



# STAYING *in Touch*

November 2013 Newsletter | VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 11 | [www.ktparkslaw.com](http://www.ktparkslaw.com)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Child Support
- ID theft and Sentara
- Thanksgiving Treats!



## *Kellam's Corner*



Thanksgiving is here and we want to wish everyone a wonderful and safe holiday. The firm wouldn't be the success it is without the trust and support of all of you and we're thankful to have such good friends and clients.

As wonderful as the holidays can be, it can also be a stressful time, especially in the domestic relations arena. As much as I hope that the season passes smoothly for everyone, please do not hesitate to call us if you encounter any issues - we're happy to help (that's why we're here, after all).

## *Credit*



As technology advances, so do the chances of identity theft. If you suspect your identity has been stolen, like the recent thousands of Sentara patients, it's important to address the issue right away. If you are not vigilant in securing and monitoring your personal information periodically, you could be opening yourself up to theft and credit disaster. Restoring your identity could become a lengthy and costly battle, but luckily there are steps you can take to make it less painful. Visit our website for more info at <http://goo.gl/W5A1Bh>.



## *Did you know?*

Tryptophan is the amino acid found in turkey meat and commonly believed to cause the "food coma" after Thanksgiving dinner. However, turkey doesn't contain significantly more tryptophan than other meats; instead it's more likely the large quantities of carbohydrates we ingest (and the following release of melatonin) that make us sleepy.



*"Talent hits a target no one else can hit.  
Genius hits a target no one else can see."*

*– Arthur Schopenhauer*

## FAMILY LAW

Divorcing parents not only have to decide on custody of children, but also financial support. It's important to think of the future when determining child support to avoid court battles and rehashing old issues. Working toward an agreeable plan is always preferred and less costly; however, if you and your spouse cannot agree on the terms, the judge will determine the amount of child support using a presumptive guideline formula under Virginia law. Even if you can settle it yourselves, a judge will still need to endorse an order and ensure that it passes legal muster.

Once you have an order, you can request to modify the child support at a future time, but there needs to be a compelling reason to do so. A few examples would be in the case of job loss or promotion, changes in custody or childcare costs, a significant change in the child's needs, or outstanding medical costs for the child.

The presumptive formula used by the courts is meant to broadly cover all needs of the children at issue. If there are special circumstances in your case (such as extraordinary medical bills or special schooling), the court can deviate from the guidelines. The courts usually try to make sure the children are able to maintain the lifestyle they enjoyed before the divorce (finances permitting). The courts usually mandate that at least one parent carries medical insurance for the children and then determines how non-covered costs are split between the parents.

Child support does not necessarily stop when a child reaches the age of 18. It is presumptively extended through high school graduation (if after 18th birthday) if the child is a full-time resident with their parent and not self-sufficient. The parties can always agree to extend support past 18, for instance through college; however, this requires an agreement of the parents. The other circumstance, which can lead to child support being paid past the age of majority, is if the child has a disability and cannot support himself/herself. If the child meets certain legal criteria, support can be ordered by the court for life.

If there is only one child for which support is being paid, the obligation terminates upon the required age/circumstances. If there is more than one child, the parties must return to court and obtain a modifying order when one ages out. The law does not presume an automatic change of terms.

If for some reason you are temporarily unable to pay support, do not make oral agreements with the payee. It won't hold up in court and you could find yourself in contempt of court with serious consequences, potentially even a jail sentence. All modifications of support terms should be in writing, reviewed by your attorney, and ultimately entered as an order by the court.

*We welcome your referrals!*

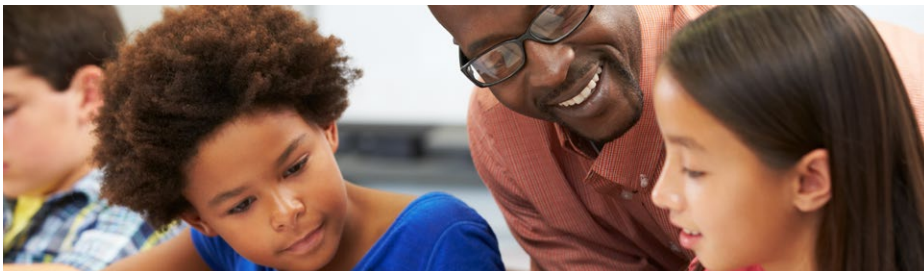
*We value all our clients. If you refer someone to us, we promise to answer his or her questions and provide first-rate, attentive service. We want to thank you for your referrals and for coming back to us when we can be of service.*



