# TRUST TALK

## WINTER 2024

# HELLO THERE!

We had such a supportive response to our first newsletter, sent out this summer, that we decided to make it a more regular thing. So, welcome to our second edition of Trust Talk, sent to you by the Trusts & Estates team at The Narrows Law Group. Aren't you excited to get more mail from your estate planning lawyers!?

Well, we're excited to send it to you. We hope this edition of Trust Talk finds you ready for the holiday season – getting cozy with your loved ones to watch a classic Christmas movie, playing a fun family board game, getting dressed up to go to a fancy holiday show downtown, or just finding the perfect gift for someone. This time of the year is often full of … too much, honestly. Here at the firm, our team is looking to simplify the holiday season … slow things down a bit … take time to appreciate our friends and families (and pets!).

This time always brings lots of perspective… usually good, sometimes sad. I find that the holidays are steeped in nostalgia and the memories of past years, with people we have lost, can weigh heavily on our hearts during this time. To those of you who have lost a loved one this year, we send hugs your way. We know how it feels. I will never forget watching my dad, who we lost to pancreatic cancer in 2018, sing Christmas carols and play his guitar for us throughout the holiday season. Nor will I forget baking rice krispie squares and playing the candy bar game with my Nana, who died in 2006. In a different way, I will always think of our German Shepherd, Maverick, who we had to say goodbye to two years ago, who loved sitting smack-dab in the middle of the discarded wrapping paper on Christmas Day. These memories make me sad but also grateful. I hope you can enjoy the memories throughout this holiday season, even if they bring a little bit of sadness with them.

The end of the year also brings a lot of reflection on the year. I know a lot of you had "get estate planning done/updated" on your 2024 resolutions, so CONGRATS on getting it checked off your list! We have had a lot of goals around the office this year, including:

- **Open our new office in Gig Harbor on Harborview, across the street from Tides Tavern**
- **Update our Tacoma office**
- **Hire 3 new amazing team members**
- **Offer The Bridge Club service to our clients, to help connect our firm to your families over time and to ensure your estate plan continues to reflect your life**
- **Send out a newsletter to say "hello" to clients we've worked with over the years and keep y'all updated on what's going on with us and the law**

In short, it has been a busy and productive year here and we are working hard to make sure we are doing what we can to make estate planning "not that bad"!

We hope the nostalgia, reflection, and perspective the end of the year brings is welcome and also brings gratitude, peace, and joy. We look forward to hearing from you and/or seeing you in the new year!

*-Annie Arbenz,*
*Founding Partner*

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

THE

# BRIDGE CLUB

**Have you looked at your estate plan since you signed the documents?**
**Do you remember who was in the important positions? Are they still the right people?**
**Do you want to call our office to check in on things but are nervous about how you pay for that?**
**Do you think your kids would know that they should call our firm when something bad happens?**
**Do you want to be more connected to our firm?**
**Do you want to get legal updates and know what's going on and know if that affects your plan?**

If you've asked yourself these questions, or similar questions about the maintenance of your estate plan, we have a solution for you! Starting in January 2024, we began a service exclusively for the benefit of our estate planning clients: **THE BRIDGE CLUB!**

The Bridge Club is basically like a subscription service...but this isn't every month or year. For one payment of $500, you get the following benefits for the **NEXT FIVE YEARS:**

1. **Free paralegal-led changes to your estate planning documents**
2. **Discount on attorney-led changes to your estate planning documents**
3. **Discount on administration of your estate**
4. **Five-year check-in to see if your estate plan continues to reflect your desires and/or the correct people in important roles**
5. **A dedicated phone number and email address to prioritize your communications with our Trusts & Estates team**

Our clients do not want their relationship with our firm to be transactional ("one and done") and neither do we! We have learned, through years of experience, that keeping in touch with our clients is the best way to ensure a successful estate plan ... one where your beneficiaries understand what is happening and have easy access to everything when the time comes... one where your estate is paying the least amount in taxes . . . one where everything transfers seamlessly to your intended beneficiaries with no drama and minimal attorney involvement. The program is evolving as it grows and we plan to include quarterly updates, webinars, events, a Facebook group, and other fun benefits along the way!

