

STERLING NEWS FEED

First and foremost,

.HAPPY.
HOLIDAYS

Reminders:

Office Closures:

Christmas Eve	Closed at noon
Christmas Day	Closed
New Year's Eve	Closed at Noon
New Year's Day	Closed

We hope that you are spending the most wonderful time of year with friends and family that you hold dear. We, here at Sterling, are taking this season to pause and be present with the ones we love.

But only for a brief moment, as we continue to hold down the fort and work hard for YOU!

The only other reason we'd be closed this holiday season is if we accidentally burned Steve's house down... like we almost did last year.

OOPS!





After waiting
an entire
12 months (!!!!!!!),

Baby Oreo finally made her debut on a beautiful Thursday afternoon in June.

Oreo weighed in at 25 lbs and was up and walking within 3 hours after birth. She is a great addition to the farm!

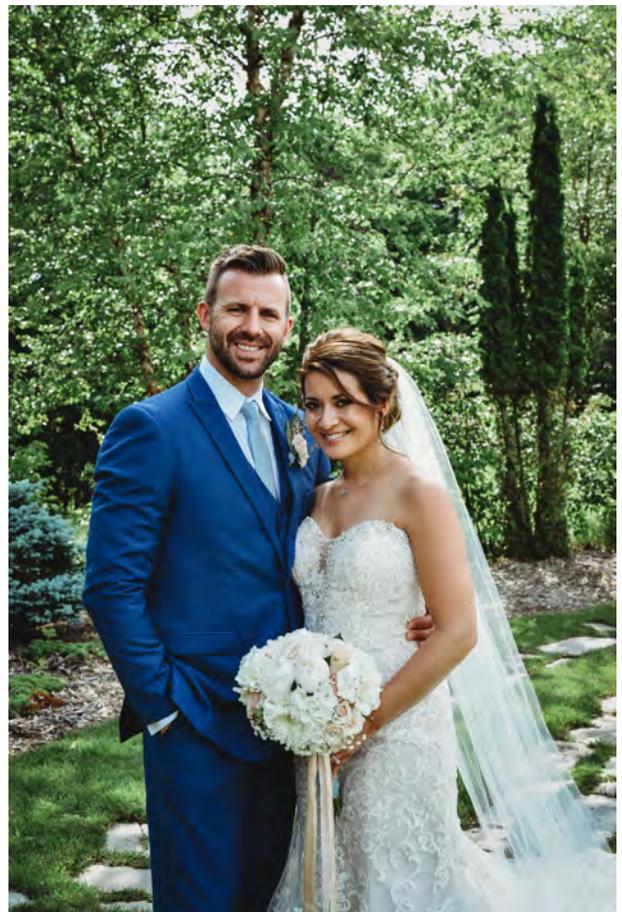
June 20th, 2018:

After 20 years and launching their three wonderful children, Steve and Stacy decided it was time to downsize and move on from the home where they raised their family. The building process was enjoyable. They've fully moved in, and are now settling in to a great entertaining space where friends and family can visit.

June 23rd, 2018:

This was a VERY big day for Sterling. It's hard to know what to highlight first! But, because Amelia's day started earlier (Mel might disagree), we'll start with her. After three years of studying, blood, sweat, and tears, Amelia embarked on her final exam, 3 of 3 of her Chartered Financial Analyst designation. It's been a grueling process but she finally made it. Stay tuned for Amelia's results...

Also, on the very same day, Melanie Deets (now KRIEGLER) got hitched! It was a beautiful day and the wedding was perfect! We were all there to celebrate and had a great time. Also, Meg takes all the credit for introducing her to Mike, even though Mike says he was going to ask her out anyway.



Amelia escaped from studying, work and MN life to an amazing camping vacation out west.



June 27th, 2018:

We've continued and increased our goal for 2018 to partner with local charitable organizations that we'd like to give back to as a team.

First on the list for the year was our annual Cooks for Kids event at Ronald McDonald House. We spent the evening with some of our clients to help prepare and serve dinner to the families staying at Ronald McDonald House. This is something near and dear to our hearts that we intend to continue on an annual basis.

Stay tuned for next year's date!



