

Fries Financial Services

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Happy Valentine's Day!

February 14, 2017

I love Valentine's Day. But it is not because my wonderful husband always "surprises me" with beautiful flowers – it is because of the actual meaning behind the holiday. Taking the time to tell those around you – your sweetheart, co-workers, family and friends – that they add happiness to your life is the real meaning to me. Thirty-two years ago I started sending you news about how you can be "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise". Our staff has grown and there are even more people to tell you that we care about you and that your hopes and dreams are meaningful to us. It is the greatest honor to us when you refer your friends and family to us because that says that you know that we promise to take great care of them. We now have many families where three generations are clients.

Last year I wrote about how we are here to help you through periods of change in your life. Sometimes the change is close to home like an illness or job change. Other times it is on a national level. We are in a time of great change; many would even say conflict. It is not our "place" to comment either way on the election but it is very much our job to help you understand its impact on your investments and what changes have been made already or should be made if campaign promises become reality. Every 4 years we seek to be ahead of the curve to act in your best interest as administrations either change or remain the same. We are here to listen to your concerns and help you "sort them out" to understand their meaningful impact on you.

Individual people have the power to act in a way which reflects their values as individual people. So whether you are thrilled with our new president or confounded at his ascension to power please always remember that we each decide how we live our day to day lives. At Fries Financial Services we will continue to cherish our relationships with our clients, co-workers, family and friends and we will always seek verifiable facts, clarity, veracity and honor. We have all heard the phrase "United we stand; Divided we fall". I hope that is not the case, as we are very much a divided people at this point in history; it is not the first time; nor will it probably be the last. Recently I thought of new phrases that could replace "The Divided States of America" which we have seen in so many articles recently. I came up with "Enlightened we Stand; Misguided we fall" and in this case "WE" is our clients and our team working together. Enlightened means "to give someone greater knowledge and understanding about a subject or situation; having or showing a rational and well informed outlook" and misguided means "mistaken, having or showing faulty judgement or reasoning; led or prompted by wrong or inappropriate motives or ideals".

Personally I miss the days when "the news" was "the news" and not someone's spin on the topic. I am flabbergasted at "fake news stories" passed off as fact. I used to be a "news junkie" watching several channels per day. But it lost its charm when I had to spend so much time on factcheck.org to weed out the details from the drama. Thankfully our office still has great sources of "black and white" financial news with no color commentary available to us. We will always tell you the facts as we know them and how they do or do not impact you. We will deliver it with kindness and respect for you, as an individual. We continue to pledge to you our highest and best.

*Kindest Regards,
Denise Fries*

Serving Our Veterans



Patricia Gerling, Denise Fries and Fain McDougal

Endowment Fund to benefit the Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial. Denise is an Army Veteran and Fain is a Navy Veteran and together they wanted to create a fund that others could donate to which would provide a permanent income stream to this worthy charity. Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial Park is located at 3101 Harvey Road in College Station and is a great asset to our community. Your donations, gifts, bequests and memorials to support this endowment are welcomed. To learn more about the Community Foundation and how it can partner with you to accomplish your philanthropic and community giving priorities contact Patricia Gerling, President at 979-589-4305 or president@cfbv.org.

Planners Plan.... It's What We Do

By Denise Fries

We are always talking to you about planning for your future – even if those plans involve “unpleasant talks” about having documents which deal with guardians for your minor children or how you want your assets distributed.... Have you ever wondered about Fries Financial Services’ plans for either natural disasters or personal illnesses or deaths?

I'm glad you asked! Yes we have written documents which cover:

DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN: This 33 page document discusses our staff's plans for how to conduct business if our building is damaged or destroyed (remember the tornado in 2016?); if there is a natural disaster to the wider community; if we lose utilities such as electricity or internet (if we lose electricity we also lose our phones and computers) or if our office is inaccessible for some reason. Quick! Without looking in your phone for addresses and phone numbers or without going to “Google Maps” for directions- could you drive to your co-worker's homes to check on them if there was a disaster? What if you lost cell service and power – how would you function? We now have written plans with assignments for each employee (and alternate) for actions which would help maintain our ability to serve our clients' needs. Having printed out maps, directions and contact information will make reaching everyone possible when technology is not working. We even have a rotary phone- remember those? – as a back up to be used if the power goes out.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN: This document covers what would happen if any of us became incapacitated or died. It includes a plan to host a group meeting to answer all of your questions if “something happened” to me. While I am healthy and have no plans to retire (I turn 55 on May 2nd) I believe it would be a complete injustice to you to not have a thorough plan that ensures a seamless transition of things in the unlikely event I am suddenly unable to “run the show”.

