



Welcome to the second edition of MAG Corner! Last time, I spent a large amount of the letter devoted to the portfolio, portfolio management, and the decisions we were moving forward with in regard to the times we believe we are facing. We will do that from time to time to keep you updated on what's happening within the portfolio. Some months it's going to be of a much lighter and more personal nature, or what's going on at the office with what we consider our work MAG family.

To that end, I want to make an announcement. It's official, I am old. I had a birthday on March 2nd, and I am now 58 years old. I'm not sure how that happened, but it sure happened fast, and yes, it's time to change some of my pictures, as that has been pointed out to me by several of you (thank you for that). It has been a fun, wonderful, and at times trying journey, but oh so worth the effort. I am truly blessed by the friends and family that I have around me. For me, you, our clients, are an extension of that family, and we genuinely care what happens to you. When we say we are here for you, we mean it! My strongest desire is that you have a worry-free retirement and really enjoy the golden years. Which reminds me of a joke I heard this week. I had someone tell me, you know it's the golden years because you spend all of your gold on doctors.

On another MAG family matter, it is with sadness and also happiness that we announce Eileen is going to retire this month. As of the 15th, she will no longer work for MAG. For some reason, she thinks grandchildren are special and she should spend more time with them. Can you believe that? She has been with me for 8 years now and she has done an absolutely fantastic job. She will be missed more than she probably knows. Some of you know this, but I have known Eileen for over 25 years. She was one of my first clients when I started in the insurance business many, many years ago. Throughout those years, we stayed in touch until I hired her 8 years ago. She's been an absolute critical component to the work we've done the last eight years. She will be missed! So, please join me in wishing her a happy retirement.

Moving on to a more serious note, I want to talk to you about your digital security. It's very important to understand there are people continually trying to scam retirees. Next month MAG Corner will be mostly about how to protect yourself and keep this from happening to you. We recently have had some clients scammed or a scam was attempted. This is a very serious problem, and for now I want to tell you how to protect yourself from a more indirect scam: identity theft. This is where someone gets ahold of your social security number, then opens credit lines, and then makes many purchases maxing out those credit lines. Then some months later you get a call from a bill collector wanting payment. This can lead to significant legal issues and expenses trying to prove it wasn't you. How do you prove it was not you when it's your social security number? Talk about stress! This can take months if not years to clear up. I am happy to tell you that there is an easy solution to keep this from happening to you. If you have not done this, then please do so immediately. Lock your credit down! This stops this scam in its tracks.

This is where your credit is still being recorded, but no one can pull a credit check. There is not one bank that I know of that will give anyone a line of credit without pulling the credit first. Locking down your credit is free and easy to do. Here is how you do it: You go online to the three credit bureaus which are Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. You then create accounts with each credit bureau and then look for an option to freeze or lock your credit. You may see an option where you are charged a fee for this. Ignore this option and look for the option where there is no charge. It's my understanding that, at some point, there was a law mandating they do this for free, but I know at least one of them offers the free version and a fee version. Do not pay to do this! I have had my credit locked for years and have never paid a dime to do it. What this does is keeps anyone from pulling a credit bureau on you, which stops anyone cold from trying to maliciously use your credit.

It's important to note that your credit will continue to be reported, but no one will be able to do anything with it. If you were suddenly in need of financing and wanting to pull your credit, you would simply log into the three accounts and unlock your credit for a set period of time. This literally takes 5 minutes. I personally think this is much better than paying someone like LifeLock to protect your credit for two main reasons: 1) It's free and LifeLock is expensive, 2) If you read the small print, you will see LifeLock buys insurance to protect you in the event someone steals your identity while paying for their service. That tells me that it can still happen, even with you paying for their protection. Having a worry-free retirement is more than having your money invested properly for retirement, but also removing anything that can harm that goal. I would implore everyone to do this right away. You will find it's a simple, easy thing to do and you will rest better knowing this can't happen to you.

Please let us know if you have any questions over this email and remember we are here for you!

Greg Melia  
President  
Melia Advisory Group  
918-794-9290