

**This Weekly Newsletter
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Legal Power for Seniors

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Financial Spring Cleaning

by Stephan J. Lipskis, Esq.

Snow has finally left the forecast and warmer temperatures are on the way. Many use this as an opportunity to clean their house and assess the damage that winter has done to their yard. Spring is also an excellent time to personally assess your financial and legal situation. The following are a few reasons of why a personal assessment of your financial and estate plans is easy to incorporate into the other activities you are doing this time of year.

Reason #1 It's Tax Season – While tax season is dreaded by many, it is also a time individuals are forced to confront their financial reality. Use the information you gathered to adjust your budget and plan for the next year or years. Also, your tax return is a great source of information needed to review your estate planning documents. For example, do you regularly donate to a charity that you have not included in your will? Then it might be time to adjust your estate plan to include that charity.

Reason #2 Housecleaning – Organizing closets, storage, and other nooks and crannies in your house offers a great opportunity to dig out and review your important documents. Take a few moments to look over your insurance policies to determine if they meet your current needs. Also, be sure to review your estate planning documents to make sure they are still in accordance with your estate planning goals. Finally, review your financial statements to make sure the proper beneficiaries are named on them. If you are unsure on any of these matters, it is an excellent time to call your financial advisor, attorney, or insurance broker to reassess your needs and goals.

Reason #3 Family Events – Spring is a great time to spend time with family. Family moments such as: spring break trips; gatherings over Easter, and sporting events offer a great opportunity to discuss your beliefs, goals, and plans. These discussions can help you formulate a financial and estate plan that not only meets your goals, but is also matches the needs of your other family members.

We hope that the reasons help you remember to take a few additional moments to address your important planning needs while you are doing your spring cleaning. If you find yourself needing assistance in interpreting your estate planning documents (or need to have some created) please give us a call. We are happy to assist you through the planning process. Let this be the spring that you feel comfortable in your clean home and confident in your family's future.



Rescued Chickens

Hook Law Center: Kit Kat, what can you tell us about the roosters and hens rescued from a property in Pennsylvania?

Kit Kat: Well, the story has a happy ending! However, it was not a good situation for the roosters and hens owned by Thomas MacFann of Daisytown, PA before their rescue. This is what happened. MacFann was engaging the roosters in fighting, and using the hens for breeding. There were 92 in all. The roosters were hitched to posts, each about 30 ft. apart. Inside the barn, there was evidence of a long career in cockfighting—trophies, ribbons, and lots of gamecock magazines. There were also drugs used to enhance fighting capability, which enabled the roosters to keep fighting even when they were near death. Implements like knives and gaffs were present, too. They were tied to the roosters' legs during fighting to injure their opponents.

Fortunately, the authorities became aware of the situation. The roosters and hens were moved to a temporary shelter in Maryland, because MacFann wouldn't relinquish custody. While the court case dragged on for 8 months, the roosters and hens gloried in their new found care. Workers brought them treats like raw pumpkin, blueberries, and popcorn. Kathleen Summers of the HSUS commented, 'They'd go bananas over pumpkin and would literally jump up and down when they knew it was coming.' The shelter workers also would play music for them, and the birds responded with chirps.

Finally, the case came to a close when MacFann pleaded no contest and was convicted. Most of the birds have stayed at the shelter, but some have been adopted. Janette Reeve of HSUS was one of the people who adopted some of the birds. They live on her farm and have plenty of room to explore. She says, 'Whenever I call them, they all come running.' Roosters and chickens are so interesting, and they really are smarter than most people will acknowledge.

(Ruthanne Johnson, "To the Rescue," *All Animals*, March/April 2015, p. 8)



Join Hook Law Center in celebrating
National Autism Awareness Month!

Upcoming Events

- **April 11, 2015** – Hook Law Center staff will be participating in the American Parkinson Disease Association's (APDA) Boardwalk Stroll & Roll at Neptune Park at 31st Street.
- **April 24, 2015** – Hook Law Center attorneys Jessica A. Hayes and Shannon Laymon-Pecoraro will be manning the HLC exhibit table at Senior Advocate's Active Aging Expo for Hampton Roads Women 55+ at the Norfolk Sheraton Waterside Hotel.
- **April 27 and 30, 2015** – The HLC Monthly Seminar for **April is Veterans Benefits: How Proposed Changes Will Affect You**. The seminar is scheduled at 10 a.m. on Monday, April 27, 2015 at the Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library, 4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Virginia Beach, VA and Thursday, April 30, 2015 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 5921 Harbour View Boulevard, Suffolk, VA. Space is limited!!! To reserve your seat, please call 757-399-7506 and ask for Debbie or register online at hooklawcenter.com/seminars.
- **August 12, 2015** – Andrew Hook will be speaking to a group at Maryview Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia.
- **August 21, 2015** – Andrew Hook will be speaking to a group at DePaul Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia.
- **August 27, 2015** – Andrew Hook will be speaking to a group at Mary Immaculate Hospital in Newport News, Virginia.
- **September 9, 2015** – Andrew Hook will be speaking at a Virginia Continuing Legal Education seminar.



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