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KATHLEEN NORTON



BOOMER GAL

Tree war's first skirmish might be a stalemate

Some of you will recall that usually, I write about the annual "debate" about whether we should keep getting a real holiday tree or get a fake one, with me leading the charge against plastic pine.

At least I am hoping like crazy that you remember this because my horrible memory has become a major player in the yearly fight (might as well call it what it is) over the tree.

This is the backstory: We had a series of unfortunate episodes with trees that we'd chopped down, including one that appeared to be suicidal. Every time we thought we had it securely in the stand, it threw itself to the floor as if to say: "Just go ahead and put me out of my misery."

If my husband were writing his version, he'd say that "we" never chopped down anything. That "he" always did the chopping and the dragging in the freezing weather while I sauntered around choosing the "perfect" specimen at the Christmas tree farm.

But he is not writing this. So disregard his whining if it all possible.

Besides, I do not saunter, as anyone who knows me will tell you. I may march around like Miss Boss Pants. But I do not saunter.

Anyway, it appears that after the holidays last year, I was overcome with guilt

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A lawyer can help you make sense of differing state laws and protect you from unintended consequences to your health care and estate. GETTY IMAGES/COMSTOCK IMAGES

Picture the Past

Glimpses of The Valley through the years



This photo from our region's past is the gatehouse to the Walter Dieterich estate in Millbrook, seen here in 1924. Dieterich arrived in Millbrook in the late 19th century from Germany. He had an acetelyne gas plant on the 2,000-acre property and brought Black Forest pines and German deer, along with foresters and gamekeepers. From Italy, he brought over masons to build the gatehouse and many other stone buildings.

If you have a snapshot from the past you'd like to see in print, send it. Include any information you have, as well as your name, town and a phone number.

Send a copy if you can, because we can't guarantee the safety or return of originals. Don't send a copy made on a copy machine.

Mail submissions to: Picture the Past, Poughkeepsie Journal, 85 Civic Center Plaza, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, or email dradwin@poughkeepsiejournal.com.

Spend time in 2 states? Get informed on laws

Research can help avoid unwelcome surprises for you or your family

BERNARD A. KROOKS



GUEST COLUMNIST

We live in a mobile society, where it's common to spend significant time away from home visiting the grandkids or escaping winter weather. New Yorkers comprise the single largest segment of Florida's temporary residents, with many ultimately relocating on a permanent basis. But those address changes could complicate your estate planning, long-term-care arrangements and tax bill.

In general, if you spend 183 days per year in a state, its residency laws kick in, so it's important to keep track of calendar days. And if you decide to move permanently, you should check that the legal documents framed in one state will be recognized elsewhere.

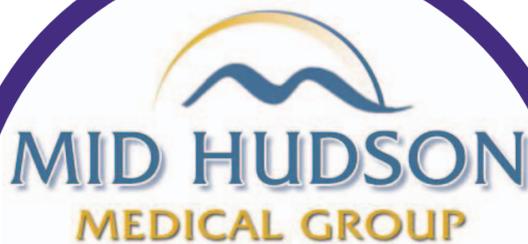
Estate planning

The regulations governing trusts and advance directives vary throughout the country. Even a difference in the number of witnesses required to acknowledge a document can render it void. Doctors and hospitals have been known to disregard the instructions

contained in living wills and health-care proxies that were drafted in another state. Banks could ignore directives from your designated financial agent. And it could be devastating to the financial security of loved ones to discover that a relocation has rendered your prior planning invalid.

If you have important ties to more than one state, be sure your estate-planning documents explicitly describe the situation. It's also useful to consult legal counsel from the relevant jurisdictions. That ensures that advantageous differences in state law are

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A day for families coping with death of a child



K. MITCHELL & M. SUGAR
ANNIE'S MAILBOX

Dear Annie: When a child dies in your family, the world changes, and you will never again be the same person. Life goes on, but priorities change, and remembering the child who has died is an important way of traveling through your grief journey to the other side. The holiday season is especially difficult, as old traditions often give way to new, more meaningful traditions that help to remember the child, sibling or grandchild who has died.

That is why The Compassionate Friends created the Worldwide Candle Lighting.

The Compassionate Friends is a national self-help bereavement organization for families going through the natural grieving process after the death of a child.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is held at 7 p.m. local time on the second Sunday in December. This Dec. 9 marks the 16th worldwide event. By lighting at 7 p.m. local time, candles first shine an hour west of the International Date Line and an hour later in the next time zone, creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light in remembrance of all children who have died, no matter their age or country of origin.

Hundreds of services open to the public will be held throughout the day, with services in every state, as well as Washing-

ton, D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam. We will be joined by allied and sister organizations both at home and abroad, with services also held by local bereavement groups, churches, funeral homes, hospitals, hospices, children's gardens, schools, cemeteries and community centers.

Anyone who is unable to attend a service is invited to light a candle in remembrance at 7 p.m. for one hour wherever they may be.

For more information on this touching tribute, please ask your readers to visit The Compassionate Friends at www.compassionatefriends.org or call 877-969-0010 toll-free. We also invite your readers to visit our website on Dec. 9 and post a memorial message in our online Remembrance Book.

We do this "that their light may always shine!"

