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The Mottley Law Firm

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THE PATH TO FINDING OUR CASTLE

When it's time to write the cover article for this newsletter, I typically check the calendar to see if any specific events or holidays will inspire me. This time, I had no trouble at all deciding what to discuss.

June is National Homeownership Month, and the topic of home ownership is high on our minds right now at the Mottley household.

Since Tricia and I are officially empty nesters now, we initially kicked around the idea of downsizing our home. Ultimately, we ended up going in the opposite direction. We upsized our living space by selling the house we'd been in for 23 years and moving into a larger, newer, home that is just 3 miles away. The increase in square footage was not necessarily part of the plan. But when we saw the new place, we fell in love with more elbow room and an increased ability to host gatherings of family and friends that comes with it.

The new abode does require some renovations, and we are in the throes of that work as I write this. But starting this new chapter has made me reflect on our journey as homeowners. We bought our first home in Richmond when I was only two years into my career. Built in 1937, that house sat on land about the size of a postage stamp. Despite these humble beginnings, we couldn't help but feel we had arrived. Buying our first home was a big milestone for us, as it is for many others. It was the moment when we graduated from being young to being proud to have accomplished enough in life to own something that was truly ours. When we outgrew our postage-stamp-size home, we moved to a 1950s-era home just outside the city. We spent the next 23 years living there and raising our children, creating memories that will stay with us as we move into our third place.

As we've moved along through the past 30 years of homeownership, I've always viewed each home as our castle. I always do my best to leave work at the office and not take the pressures of the day with me when I finally settle in for the evening. While I can't say I always achieve that goal, having a comfortable sanctuary where loved ones and great times await makes leaving work at work a lot easier.



Kevin and Tricia's First Child Andrew at Their First Home

What have been the biggest things I've learned as a homeowner? Well, for one thing, owning a home will always cost you more than you think it will. That's not necessarily a deal-breaker, but it should be something to remember whenever you decide to find a castle of your own. Second, if you buy an older home, be careful not to do too many things that alter its footprint or flow. While it's natural to want to make unique additions and changes to your home, those revisions could affect your ability to sell it if and when the time comes.

Now that we have pulled up and replanted roots for a third (and hopefully final) time, I'm reminded that homeownership really has nothing to do with square footage or acreage. It's all about finding that special place where you enjoy the greater things in life and build memories with those you love. It's where you live. Whether you live on a postage stamp or a large property, may your castle always bring you the comfort and joy you deserve.

-Kevin Mottley

Beat the Heat

Simple Steps to Stay Cool and Safe This Summer

The summer months can get incredibly hot, and this year may be even hotter. Environment and Climate Change Canada predicted that this summer could be one of the four hottest years ever recorded. As each day passes, their prediction becomes increasingly realistic. If you or your kids are planning to spend some time outdoors over the next few months, you need to take steps to protect yourselves!

Hydration is key during the summer. Don't wait until you feel thirsty; drink plenty of water around the clock. Avoid drinking beverages with large amounts of alcohol, caffeine, or sugar, as they dehydrate you. Whenever you head outside, whether it's to garden, play with the kids, or walk the dog, bring a water bottle. Even when you're just driving around town, it's a good idea to bring water in case you break down and have to walk to get help.

Before heading outside, take precautions to protect your skin and avoid heat stroke. Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and throw on a wide-brimmed hat to protect your head. Sunscreen is also a must, even on days that aren't overly sunny. If you're going to be physically active outdoors, make sure you do so only in the mornings and evenings. Working too hard during the peak of the day's heat will quickly exhaust you.



You can even implement home practices to help cool your house down. Avoid using your stove or oven when cooking meals, take cooler showers, and apply weatherstripping to doors and windows to help keep cool air inside. You should also cover any large windows with curtains or shades to keep the heat out.

Most importantly, if you drive anywhere with your kids or pets, don't leave them in the car. Your vehicle can reach dangerous temperatures quickly, even if the windows are down. It's never worth the risk!

We don't have to feel sticky and hot all summer long. With the right strategies, we can stay cool and make the most of the next few months.

When Inspiration Needs Fresh Air

Take Your Creativity on a Date (No Reservations Required)

What if the secret to unlocking your creativity wasn't working harder, but playing more? With packed schedules, our creative side often gets pushed aside. But that imaginative spark still lives inside us, waiting for a little attention. One way to reconnect with it is to schedule an "artist date," a small outing dedicated entirely to feeding your curiosity and creativity.

Reawakening Your Sense of Wonder

An artist date is a solo activity you plan, purely because it sounds fun or intriguing. There's no pressure, no expectations, just time exploring something that catches your interest. The best way to think about it is channeling your younger self. Remember the thrill of discovering something new or wandering through places that felt magical? That same spirit can guide your outings today.

You might browse the shelves of a cozy bookstore, wander through a pet shop, or explore the colorful aisles of an art store. Maybe you'll stroll through a botanical garden, pop into a quirky local shop, or watch a play you've been curious about.

Filling the Creative Reservoir

Creativity doesn't appear out of thin air. It grows from the experiences, sights, sounds, and moments we gather along the way. When life becomes all output and no inspiration, that creative reservoir begins to run dry.

