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3	4	9	8	5	7	2	1	6
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2	3	1	5	7	6	9	8	4
7	8	5	9	4	3	1	6	2
4	9	6	2	1	8	3	5	7

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## Escape to a Winter Wonderland

### Chill Out in These Frosty Destinations

Snow is magical and gorgeous — unless you have to commute in it. If you want to enjoy all the wonder that winter has to offer without the hassle, why not turn it into a vacation? Here are a few breathtaking, snow-covered destinations that any winter lover can enjoy.

#### **Bulguksa Temple, South Korea**

Above the city of Gyeongju, this ancient Buddhist temple has stood on the slopes of Tohamsan Mountain since the eighth century. Bulguksa, or "Temple of the Buddha Land," is South Korea's No. 1 UNESCO World Heritage Site, making it a popular attraction for domestic and international tourism. The crowds and school tours die down during the winter, however, which also happens to be when Bulguksa is at its most pristine. The iced-over lotus ponds and snow-dusted pagodas add to the sense of tranquility this site naturally exudes.

#### **The Dolomites, South Tyrol, Italy**

If you want the feel of a ski trip to the Alps without the packed slopes and ritzy resorts, the Dolomites are just for you. Located in northeastern Italy, this stunning mountain range is home to some of

the best skiing in Europe, as well as many historical sites. The secluded villages that dot the mountain valleys are an attraction in their own right, especially for the rustic cuisine you'll find there. Don't expect pasta though. This region is a melting pot of flavors from Austria, northern Italy, and the local Ladin people. Ricotta and sauerkraut pancakes, anyone?

#### **The Antarctic**

This is the one entry on this list that is best enjoyed during the summer months, which is December–February in the Southern Hemisphere, because that's when the freezing temperatures of the southernmost continent are at their most hospitable. The Antarctic has become an increasingly popular tourist destination, with cruises taking adventure seekers through the vast, untouched beauty of this far-flung destination. Some tourists even enjoy kayaking or cross-country skiing through this icy paradise.



JANUARY 2020

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## Living Up to Her Dream

Meet Jennifer Knight

**H**appy New Year, everyone! As the newest face to the Preston Estate Planning team, I thought the first edition of 2020 would be a great time for me to introduce myself. Having practiced for over 10 years, I'm no stranger to the legal world. But I have to say, my four months with this firm have been eye-opening.

Preston Estate Planning approaches estate planning in a way I've never seen. Too often, attorneys get stuck in the ways they do things. For years, I received the same old advice and training that failed to address major problems with traditional estate planning. Over time, I learned that standard practice is not always best practice. That's why Preston Estate Planning is such a breath of fresh air — we put together plans in ways so innovative that we achieve results I once thought impossible.

For example, I've often been asked if it would be possible for the grantor of a trust to protect the assets for their beneficiaries. All of my legal education and mentors told me *no* — in California, it simply isn't possible to protect assets for your beneficiaries after you pass away. But as you'll see on the next page, we include language in our trusts to make this added peace of mind a reality for our clients. I deeply appreciate this firm's commitment to going the extra mile, especially as someone who knows from personal experience just how important estate planning really is.

My father always wanted me to be a lawyer and did everything he could to support my education.



**“I deeply appreciate  
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planning really is.”**

He passed away during my first year of college, when I was just 18 years old. Needless to say, it was devastating for my whole family. But because he passed away without a plan, all the grief was compounded with uncertainty.

In the wake of his passing, I left school in Texas to be with my mom in San Diego and figure out how I was going to complete my education without any financial help from my parents. But I didn't lose sight of the dream he had for me. I got a job and put myself through school at Cal State San Marcos, then law school after that. It was tough, but the journey was more than worth it.

What I love most about my job is being able to protect families from the uncertainty mine faced. After going through the trauma of losing someone so close and having to pick up the pieces in the aftermath, nothing brings me more joy than seeing the relief on a client's face when they realize they're in good hands. I'm grateful to be part of a team that lets me help these families to the absolute best of my ability.

Speaking of families, I have a young one of my own! My 6-year-old daughter is already loving fishing and the great outdoors — and she's already surpassing me in negotiating skills. Who knows? Maybe she has a future in law herself.

Here's to the new year,

*—Jennifer Knight*



# Expand Your Family's Horizons

By Opening Your Home to an Exchange Student

Hosting an exchange student in your home may not be something you've considered before, but there are many reasons why adding an international member to your family is great for everyone involved.

## Develop Understanding

One of the most valuable traits we can learn is to be understanding of others. Learning about other countries and cultures offers an opportunity to be more receptive to the idea that, no matter how far apart people live or how much the languages we speak differ, at our core, we have a lot in common. Navigating life with this open mindset has far-reaching value that your entire family will benefit from.

