

# NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS

## BLACKWELL COOK LAW

INJURY & CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

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November 2015 Newsletter

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### Ten Things to Do Before Thanksgiving

Doesn't it feel like it was just summertime? As we lace up our shoes and prepare for the marathon of turkeys and tinsel before us, here's a list of ten things to do before Thanksgiving that might help you have a less-stressed holiday season.

#### 1) Get Listed

Before things get too hectic for you to think, sit down and make out lists. Thanksgiving menus, Christmas shopping, Christmas cards, charity giving, holiday bucket list, end-of-year work projects--grab your pen and notepad and list away. Sounds silly now, but you'll thank yourself in a few weeks.

#### 2) Pencil It In

Sync your family's calendars now to make the busy holiday season much easier. Include work, school, church, family, and other social events. Be sure to allow yourself some margins for relaxation and spontaneous fun (Hey kids--hop in the car for hot chocolate and Christmas lights!). Remember that it's okay to decline some holiday invitations, choose wisely.

If your children are grown, decide when and where you will get together as a family now, so that it's not stressful closer to Christmas. Keep in mind that as families grow, it's best to be flexible about when you celebrate with your family. Christmas happens whenever you decide to celebrate it.

#### 3) Clean it Up

Whether you're expecting a house full of family like the Griswold's or heading out for the holidays, it's a great idea to de-clutter and deep clean before Thanksgiving. If your house is in order, you will be less stressed, and your Christmas décor will even look better. Consider making a list of household touch-ups now and work away at them until Thanksgiving (see #1).

#### 4) Change Your Clothes

Now is the perfect time to retrieve your winter clothes from storage and tuck away your summer threads. Take inventory and decide what you really enjoy wearing and what you can donate to local charities. Even if it's not very cold now, having your winter clothes ready will prevent you from rushing out to buy winter clothes on the first chilly day.

#### 5) Check Yourself

Have you already had your annual check-up? If not, call now and make an appointment. Don't let the busyness of life interfere with your health. You only get one body—even Santa can't change that fact.

#### 6) Spruce it Up

When's the last time you updated your resume? Hopefully your job is not on the chopping block, but historically, a lot of companies make changes, including layoffs, before Thanksgiving so they don't have to around Christmas. Either way, it never hurts to have a fresh, updated resume on hand. And most people never get around to it until it's too late.

#### 7) Get Your (en)Roll On

Don't miss your opportunity to enroll and/or make changes to your healthcare and other benefit plans at work if you have that option. If you must use government healthcare and fail to enroll, you may face some pretty heavy fines.

#### 8) Kid Around

Make Christmas special for a child less fortunate. Whether you choose to give a shoebox to Operation Christmas Child, adopt a child from the Angel Tree, or give through some other organization, you'll be so glad that you did.

#### 9) Budget, Baby

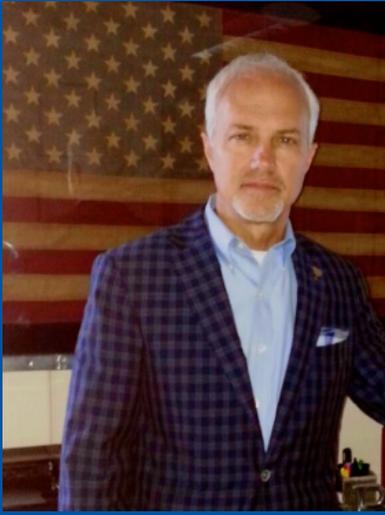
Did you know the number one cause of holiday stress is spending? And you thought it was your in-laws! Dave Ramsey says, "a budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went." Budgeting for your Christmas spending doesn't have to be complicated, just decide how much you are able to spend, and make a plan. If funds are tight, make something (cue Pinterest). Your friends and family will appreciate the thought you put into your gift, and honestly, they probably really just want to spend time with you.

#### 10) Unlax

Chill out. Take a break. De-stress. Whatever you want to call it, make a conscious effort to step away from your lists and duties and demands and rest. Your family and co-workers will appreciate a better version of yourself after you give yourself some time away from it all.

