



# Seufert Law Offices, PA

*We'll Get You Through It*

## From the Captain's Log A Debt Repaid?



I “inherited” a client a few years ago, a local nursing home said a resident needed an update to her Will. I went there and met Mary. Both her 1st and 2nd husbands had passed, her 1st died in a plane crash as a Navy pilot flying support missions in Africa for the UN, leaving her a young widow. Her 2nd died after a long career, also in the Navy. Never having any children, and all her siblings long since passed, Mary was then left all alone in this world. I charged Mary for the initial updates to her Will, but then just continued to visit and help her ever since, as she is living on a fixed income.



However, the more I visited and helped her, I found my service to her was really a reimbursement to her and her family for all of their service to this country, and not just to what sacrifices both her husbands had made. Not only were her husbands both career military, but I later learned that her entire family were Naval Officers. On a nice day last month, I had brought Mary to the National Guard Armory in Concord to see if we could get her any increase to her veteran’s survivorship benefits. After a successful meeting, I decided to take the “long way” back to Franklin up Rte. 103 through Hopkinton, knowing Mary was born in Hopkinton so long ago. Once Mary realized that we were in Hopkinton she asked me to stop at the town square where there had once stood a monument erected after WW II, showing the town’s contribution to WW II by its veterans. Still there, on it Mary showed me the names of her late father, a Naval Officer, as well as her late brother, a sailor in the submarine service. Just when we turned to leave, I caught out of my peripheral vision another monument, looking much older. Mary turned and approached it, and there pointed out the name of her father again, a veteran of WW I as well.

How can we thank families like this enough? We can’t. •

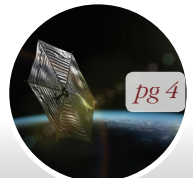
November 2019 News  



pg 2



pg 3



pg 4



## Fathers and Parenting

Our society tends to vastly underestimate fathers' parenting skills. I see it every day in the family court cases I litigate. I have a wonderful husband of thirty two years who is also the father to our two children. He is the best father I know. He is also a partner in a law firm in Concord, so an intelligent, educated person as well. But, I was not good at letting him parent without double checking and correcting what he was doing. Now, don't get me wrong. Some of what he did was purposeful. If he didn't do something right, he probably was going to have to do that chore again. He was usually right.

Dads are just as important to a child's life as moms are. Dads are the ones who convince moms that it's ok to have ice cream before dinner once in a while. Dads take the kids to the lake to go swimming on the night that its 90 degrees and no one can sleep. And, by the way, when the chips are down dads are very good at the day to day drudgery of being a parent as well.

Our daughter was a cheerleader in college, at a school where cheerleading was a varsity sport. The team made it to nationals every year, which was held in Daytona. Her sophomore year my husband went alone. Our son was still in high school so I needed to stay home. (I had gone down her freshman year). My daughter was not happy. I think her quote was "Daddy can't come alone, he won't even be able to find the venue". I don't believe that there is a daughter who loves and respects her father more. But, somehow she did not have faith that her father could complete a pretty simple task. Some of that was watching me over the years literally give him a daily itinerary of the kids' whens and wheres. I believed the same thing: without that, he wouldn't know where to go or when to be there.

I do think that there are some things that are generally true regarding the parenting skill set of a mother and a father. But, I don't believe that one is better than the other. They are different and equally important to the life of a child. Fathers have to fight harder to get equal parenting time in court, even though it's a presumption under the law. That is not right. Children are losing out and so are the fathers. Here's to dads and the wonderful parents they are to their children. ●



# The Disputed Election of 1876

In the 1876 presidential election, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden of New York ran against Republican Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio in a hotly contested affair. In the popular vote, Tilden outpaced Hayes by nearly 250,000 votes; however, he was one electoral vote shy of victory, pending the results in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina.



