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MAG CORNER VOL. 6

Dear Clients,

WARNING: Longest MAG corner ever ahead! Grab a drink and get comfortable.

Great news! I am excited to tell you that we believe we have found a solution to solve most if not all of your Charles Schwab woes. After an exhausting search, we have found and signed on with a company that contracts with Schwab to take their information and make it so much easier to understand and in a better format for you. This means you will get a brand-new portal to log in to. This portal is far more intuitive and offers significant information that is easy to find and understand than about any other portal I have seen. You will be able to locate accurate income numbers and download a new statement that will reflect those numbers.

The implementation should be completed by the end of this year. We will be sending out instructions on how to access your individualized portals. Please be patient as we roll this out to each one of you. I sincerely believe this change to be a major improvement even over what we had before with TD Ameritrade. This change does add cost to the firm, but at this time we are not planning any fee increases. We believe the efficiency gains will help to cover that cost.

That being said, this change does not help so much on the back-office side because we still have to interact with Schwab as the custodian. As I have said in a past MAG Corner, Charles Schwab has antiquated systems that, in our opinion, are inefficient. As a result, we are still investigating other options for a better custodian. We are considered to be a large firm, and many custodians are vying to be our custodian. We are taking our time and looking at every option in detail because we want to truly give you the best, most timely service possible. I am not saying that we are definitely going to make a custodian change, but we will if it makes sense. I will keep you posted in future MAG Corners for all developments.

At MAG, we look at anyone who works for us or is a client as being a part of our extended Melia Income family. One of my favorite things to say is we are here for you. It starts with the fact that when you call our office, you should almost always talk to a human voice and not a phone tree by the second ring. That is a policy to which we are committed. That shows we care enough to talk to you now and not put you through some ordeal just to get something you need. I am dismayed at several of my advisor friends who make their clients leave a voicemail on every call.

This “we care” attitude starts with our staff. At MAG, we have a very generous PTO policy for our employees. This gives them the ability to have a good work-life balance and be there for their families. I think every employee would tell you they are happy to work here. As a firm, if we start with caring for them, then they will by nature want to carry that over to their job and to you the client. Now this doesn't mean that family will always see eye to eye, but when you know someone genuinely cares for you then it makes it much easier to work through those real-life situations. In short, I look at them and our clients as an extension of the MAG Income family.



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Our absolute main goal is to provide the highest, most stable income for you to live the best retirement possible while providing best-of-class service. In other words, we genuinely care about you and your retirement, and want the very best worry-free retirement for you. One of my greatest joys is to see the work we do give someone the retirement of their dreams and then watching them live out that dream.

Generally speaking, when one cares for family, there are two primary things we want for them: to be financially secure and to be healthy. This way they can live their lives to the fullest. To be financially secure is more than just having enough money; it's about making wise decisions with the money you have. We all have different lifestyles. With most retirees, if you were to give them more money, they are not going to change their lifestyle very much. Of course there are exceptions, but for most this would be true. I have seen it time and time again when my clients receive an inheritance. They change little. You are who you are, and more money won't change most people much. It's more about taking the resources you have and making sure you're making good decisions for your individual lifestyle.

As an example, you know I am not a fan of putting retirement dollars into typical common stock that focuses on capital appreciation for you to survive. I think this is a bad decision for a no-salary retirement lifestyle. We need steady, dependable income, not volatile capital appreciation in retirement. Allianz Life just ran a survey that found 63% of retirees are more afraid of running out of money than actually dying. Selling capital appreciation assets when the market drops is a great way to risk running out of money.

Choosing to have a stable income you can count on to supply your lifestyle is mission critical. Also, make sure you really think about any large financial decisions. This is where I would tell you if you are thinking about making significant changes, like moving into independent living or moving to another state, even buying a car, please, please call and run your plans by us. You pay us to manage your money, but that also affords you advice on the best way to use that money. After doing this for 15 years, there is very little we haven't seen before and can generally give you some valuable feedback as to which steps work the best for what you're wanting to achieve. If anything, it can confirm you are on a good path. It never ceases to amaze me when clients inform us of large changes to their financial picture and never involve us. Sometimes it works out but many times it's to their detriment, and if they had just talked to us first, we could have saved them some real heartache.

