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BEYOND THE BALL DROP *How Different Cultures Celebrate the New Year*

The New Year is a time for celebration, reflection, and new beginnings. While many of us are familiar with the ball drop in Times Square or the clinking of champagne glasses at midnight, exploring how different countries and cultures ring in the New Year is fascinating. Let's journey outside the United States to discover a few unique New Year's traditions from around the world.

Denmark: Breaking Plates

The Danish have a unique way of showing affection to their friends and family. On New Year's Eve, it's customary to break plates and dishes against the doors of loved ones. The more broken pieces you find at your doorstep, the more popular and loved you are.

Brazil: Offerings to Iemanjá

In Brazil, particularly in coastal cities like Rio de Janeiro, people make offerings to Iemanjá, the goddess of the sea, on New Year's Eve. They gather at the beach dressed in white and send small boats filled with flowers, candles, and gifts into the ocean as offerings.

Scotland: First-Footing

In Scotland, the first person to enter a home after midnight is called the "first-footer" and will bring good luck for the year. Traditionally, the first-footer should be a tall, dark-haired male who brings gifts like coal, bread, and whisky to symbolize warmth, luck, and good cheer.

Spain: Eating 12 Grapes at Midnight

As the clock strikes midnight in Spain, people eat 12 grapes — one for each clock chime. This tradition brings good luck and prosperity for the coming year. The grapes are usually eaten in public squares and plazas where crowds gather to celebrate. It's a race against time to eat all 12 grapes before the last chime, as failing can bring in bad luck.

Japan: Joya-no-Kane (Bell Ringing)

The Japanese celebrate Joya-no-Kane, where temple bells ring 108 times: 107 times on Dec. 31, and then the 108th ring at midnight on the New Year, bridging the old and new year. This practice is rooted in Buddhist beliefs and is thought to cleanse the 108 worldly desires that cause human suffering.



OPPOSITE DAY SPECIAL

3 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER DO FOR A STRONG CASE

much. No one should enter an injury case to win as much money as possible to live a lavish life — that's not the point. The point is to receive justice and fair compensation for damages that someone else's negligence caused you. Endless money is not awaiting you at the end of the case, and much of what someone receives has to do with the amount of insurance coverage the other party has and the facts of the case. Just because you file a claim doesn't mean you'll always win.

Plus, it's important to remember that no amount of money will reverse the injuries caused by an accident or bring someone back who was a victim of a wrongful death.

No. 3: I would never advise clients to go on social media during their case and post about their accident or injury.

Whenever you post on social media during an injury case, you open a metaphorical can of worms where the opposing counsel can use anything they find against you and your claim. For example, years ago, I had a client who was in a terrible accident and severely injured her neck as a result. She was extremely close to being paralyzed and required intensive surgery.

But then, after her surgeries and subsequent recovery, she went to a concert and posted about it online. She was also filmed doing cartwheels in the parking lot of the concert venue, and those videos were also shared on her social media. So, needless to say, those photos and videos found their way into the courtroom and had an incredibly depressing effect on the value of her case.

If you ever find yourself about to do one of these three things or aren't sure of the next best step to take regarding your own accident, feel free to call me at (804) 823-2011. I'll help you avoid legal "don'ts" this Opposite Day and beyond!

—Kevin Mottley

Like I was, you may be surprised to learn that Jan. 25 is Opposite Day, a holiday many of us as children used as an excuse to prank or tease our friends. And, if you didn't know, the whole idea of Opposite Day is that whatever you say or do should be carried out in reverse: Yes is no, right is left, up is down, and so on.

If you've been reading my newsletters for some time, you'll know I often like to use this space to provide clients with tips, advice, and guidance on what they should do during their personal injury or estate dispute cases. But, this month, given the holiday, I will provide a list of the things I would *never* advise clients to do if they wish to have a successful case. After all, knowing what you shouldn't do can sometimes be just as helpful as knowing what you should.

No. 1: I would never advise clients to ignore their lawyer's legal advice.

For whatever reason, some people simply refuse to listen to their lawyer. Perhaps they've had a bad experience, think they know better, or don't believe what their lawyer tells them.

But the truth is, when you entrust your legal matters to someone, you're essentially paying them for that advice if you win. So, if you want to win, it's probably a good idea to trust the professional. Otherwise, what is the point of enlisting legal counsel in the first place?

No. 2: I would never advise clients to consider their case a chance to 'get rich quick.'

This is especially true for personal injury cases, and I always encourage clients to do their best to understand that the legal system can only do so

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER – HOW CONSISTENT EXERCISE KEEPS YOU YOUNG

It's been said that you're only as old as you feel. If that's true, then there are plenty of Americans in their 50s and 60s who feel like they're in their 30s or 40s. As a result, they are enjoying the "prime" of their lives for much longer than generations past.

The general life expectancy for Americans has historically trended upward, though COVID-19 introduced the first downward trend in decades. Today, the average life expectancy for men is 73 and for women 79.

Correlated to this increase in life expectancy is an overall improvement in a person's quality of life. People who are 50-plus are enjoying a quality of life that, in many cases, is seamless for them compared to earlier decades. There are several contributing factors, including diet, advances in health care, and other technological improvements, but one of the most important is consistent exercise. If you're over 50, there are steps you can take to age gracefully — literally!