-Lizzie Batchelor





## What's David Doing?

What's all this talk about gun control? The right to "keep and bear arms" is protected in the second amendment to the Constitution. Some people use guns to kill people. How about Planned Parenthood? Are they killing people? A lot of debate here, too. Although these topics are certainly important, do they make your list of top three things you want to see our presidential candidates address? Not too many candidates are talking about jobs or education this go around. We still have some talk going on about Obamacare, Benghazi, and even Bernie Sanders and socialism. And let's not forget Trump! There is always talk about Trump.

Why are candidates focused on gun control and Planned Parenthood? Are these the things people want to hear the most about or are the candidates hiding from other issues? What do you think is most important? What do you think the candidates should be talking about? And why? We want to hear from you. Send us an email, write us a letter, or join in on our discussions on Facebook. Thanks.

## Thanksgiving Safety

The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially at Thanksgiving. Kids love to be involved in holiday preparations. Safety in the kitchen is important, especially on Thanksgiving Day when there is a lot of activity and people at home.

### Safety Tips

- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home when cooking your turkey and check it frequently.
- Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot, and kids should stay 3 feet away.
- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over your kids, toys, pocketbooks, or bags.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmers, or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children---up high in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a lit candle.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

## Out and About

We've enjoyed spending time with you all over Lancaster County this fall. We hope you got to see our new client, Ben Hurtt, while he was hanging out on Main Street. Got an event or need a speaker? Let us know! We're happy to help.



# People Matter

Cathy Catoe is the newest addition to the Blackwell Cook Law family. Cathy is our intake coordinator, and you'll find her at our Heath Springs office most days. Before joining our team, Cathy spent twenty years in a dental office.

Originally from Heath Springs, Cathy is mother to three children: Jodie, Alan, and Andy and grandmother to three grandchildren. Cathy said she is most thankful for her children and of course her grandchildren. She says, "I am so lucky to be a mom and "Nana."

Cathy loves her new job because she loves working with and helping people. Although the legal world is a big change from the dental office, she has enjoyed learning the laws and language of the field.

Cathy's hobbies include cooking, reading, spending time with her family and riding motorcycles. She loves the colors, cooler weather, and college football that Fall brings. When thinking about the upcoming holiday season, Cathy shares that she loves the holidays and has a tendency to stress out a little, but getting together with her family and friends is a great reward that makes it all worthwhile. Welcome aboard, Cathy!



Know someone great in the community? Email [linzie@blackwellcooklaw.com](mailto:linzie@blackwellcooklaw.com)

## What are You Thankful For This Year?

***What I'm thankful for this year is being a one year survivor of cancer. I am also thankful for the new people and exciting times ahead of me with the new Lancaster Events and Promotion Management Position. -Joe Timmons III***

I am most thankful for my loving, Christian husband. He is a wonderful father and role model for our five children. -Dana Stogner

**This year, I am thankful for my growing family. As if I wasn't already lucky enough to have great parents and two awesome brothers, my family has grown by leaps and bounds this year. First, I married Madison back in June, so I added a wonderful wife and an entirely new family of in-laws. Secondly, eight days after our wedding, my brother Ben and his wife Amy welcomed their son Conor into the world. It has been an eventful year that I will always remember. -Bob Cook**

I am most thankful this year for the opportunities to work with folks in our community towards positive improvements. I am thankful for: a community of caring people, sweet pets that have come into my life, a mom who continues to be my inspiration, the abilities to continue striving to make a difference for others through non-profit work with Avant Garde Center for the Arts, and a family business that provides soul-satisfaction through the arts. -Cherry Doster



## Apples With Cream Cheese Dip

### Ingredients

- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar (or artificial sweetner)
- 1 jar caramel sauce
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts, toasted
- 2 Red Delicious apples, unpeeled and sliced
- 2 Granny Smith apples, unpeeled and sliced
- 1/2 cup ginger ale

### Instructions

Mix cream cheese and sugar thoroughly. Mold in center of a plate and drizzle caramel sauce on top. Sprinkle with pecans or walnuts. Wash and slice apples, then dip in ginger ale to keep from turning brown. Alternate red and green slices around the edge of the dish. Enjoy! What's your favorite recipe? Send it to us! [linzie@blackwellcooklaw.com](mailto:linzie@blackwellcooklaw.com)



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## Congratulations!

Winner of our \$500 Tailgate Giveaway is

### Pinto!

(submitted by Julie Tyre of Lancaster SPCA)

You're a "weiner" and we appreciate your support, Lancaster SPCA!



*This newsletter is published for informational purposes only and no legal advice is intended.*