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Car Insurance 101 (How to Protect Yourself)

We don't sell auto insurance, but we've learned a lot about it in 18 years of car accident injury work. Mostly, that there are many misconceptions about coverage, and many injury victims are disappointed. For example: Let's say you're seriously injured by a negligent driver. You require hospitalization, surgery, and follow-up therapy. You also lose time at work, and you are never quite the



same. So you request compensation from the other

driver's insurance. Unfortunately, the negligent driver only has minimum liability coverage (\$25,000). The real shocker comes when you discover that your UIM coverage was only \$25,000. Therefore, the maximum insurance available to compensate you is only \$50,000 – a fraction of what you need.

So what went wrong? For starters, let's review some basic terminology: (1) *Liability Insurance*—protects your assets if you cause an accident and hurt someone. Your insurance could pay the person you injured up to the limits of this coverage. Nebraska requires a

minimum of \$25,000 in liability coverage; (2) *Uninsured Motorist Insurance (UM)*—protects you against a driver with no insurance. Your insurance could pay your damages (medical expenses, pain and suffering, wage loss, etc.) up to the limits of your UM coverage; (3) *Underinsured Motorist Insurance (UIM)*—protects you against an underinsured driver who doesn't have sufficient liability coverage to pay for your injuries (see "example"). Here again, your insurance company could pay you up to the limits of this coverage. Nebraska requires a minimum of \$25,000 in UM and UIM insurance.

So how do you protect yourself? Simple, buy more insurance. Thankfully, 10 times your current coverage won't cost you 10 times as much. More likely \$300-\$500 extra per year. This will vary, of course, but the cost of two extra-large pizzas a month seems a small price to pay for protection against a ■

A Note From Bill

We just got back from vacation (yeah, it was great!), and I've been thinking about how important it is, for all of us, to "get away" at least annually. I know, the standard response by most is, "We can't afford that." Used to be mine, too. However, my family has slowly changed my attitude. Even frequent weekend trips just can't measure up to 7 consecutive days (at least) "somewhere else." It's so healthy for your mind and body on so many levels. If you're a penny pincher, it will remind you why you're saving in the first place. If you're driven at work, it will completely decompress you. It can change your perspective on a location, a culture, or life in general. I just experienced snorkeling on an ocean reef for the first time. Wow! Amazing! My only regret is waiting this long to experience it. My best overall health advice: Get out your calendar and mark off at least a week for vacation. If you don't do it now, you and I know that "stuff" will steal away the time.

Loan Qualification After A Catastrophe (It's Possible—Even After Bankruptcy)



Sure, most lenders shy away from lending money to people who have recently sought the protection of bankruptcy. But that actually doesn't last very long, even though credit reports will include your bankruptcy for 7-10 years. While debtors often get credit card offers (albeit low limits) shortly after their bankruptcy case closes, getting a loan will require some planned action on your part. Here are the proven strategies that work:

(1) Get a decent job and keep it. A good employment history speaks volumes. Lenders are willing

to take a risk, but steady employment is almost mandatory. If you're borrowing money for a car — employment may be all you need. Check out used car lots that pitch “you work—you ride”. They are growing in number.

(2) Start saving money. Plan on making a down payment of 20% or so on any loan you may negotiate. Not only will it help qualify you, but it will obviously lower your beginning balance.

(3) Review your credit report. Even though it may be ugly, be sure the information is correct. You don't want to take the heat for someone else's mistakes too.

(4) Learn how to improve your credit score. See our March 2014 newsletter ar-

icle: “7 Steps to Improve Your Credit Score”.

(5) Find a hometown banker who will work with you. You'll have more luck locally where the bank knows your employer, your background, and your story. Treat them like your new best friend – they just might be.

(6) Start small and practical. Don't plan on a loan for something frivolous. Begin with a small loan for a basic need – like a car or maybe new tires for a car.

(7) Consider asking a family member or friend to co-sign. You can usually get a better interest rate with a co-signer. For a while, this may be your only way to get a sizable loan. It will need to be someone with a good credit history.

(8) Be patient. It took a while to ruin your credit, and it will take some time to restore it.

(9) Put your new loan on autopilot. When a lender

gives you an opportunity, don't blow it. If possible, set up an auto withdrawal from your bank account (which pays out before the due date), and make sure there is money in the account.

Don't listen to the naysayers who may tell you this is hopeless. Like most goals in life, it is possible with the right attitude, smart strategies, and

*Thanks
for the
Referrals*

Our success depends on your continued satisfaction, and on the family and friends you refer to us.

Thanks for your help. We appreciate the trust that you have placed in us. Please continue to remember to pass our name on to people who could use our help.

the required effort.