Part of this plan is the addition of our team of Salaried Servicing Associates. **Travis Vollmering, Bill Hoffman, and Mike Albert** are licensed financial advisors who have now met 576 of our clients as they join me on appointments and meeting your service needs when you call in or email. All of these qualified gentlemen moved from other cities to work at Fries Financial Services because they believe in our model of providing excellent customer service. I look forward to introducing them to every client.

While not everything can be planned for, we want you to know we take both your and our planning seriously.



When we send you a postcard telling you that it's time to schedule an account review, please call or email us as soon as you can. Some things that we need to discuss with you are time sensitive.

Fries Financial Services

Advisory Team



Denise Fries '84 opened Fries Financial Services in 1984 after interviewing with, and being disappointed in, several brokerage firms which were industry giants. Her goal was to provide the best possible financial products delivered by a team of caring, competent professionals. **Denise is pleased to introduce you to Travis Vollmering, Bill Hoffman and Mike Albert.** Travis, Bill and Mike are Salaried Service Associates whose number one task is to ensure your complete satisfaction with the service and attention you receive from our team. All of us, together, want you to feel like you receive Concierge Care. Travis, Bill and Mike will be working with us to continue to earn your business. Please let us know how we can best meet your needs. She can be reached at denise@friesfinancial.com



Travis Vollmering '12 is a graduate of the Trading, Risk, and Investments program from Mays Business School at Texas A&M University. Upon graduation he worked in New York for an independent execution and research brokerage company. After working in New York he returned to Texas to be close to family and pursued a career in the oil and gas industry. Travis has vast knowledge in portfolio management and analyzes the holdings within client portfolios. Travis is licensed and well versed in providing clients with information and services regarding Long-Term Care insurance. Travis is the 3rd of 7 siblings. His family consists of 3 A&M graduates and 2 brothers currently enrolled at Texas A&M. He is a passionate follower of Aggie football and baseball and regularly attends the home games with family and friends. He can be reached at travis@friesfinancial.com



Bill Hoffman grew up in a military family. He is particularly proud that both parents retired with a combined 56 years of service in the Air Force. After living all over the world, his family settled in the great state of Texas. Bill graduated from Mississippi State University in 2003. Upon graduation, he worked for the Division of External Activities for MSU. He returned to Texas to be close to family, and he met his wife, Cari Cesaro – Aggie class of '02. Bill joined us after working in the financial services industry since 2009 with a Fortune 500 company, doing retirement and portfolio planning, risk management and pension education. Outside of work Bill enjoys spending time on the golf course and attending sporting events and Broadway Musicals with Cari. They enjoy both Texas A&M men's and women's sporting events and some of the great restaurants in town. He can be reached at bill@friesfinancial.com



Mike Albert '95 is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) and has also obtained the Accredited Asset Management Specialist (AAMS®) and Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (CRPC®) professional designations from the College for Financial Planning. Mike worked at USAA in San Antonio for 6 years as a Senior Wealth Management Service & Implementation Specialist. The culture at USAA was very client-centric with a special emphasis placed on providing exceptional client experiences; therefore, his experience providing excellent customer service has served him well since this is the top priority at Fries Financial Services. Mike graduated with honors from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. His work experience also includes 14 years at Texas Instruments (TI) in Dallas, Texas as a Senior Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC) Technical Design Lead Engineer. This role involved overseeing multi-million dollar design projects and helped him to develop excellent problem solving skills and to be very detail oriented.

Outside of work Mike enjoys reading, watching movies, exercising, traveling, following sports, and spending time with his family and friends. He can be reached at mike@friesfinancial.com.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Power of Attorney, Medical Power of Attorney and HIPPA Documents



In 2013 and 2014 Attorney Brett Charles, whose office is located in the Fries Financial Services building, prepared FREE legal documents exclusively for our clients. If you have ever dealt with an emergency situation you know the value of having those important documents prepared

BEFORE you need them. For that reason we have arranged for him to create these valuable documents for our clients.

Between now and March 15th email us at service@friesfinancial.com and we will arrange for Brett to email you the questionnaire which you will complete and return to him. He will create the documents and arrange to deliver them to you either via email or in our office.

Do not miss this incredibly generous offer. Questions? Email Brett Charles at bcharles@charles-law.com.