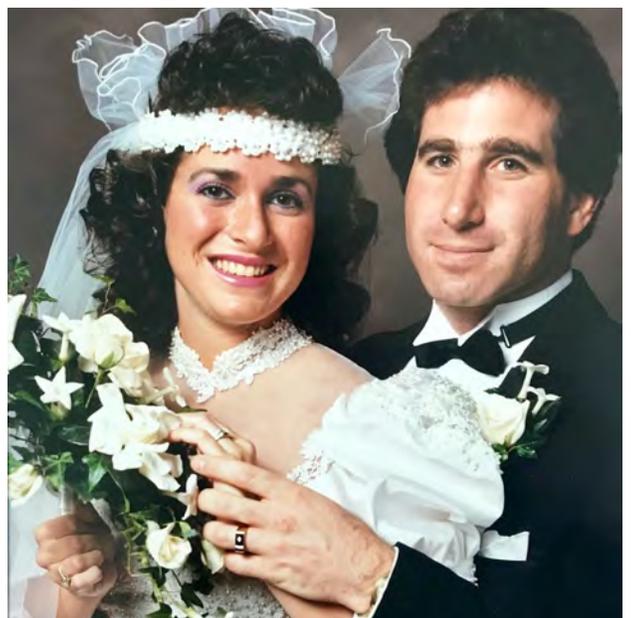
July 28th, 2018:

Davis took advantage of an unexpected road trip to do some fossil hunting, and he came home from Maryland with 20 million year old shark teeth and 300 million year old plants.



August 13th, 2018:

Steve and Stacy celebrated their 30-year wedding anniversary!



All of this talk about travel and vacations remind us to tell you that the “bad actors” who want to compromise your security online don’t take vacations. Instead, they have an eye out for when you do. Here’s how to keep them from compromising your online safety while you travel:

BEFORE YOU GO:

01 Sign up for fraud alerts from your financial institutions

Many major banks and credit cards can send you free alerts by text, email or phone call if you have a suspicious transaction. Be sure to call and see if this service is available, and that you have it activated before you leave on vacation.

02 Turn off location services, and auto connect for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on your devices

These can be a great convenience, helping you move seamlessly through your day. But, if you leave them on while you are on vacation, anyone sitting nearby – say in a hotel or coffee shop – can track you or get access to your data. If you take your laptop, turn off auto file sharing, too.

03 Install anti-virus protection

Be sure all your devices are equipped with virus protection, and that it’s running the latest updates.

04 Enable PINs and passcodes on your devices

This is your first line of defense in case your phone is lost or stolen. Also, check to be sure it’s set to require the password in the shortest amount of time. Annoying for you – but even more annoying for the “bad actors”.

WHILE YOU’RE AWAY

Use only password-protected Wi-Fi from networks you recognize

Avoid “free” public Wi-Fi – you might pay the price of giving the bad actors access to your information. Most hotels (and even some restaurants) have password-protected networks.

Don’t post your vacation on social media while you’re away

Even if you or one of your family members is “Instagram Famous,” stay off of social media platforms while you’re away. Your posts are broadcasting to strangers that your home is vacant, as well as giving plenty of clues when you’re not at your hotel, too. Post highlights from your trip when you get back.

Be careful on public computers

If you use a public computer – in your hotel business center or an internet café, for example – be sure to log out of any accounts you accessed before leaving. (And you should note that if you do need to check financial accounts, it’s usually safest to do it from a wired connection – not Wi-Fi – or a cellular on your phone.) Also, if a URL starts with “https://” it means you have a more secure connection.

We hope you continue to enjoy your travels, wherever they might take you, both near and far. Keep these tips in the back of your mind as you hit the road.

August 22nd-28th, 2018:

Meg, Steve, and Melanie headed to San Antonio to take part in a three-day continuing education national conference. This is good time spent learning about updates in the industry, how we can better serve our clients, and collaborating with each other and colleagues. This was Mel's first-ever conference and a great learning experience. We did sneak out during a break to go visit the Alamo on electric scooters one afternoon! It's amazing more people don't crash on those!



August 28th, 2018:

After much anticipation and a long wait, Amelia learned that she PASSED the Level 3 exam and became an active CFA charterholder! Even though it was a long wait and Amelia was unsure of the actual results, we had 100% confidence that she passed all along. Congratulations!

August 30th, 2018:

Every now and then, we like to have a little fun! Steve always tells Meg, if there is no fun involved, she's out! True statement!

We spent the morning partnering with Loaves and Fishes on their Farm for All project. Loaves and Fishes is an organization that provides nutritious meals to people who are hungry across Minnesota in an atmosphere of hospitality at site locations where the need is greatest. The Farm for All project focusses on a farm-to-table approach to serving people in need.

On this particular morning, we worked on harvesting, weeding, washing, and fixing things up around the farm. It was a great day to be outside, get our hands dirty, and really give back! In 2018, the Farm for All project harvested a total of over 7,000 pounds of produce, up from 4,500 in 2017. The farm produce was served on over 60,000 plates this year!



