updated information about estate planning, and things in the news that might affect or interest you.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What we're reading, watching, cooking, celebrating or otherwise doing outside of work.

Also included: *Legacy Corner*

IN CONTEMPLATION...

by Rachel Jewett

Like me, some of you may be more than ready to wave 2023 goodbye. I disliked 2023 more than any other year so far including the year of COVID. I experienced two flat tires within the same month (sorry big brother!) and replaced my engine. While dealing with unexpected car issues, my family came to the realization that there are some things modern medicine can't fix or prevent. My mother passed away in September after a year and a half battle with lung cancer. There is no preparing for the loss of a loved one, expected or unexpected. Sadly, this made me the second person at the firm who lost their mother this year. Now, working at an estate planning and probate firm meant that we were both better equipped than most to deal with the business side of things. Emotionally, we leaned on the support of our tight knit office, family and friends. As adults, we all strive to just push through versus processing.



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RESOLUTIONS

By Staff



Now, what kind of newsletter would this be without a Resolution section for the New Year? Check out some of the things our office is hoping to incorporate into 2024!

Karen - Getting married later in life and combining households has resulted in a large storage unit full of furniture and household items. I resolve to finally go through it and sell or donate all the things we no longer need or no longer bring us joy!

Polly - I resolve to do more journaling. Be intentional about spending quiet time in thought, prayer, and reflection at least 5 days per week.

Maureen - My goal/resolution is to cook more meals from fresh ingredients in the new year.

Anne - I resolve to taking better care of my physical self.

Amanda D - Buy a house. Being a first-time homeowner is HARD these days. We are hoping we can get ourselves into somewhere that we can call ours. If that doesn't happen, then a family beach trip will suffice. Being born and raised in California and living in Hawaii for an extended period of time, we are a beach family and deeply miss it. Cheers to 2024!

Amanda S - I will listen to a book or read/finish a book I have started (there are a lot!) each month next year.

Rachel - I have a slew of to be read books as I tend to buy them in chunks at the book store. I would also like to be healthier and make more of an effort with my meal planning.



IN CONTEMPLATION...

continued

I get to know the majority of our clients very well, which is a part of my job I enjoy immensely. I have always thought of myself as an empathetic person but experiencing a loss has made me even more aware of the emotional turmoil they're experiencing. One very important thing is to remember to be patient with ourselves. Whether you are dealing with the loss of a loved one, long term care planning or getting your estate plan updated, it can be an overwhelming amount of information to process. Plus, if you're prone to internet searches then you'll quickly disappear into the black hole of Google. I have moments where I'm convinced I can do it all and that I do not need to ask for help. I will just struggle silently but really I need to take a moment to breathe and cut myself some slack.

At the start of each year, we all begin thinking about resolutions and things we've been putting off that we need to do. The great majority of people always put something like 'get healthy' or 'exercise more' on their resolution. If that is you, you're not alone. My current goal is to wear boots that don't require a wide calf. Yes, my resolution is that specific and ridiculous. And attainable! Well, I hope it's attainable...my calves were smaller at one time in theory...

I am not going to go into 2024 with unrealistic expectations like '2024 will be my year! The year of Rachel!'. I just want 2024 to have fewer life altering events than 2023. I'd like to take a vacation (everyone here will tell you I'm a workaholic control freak) and to be able to shut my brain off. I've got a slew of nieces and nephews from 5 years old to almost 19 (YIKES) to help. They're becoming real people in their own right and hopefully, I'll be able to assist them with that.

My personal mantra is 'patience is a virtue' which gets very annoying, very fast for my friends. Still, as you look towards 2024 I hope you consider patience when making your goals. If you have also had a rough 2023 then join me in saying Bye Felicia!



Legacy Corner

*Where we share our family traditions,
recipes, and other ways, we are passing
on our legacy...*

Growing up, my mother was very deliberate about our meal for New Year's Day. In true southern tradition, we would always have black-eyed peas in some way or another, greens and pork. The green was usually fried cabbage and the pork was a ham, all of which were required in order to set the tone for the New Year: the peas represented health, abundance, and coins; the cabbage represented long life and money, and the pork represented good luck. Our meal was accompanied by corn bread that my mom baked in a cast iron skillet, and we would pour honey right on top of the hot corn bread. My mother's preferred recipe for the black-eyed peas as a dish called, "Hoppin' John," which has the black-eyed peas, and other ingredients, onion, garlic, celery, bell pepper, all served over rice. This is a recipe with history, with the first Hoppin' John recipe appearing in *The Carolina Housewife* in 1857 and called for one pint of rice, one pint of peas, and one pound of bacon. No one knows for sure where the name came from, but the tale is that a man named John used to sell fresh black-eyed peas in Charleston, SC and the name came from him.

Please enjoy this recipe and from the CEPL family to yours, we wish you a very Happy New Year!

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion chopped
- 1 large green bell pepper chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper chopped (optional)
- 1 stalk celery chopped
- 2 cloves garlic chopped
- 1 pound smoked ham chopped (can also replace with 8 oz. of bacon)
- 2 tablespoon Cajun seasoning blend (or more to taste)
- 1 pound black-eyed peas sorted through, rinsed, soaked and drained
- 4 cups chicken broth or more, as needed
- Cooked white rice for serving
- Chopped parsley for serving

Directions:

Heat a large pot to medium heat and add the olive oil. If you are using bacon instead of smoked ham, sauté the bacon until cooked.

Add the onion, peppers and celery and cook them until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add the garlic and smoked ham, if using, and cook another minute, stirring, until fragrant.

Add the Cajun seasonings, black-eyed peas and chicken broth. Bring to a quick boil, then reduce the heat.

Simmer for 1 hour, or until the beans are nicely softened, but not mushy.

Serve over rice and garnish with chopped parsley.



THINGS TO KNOW

By Maureen Lester

In our November article, I outlined some signs of aging you may notice while visiting relatives or loved ones during the holiday season. When those signs become alarming or you recognize a safety issue, it might be time to talk with the elder loved one about ensuring their well-being. This month, we will cover tips for approaching this subject of bringing in care or moving to a care facility.

Decide Your True Motivation

To help you frame the conversation, determine your true motivation behind the conversation. If there is a grave safety concern, that should be the central theme. Is the care needed becoming too burdensome on the family members pitching in to help? Is the spouse's decline affecting the health of the well spouse? Your concerns for their well-being coming from the heart will drive the conversation. Be clear about your motivation and the authenticity of your message will come through.

Presentation of the Conversation

Take time to think about your choice of words. Consider the surroundings and timing of the discussion. Plan who should participate in the conversation and meet beforehand to ensure all involved are on the same page. Determine whether the goal is simply to express concern or whether you are asking them to make a change or decision.

Turn the Tables

Put yourself in your loved one's shoes. How might they feel with the method of presentation? How are they going to feel about this conversation in general? One good way to keep the conversation going is to ask them how they envision solving the problem. If the discussion becomes argumentative, it is okay to take a break.

Understand the Desired Outcome

The goal of your conversation may be simply to express concern and make the elder family member aware of the aging signs you notice. However, if the objective is to move towards change, this should be clearly expressed. It may help to prepare a plan. For example, if the choice is whether to move to a care facility, it takes time and research to make that happen. Your plan could include a list of the facts you wish to understand, delegate to the person responsible for finding the answer, and schedule a date to revisit the progress of the decision. There are incredible resources available, and new and creative services are being offered as the Baby Boomer generation reaches this critical age. A consultation with our Elder Law team can help you organize the scope of the decision at hand, provide valuable information about payment sources for various types of care, and recommendations for resources to help navigate these long-term care decisions.