## GET IN EARLY!

This opportunity is available exclusively to our estate planning clients. You can join in minutes by scanning the QR code to the left or visiting www.thenarrowslawgroup.com/the-bridge-club or scanning this QR code:

CONTACT: **kristen@thenarrowslawgroup.com** | **(253) 340-1825**

THE FIRM

# UPDATES

## HALLOWEEN TRICK OR TREAT

On Halloween, we got to experience some true joy as a booth sponsor at the Gig Harbor Downtown Waterfront Alliance's trick-or-treat! It was the wettest Halloween we all remember, but there were thousands of kids and parents roaming the streets for candy, all in amazing waterproof costumes. We all got dressed up and had a blast. Thanks to the Alliance for keeping up this great tradition.


## HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

Throughout November, our firm was a drop-off location for JBLM's Santa's Castle, an organization that helps make sure kiddos in Active Military Families get gifts for Christmas. If you'd like to know more about this organization or how to help, please let us know – it's an amazing way to create magic for kids who might not otherwise have much magic in their lives.

## YOUNG ADULT ESTATE PLANS AVAILABLE ON

ORBITWILLS
SIMPLE WILLS FOR SMART PEOPLE

Many of you know about our online option to get estate plans done through Orbit Wills, a website TNLG founding attorney, Annie Arbenz, created in 2017 to help make estate planning accessible to everyone. If someone can't afford a traditional plan, Orbit Wills is a great way to get something in place to give some direction if bad things happen.

Lately, a lot of our clients have asked us about getting an estate plan for their young adult children. This is because parents lose legal authority over their child when they turn 18 (i.e., when they go off to college). For this reason, we advise every 18-year-old to sign a Power of Attorney and Will to help if things get tough. And we're sorry to say: we've seen it get tough.

To address this issue, we have developed a product for unmarried young adults, ages 18-25, to get their estate planning done on Orbit Wills for only $250 – this includes a basic Will, Powers of Attorney, Health Care Directive, and Disposition Authorization! All for $250!

Don't you think any 18-25-year-old would love to get this gift under the Christmas tree?! Please visit www.orbitwills.com or contact us for more information.

## OUR PODCAST

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

**Hannah, Annie and their mom took a hiatus from the podcast because schedules weren't aligning very well this summer/fall, but we've had several people asking about when more episodes are coming out. Don't fear – we have lots of good content coming your way this winter!**

THE STATE OF

# ESTATE PLANNING

## WASHINGTON STATE ESTATE TAX

The exemption for the Washington State Estate Tax is – no surprise – not changing in 2025, meaning the exemption amount is $2,193,000.  Remember, this is per married couple unless you have the proper estate planning in your Wills/Living Trust. So . . . still an expensive place to die, but it sure is beautiful here, right?

## FEDERAL ESTATE TAX

The exemption for the Federal Estate Tax is increasing from $13,610,000 to $13,990,000 (which is automatically doubled for a married couple). NOTE: the federal exemption goes down to around $7,000,000 on January 1, 2026 (~$14,000,000 for a married couple), but general consensus is that Trump will likely tinker with this exemption before 2026 hits.

## FEDERAL GIFT TAX

The annual exclusion for gifts in 2024 is $18,000/year, meaning you can give $18,000 to anyone without either party reporting it to the IRS. This amount goes up to $19,000 in 2025.

The lifetime gift tax exemption follows the federal estate tax exemption and will be $13,990,000 in 2025, which means you can give that much away in 2025 (or double that if you're married) without anyone paying any gift tax. As with the federal estate tax exemption, this amount drops down to around $7,000,000 on January 1, 2026. So, yes, 2025 is a good time to make big gifts, if you're in that world. But, please! Contact us and/or your financial/tax advisors before making big gifts, though, to ensure you're reporting properly and that you can afford it!

## CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT

If you own an interest in a business entity, like a corporation or limited liability company, you need to know about the Corporate Transparency Act, which is a new federal law designed to prevent illegal activities (e.g., laundering money, funding terrorists, etc.). This law is enforced by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), which is a division of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The new law requires certain business entities to file a "Beneficial Ownership Information Report" (BOIR) to FinCEN to disclose information about the "beneficial owners" of a business entity. By providing this information (which includes a copy of a valid ID like a drivers' license or passport), you are confirming that the entity has legitimate business purpose and is not a shell company for criminal enterprise. There are several exceptions to the filing requirement, but – generally speaking – the types of businesses that our clients own do not qualify for an exception.

If you're wondering: yes, by simply owning real estate with your spouse in an LLC for liability protection, you must file the BOIR with FinCEN. There's no exception for this type of entity.