Medicare Premiums for 2017

If you are over 65 and Medicare Part B is your health care provider your premiums are dictated by your annual income. 2017 Deductibles will be \$183 (up from \$166)

Premium per Person	Single	Married Filing Jointly
\$109 to \$127 Depending on when you enrolled	Everyone below \$85,000	Everyone below \$170,000
\$187.50	\$85,000 to \$107,000	\$170,000 to \$214,000
\$267.90	\$107,001 to \$160,000	\$214,001 to \$320,000
\$348.30	\$160,001 to \$214,000	\$320,001 to \$428,000
\$428.60	\$214,001 +	\$428,001 +

Tax Free Family Giving

This year you may give \$14,000 per person to any other person without triggering a gift tax. If married, a couple can give \$28,000. If you will not outlive your nest egg we often suggest you "feather the nest" of your children or grandchildren with a deposit into an IRA or 529 college fund for them. These gifts transfer gift tax free and can be the basis for the next generation's knowledge of investing and appreciation for long term wealth accumulation. Many people don't want to wait to die to leave a legacy. Contact us for a discussion of options that will work well for you and your family.

Make Sure You Are Covered

The penalty for failure to have health insurance in 2016 and 2017 is \$695 or 2.5% of "household annual income"- whichever is greater. Household income is your gross income minus your standard deductions and personal exemptions. The household maximum is 3 times the flat dollar amount or \$2,085 no matter how big your family is. Be sure to submit your form 1095 when you file your tax return for proof you had coverage in 2016.



Retiring Worn-Out Flags

Do you have worn-out American flags that are no longer fit to display? If so, a local Boy Scout troop will ensure that they are properly retired.

Under Title 4, Chapter 1, § 8, paragraph k of the US Code (often referred to as the Flag Code) it states: *"The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."*

If you live in the Bryan/College Station area and are interested in this service, you can contact Mary Welch at mary.welch@scouting.org or 979-204-1526. Mary is the District Executive for the Boy Scout troops in the Bryan/College Station area, and she will coordinate with a local troop to have them take your flag and retire it. If you live outside of Bryan/College Station google Boy Scout troops in your city for the contact info for this service.



Coconut Oil The Superfood

It might be time to consider an oil change when it relates to cooking and personal care. Instead of chemically processed soybean, vegetable and corn oil, please consider Coconut Oil for the following benefits:

- Reduces appetite while at the same time helps burn fat, specifically belly fat
- Boosts brain function in Alzheimer's Patients
- Healthier looking hair
- Moisturizes Skin
- Functions as Sunscreen
- Contains Fatty Acids with Powerful Medicinal Properties
- Improves Blood Cholesterol
- Quick Source of Energy
- Coconut oil speeds up healing process for bruises and infections - just rub it on
- When digested, coconut oil kills harmful Microorganisms

When choosing a coconut oil, please look for "organic" and/or "virgin coconut oil". Coconut oil is high in Saturated Fat, but these are different than the saturated fats found in cheese or steak! These Medium Chain Triglycerides are fatty acids that are metabolized differently. They go straight to the liver from the digestive track. Plenty of populations around the world have thrived for multiple generations eating massive amounts of coconut fat.

You Can Now Text 9-1-1 in Brazos County

Brazos County has joined the 10% of counties in the US that will communicate with you via text message if you cannot call during an emergency. Here are the details you need to know:



- Texting 9-1-1 is only for the speech or hearing impaired, or those in an emergency situation where calling would be unsafe (ex. a hostage situation or witnessing a robbery).
- Give your location immediately as dispatchers cannot pinpoint your location like they are able to do with a landline phone call. Ask for police, fire, or ambulance.
- Use plain and complete words, not text shorthand. Be direct, as voice inflection is not possible via text and give as many details as you can.
- Currently, you **cannot** send video or pictures but that may change soon.
- The program only works for Verizon, AT&T, Sprint and T-Mobile customers.

If you **do not** live in Brazos County and wish to find out if you can text 9-1-1, call the non-emergency phone number of your local police department.



