

# STAYING *in Touch*

February 2017 Newsletter | VOLUME 6 - ISSUE 2 | [www.pzlaw.com](http://www.pzlaw.com)

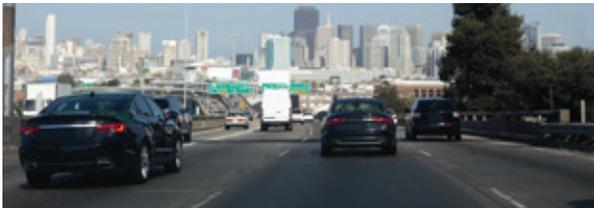
This publication is intended to educate the general public about various issues. It is not intended to be legal advice. Every case is different.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Tax Filing Warnings
- Matcha
- Divorce by App



## *Safe Driving*



A new bill was introduced to the Virginia House of Delegates that would make driving too slow in the fast lane a violation punishable by a \$250 dollar fine. The bill was proposed by Del. O'Quinn, who represents the 5th district. He was compelled to address the "particularly pervasive and ever-growing problem of cars going grossly under the speed limit in the left lane." So far there's no details on what would be considered "too slow."



**Brandon's Soapbox:** February finds the firm busy and looking forward to a year of positive change and growth. Parks Zeigler has an amazing team who work to support the firm's vision of always progressing forward, with technology, education and client service. We're especially happy to announce that Allison W. Anders has been admitted to the American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers. She is one of only nine in Hampton Roads and 55 in the entire state of Virginia with this prestigious designation. This is a great accomplishment and we are all very proud of her, she definitely deserves it.

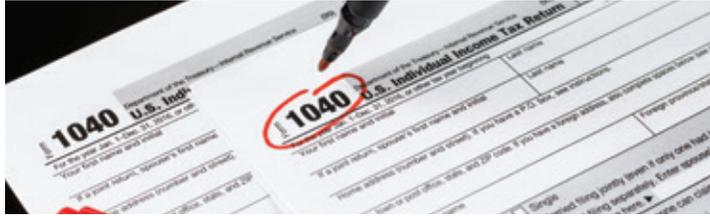
Patriot fan or not (and I am definitely not), you have to agree this year's Super Bowl was one of the more interesting games in league history. Super Bowl time is always a great reason to gather family and friends to enjoy party foods and spirits. Now time to prepare for the upcoming March Madness!

*Brandon*



## *Did you know?*

The first black astronaut was Robert Henry Lawrence Jr, who held a Ph.D. in chemistry and was a senior USAF pilot. Several months into astronaut training he died as a passenger on a F-104 Starfighter plane crash, sadly, before he was able to go to space.



*"Just don't give up what you're trying to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."*

*— Ella Fitzgerald*

## TAX FILING ALERT

It may seem like February is a bit early to talk about filing for taxes, but some recent developments may delay your refund. If you're depending on a projected refund to help you financially, it is important to know if yours will be delayed.

In 2015, Congress passed the "Protecting Americans from Tax Hike" Act (PATH) and there is a section in that law that prohibits the IRS from sending out tax refunds before February 15, 2017 if the citizen filed for the earned income tax credit (EITC) or the additional child tax credit (ACTC). The reason behind this section of the legislation is ultimately to defend against tax scams. Both credits (EITC & ACTC) are nonrefundable tax credits and can be claimed even if you did not pay into the system or have no tax obligation. For those reasons, they are often targeted by identity thieves. While the delay can be frustrating, it is meant to protect you against identity theft and tax fraud.

Tax scams have been a topic of interest lately because of an increase in foul play that has targeted the IRS and tax payers. We have written on this topic in the past and offered tips on how to protect yourself – such as avoid giving information over the phone (the IRS will **not** call you demanding payment), not offering any personal information via email (the IRS will **not** email you with such requests), and filing early.

If you plan to hire someone to prepare your taxes, there are a number of things that you should pay attention to when mak-

ing your decision. We've listed just a few below:

- Request his or her Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). They are required to register with the IRS and include their PTIN on your forms.
- Use the IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications to check their credentials. The directory is searchable by region and includes attorneys, CPAs, enrolled agents, enrolled retirement plan agents, enrolled actuaries, and annual filing season participants.
- Inquire about service fees. Preparers are not allowed to base their rates on a percentage of your return. Also, avoid those who try to "sell" you based on getting you a higher refund than competitors.
- Ask the Better Business Bureau about the preparers history. Look for any disciplinary actions and the license status.

These are just some of the things you should remember to do before hiring someone to prepare your taxes. If you visit the IRS's website, you can find a thorough list that provides more information on those items listed above, as well as more detailed steps to take in making sure you are well informed before you make your decision. Please visit the IRS website and visit our website to learn more about tax time risks and how to protect yourself from those risks.