— Patricia Loder, Executive Director, The Compassionate Friends/USA

Dear Patricia Loder: Thank you for giving us the chance to once again mention the Worldwide Candle Lighting. This is a wonderful opportunity for the bereaved and their friends and family members to honor the memory of a child who has died and to be part of a community of others who are paying tribute to their loved ones. We hope our readers will look at your website and participate in this worthwhile event. (And as an added precaution, please do not leave your lighted candle unattended.)

Dear Annie: I find myself in the sad and unfortunate position of having a

daughter who has decided out of anger to prevent my husband and me from having any contact with our 7-year-old granddaughter.

This seems to be a common occurrence these days. My friends and family tell us that we will eventually hear from our granddaughter when she is older and out on her own. I don't know if this is true.

Have any of your readers been through this difficult situation and reconnected with their grandchildren after such a long separation?

— Arizona Grandparents

Dear Arizona: We hope so, and undoubtedly they will write to tell us if this has happened and offer words of encouragement. But in the meantime,

check with an attorney to see whether your state recognizes grandparents' rights.

Also, if there is anything you can do to repair the relationship with your daughter, please try. Estrangement is a high price to pay for angry disagreements that could possibly be resolved with apologies and tolerance. We also hope you will look into becoming foster grandparents.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, veteran editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, care of Creators Syndicate, 737 Third St., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254.

Don't take action until you're sure, Scorpio



HOLIDAY MATHIS
HOROSCOPE

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY, DEC. 2: You are loved, and people show you this in a big way. Fresh vigor kicks off this eventful year. This month, you'll eject the person, place or thing that is taking up too much emotional space. Social horizons broaden in January. Friends fix you up with hot leads. Your love life will sizzle on one of the best Valentine's Days yet. Aries and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 3, 9, 16 and 40.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Don't give into the pressure to change. The person pushing you doesn't understand that you still need nurturing and care. When you're ready to change, you won't be able to stop yourself from doing so.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). While dealing with an authority figure, ignore the minor mistakes. They will soon be forgotten, and they don't matter anyway. Being the bigger person helps you see the bigger picture.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You might make a purchase if it costs less than the amount in your wallet. But if it requires you to go to the ATM, you'll skip it. What you want on impulse you devalue if you take the time to think about it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Don't be surprised if you're suddenly wondering how to make sultry eye contact or scintillating small talk. These interests are an outcropping of your broader interest in getting a certain person's undivided attention.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It may take two to tango, but each partner can work on the steps alone to get ready for the next dance. Preparation is the magic ingredient that will make a relationship

work beautifully.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There are things that look nice from the outside — a beach house, marriage to royalty, a pony — that are actually a lot more work than appearances suggest. Right now the fantasy is more enjoyable than the reality would be.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). True friends will reflect back to you your best qualities. If you feel less wonderful about yourself around a certain person, consider that the person may not be a true friend.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). At times like now, inaction can be the most positive and powerful thing to do — or in this case, to not do. Be cautious. Only make a move if you feel undeniably driven to do so. Also, people will respect your decision not to decide.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Even simple things can seem confounding now. If you have a mind full of question marks, consider yourself wise. Only the very young and the very immature think they know everything.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). People have a tendency to be overly dramatic and drag you into it. The only person you should get serious about now is someone who makes you laugh.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're not exactly working for a seal of approval, but it still feels good to get one from someone you admire. Self-acceptance has a subtler benefit, but it lasts longer.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The person whose opinion matters so much to you will give up a stamp of approval. Soon you're on to bigger things — like self-acceptance. Diversity keeps you creative.

Write the astrologer, Holiday Mathis, at Creators Syndicate, 737 3rd St., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 or at her page at the website www.creators.com.



It's a good idea for people with dual residency to go over their estates with a lawyer to closely examine the impact of both states' laws. THINKSTOCK

Krooks

Continued from Page 1G

considered, and it's less likely that recent legislation will be overlooked.

Long-term care

Since Medicaid is often a major source of funding for long-term care, differing state guidelines could complicate a sudden, debilitating medical condition. Eligibility requirements, as well as covered services, often vary. In a previous column, I discussed "filial responsibility" laws, which could potentially hold adult children responsible for their parents' expenses. These are state-specific and evolving, so lapses in

Medicaid coverage have the potential to result in big bills for the younger generation. Work through the scenarios with certified elder-law attorneys who can navigate the Medicaid systems of whichever states you or your parents are likely to call home in later years.

Taxes

Another possibility is that more than one state will hold you liable for income or inheritance taxes. Residency audits are increasingly common, and New York is especially aggressive, with taxpayers expected to provide documentation that establishes where they're spending their time. Nor is that the sole determinant. You must

take active steps to relinquish New York residency — possibly including the sale of real estate — in order to establish another domicile.

For many couples, second homes and frequent travel represent a lifetime's hard work and investment. With some forethought, you can ensure that your chosen lifestyle doesn't have costly, unintended consequences.

Bernard A. Krooks is managing partner of the law firm Littman Krooks LLP (www.littmankrooks.com; 845-896-1106), with offices in Fishkill, White Plains and Manhattan. His firm collaborates with Solkoff Legal, P.A., Delray Beach, Fla., on dual-residency issues.

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