## Deb Dishes:

It is Thanksgiving and I'm excited to be cooking alongside my kids Cara, Paul and Courtney. While the prep work begins I will sneak a wheel of brie covered in chopped pecans and red pepper jelly into the oven surrounded by slices of bakery fresh French bread brushed with olive oil. The slices toast up while the cheese becomes melty and easy to spread. Cooks need to nosh while we work. Our table will have turkey made juicy by placing many cold pats of herbed butter up under the skin prior to cooking, many southern favorites like corn pudding, corn bread, collard greens, stuffing and sweet potato casserole. We'll also serve smashed potatoes (no one likes them whipped smooth) topped with chipotle gravy. In addition, Kelly Parks' bacon green beans are great tasting and easily cooked in the crockpot. You can find several of these recipes on our website at <http://goo.gl/Hn03IG>. There will be cranberry jelly, "green stuff" aka Watergate salad and one of my holiday favorite traditions- ambrosia made with peeled orange sections, coconut flakes & chopped pecans. And then there is dessert time when more family drops over to visit and partake in some pecan pie, pumpkin butterscotch cookies and cream cheese pie. Please send me your family favorite recipes, as I love trying new ones. I am so thankful for my family and hope each of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

## On The Local Front - Test Scores



Hampton and Newport News have joined Norfolk and the Virginia School Board Association in a lawsuit against the Commonwealth over the constitutionality of the Opportunity Educational Institution ("OEI"). The OEI is a new statewide "school division" that would take over schools that have lost accreditation, starting with the 2014-15 school year. If a school becomes rated "accredited with warning" for three years in a row, it too would be subject to the OEI. The OEI was created to address the fact that 69 Hampton Roads schools did not meet the requirements for accreditation last year, up from only 22 the year before. School officials claim this is due to the new, tougher SOL tests.

Despite the Commonwealth-wide drop in SOL scores, the Daily Press reports an increase in Virginia public school students graduating on time and a decrease in drop-outs. Both of which are good news for Virginia schools. Many are not saying the same about the OEI - blogs abound. Aside from diverting funds in an already financially-strapped economy (teachers going several years without a pay-raise), the lawsuit claims that the OEI is unconstitutional because it goes against several codes in Virginia's constitution, such as "No school division shall be divided or consolidated without the consent of the school board thereof and the governing body of the county or city affected." Another is the mandate that the State Board of Education create school divisions, but the OEI was created by the General Assembly. You can learn more about the lawsuit and this issue at <http://goo.gl/5Nx3Jx>.

## Child Safety:

Children are not only more fragile than adults, they also think very differently and therefore require extra consideration. We may look at a pool and know that anyone could drown, but a child only knows that swimming is fun. They don't understand consequences the way an adult does. Children depend on their parents/guardians to make good decisions that will keep them happy, healthy, and safe. To learn more child safety tips, check out our blog <http://goo.gl/xeCaeB>.

## Family Time...



Here are cousins "Bella Bean" and "Bryant Bugg" with the Mickey Mouse in his safari wear at the Tusker House in the Animal Kingdom. Deb, Bryant and six other family members went to trick or treat with Mickey this year and enjoy all the parks. Great fun and company all trip long!



Disney with family is such a blast. Here's Deb with grandson Bryant, and Deb's aunt Janis Bagnall with granddaughter Bella... oh and a couple of college pals we found in the Disney toy store in Downtown Disney.





LAW OFFICE OF  
**KELLAM T. PARKS, PLLC**

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



Law Office of Kellam T. Parks, PLLC



Law Office of Kellam T. Parks, PLLC



Ktparkslaw



Kellam Parks, Esquire

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

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Child Support
- ID theft and Sentara
- Thanksgiving Treats!

## Tech Tip:

Seeing as the holidays are approaching, I thought I'd share my favorite online shopping places and tips (for those who avoid physical shopping like the plague as I do...)

The first place I check is [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). In addition to good prices, there are also usually great reviews of the items I am considering. You should consider their Prime service if you use them frequently, especially as they just recently raised their minimum purchase for free shipping for non-members to \$35. When I am looking at electronic purchases, I also check out [www.Newegg.com](http://www.Newegg.com), [www.Tigerdirect.com](http://www.Tigerdirect.com) and [www.rakuten.com](http://www.rakuten.com) (formerly Buy.com). These all have great selections and low prices.

Speaking of reviews, I always check out [www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com) for electronic items. They usually have some consideration of the product I am looking into and I have found them to be spot on. Another good

resource for in-depth reviews is [www.thewirecutter.com](http://www.thewirecutter.com).

When you have settled on a purchase, don't forget to check to see if there are any online coupons or discounts. More often than not, a discount code exists somewhere, especially for the more traditional retailers. Good sites to check are [www.retailmenot.com](http://www.retailmenot.com), [www.coupons.com](http://www.coupons.com), and [www.savings.com](http://www.savings.com).

Lastly, be sure to be safe when shopping online. Ensure that the site is secured (look for a padlock icon in the address bar and an "s" in the URL address ("Https:")). Consider using PayPal or another payment service so that the vendors don't have your credit card information.

I hope this information helps you save some time and money when shopping this holiday season!

***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@ktparkslaw.com](mailto:dmontagna@ktparkslaw.com). If you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please call Deb. Thanks!***