## Cultivate Friendship

Welcoming a new member into your home paves the way for new friendships to blossom. Even though the duration may often feel short, the friendships developed during an exchange are strong, and it's not uncommon for host families and students to keep in touch for years after they've parted ways. Having friends in different parts of the world is also

convenient when it comes to travel — you might get lucky enough to have a nice place to stay when you're in their neck of the woods!

## Broaden Horizons

It's not just your family that will reap the benefits of opening your home to an exchange student; the student has much to gain as well. They'll immerse themselves in your culture and get to see how your community lives harmoniously together. You'll play an important role in showing them what life is like in your backyard while gleaning important perspectives on what life is like in theirs.



## PROTECTION FOR BENEFICIARIES

How J.M. Made the Impossible Possible



As is referenced on this month's cover, many people are interested in protecting the assets in their trusts for their beneficiaries. J.M. Preston helped a client design this kind of estate plan just recently. For a long time, J.M.'s client had been trying to find an estate plan that would allow her beneficiary (her son) to receive her assets without them being vulnerable to creditors and divorce, and J.M. was the first to show her how to do it. "Are you kidding me?" I heard her exclaim. "I've met with so many lawyers over 10 years, and they all told me it couldn't be done!"

Under the method in which most trusts are drafted, these lawyers are correct. The key is to change the way the trust is drafted. Traditional trusts contain an "outright distribution," which terminates the trust at the death of the trustor. For example, if you transfer your house into your trust while you are alive, then at death, the house comes out of the trust. The house is then owned by your beneficiary, exposing the house to the beneficiary's current or future creditors. This is why so many believe that protection for beneficiaries is impossible. However, what if the house never had to leave your trust in the first place?

Rather than distribute these assets outright (terminating the trust), your beneficiary has access to the assets in the sub-trust. To be clear, the beneficiary has access to, but not ownership of, the assets in the sub-trust. This way, the property can be freely used by them, while still maintaining a "legal shield" to protect them.

J.M. used this outside-the-box approach to make a difference for a client who thought it was impossible. It's natural that she couldn't believe her ears for a moment; this is a very novel means of asset protection in this state. But when it comes to designing exactly the right plan for a family's needs, this sort of innovation is invaluable.

# Have You Been Asked to Pay to See Your Documents?

## TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

If you've received what looks like an official letter notifying you that a document relating to your real property has been recorded at the county recorder's office, you should be wary. If it instructs you to pay an exorbitant fee (usually around \$85) to receive a copy of your deed, DO NOT PAY. We always provide you with copies of any documents we've added or modified, and regardless, the county recorder's office can always send you more copies for a small fee. So, where are these letters coming from?

### Third Parties and the Public Records Act

Under California's Public Records Act, government agencies legally have to provide anything within the public record to any party who requests them. Some companies have been using this in a way that doesn't sit right with us but is legal nonetheless. They are continually running requests with the county recorder's office to receive notice of any new documents being recorded and then using the information they receive to send out misleading notices.

### An Example

Let's say you purchased new property and need to register it in the name of your trust. We prepare the deed and have it recorded at the county recorder's office. Meanwhile, a third-party company has put in ongoing Public Records Act requests to receive a copy of any deeds recorded from said office. The county recorder has to comply, and now this third-party company knows that a new deed has been recorded on your property. Using this information, they send you a very official-looking letter saying they'll print you a copy of your updated deed for a fee. Legally, it isn't a scam, but make no mistake: **You don't need to pay this money to get a copy of your recorded documents.**

### Better Safe Than Sorry

If you're ever asked to pay to receive records of anything relating to your estate plan, give us a call first. We always send updated documents as they are recorded, and there's a good chance they're already on their way to you. Otherwise, we're more than happy to print and send you another copy. Again, the county recorder's office can do the same for around \$2. Don't be taken advantage of by these third parties.

# Sudoku

6		7			4	8	9	
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9	5						4	
		4	7				3	1
1	7	3				6		9
2	3	1						
7			9	4			6	2
4			2	1		3	5	7

Solution on Pg. 4

## HOPPIN' JOHN

*Inspired by Epicurious*

*A traditional New Year's favorite in the South, Hoppin' John includes black-eyed peas that are said to represent coins, a sign of prosperity for the coming year. It's usually served alongside collard greens, which represent cash.*

### Ingredients

- 1 cup dried black-eyed peas
- 5-6 cups water
- 1 dried hot pepper, optional (arbol and Calabrian are great options)
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 cup long-grain white rice

### Directions

1. Wash and sort peas.
2. In a saucepan, cover peas with water, discarding any that float.
3. Add pepper, ham hock, and onion. Gently boil and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until peas are just tender, about 90 minutes. At this point, you should have about 2 cups of liquid remaining.
4. Add rice, cover, drop heat to low, and simmer for 20 minutes, undisturbed.
5. Remove from heat and let steam for an additional 10 minutes, still covered.
6. Remove lid, fluff with a fork, and serve.