Osteoporosis Update by Denise Fries

In our 2015 Valentine's Day Newsletter Dr. John Davidhizar, my Concierge doctor in College Station offered a free lecture on Traditional vs Natural treatment options for Osteoporosis. I asked him to do this for our clients because I had learned one year earlier from a DEXA scan that I had Osteopenia, which is reduced bone mass that often becomes Osteoporosis. DEXA scans are not usually done on women before age 65 but if your health history includes anything which could compromise your bone health- gluten intolerance for me- you may have to ask your doctor to order the test. I want to do everything I can to live a long and healthy life so I considered treatment options and learned that vitamins and calcium supplements could only slow bone mass loss and cannot replace it. Fosamax, an osteoporosis medicine, is the 3rd most frequently prescribed drug for seniors, but it is poorly absorbed and has significant side effects. After reviewing a lot of research that my doctor presented to me, I started taking Estradiol and Progesterone and my DEXA scan last month on my hip showed a 2.8% improvement in bone mineral density. So instead of it continuing to get worse it has shown impressive improvement. Imagine if I had remembered to take it every day! Obviously everyone reacts differently to medical treatments and you should seek wise medical counsel AND do your own research. Dr. John is willing to answer your questions if you wish to email him at drjohn@mymdbcs.com

I just wanted to share my story with you and encourage you to get a scan EARLY to check on your bone health. I am glad my doctor suggested it so I could act fast to start fixing it.

Join The Taste of the B-CS to earn cash and support Independently-Owned Restaurants in Bryan - College Station

The Taste of BCS is a program that rewards people for eating at locally owned restaurants. You can sign up to get a card that you swipe at local restaurants or you can just register your cell number. The current reward system is for every \$150 you spend you get \$10 back. They have 13 local restaurants involved that feature a good selection of local cuisine.

If you support local businesses you are helping the community. Local restaurants buy most food locally so it is fresher, are more able to offer discounts and they donate to local charities. You get rewards for eating and get a chance to sample some great new flavors and dishes created by local chefs.

Sign up for the Taste of B/CS restaurant reward program at any participating restaurant or go to www.tasteofbcs.com. The website also contains a list of restaurants, events, rewards, gift cards and web certificates.

Participating Restaurants:

C&J's BBQ
Cafe [Eccell](#)
Carney's Pub and Grill
G Deli
Hullabaloo Diner

J. Cody's Steak and Barbeque
Madden's Casual Gourmet
Shipwreck Grill
[The](#) Village Downtown
[The](#) Corner Bar and Grill

Potato Shack
[The](#) Tap
Blue Baker



Do You Know How to Use Your Spouse's Cell Phone?

By Denise Fries

We used to be an iPhone family; we all had one and I was the "coach". That was great until hubby decided he wanted something else. Now he can't remember how to use my iPhone and I have no idea how to use his...whatever it is!

It didn't matter until he was in the hospital last year and I had no idea how to get to his contacts to "call Tom and tell him the cattle are in the west pasture and need water..." or how to reply to his incoming texts and calls. On the short term basis I went to the nurses' station with the phone and asked if anyone knew how to use it – a duty I am certain is NOT in their job description! For a better solution I recommend:

- ✓ In [your](#) "contacts" section under your spouse's name list the type of phone they use and any password. The type of phone is important because in a pinch you can google "how to reply to a text on a [brand and model of your spouse's phone]"
- ✓ Record a 2 minute video on your phone of your spouse telling you how to :
 - Answer a call
 - Reply to and send a new text
 - Find contacts
 - Read and send emails
- ✓ Once a month use their phone to place a call and text and look up someone's contact info so you can stay "trained".



It's stressful enough to be in a medical emergency, you don't need to be frustrated with unfamiliar technology.

Taylor's Column

Happy Valentine's Day! This year I may be a little biased but I think 2017 is going to be the best year yet. I am very happy to share with you that I am getting married in May to Zachary Johnson, my boyfriend of 6 years. Zach is a homebuilder for Schaefer Custom Homes, a 2011 Aggie Grad, and an overall wonderful man. This year was my first full year in the workforce. I enjoy my jobs as a Realtor for [Cortiers](#) Real Estate where I have closed deals in commercial, residential and Farm & Ranch real estate, and for Fries Financial Services, where I wear many hats including bookkeeping and human resources. I wish you and yours a prosperous 2017 and a Happy Valentine's Day.

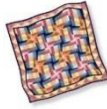
Love, Taylor





The Value of Family Heirlooms

by Ann Cain



Parents fear that their children and grandchildren will end up tossing the family treasures like a worn out pair of gym shoes. Often what parents and grandparents consider to be keepsakes, their children and grandchildren see as junk.

Even though boomer's homes are bursting with their own collections from Beatles albums to Christmas tree ornaments, when their parents die, they dutifully step up to provide a new home for the remnants of another era. Each piece has a story, and the memory keepers know it well. But is it all worth keeping? What if you bought it at a garage sale? Should they feel obligated to keep it?

So what can you do to make your family aware of what heirlooms are important or valuable?