The outcomes in all three Republican-controlled states were disputed. The Democrats asserted that Republican fraud overturned Democrat majorities in each state. Republicans countered that many black Republicans had been forcefully blocked from voting. (Following the Civil War, during Reconstruction, federal troops had been deployed throughout the South. Among their responsibilities was enforcing laws regarding newly freed slaves, including the rights of black men to vote and hold political office.)

Each state ended up sending two contradictory certificates of election to Congress.

Congress established an electoral commission in January 1877 to resolve the dispute. After roughly a month of examination, the commission deemed Hayes the victor in each disputed state, giving him the presidency by one electoral vote.

Southern Democrats saw an opportunity to work out an unwritten agreement with Republicans: The Compromise of 1877. They would not attempt to block the congressional vote certifying Hayes' controversial presidential victory (Democrats controlled the House of Representatives; Republicans, the Senate); in exchange, the federal government would withdraw all federal troops from the former Confederacy, a sore spot for old-guard Southern politicians.

However, the compromise did not bode well for blacks in the South, whose newly gained rights were rolled back. They faced violence, intimidation, and state-sanctioned discrimination and segregation (Jim Crow laws) for the next 80+ years, until the breakthrough of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s.

So while political controversy continues to this day, the old saying still applies:

***Democracy is messy. It is messy whether you've been doing it since 1789 or whether you're going to do it for the first time in 2005. The trouble with Democracy is, you hold elections. The trouble with dictatorships is...you don't.***

Rich Galen •

November 2019 Notable Dates

**November 1**  
National Cook  
for Your Pets Day

**November 6**  
Saxophone Day

**November 11**  
National Sundae Day

**November 13**  
World Kindness Day

**November 15**  
National Clean Out Your  
Refrigerator Day

**November 21**  
Great American Smokeout

**November 23**  
National Eat a  
Cranberry Day

**November 30**  
Small  
Business  
Saturday

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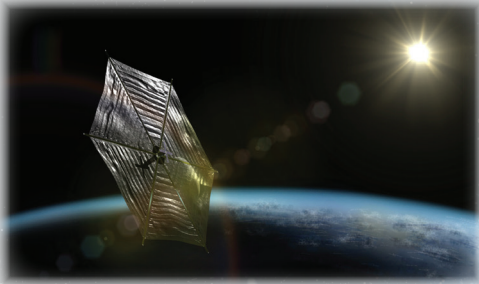
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*Protect Your Family, Protect Your Rights*



A Debt  
Repaid?  
SEE PAGE ONE

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## Sailing on Beams of Light

This past June, the Planetary Society—a nonprofit space organization—launched LightSail 2, a loaf-of-bread-sized spacecraft that piggybacked its way into space on SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket. Once deployed in Earth's orbit, it successfully unfurled a 340-square-foot solar sail.

Solar sails are composed of gossamer-thin mylar, making them extremely strong and exceedingly light—critical elements in carrying out the straightforward idea behind them. The sun is constantly emitting photons. Photons have no mass, but they do possess momentum. As photons bounce off the solar sail's reflective surface, their momentum is transferred to the sail, nudging it and whatever is attached to it away from the sun. No onboard propulsion system is required. Sails can be steered by changing their angle.

In the near-vacuum of space, as more and more photons bounce off the solar sail, the sail will continue to accelerate. The farther a solar sail travels away from the sun, the fewer the photons available to exert their influence. The solar sail won't slow down, but its rate of acceleration will decline.

The ultimate goal is to use solar sails to gulf the vast distances between our solar system and neighboring stars, and transport small probes with them. A plan is also afoot to supplement the sun's photons with ultrapowerful, Earth-based lasers. If all goes well, solar-sail speeds could approach one-fifth the speed of light—roughly 37,000+ miles per second! Our closest star neighbor, Alpha Centauri, would be within reach (approximately 20 years).

The early returns are promising, but it may take a generation before solar sails go interstellar. If plans come to fruition, our immense universe will become a tiny bit smaller. ●