*We welcome your referrals!*

*We value our clients and want you to come to us for any legal need you may have, no matter the type of case. If it is in an area we do not practice, we will refer you to a trusted colleague to take care of you as we would. If you refer someone to us, we promise to answer his or her questions and provide first-rate, attentive service. Thank you for your referrals and for continuing to come back to Parks Zeigler.*



## *Deb Dishes:*

What's trending for our palates in 2017? Mini-sized desserts, the stuffing of croissants with anything that floats your boat, bubble waffle cones, tamales, smoked carrot lox, cereal as a topping on everything, and seaweed. Yep, kale is out and seaweed is in this year. Not at my house, but I suspect you will see it along the boardwalk restaurants this summer! Matcha. Not just the Japanese green tea for drinking but matcha favored anything. Next time you pop open a can of beans, don't pour that liquid (called Aquafaba) down the drain, save it to make merengue, ice cream, or macarons. What's old is new again with southern fried chicken from non-chain providers, and brisket with a multitude of BBQ sauces. Kellam is on the bandwagon for Poke, a sushi salad bowl. I do enjoy the newer ramen and pho bowls – warm broth with veggies and noodles, customized with your preferred meats and veggies. And I like to hear people are spiralizing all kinds of vegetables, calling them "zoodles." I have not found one yet that I like with red sauce, but I'll keep on searching for an alternative to carb-heavy pastas. I want to try Sancocho and Apreas..... I had to read about these previously unheard of Latin American dishes myself. Anyone want to join me for lunch?

## *On The Local Front*

### **PUBLIC TRANSIT WOES**

Norfolk's Light Rail and the debate on whether or not to extend it into Virginia Beach has been a hot topic for local residents from both cities. Last year Virginia Beach residents voted down a referendum that would have approved extending the light rail along a specific route from Norfolk into Virginia Beach. However, that decision is now causing a fiscal headache for Virginia Beach city officials.

In 2010, the State of Virginia and the Federal Government loaned Virginia Beach \$20 million and \$5 million respectively based on the plan to extend the light rail. However, now that residents have rejected the project by a substantial majority, that loan is now being called due. A few weeks ago city officials struck a tentative agreement that would have allowed the city to keep the funds provided they put it towards a large scale public transportation project, but that deal fell through at the end of January.

So, now the question is how to repay the loan? City officials speculate that the loan will be paid back in installments over the next several years. Interestingly, while the Light Rail was voted down, residents are still expressing the need for an improvement in public transit for Virginia Beach. At the end of the day, it seems that Virginia Beach has a new financial burden, and a continued need to improve public transit.

## *Family Corner*



Superman is on vacation in Virginia Beach! Allison's son Connor enjoys a family day at the oceanfront during recent record breaking temperatures.



Ambir shopping with sister Alisha, mother Karen, and sister Kelli in Mystic, CT..... after having lunch at Mystic Pizza.



## *Family Law*

A new UK mobile app allows couples to get a divorce without hiring attorneys. "Amicable," was developed by a family counselor and an IT consultant, who claim that "the world needed a solution that put families first and helped parents remain on good terms." However, for the app to work, "you and your soon-to-be ex must be on the same page, both committed to divorcing responsibly and reasonably." That's a substantial caveat. Let's just say that the jury's still out on this one.

4164 Virginia Beach Blvd, Suite 204  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-1762  
pho: 757.453.7744 | fax: 757.453.7578  
[www.pzlaw.com](http://www.pzlaw.com)



Parks Zeigler, PLLC



Parks Zeigler, PLLC



Parks Zeigler, PLLC



Parks Zeigler, PLLC

Visit our blog @ [www.pzlaw.com/blog](http://www.pzlaw.com/blog)

Visit our website @ [www.pzlaw.com](http://www.pzlaw.com)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Tax Filing Warnings
- Matcha
- Divorce by App

## *Kellam's Tech Tip:*

This month I am circling back to Facebook – your account should be safe and secure from tips I provided last year. This time I'm going to give power tips for most effective use.

- Hidden Facebook Inbox – You may have a folder of unread messages you didn't even know you had. Click the "messages" icon at the top of your homescreen (or the "Messages" link to the left field). The default is you in the "Recent" tab, but directly to the right, you'll see a "Message Request" tab. If you click that, you may see a link that says "See filtered requests." If so, click it to see if you've been missing messages from people you may know.
- Archive of Facebook – You can get a copy of everything you've ever shared on Facebook to save if you so desire. Go to Settings>General>"Download a copy of your Facebook data" (on the bottom). Follow the

instructions and you'll have the whole enchilada in no time.

- Customize Your News Feed – (1) Click the three dots next to "News Feed" at the top left rail and choose "Edit Preferences" from the pop-up screen, then "Prioritize who to see first" and choose the people, Pages, and brands you want to see more or less of in the feed. You can also directly choose to stop reading posts from people without unfriending them by clicking the little arrow in the top-right corner of a post and selecting "Unfollow [Friend's Name]"
- Customize Ads – You can customize the ads you see too. Go to Settings>Ads>"Your Interests." You'll see topics Facebook has determined for you by category – you can delete an interest (or even add more, but who wants to do that, really...)

***New address? New phone number? New Email? Help us stay current by letting us know. Call Deb at 757.453.7579 or email her at [dmontagna@pzlaw.com](mailto:dmontagna@pzlaw.com). If you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please call Deb. Thanks!***