

What's Your Title?

By Andi Peterson Brown

Do you remember how you took title to your home? Are you a sole owner? Joint tenant? Is it community property? Is it in a trust? ...and are you sure?

A recent health scare with an extended member of my family brought this subject to the forefront for us. Once calm was restored and relief set in that all was going to be ok, we all started to mull over the dreaded "business of death" and "what would have happened" questions. Did this person have a will? Is there a Power of Attorney? Really, they picked who? Are there DNR instructions? What about the cat? What about the house? Would it have to be sold? Would there have been tax repercussions for the surviving family? And on and on this went as we all realized that we were grossly underprepared.

As this family member later did their due diligence with an attorney and began their estate planning in earnest, it was discovered that their property was not vested the way they had thought. There would have been major unintended legal and financial complications on surviving family. This family member was upset that their initial lack of planning could have caused such ramifications but took comfort in knowing that they were able to change their vesting to best suit their personal and financial goals.

Do you know how your home is vested? See above for why it's a good reason to check.



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Orinda's Sleepy Hollow Neighborhood

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Sleepy Hollow Book Club member Patty Moore said their club is one of the oldest in Contra Costa County. Moore joined when she started chauffeuring her mother-in-law to meetings. The group was originally composed of young mothers who were "short on time to read." They met mid-morning, once a month when kindergarten was in session, to hear a book review from one member who read one book. The club still adheres to that format and schedule.

Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, one of four Orinda Union School District elementary schools, is perched on a hilltop. Built in 1953, the K-5 school has a student body of 390. Principal Ken Gallegos said the current enrollment includes grandchildren and children of alumni, and students usually hear the story of Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" each October.

How perfect is that?

The next Lamorinda neighborhood featured will be Lafayette's Burton Valley.

To learn more about the history of the Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club, see the Lamorinda Weekly story, "Preserving a Community Gem - The Legend of Sleepy Hollow Continues," at

www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0616/Preserving-a-Community-Gem-The-Legend-of-Sleepy-Hollow-Continues.html.



"We have neat street signs [in Sleepy Hollow]," said Sleepy Hollow Homeowner's Association co-president Wayne Hill. "They're not the traditional wooden ones but curved..."

Photos Cathy Dausman