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FEBRUARY 2020

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'Ocean's 3' Attempt a High-Stakes Heist

On a hot summer day in late July 2018, three people entered Miss Helen's home, forcibly removed her, put her in a stroller, and ran toward their getaway vehicle. This might sound like a typical kidnapping story, but Miss Helen is no ordinary person. She is a 16-inch horn shark living at the San Antonio Aquarium.

Fortunately, their fishy behavior didn't go unnoticed, and someone alerted the aquarium staff. One perpetrator drove away with Miss Helen in tow, but the other two were stopped by aquarium staff, later confessing to their involvement. Thanks to some observant witnesses and aquarium surveillance, police were able to identify the third thief and obtain a warrant to search his house. As it turned out, he had an extensive aquarium in his home and possibly hoped to add Miss Helen to his collection. After being identified, Miss Helen was returned home safely.

The aquarium staff was grateful to have Miss Helen back unharmed, despite her ordeal. "She's a tough

little horn shark, I'll tell you that," affirmed Jamie Shank, the assistant husbandry director at the aquarium.

No Minor Crime

While many animal lovers might disagree, animals are considered personal property, so stealing them is a crime of theft, not kidnapping. The penalties for stealing animals vary depending on each state's laws, and some states have specific laws regarding animal theft.

In Texas, larceny law designates the theft of property valued between \$1,500-\$20,000 as a felony. In the case of Miss Helen, who's valued by the aquarium at \$2,000, the thieves committed a felony. Also, transporting certain animals requires special permits, which led to additional charges against the three thieves.

The Animal Welfare Act, which was adopted in 1966, is the only federal law that regulates the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport, and by dealers. Interestingly, it only applies to warm-blooded animals, so if Miss Helen had needed further protection, she would be left out in the cold.



LEAPING INTO FEBRUARY

February may be a short month, but there is a lot going on. To kick off the month, I'll be attending the second annual National Alliance of Attorneys for Alzheimer's Planning (N3AP) conference. This takes place Feb. 1 and 2 in sunny Tempe, Arizona.

As a founding member of the N3AP, I am fortunate to be joining with other nationally recognized elder law attorneys and authorities on issues related to Alzheimer's and dementia planning. The conference will be packed with programs on the growing epidemic of Alzheimer's and dementia and new information on the latest developments with the disease.

Our group's main objective is to bring awareness, education, and options to seniors and families who have loved ones living with Alzheimer's. I will be recapping the conference in our April edition and sharing many of the topics discussed during the two-day event, so be on the lookout for that in the spring.

Another big "event" this month — which isn't really an event as much as a unique day — is leap day. The one thing in this world you can't manufacture is more time, and yet, every four years, we get an extra day thanks to leap day. Of course, for many of us, that day will come and go and we won't even realize it, but it's fun to think about.

This year, leap day — Feb. 29 — is on a Saturday. I will have the day off, but I have no plans as of the time of this writing. With winter slowly but surely making way for spring, it might be a good time to take a nice brisk walk or hike and take in the crisp February air. It's certainly a far cry from Tempe, Arizona!

"Think of it as starting with a clean slate. It's only the second month of the year, so not much time has been lost."

It's also a good day to sleep in and kick back and relax. Whether it's leap day or any day you don't have any obligations, it's always good to spend some time doing "nothing." Maybe "nothing" is reading a good book or catching up on a TV show you haven't watched in months (or years). Or it could be doing a puzzle.

It could also be catching up with correspondence. If you haven't written a letter to anyone lately — and many people haven't — it's a great way to spend an afternoon. Plus, research shows that writing letters comes with many psychological benefits, including maintaining a sharper mind as we age.

Speaking of writing, did you write down any goals or resolutions for this year? It's estimated that 80% of people either forget or give up on their New Year's resolutions by Feb. 14. If you've let any of your goals fall by the wayside, February can be a month of second chances. You may not have gotten a good start in January, but you may find you have the energy or inspiration to try again in February.

Think of it as starting with a clean slate. It's only the second month of the year, so not much time has been lost. Or maybe your goals weren't inspiring to begin with. When we set goals for ourselves, they should be worthwhile enough to see them through to the end. If you set goals in January and you're not feeling excited about them, that's okay! It just means you should focus your attention on something else — something that means more to you.

I hope you are having a good month! My mind is already on March — and March Madness! See you then.

Glenn Matecun

Time to Get Back Out There!

Expert Advice to Beat the Stigma of Senior Dating

Getting back into dating can be hard when you've been out of the game for a few decades. In fact, some would-be romantics are so self-conscious about their age that they never even try! In honor of Valentine's Day, we've rounded up some expert advice on dating at any age.

Don't fear online dating.

Online dating is a great way to meet people outside of your social circle, and there are many dating sites and apps specifically for singles over 50 who are ready to mingle.