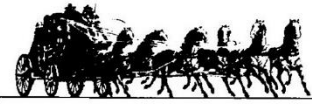
- Start talking. It allows you to let your heirs know what is an heirloom and what is not. As you develop your estate plan find out who among your family members might like particular keepsakes. It may have only sentimental value and you may want to just give away as much while you are living as you are comfortable.
- Know the value of what you have in your home and offer the members of your family/heirs a clear understanding so that heirlooms will not be sold at a garage sale some day for \$1.00 or thrown in the trash.
- Make a plan as to how you want your heirlooms distributed. Put it in writing, and/or take pictures of the items and give each family member a copy.
- Make a list of what is NOT an heirloom! If you bought it at a garage sale, estate sale or auction and it looks old your poor kids may think it is an heirloom – free them from fitting one more thing in their house or feeling guilty for selling it.
- Periodically go over family papers, pictures, furniture and other “treasures” with family members, your children and grandchildren. Relay the stories behind them or why the item(s) is valuable whether as an heirloom with monetary value or something you love and would like to pass down.

Please Visit Our Website at

www.FriesFinancial.com for more articles

- 9 Simple ways that may take pounds off
- Exercise after 50 –Not just surviving but thriving
- Replacing your fence – metal pole vs wood posts
- Yoga for cancer and chronic illness
- And mortgage calculators to see if you should consider refinancing
- And much more!
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Take This Quiz About Wells Fargo



WELLS FARGO

How much do you know – or even care – about the massive fraud investigation against the world's second largest bank? If you bank with Wells Fargo this is your opportunity to decide if that should continue. Remember that the **ONLY** punishment you could dole out to them would be to change banks and let another more reputable bank earn your business.

▶ Did you know that Wells Fargo bank fired 5,300 hourly employees for using their customers' confidential information (social security numbers, date of birth, etc.) to open **millions** of unauthorized credit cards and loans; created phony email addresses to enroll customers in online banking and transferred customer money without their authorization to set up fraudulent accounts?
YES or NO

▶ Did you know that (as of this newsletter printing date) no Wells Fargo executives have been fired and none have been personally charged with fraud? During the time of this fraud the CEO of Wells Fargo earned over \$100 million and it was the tellers who were fired. But you could go to jail for stealing \$106 in food from a grocery store.
YES or NO

▶ Did you know this is NOT the only fraud or racketeering lawsuit they are involved in? In October 2016 Wells Fargo settled upon a payment for a racketeering lawsuit alleging they overcharged homeowners on thousands of appraisals. And in December 2016 it was announced that they are under investigation to determine if the bank fraudulently signed customers up for Prudential Life Insurance policies without their knowledge.
YES or NO

If you bank at Wells Fargo Bank: What else would they have to do to make it be worth your time to change banks, essentially telling them they are NOT worthy of your trust? Fill in the blank _____.

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Happy Valentine's Day

POSTMASTER: PLEASE DELIVER ON OR BETWEEN DATES FEBRUARY 8-14, 2017

Maximize Your Retirement Savings

The IRS announced that the 2017 maximum contribution limits will remain the same for most retirement plans:

Plan Type	Under Age 50	Over Age 50
401(k)/Roth 401(k), 403(b)/Roth 403(b), 457/Roth 457, Thrift Savings Plan/Roth Thrift Savings Plan	\$18,000	\$24,000
IRA, Roth IRA	\$5,500	\$6,500

- Before-tax contributions act to reduce taxable income today, account holders will pay income taxes on all money distributed in retirement.
- Roth IRA and Roth TSA contributions won't reduce taxable income right now. But these contributions, and the earnings on them, are tax-free at retirement; as long as the account holder is at least age 59 1/2, and their Roth account is at least five years old when they make the withdrawals.
- You can't make regular contributions to a Traditional IRA after age 70½. However, you can still contribute to a Roth IRA and make rollover contributions to a Roth or Traditional IRA regardless of your age.
- You can contribute to a Traditional or Roth IRA whether or not you participate in another retirement plan through your employer or business. However, you might not be able to deduct all of your Traditional IRA contributions if you or your spouse max out in another retirement plan at work. Roth IRA contributions are limited if your income exceeds a certain level.

Contact our office today to discuss what retirement plan works best for you. If you already have a monthly draft set up for your IRA or Roth IRA, we can increase it without additional paperwork. If you are contributing to a TSA, we need to get one form signed to change the monthly contributions.

Disclosures:

The opinions and forecasts expressed are those of the author, and may not actually come to pass. This information is subject to change at any time, based on market and other conditions and should not be construed as a recommendation of any specific security or investment plan. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

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