You can file your initial report at this website: www.boiefiling.fincen.gov and you can learn more about this new law and the reporting requirements here: www.fincen.gov/boi-faqs.

The FAQs on the FinCEN website are very helpful and the filing process is relatively painless. However, if you would like us to help you with these filings, please contact us.

TRUST & ESTATES

# HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

**We are so grateful to our community for supporting us and helping us grow our firm and bring more wonderful people onto our team. We'd like to take a few minutes to tell you our unique traditions around this time of year!**

Annie - We always got to open one gift on Christmas Eve and it was always pajamas from my mom and step-dad. It was always so exciting to have one present to open and the PJs were always the best. I continue the tradition with my kids now.

Hannah - My mom always hosted a Santa Party, which included everyone we knew and their kids and tons of food. Santa even came and gave everyone presents! My grandma hosted the parties when my mom was little, my sister hosts now with her kids, and I'm excited for the day when I can host one, too.

Madison - One of my favorite holiday traditions is watching a Christmas Story and wrapping/putting together presents after the kids are asleep Christmas Eve.

Lindsay - My favorite tradition is "Noche Buena". It's a time for families to come together to eat celebratory foods and spend time together. We open presents on Noche Buena, then we wake up Christmas Day, have a Christmas Breakfast and hang around home all day with family.

Logan – Every Christmas morning we have French Toast made by my mother using the recipe that has been passed through her family for generations. We also always put an orange in the bottom of EVERY stocking; family tradition.

Jenn – Rain, shine, or snow, our family makes time every holiday season to get a cup of coffee at Seven Coffee Roasters in Ravenna, walk Candy Cane Lane, and finish with dinner at Kau Kau BBQ Restaurant on King Street. I wish I knew how many years we have been doing this, but it is truly one of my most favorite holiday traditions that we all look forward to every year.

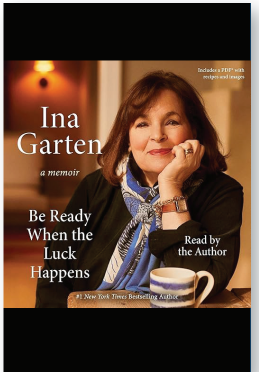
Kristen – During the holiday season we gather with family and make Norwegian lefse. Everyone participates in mixing, rolling, grilling and of course eating with ample amounts of butter, cinnamon and sugar!

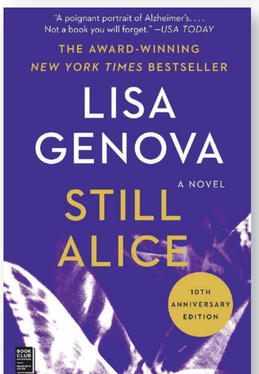
Theresa — We get new Christmas jammies every year. We usually watch at least one older Christmas movie in the theater. And family photos are a must! We actually have a lot of traditions!

**WHAT ARE YOUR TRADITIONS?**

**Connect with us, share them on our social media**

# THE BOOK CLUB




Our team loves to read things other than legal documents, and we have come across some great books lately. We wanted to share two more of them, which have sparked some conversations (and maybe some paranoia) over the past few months…enjoy!

## BE READY WHEN THE LUCK HAPPENS

Who doesn't love Ina Garten?? When you're dealing with heavy things in life, a big dose of Ina is a wonderful thing. Ina, famous for her cooking shows on The Food Network, has written an intimate memoir of her life, sharing stories from her challenging childhood, struggles to find her path in the 60s and 70s, marrying the love of her life, Jeffrey (with whom she is still obsessed), opening the Barefoot Contessa in the Hamptons, and – ultimately – becoming a star TV chef and cookbook author. Her passion for simplistic, delicious recipes, her joie de vivre, and her big love is on display in this sweet and inspirational book.

## STILL ALICE

This fiction book is about 50-year-old Dr. Alice Howland, a Harvard professor of cognitive psychology, who – after a few concerning lapses in her memory – is diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. We liked the idea of reading it because dementia and Alzheimer's are diseases we deal with in our practice every day. But, ugh … this was a tough read on account of it being … terrifying. It is an important read, particularly when you are living with or love someone with dementia or Alzheimer's. This book was made into a movie in 2014 and Julianne Moore, who plays Alice, won an Oscar.

**Have a good book suggestion for us? Thoughts on our suggestions?**
**Email us at bookclub@thenarrowslawgroup.com**