Julie Spira, a relationship expert with senior dating app OurTime, says that "Authentic dating profiles get the best results." Basically, don't lie on your profile. Use a picture of you from this year and be proud of your age. That's the best way to find people who will love the real you.

Go to 26 different places.

Prefer to meet people in person? Lisa Copeland, a dating coach who works exclusively with women over 50, recommends creating a list of 26 different places in your area, one for each letter of the alphabet, then going to those places. While you're out, Copeland says, "You want to smile. Make eye contact. Ask a question. Give a compliment and put a question behind it."

Be present when meeting new people.

Dating as a senior means coming to the table with a lot of baggage. Dating is when people get acquainted, so be careful about sharing that baggage right out of the gate. This doesn't mean you should never talk about heavy topics, but remember this advice from the popular dating site, eHarmony: "Early on, focus on enjoying each other's company here and now."

It doesn't matter if you're 26 or 62, dating is always hard. You have to step outside your comfort zone and trudge through a series of terrible first dates. But in the end, it's all worth it when you find that special someone with whom you can spend your golden years. Just remember, you'll never meet that person if you don't make the leap.



What You Can Accomplish With a Plan for the Future

While it's easy for people to put estate planning on the back burner due to busy schedules or thinking they have plenty of time to get around to it, doing so can result in property and financial assets passing to unintended heirs in unintentional ways.

Additionally, people fall into the belief that estate planning only benefits the very wealthy, but nothing could be further from the truth. It's something everyone needs to engage in, regardless of age, estate size, or marital status.

If you have a bank account, investments, a car, or a home or other property, you have an estate. More importantly, if you have a spouse, minor children, or other dependents, an estate plan is critical for protecting their interests and their future income needs.

An estate plan is also important if you want to leave behind a legacy for your family for years, if not decades, to come.

An estate plan can help you accomplish the following goals:

- Name the family members, loved ones, and organizations you wish to receive your property following your death.
- Transfer property to your heirs and any organizations you've named in your estate planning documents in an expedient manner with as few legal hurdles as possible.
- Minimize or eliminate estate taxes.
- Name your personal representative and/or trustee — the individuals or institution you appoint to act as your proxy in settling your estate and distributing your property.
- Avoid probate — the court process for proving that a deceased person's will is valid and administering a decedent's estate.
- Document the type of life-prolonging medical care you do or do not wish to receive should you become incapacitated.
- Express your wishes and preferences for funeral arrangements and how related expenses will be paid.

WHO NEEDS AN ESTATE PLAN?



Enhance Your Mood!

3 Simple Ways to Beat the Winter Blues

Many people feel down during the winter months. The skies are often gray and many of us are patiently waiting for spring and summer — and sunshine. Constant gray skies can make us feel melancholy, depressed, or anxious. It can be challenging to deal with, especially when you want to go outside or take part in your favorite activities, but you just don't feel up to it.

There are many reasons why people feel depressed or anxious during the winter, but no matter the cause, there are simple ways you can boost your mood. While these aren't cures, they can go a long way in lifting the veil of melancholy to bring your spirits up and help you feel more relaxed — and more like yourself.

VITAMIN D

During the winter, millions of people deal with seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. There are many causes of SAD, but one major culprit is a lack of vitamin D. While vitamin D is not a mood enhancer itself, taking a daily vitamin D supplement can do wonders for the mind and body.

VITAMIN B6

Vitamin B6 is used in the brain to make serotonin and norepinephrine — two neurochemicals that influence your mood. But don't just take B6 alone. Instead, take a "B-complex" supplement with all the important B vitamins, many of which help convert sugars into usable energy. This is a great way to elevate your mood and boost your energy.

CHAMOMILE

If you don't want to take supplements, chamomile herbal tea is a great mood-lifting option. A lot of people drink chamomile to relax, as it's a great stress reducer and can elevate your mood. When you can melt the stress away with a warm cup of chamomile (try it mixed with peppermint!), you'll be left feeling more like yourself.

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Solution on Pg. 4

Helpful Resources

• **Is your estate plan up to date?** Ask us about our FREE estate planning checklist ... Call our office or email Julie@mtolaw.com.

• **Don't miss our upcoming estate planning and elder law workshops** — our website has our entire educational calendar for the year.

• **Learn about estate planning and elder law topics in plain English** ... Check out our Elder Care Whiteboard Videos at MichiganEstatePlans.com.

• **Let us be your trusted advisor for all your legal matters.** We have grown by the referrals we receive from our clients. We want to return the favor by helping you find a great attorney outside the field of estate planning, elder law, and probate. Instead of taking your chances on Google or the phone book, let us put you in touch with an experienced attorney who can help you. Our clients often call us in need of an attorney who focuses on family law, personal injury, auto accidents, elder and nursing home abuse, workers' comp, Social Security disability, and many other areas. To get the best results, you need an experienced attorney to help. If you want a referral, call our office or email Julie@mtolaw.com. We are glad to help!



Sudoku