

President's Message

Happy New Year! I am writing this in early December and all the news is doom and gloom. Hopefully, everyone was able to enjoy the holidays with family and friends.

Effective January 1, 2009, the annual exclusion increases to \$13,000 and the unified credit goes from \$2 million to \$3.5 million. We may see additional changes in the estate planning arena when the new president and congress are sworn in.

We had a great turnout for the November meeting, ninety-three members and guests. This was no doubt due to our speaker, George Coughlin. George turned each of our tables into a study group to work through retirement plan distributions scenarios.

Judy Barber and Frederick Hertz will join us in January to discuss the psychology of money and real property co-ownership issues. We were fortunate to have Judy as a speaker three years ago and she was really well received.

Rob Silverman is lining up great speakers for the balance of the year. An Economic Update is scheduled for our February meeting. Mark your calendars for the April 22nd meeting: for this joint meeting with the East Bay and Tri-Valley chapters, Rob has booked nationally known tax guru, Dean Zerbe (former tax advisor to Senator Grassley, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee). Dean will give us his "Washington insider" perspective on the status and anticipated changes in estate and gift tax as well as other federal tax policy/legislation."

Please join us for timely topics and good company. *-Lynn Gardner*

“When Family, Money and Mortality Collide - Property Co-ownership Dynamics, and The Advisor’s Role”

For many of us, dealing with the interpersonal dynamics of family members is one of the most challenging aspects of estate and trust planning. Often, advisors avoid family interactions. Rather, they focus narrowly on the structure of the loans, investment policies, legal arrangements, and tax benefits, without devoting sufficient attention to how the proposed plan will play out over time or how co-owned assets should best be managed.

To present this interesting topic, we are fortunate to have: JUDY BARBER, a well known licensed family therapist, mediator and family money consultant; and FREDERICK HERTZ, an attorney and mediator. Judy is a founding member of the ABA Committee on the Psychological and Emotional Issues in Estate Planning, and has many years of experience helping clients resolve overlapping family and money conflicts so they are better able to make sound business and estate planning decisions. Fred has an active law and mediation practice in Oakland, often representing families, siblings, cohabitants and domestic partners in matters involving co-ownership of property. He is the co-author of Nolo Press' Legal Guide for Lesbian & Gay Couples and Living Together: A Legal Guide for Unmarried Couples. Fred and Judy have co-mediated a number of family co-ownership disputes.

Judy and Fred will introduce strategies and solutions that we, as advisors, can consider in helping our clients handle the financial, legal, and psychological aspects of these complex challenges. They will help us: learn how to create a safe environment for difficult conversations and consensus decision-making; identify and work with differences in decision-making styles; examine the respective roles of spouses/partners, step-siblings and step-parents; and anticipate the sibling dynamics that are likely to emerge only after the death of their parents.

Family members who are bound together by money need help with these issues from professional advisors. Nevertheless, they may resist solutions provided by advisors because, at some level, they understand the obstacles to successful co-ownership are more about family than the money. Without losing sight of our advisory limitations as legal, tax and financial professionals, this program will provide a lens through which the tasks of the estate planning professional can be reframed.

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

*Lafayette Park Hotel
3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Lafayette*

*6:00 PM. Wine and Registration
6:30 PM Dinner and Speaker*

***Cost: \$40.00 dinner (if mailed in)
\$45.00 (at the door)***

Reservations and cancellations must be received by Monday, Jan 19th at 1:30 p.m. to be assured of a reservation. Please send your check in the enclosed envelope today! or Pay online!

*www.acteva.com/go/epcdv
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