That's why these small adventures matter. They give your mind new textures, ideas, and images to absorb. A walk through a park, an afternoon sketching at a café, or even browsing a craft store can quietly refill the

well. Later, when you return to your creative work or simply to everyday problem solving, you may notice something surprising: Ideas begin flowing again.

Let Curiosity Lead the Way

The beauty of an artist date is that there are no rules beyond showing up for yourself. It could be sipping coffee while flipping through magazines for a vision board, taking photos on a nature walk, wandering a farmers market, or planning a spontaneous day trip somewhere new.

Sometimes the most inspiring moments arrive when you let yourself explore with no agenda. So, block off a little time this week. Choose something that sparks even a hint of curiosity. Then go enjoy it, just you and your imagination.



HIGHWAY HAZARDS AND HIDDEN HOURS

A GUIDE TO NIGHTTIME TRUCK ACCIDENT CLAIMS

There's a world of difference, and a world of liability, between truck accidents that occur during the day and those that happen when the sun goes down.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, automobile accident-related fatalities per mile traveled are roughly three times higher at night than during the day. Truckers driving 80,000-pound vehicles while operating on limited sleep only increase the likelihood of roadside disasters. While myriad things could impact your claim if you're injured in a nighttime collision with a truck, these two points are essential to understanding and fulfilling your responsibilities to maximize your chances of a favorable outcome.

Details determine your legal recovery.

While evidence is essential to any legal victory, it is particularly important in claims related to nighttime trucking accidents. Under Virginia's pure contributory negligence doctrine, a plaintiff may be barred from receiving compensation if they are deemed even 1% at fault for the collision. The more information you can gather to establish the other driver's full fault, the better.

An experienced personal injury attorney can help you gather the right evidence from the at-fault party, including (but not limited to) the truck driver's qualification files, the truck's maintenance records, dashcam footage, GPS tracking information, and electronic logging device data. In some cases, the trucking company can be held liable in addition to the driver if the evidence indicates the company failed to maintain the vehicle or uphold other industry standards at the time of the crash.

The timing of your claim is critical.

If you're involved in a nighttime collision with a commercial truck, it's important not to delay pursuing legal recourse. Although Virginia's statute of limitations is generally two years for truck accident-related injury or wrongful death claims, trucking companies are notorious for deploying defense attorneys and investigators almost immediately following the incident. Consulting with our firm as soon as possible will allow us to build your case promptly and obtain the information needed to verify potential liability.

Please contact us to receive information on nighttime truck accidents or discuss your particular case. We're here and ready to help you reach a just and positive conclusion and address any and all concerns you have.



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BACKYARD BALANCE

EASY ESCAPES CLOSE TO HOME

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that you very likely could use a break.

With summer right around the corner, now's the time many of us gear up for vacations and other ways to enjoy some well-earned time off. With that in mind, it's not at all surprising that June 18 is National Wanna Get Away Day.

"Getting away" means different things to different people. Some may count down the day until they can finally shut off their phones and work computers and travel to an exotic locale for a few days of fun and relaxation, while others find calm moments in their daily lives amid their ongoing commitments. While I'll never say no to a chance to go on a nice extended trip, I tend to find my greatest peace in the natural beauty of things much closer to home.

I'm the kind of guy who likes to take the scenic route when I'm driving or go on shorter, more regional trips whenever time permits. Sometimes, the most enjoyable "vacations" I take are simple moments spent in my backyard or a



nice 15- to 20-minute walk around the office park. Over the years, I've embraced the value of getting away here and there throughout the week (and especially on weekends) rather than waiting for one special occasion to step back. It's been a fantastic way to get a little active, clear my brain, and reset when my schedule doesn't allow me to take an extended break.

Of course, so much in our community could help you get away, too. If you need a brain break these days, I encourage you to think smaller and more locally. As a big bluegrass aficionado, I'm looking forward to checking out a lot of the great bluegrass cultural venues here in Virginia that I haven't been to before. Even if you prefer beaches to banjos, you can still find great opportunities to get away here in Virginia.

Ultimately, getting away doesn't have to mean going far. Whether discovering a hidden gem in your neighborhood, revisiting a favorite local spot, or simply carving out time to unplug, those small escapes might be exactly what you need to come back feeling clearer, lighter, and more present for what comes next.

-Kevin Mottley

BLT CHOPPED SALAD

INGREDIENTS

Salad

- 8 slices thick-cut bacon (about 9 oz)
- 1/2 cup julienned sun-dried tomatoes (not packed in oil)
- Hot water
- 8 cups chopped kale, stems removed
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved

- 1 1/2 cup sweet corn
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green or red onion

Dressing

- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 3/4 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Bake bacon at 400 F until crisp, then pat dry, cool, and chop.
2. Submerge sun-dried tomatoes in very hot water for a few minutes, then drain and pat dry.
3. Place kale in a large bowl, sprinkle with salt, and massage until darker and tender (about 2 minutes).
4. Add sun-dried tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, corn, bacon, feta, and onion.
5. Combine all dressing ingredients, mix well, then drizzle over salad and toss.
6. Chill 15 minutes if desired, or serve right away.

-Kevin Mottley