Next, to continue on with our team day of FUN, we spent the afternoon at the Great Minnesota Get Together! Since Mel and Amelia aren't originally from Minnesota, the concept of walking around all day in crowds of people, eating things off a stick was a bit foreign. But they were good sports and we had a great day! Everyone picked three must-do/eat items and we checked them all off the list. Steve's number one request was to go on the sling shot with Amelia!

Also, one interesting fun fact: more people visit the MN State Fair on a given day than there are CFA charterholders in the world!! Not sure which to congratulate Amelia the most on...surviving the MN State Fair or her passing score?!? Just kidding!



Meg and Jason checked off a bucket list item by heading to Iceland to celebrate Jason's birthday! It was a quick five-day trip but they made it around the entire island. It almost felt like a different planet as the terrain and weather is so volatile. If you've never been, it's worth a look!



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOW through mid-December:

Sterling is a proud supporter of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Upper Midwest which helps to “keep families together when their worlds unravel”, and **starting now through Friday, December 14th** we are hosting a drive to collect items on the Ronald McDonald House Wish List.

From everyday basics like toiletries and paper products to shelf-stable meals and snacks, the items on Ronald McDonald’s Wish List help make their families’ home-away-from-home more comfortable.

We gratefully accept new, unused, and unexpired items and we do ask you to donate only from their Wish List. Please note that due to our limited refrigerator and freezer space, we can only accept pantry and non-perishable food items at our office.

If you'd like to donate, you may drop your items off at the **Sterling office** during normal business hours. Contact Melanie at **763-762-3402** or **melanie@sterlingretirement.com** for more information.

January (date TBD), 2019:

Compelling Wealth Management Conversations workshop. The news always seems to delay, derail or even avoid investing in the markets. Compelling Wealth Management Conversations provides historical perspective on market volatility and demonstrates, through anecdotes and illustrations, the values of sticking to a long-term investment plan.

April 4th and April 9th, 2019:

Steve and Meg will be speaking both days at 9:30am and 4:30pm about Social Security. The article included here will also be featured in the spring AAA magazine.

The New Social Security

By: **Steven Finkelstein**, CFP®, **Megan Gehrman**, CFP®

We're living through the end of an era. In 2016, congress, with bi-partisan and presidential support, suddenly, and without warning eliminated several long-standing Social Security strategies including File and Suspend and Restricted Applications. For those of you who were born before January 2nd, 1954, there's still time to take advantage of the Restricted Application option, albeit not much. For everyone else, Social Security looks very different than it did a few years ago.

When it comes to Social Security, one must consider multiple factors to determine the best collection strategy. No one's situation is the same, and so there is no one-size-fits-all answer. For example, conventional wisdom would say that you should always wait until your age 70 to begin collecting in order to take advantage full advantage of the 8% annual growth to your benefit from full retirement age to that point, but is this always the best strategy?

Take this hypothetical example of Jane Doe. Jane is single and has just turned 66 and 4 months (full retirement age). She has not retired yet, but would like to move to part time and retire completely at age 70. She had never been a big saver, but she had a good pension program and had socked some money away into a 401(k) over the years. She had never prioritized saving after-tax money, though, and therefore has essentially no after-tax savings. As a result, any capital pulled from her investment portfolio in retirement will be fully taxable and this will likely result in a substantial portion of her Social Security being subject to tax as well. Her part time income should be sufficient to cover her living expenses until she fully retires, at which point she will rely on a combination of her pension, investments, and Social Security for income.

For Jane, it could be in her best interest to file for Social Security now instead of waiting until age 70. Since her part time income is sufficient to cover her living expenses, this would allow her to save her Social Security income into an after-tax investment account, which could provide around \$80k to \$100k in after tax investment capital once she retires at age 70. This, in turn, provides more tax planning flexibility down the road which can help limit the amount of Jane's Social Security and Medicare benefits that are subject to tax in the future.



As you can see from Jane's situation, there are many different factors that need to be considered when determining a Social Security strategy and delaying Social Security until age 70 is not always the best option. Social Security has a language all its own, and the rules frequently change. As such, understanding the system and knowing what options are available is critical for developing an effective strategy.

With the File and Suspend and Restricted Application loop holes closing, Social Security would seem like it's simpler than it has ever been. But, with fewer filing options available, proper Social Security planning has never been more important.

September, 2019:

And, finally, excited to announce that Steve will be playing Agent Sterling in the upcoming Spies in Disguise cartoon!! Oh wait, just kidding, it's actually Will Smith....but Agent Sterling had a nice ring to it and seemed fitting! Ha!

