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MEMBER



*Special needs require special lawyers.*

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## OAST & HOOK'S SHRED DAY

One excellent way to help protect your personal information from falling into the wrong hands is to shred unneeded documents. Oast & Hook has partnered with Stealth Shredding to provide free document shredding from 9:00 a.m. to noon, Saturday, May 7th to all of Oast & Hook's clients and friends. The event will take place at Oast & Hook's Harbour View office, and all shredded paper will be recycled. Just show up with your old records, and Oast & Hook will gladly assist you. Come meet Oast & Hook's attorneys and staff, and enjoy free parking, hot coffee, and snacks.

Although this shredding service is free, Oast & Hook encourages donations to the 2011 Suffolk Rockin' Relay for Life that will take place on May 13th at the Bennett's Creek Park, 1000 Bennett's Creek Park Road, Suffolk, Virginia 23435. For more information or to make an online donation, please visit [www.relayforlife.org](http://www.relayforlife.org).



## BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AND DEMENTIA BY KATHLEEN O'CONNOR

Family caregivers are often surprised when their loved one with dementia develops behavior problems that have never before occurred. Individuals with dementia may begin to wander, curse, or become easily agitated, even if the person was previously very calm and caring. A recent CNN-Health article reported that 5% to 10% of Alzheimer's disease patients become violent at some point. In rare cases, caregivers are injured or killed by people with dementia.

There can be many possible causes for these changes in behavior, including medical issues, pain, lack of sleep, and too much noise or stimulation in the environment. In some cases, it isn't clear why the behavior started, and the person with dementia usually cannot explain it (and often doesn't remember doing it). It is important to consider whether the behavior is really a threat to safety, versus temporarily annoying or inconvenient.

There are strategies that can help prevent a situation from escalating to a point where it might put the person with dementia or the caregiver at risk. In the short term, trying to reduce the demands or stimulation the person is facing can help. So, if the person gets agitated while a caregiver is trying to help the person bathe or dress, backing off until the person is calmer is much better than persisting in trying to get the person to complete the task. Trying to distract the person with music, ice cream, or other pleasant treats can help to reduce fear and agitation. Trying to reduce the noise and number of people around the person can be helpful. Offering food, seeing if the person needs to use the toilet, etc., can help to relieve discomfort. It is important to use a calm tone of voice and be reassuring to the person. It will usually be helpful to avoid arguing, reasoning, or saying "no" to the person.

If there are ongoing problems with behavior, it is always a good idea first to contact the person's physician, to see if there might be medical factors involved or if some type of medication would be appropriate. If things still do not improve, caregivers in Southside Hampton Roads can contact Southside Geropsychiatric Services for a free in-home consultation. This is a non-emergency service sponsored by the Community Services Boards in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach that helps seniors with behavioral disturbances to safely remain in the community. For further information regarding Southside Geropsychiatric Services, please phone Kathy O'Connor at 757-385-4202.

For those emergency situations when the person seems to be at substantial risk for harming self or others, you can phone 911 or contact the Community Services Board in your locality to see if further evaluation in a psychiatric facility might be needed or appropriate.

*Kathleen O'Connor is the coordinator for the Southside Geropsychiatric Services.*

The attorneys at Oast & Hook can assist clients with their estate, financial, insurance, long-term care, veterans' benefits and special needs planning issues.

### **Ask Allie**

O&H: Allie, we've heard about a wonderful thrift and gift shop to help animals in need. Please tell us about it.

Allie: Sure! The Worthy Pause Thrift and Gift Shop in Bayside, New York, was established 30 years ago. Gertrude Barron, one of the founders of the shop, says, "We sell donated merchandise, and the funds are used to help people with animals." The merchandise includes antiques and novelties,

including jewelry, collectibles, books, kitchenware, cameras, and even high-ticket items. From 1997 to 2009, The Worthy Pause increased its donations from \$6,000 annually to more than \$40,000 annually, most of which went to animal rescue groups to help with spay/neuter certificates, veterinary care, food, and boarding. This year the organization is participating in the local trap-neuter-release program for feral cats. The Worthy Pause also welcomes cat and dog food donations which it then gives to people who cannot afford food for their own pets or to feed neighborhood strays. Henry and Oliver are two cats who live at the shop, and they regularly greet each shopper with a cheerful meow. Both cats are rescue animals and are the spokescats for the organization. What a great organization! I'm sure there are organizations such as The Worthy Pause in our area, so please let me know about them, and I'll talk about them in future columns. See you next week!

### Speakers

If you are interested in having an Oast & Hook attorney speak at your event, phone Jennie Dell at 757-399-7506 or e-mail her at [dell@oasthook.com](mailto:dell@oasthook.com). Past topics include estate planning, long-term care planning and veterans benefits.

### Distribution of This Newsletter

Oast & Hook encourages you to share this newsletter with anyone who is interested in issues pertaining to the elderly, the disabled, and their advocates. The information in this newsletter may be copied and distributed, without charge and without permission, but with appropriate citation to Oast & Hook, P.C. If you are interested in a free subscription to the *Oast & Hook News*, then please e-mail us at [mail@oasthook.com](mailto:mail@oasthook.com), telephone us at 757-399-7506, or fax us at 757-397-1267.

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