Cory's Parmesan-Crusted Chicken Cutlets

- 2-4 (8-oz.) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, tenderloins removed, trimmed
- ¼ c. plus 1 T. all-purpose flour
- 6½ oz. Parmesan cheese, ½ oz. grated fine (¼ c.) & 6 oz. grated coarse (2 c.)
- 3 large egg whites
- 2 T. minced fresh green onions (optional)
- Salt & Pepper
- 4 tsp. olive oil
- Lemon wedges

- (1) Cover chicken breasts with plastic wrap and pound to an even ¼” thickness.
- (2) Combine ¼ cup flour and finely grated Parmesan in shallow dish. Lightly beat egg whites and green onions, if using, together until slightly foamy in 2nd dish. Combine 2 cups coarsely grated Parmesan and remaining 1 T. flour in 3rd dish.
- (3) Pat chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Dredge 1 cutlet at a time, in flour mixture (shake off excess), then coat with egg white mixture, then coat with

- coarsely grated Parmesan mixture, pressing gently so that cheese adheres.
- (4) Heat 2 tsp. oil in 12” non-stick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Place 2 cutlets in skillet and cook until golden brown on 1st side, about 3 minutes. Gently separate any cheesy edges that melt together. Flip cutlets, reduce heat to medium, and continue to cook until lightly browned on 2nd side (about 2 minutes). Wipe out skillet with paper towels. Repeat with remaining 2 tsp. oil and remaining 2 cutlets. Serve immediately with lemon wedges. ■

Personal Asset Planning For Retirement (You Should Come First)



Many Boomers are busy these days planning for retirement. Mostly, this involves calculating and manipulating various types of financial assets. In the process, don't overlook your most valuable personal asset right now, and in retirement – *You*. A huge retirement account will matter little if you're not mentally and physically able to enjoy it.

I have had the pleasure of working with many senior citizens over the years (although few would ever refer to themselves that way), and I have noticed some common attributes shared by those who are

truly enjoying their golden years. Here is my top 10 list:

- (1) Healthy Diet. They don't follow fad diets nor do they eat large quantities at one time. Generous portions of fruits and vegetables, but little red meat, fill their plates.
- (2) Remain Active. They wear comfortable walking shoes, and use them often. More importantly, they seem to be energized by exercise and enjoy it.
- (3) Managed Weight. They maintain a slender figure. They have learned that a slim body moves easier, is better balanced, and lasts longer.
- (4) Healthy Sleep Patterns. Good sleeping habits enable them to get to bed at about the same time every night, sleep deeply for at least 8 hours, and wake refreshed.
- (5) Engaged Socially. They

have a large, and active, social network including family, friends, and organizations (fraternal, religious, and charitable).

(6) Exercise Mentally. They keep their brain sharp by reading, and challenging themselves intellectually with work, puzzles, memorization, musical instruments, or "smart" games.

(7) Limit Stress. They have found a way to shut off excessive worry about things they have little or no control over with exercise, yoga, meditation, or just by learning to change gears and focus on something positive.

(8) Wake Up With a Purpose. They have found meaningful work or projects to engage and challenge themselves (usually something that involves helping others), and they look forward to it each

day.

(9) Regular Medical Check-ups. They see their physician at least annually, follow their advice, and perform regular blood screens.

(10) Laugh A Lot. They take time for the fun things in life, and are quick to find the lighter side of living.

This list may not add to your pocket book, but it could keep you healthy longer and add richness to your senior years. After all, practicing a healthy lifestyle is like pouring sand into the top of your personal hour-■ glass.

We Appreciate You

Thank you for choosing our firm for your legal needs. We hope that you will think of us as "your law office."

If you have a legal question, give us a call. If we don't practice in the legal area you need, we can refer you to another experienced attorney who does.

Estate Planning—Summer Seminar

The last thing you want to worry about before you board the plane for vacation is, "Are my affairs in order?" Let us help you check that issue off your "to do" list. Steffens Law Office will be presenting a free workshop on June 5, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Cobblestone Hotel conference room. We will review Wills and Trusts, as well as Powers of Attorney. We pride ourselves on simple and direct presentations—

no confusing "legalese." Unfortunately, many people put off completing this process until it is too late. The result is a lot of unnecessary confusion and stress for loved ones—and sometimes, unintended heartache or financial loss for heirs—because simple documents were not prepared.

We will show you a simple, straightforward, and fool-proof approach with our estate planning

notebook system. It breaks down what is needed to have a thorough estate plan, and provides a method of organizing and storing this important information.

A number of handouts accompany the presentation, and space is limited. So call now to reserve materials and a seat.

The workshop will enable you to complete simple information sheets that can be used to prepare all

of your estate planning documents. We will provide all the information you need to make your personal choices.

This is a one-of-a-kind, "git-r-done" opportunity. We urge you to stop procrastinating and sign up now. Besides, the free coffee and ■ cookies are





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Sunscreen—Don't Leave Home Without It!

Summer weather is almost upon us, and outdoor activities are inviting to all ages. While no doubt you have been warned about the dangers of ultraviolet sun rays, it bears repeating.

Skin cancer from over-exposure is the most common form of all cancers, affecting more than 2 million Americans each year—a number that is rising rapidly. Fortunately, it is also the easiest type of cancer to cure—if it is diagnosed and treated early.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, 1 in 5 Americans will be diagnosed with some type of skin cancer in their lifetime. Unfortunately, one person dies from melanoma

every hour.

Not only are sun rays damaging to our skin, but so are the rays from tanning beds. Declared a “known cancer-causing agent” in 2009 by the World Health Organization, research shows that tanning beds increase a person’s risk of skin cancer,

particularly melanoma, by 74%. The American Cancer Society encourages everyone to protect themselves by using the following tips:

- **Seek the shade**, especially between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

- **Cover up with clothing**, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-

blocking sunglasses.

- **Apply 1 oz. of sunscreen** to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 2 hours or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.
- **Keep newborns out of the sun.**
- **Examine your skin regularly.**
- **Avoid tanning beds**—swapping sun rays for tanning bed rays is not a healthy choice.

Personally speaking, these often repeated until monotonous sunscreen rules take on a whole new meaning after you go under the dermatologist’s knife—even for a small suspicious skin spot removal. ■

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