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## Music & Wonder in South Carolina

### Summer Concerts & Blooming Butterflies

*The dog days of summer are officially upon us, but don't let this southern summer heat keep you cooped up in the house. There are still a variety of exciting local events around Lexington that will keep your family cool, cultured, and entertained.*

#### CONCERTS IN THE PARK

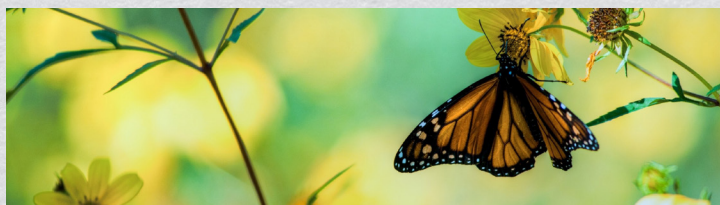
There is nothing quite like spending a summer evening out under the stars, and there's no better reason to get out of the house than for a live concert in the park. This summer, be sure to visit the beautiful Newberry Opera House for their outdoor music series featuring a variety of talented artists. Guests are welcome to bring their own lawn chairs or blankets to lay on the grass and relax. Be sure to bring friends and family to enjoy the end of summer by jamming under the setting sun.

**WHEN:** Every Friday in August starting at 7 p.m.

**WHERE:** Newberry Opera House, 1201 Mckibben St., Newberry, SC 29108

**COST:** Free

For more information visit [www.NewberryOperaHouse.com](http://www.NewberryOperaHouse.com).



#### BLOOMING BUTTERFLIES:

This summer, prepare to explore the beautiful world of the butterfly! EdVenture has created a living exhibit, Blooming Butterflies, which explores the world of these awe-inspiring insects. This interactive exhibit features dozens of species of trees and plants, and more than 20 different kinds of butterflies native to the Southeast. There is even a special Bloom Room where you can observe chrysalises and emerging butterflies. The exhibit is designed to be both educational and fun, with facts and information about the butterfly life cycle. It is perfect for children of all ages, or anyone who wants to spark the imagination. The butterflies are both wild and whimsical, so visitors are sure to be delighted.

**WHEN:** Weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** EdVenture Children's Museum, 211 Gervais Street, Columbia, SC 29201

**COST:** Free with membership, or standard museum admission (\$11.50)

For more information call (803) 779-3100 or visit [www.edventure.org](http://www.edventure.org).

# MAIN STREET MONTHLY

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JULY 2015

## PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

**T**his month we have some exciting news to share with our readers, especially those with recent additions to the family. We have been hard at work on a new book and package of materials for new parents. A common issue we find is that newer parents have not done any planning in case something happens to one or both of them. This can lead to a lot of serious issues, including fights between grandparents over who will take care of the children, fights over who will manage money, and even issues where minor children suddenly own real estate or other assets with their parents due to our intestacy laws. Below, attorney and new parent Chasity Stratton has put together some answers to common questions we get from new parents.

**Q:** Chasity, who would take care of a child if both parents suddenly passed away in a car accident? How should new parents plan for this?

**A:** That's a really good question. Under our laws, all of the grandparents would have equal priority to be the guardian of the child. This means that if they can't agree, the only way to determine who would get custody is by bringing competing actions in the family court and letting a judge decide. On the other hand, if even basic wills are done by the new parents ahead of time, they can agree on who gets custody of the child and potentially save tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees and months of fighting between in-laws.

**Q:** Since we're on the topic, what would happen in that same situation to the parent's assets such as life insurance policies and real estate?



**A:** This could lead to a lot of issues. In South Carolina, if a child inherits over \$10,000, which is common in these cases, a Conservator must be appointed by the Probate Court to handle the money. Often this is the same person as the Guardian, but it doesn't have to be. I've seen cases where a grandparent on one side of the family was named Guardian while a grandparent on the other side of the family was named Conservator, with the Court's goal being this would keep both families communicating with one another. In reality, this means both sides have to ask the other for permission to do certain things and can lead to them each using their power as leverage to get the other side to do what they want. Obviously, this can lead to the complete breakdown of the relationships and really just creates a mess for the child who is caught in the middle.

Another big issue we see is a family member being named to manage the assets who isn't very good with money. They can literally waste tens of thousands of dollars through poor management or spending on frivolous things. This becomes a serious problem when the child gets ready to go to college and finds out that the money his or her parents left to them is pretty much spent.

Again, a little planning ahead of time can do a lot to preserve the family dynamics, make sure the right person is appointed, and even make sure the assets are properly managed so the child is provided for and has enough money to finance their education.

**Q:** The last question I have today is, what happens when only one parent passes away? Since the surviving parent is still around to manage the assets and take care of the child, is there any need to plan for this?

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# Nanny Know-How

They take care of our kids, become part of our families, and yet they are hard to place when it comes time for taxes! When it comes to nannies, is it enough to just give them their pay and send them on their way? Unfortunately, and unknown by many, the answer is no.

Here are some handy tips to guide you through the money mayhem of child care.

While it may just seem like babysitting, you're technically the employer of your nanny, and that means that she's not an independent contractor. With every paycheck, you're supposed to be withholding taxes. Which means that 15-20 percent of the gross wages of child-care workers like nannies, needs to be withheld and handed over to Uncle Sam (and this includes Social Security and Medicare).

It's been said before — your home is like a business; and in this case, the IRS sees it that way. Like any other business, state and federal governments regulate the minimum wage. It may seem

like a no-brainer, but even your nanny is to be paid the minimum wage of the state you live in (at least \$7.25 per hour in our state). Additionally, they are due the same accessibility to overtime pay as any other worker (but special laws apply to live-in nannies).