Please hear me when I say we are here for you. We have an open-door policy that says you can get on our calendar anytime you need beyond just an annual visit. Please take advantage of this. We genuinely want the best for you.



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Financial security also means not getting scammed and losing precious resources, which is why we covered how to avoid scams and lock down your credit in a previous MAG Corner. If you have not done that yet, please stop and do it now. Last week there was one of the largest data thefts ever recorded. It was in the billions with social security numbers. That is right — billions. It is very possible one of those social security numbers was yours. If you do not know how to lock your credit, call our office and we will get the info to you. This needs to be done for both spouses if you are married and with all three credit bureaus.

The last thing I want to cover concerning financial security is making sure you have an estate plan and very important health care documents to make sure when your life ends or your health declines you have things covered the way you want. I hate seeing families tear themselves apart because of bad — or no — estate planning. I watched my mom's family do this to each other many years ago, and this is why I partnered with Charles Crain 15 years ago.

If you are not aware of this, Mr. Crain is an attorney who operates out of our office. I have negotiated with him to give my clients and their friends a significant discount on setting up a trust. He would tell you that this is the best way to avoid probate, which could cost thousands of dollars, be very time consuming, very public and a general pain in the rear for your heirs. The trust will also get you the very important health care documents you need. Not having proper ones can leave you on a ventilator or in a vegetative state for many years. This thought bothers me more than death. Anyone remember Terri Schiavo? If you don't, google her name.

A trust generally costs anywhere from \$2,500 to \$4,000. Mr. Crain's charge, including creating a deed for your house for one person, or a couple, has been negotiated down to around \$1,475. If you have not already taken advantage of this relationship with Mr. Crain, sincerely it is time to do so. I have always considered proper estate planning as the number one tool to keep family infighting to a minimum. I know we all have perfect children that will not fight (obvious sarcasm). But being serious, when you mix high emotion from a death with money, things can become very volatile in a heartbeat.

Take care of this now by calling our office, and we will get you set up for an appointment with Mr. Crain. He does not charge for a consultation. You will not have to pay until he delivers the trust to you. We make no money on this transaction; this is another part of being here for you. In fact, we want to be here not only for you but for your children and grandchildren. This offer is for your friends even if they are not clients. Generally, they would meet with Becky, Madison or me first to see if they have the assets necessary for needing a trust. Mr. Crain would then look over that assessment, and if he says yes, then we would set up the meeting. Remember, we always enjoy meeting with our clients' children. If you have ever thought you would like them to meet us, please call us and set that up.



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Let us talk about health — what I believe to be the second requirement of a successful retirement. I personally have been more focused on health this last year more than ever before. If you do not know this, I met my wife through my children, and she is more than 12 years younger than myself. Understandably, I need to do all I can to stay as young as possible. I started following several longevity doctors via podcasts, and they all say the number one youth drug you can take is exercise. I think I am hearing a moan about now, but time and time again, study after study has proven that it significantly reduces dementia, Alzheimer's, stroke, and heart issues. These four are the majors for wrecking the best laid retirement plans, and I can't stress enough how important it is to exercise.

I know you have heard this before, but I want to give you some good news. Recently, studies have shown that simply walking 15 to 20 minutes 4 to 5 times a week will give you the same health benefits as exercising at a much higher level. Studies have also shown the importance of healthy long living to include some weight training. This keeps your joints strong, and muscles can help keep you from falling. It enables good muscle reaction time to catch yourself and protect you from serious injury, if you do fall. The statistics of what happens to seniors after breaking bones from a fall are incredibly dismal.

Again, this type of exercise does not have to be difficult and can be done in the comfort of your home. You can buy resistance bands or a set of kettlebells to exercise your large muscle groups. The goal is to stay moving and find an exercise program that works for you — then stay disciplined to do it frequently.

Nutrition is also mission critical. I would challenge you to stay away from added sugar and most processed foods. I personally have never eaten as healthy nor exercised as much as I am today. Consequently, I believe at 58 I am in the best shape of my life. I feel better than ever and that is why, after this experience, I believe doing these few things can really increase your retirement enjoyment for each of you. It is always good to consult your doctor with questions for that, which I am not.

I tell you this again because we care and want you to have the most successful retirement possible, which means more than just being sure your money is taken care of. If you have questions, call us; we are here for you.