First, remember to warm up. While you may want to start your exercise immediately, take a few moments to stretch your muscles properly.

Another thing you can do is to ensure that your exercise methods are low-impact whenever you can. While you may want to go out and run several miles, approach high-impact exercising with caution. You may feel younger, but your bones and joints continue to age, and the parts of your

body that serve as "shock absorbers" for the rest of the skeletal system wear out faster than the rest of your body.

The main thing to do to give yourself the best chance of feeling as good as you can in your 50s and 60s is to find a consistent source of activity that you enjoy and keep doing it!



WHEN THE ORIGINAL WILL VANISHES A Guide to Probating Lost Wills

After a loved one dies, many things must be done. One crucial task is to find their original will.

But what happens when you've looked everywhere and still can't find the original will? Can a copy of a lost or misplaced will be admitted to probate in Virginia? Under the right circumstances, the answer is "yes." In rare situations, it may be possible to probate a lost or misplaced will even if you cannot find a copy.

Overcoming a Presumption for a Will in Virginia

Even if you have a copy of the missing will, you can't just take it to the clerk's office and have it admitted to probate like you could with a signed original. Instead, you have to file a lawsuit in the circuit court to "establish" the will.

In most cases, the proponent of a lost will faces an elevated burden of proof in such a lawsuit. This is because when an original will in the testator's custody can't be found after they die, Virginia law presumes the testator destroyed the will with the intent to revoke it. To overcome that

presumption, the proponent of the lost will must prove otherwise by clear and convincing evidence.

Does that mean the proponent has to prove what became of the lost will? No, it doesn't. Although evidence establishing precisely what happened to the will would be ideal, it often isn't available. If it were, the will wouldn't be lost.

What if You Can't Find a Copy?

Believe it or not, you might not be out of luck.

Establishing a lost will without a copy is undoubtedly an uphill battle. As early as 1913, the Supreme Court of Virginia upheld a decision to probate a lost will without a copy when the contents of the will could be established and were not denied. In another case from 1943, the lawyer who made a will testified that he didn't keep a copy but could reconstruct what it said. The Supreme Court of Virginia thought that was enough for the lost will to be admitted to probate.

So, all of that is to say, it's entirely possible to probate a lost will in Virginia — *with the right legal representation.*



NEW YEAR, SAME DEDICATION

Our Renewed Commitment to Personal Injury Cases and Estate Disputes

With the arrival of the new year, we want to thank you for choosing The Mottley Law Firm. We understand the importance of reliable representation and are committed to providing you with the highest level of service.

As we move forward into 2024, we want to remind you of our different services so you can make the most of our expertise and support should you need it this year or beyond.

Personal Injury Advocacy

Our law firm focuses primarily on cases related to personal injuries, especially those involving severe incidents such as traumatic brain or spine injuries. We understand how difficult it can be to navigate complex cases, whether they arise from negligence or any other significant event. As a small firm with two dedicated lawyers, we limit our caseload to ensure each case receives the attention it deserves. We take on cases only if we can genuinely commit to them and make a significant impact.

Litigation Involving Estate and Trusts

Apart from handling personal injury cases, we also handle legal matters relating to estates and trusts. We have expertise in resolving conflicts arising from disputes over a deceased person's estate, including issues related to wills and will contest cases. Such conflicts may occur for various reasons, such as false wills, disagreements regarding the validity of a will, or disputes over the management of a trust by a trustee. We also provide legal support in cases involving the misuse of power of attorney to ensure justice prevails in disputes related to estates and trusts.

So, as we begin the new year, know we're here to help you with any legal issues you may have. We understand dealing with legal matters can be complicated and stressful, but we are committed to supporting you every step of the way. Whether it's a small or big issue, we have the expertise and dedication to guide you through the process! As always, you can always reach us anytime at **(804) 823-2011**.

—Kevin Mottley

6	3	5			8	7		1
		7						4
9	2				7	5	8	6
7	6	3	2	4	9		5	8
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	9	6	8			2		5
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SOLUTION

6	9	2	5	3	1	7	4	8
9	4	2	4	1	8	9	6	5
5	1	9	7	6	2	8	3	8
2	6	8	1	5	9	7	5	8
5	1	8	7	6	3	9	4	2
2	6	3	4	5	8	1	5	8
8	2	9	7	6				3
9	6	8			2			5
		1		5	2			9

SUDOKU



BELL PEPPER SANDWICH

INGREDIENTS

Inspired by TheSpruceEats.com

- 1 medium bell pepper, any color
- 2-3 tbsp cream cheese
- 1 tsp whole-grain mustard
- 2 oz ham (or other deli meat), thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 oz Swiss cheese, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small cucumber, cut into 6-8 thin slices
- 2 tbsp guacamole or a few slices of avocado
- Dash of salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. On a cutting board, remove the stem of the bell pepper with a sharp knife. Cut the pepper in half lengthwise and remove the ribs and seeds.
2. Lay the pepper halves on the cutting board and spread cream cheese inside each half. Spread whole-grain mustard on top of the cream cheese.
3. Layer your deli meat, cheese, cucumbers, and guacamole on each bell pepper half. Add a dash of salt and pepper, then combine both halves and serve!