The good news for you is that there are some handy ways to make sure that you're not overburdened by the cost of employing help to take care of your kids. Several companies offer dependent care accounts or flexible spending accounts that will mean about \$2,000 of savings each year. If your company is lacking in this area, each family is allowed to claim 20-35 percent of their expenditures in childcare (there are limits on the dollar amount per dependent), which will save you anywhere from \$600 to \$1,000 each year.

While the dependent care account is certainly the better option (families often end up saving significantly more than they'd spend), either one will keep you financially fit. Sure, it makes for a few more hoops to jump through, but the savings, protection, and satisfaction of ensuring the future of the person who is helping you raise your little ones is certainly worth it!



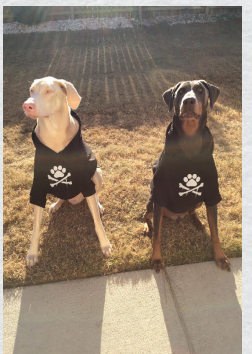
## Employee Spotlight: Meet Tiffany!



## Puppy Love

This month we are proud to introduce our administrative assistant, Tiffany! She is our go-to girl around the office for scheduling appointments and following up with clients to make sure they are receiving the best-possible care.

Before working at Stratton & Reynolds, Tiffany was a stay-at-home wife and proud pet-mom to her two Doberman pinschers, including one that is a rare albinistic white. She is originally from Boston, Massachusetts, so the move down to South Carolina was a bit of a culture shock, but she is starting to love her new home.



One thing that has helped her transition from Boston to Lexington is volunteering and donating to local dog rescue groups. She is very passionate about animal welfare, even working on a legal project that will help protect animals from abuse in South Carolina. Tiffany and her husband have even decided to use Christmas shopping as an excuse to raise money for the rescues — instead of buying gifts for family and friends, they donate to local animal shelters.

It's hard to imagine that Tiffany has been with us for a full year — she has already become a valued fixture of the office. Between her big heart and her attention to detail, it has been a great fit. Tiffany says her favorite part of the job is how comfortable and engaging the office environment is. She is a true lover of learning, so we have made a point to teach her everything we can about paralegal work and different aspects of the law that help her help our clients.

When she's not volunteering or working in the office, Tiffany and her husband enjoy visiting Isle of Palms, a quiet beach where they can soak up the sun. Lately, she's also gotten into photography and recently did her first newborn session. This busy girl is on a roll, and we can't wait to see what her future holds!

## Creating Moments of JOY

"Everything is in the process of being forgotten. But who we are – who we have been in mood, in personality, in character – persists much longer"

~Jolene Brackey

also explains different types of communication methods, and even how to reach the "unreachable."

Brackey easily puts the reader in the patient's shoes so he or she can understand more of what it feels like to struggle with memory loss and periods of confusion. She focuses on improving spiritual well-being and improving your state of mind, and she discusses many topics similar books seem to ignore like how to still be intimate with a partner suffering from dementia, or how to help your grandfather go to the bathroom without making him feel like a child.

We recommend this book as a terrific resource both for former clients and for anyone else you may know who is helping to take care of a loved one with memory loss. Knowing and understanding simple ways to make some of those tough moments really special can lead to an increased happiness both for the patient and the caregiver.

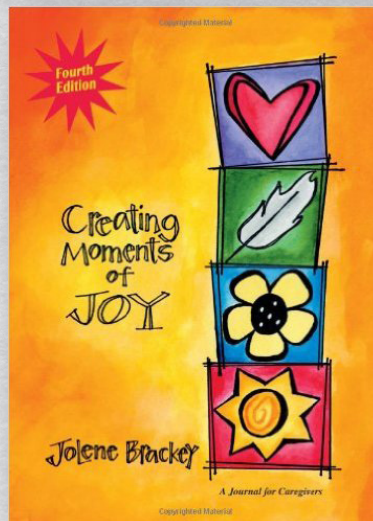
For this reason, we would like to do something very special for our clients. We have twenty copies of "Creating Moments of Joy," and we would like to send them to our readers who are dealing with loved ones with memory issues. This book is absolutely free to the first twenty people who call to request a copy. Please give us a call if you think either you or someone you know could benefit from this book.

### Cover continued ...

**A:** In South Carolina, all parents really need to have a will. If you don't have one, the state has one for you. It's called our intestacy statute. What it says is that if a parent passes away without a will, half of their estate goes to their spouse and the other half goes to their child. This means you could have a three-year-old suddenly own half of your spouse's interest in your real estate, or half of any accounts just in your spouse's name. This puts us back into the mess where you have to be appointed as Conservator to manage your children's money. It also leads to a lot of issues when trying to sell the real estate later. While these things can be cleaned up with a few thousand dollars in attorney's fees, I would strongly encourage you to instead take care of them ahead of time and avoid all the money and hearings involved.

We go into detail about these issues, tips for proper estate planning when you have minor children, and much more in our new book. For anyone interested, feel free to call our office or go to the website we have set up at [www.SCNewParentBook.com](http://www.SCNewParentBook.com) to get a copy of the new package we have put together. In that package we also have details on some discounted estate planning packages we have put together just for new parents or those with young children.

~ Charity



This month we want to offer something special to our readers who have family members suffering from memory problems due to diseases such as Alzheimer's or forms of dementia. We recently picked up a copy of "Creating Moments of Joy," by Jolene Brackey.

She has written about a lot of ways we can take those difficult moments we have with aging parents or loved ones affected by Alzheimer's or dementia, and turn them into really special moments for us and our loved ones.

The author focuses on how to improve the daily routines of people suffering from these life-altering diseases. She