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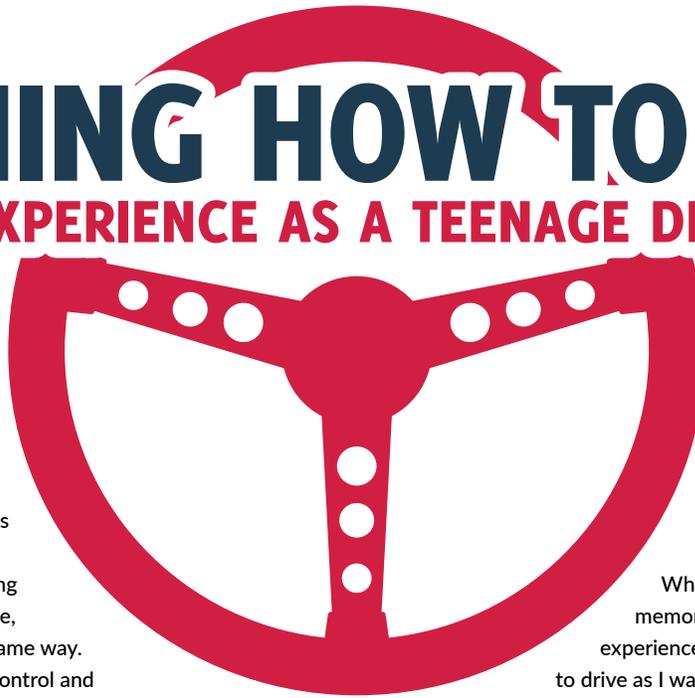
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JANUARY 2023

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LEARNING HOW TO DRIVE

MY EXPERIENCE AS A TEENAGE DRIVER



Do you remember the first time you drove the family vehicle with your parents inside? It probably came shortly after you got your temporary or permanent driver's license. You wanted to drive flawlessly to impress your family, and your parents just wanted to make it safely to your destination. The first few years of driving are some of the most fun we experience, but parents don't necessarily feel the same way. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among teens aged 16-19 than in any other age group. January is Teen Driving Awareness month. As someone who drove as a teen and with children driving, I've had my fair share of interesting driving experiences.

My high school offered driver's education as a class, which was a unique experience. When you walked into the classroom, it was full of arcade-style driving modules. Everyone would sit at those cabinets, and they'd show movies that would display what happens when they act irresponsibly behind the wheel. They were genuinely gross videos, but we thought it was pretty cool as teenagers, mainly because we couldn't imagine those situations happening to us.

While the bulk of the class was taught in a classroom setting, we still had to get some real training behind the wheel. All the kids got an opportunity to drive on the weekends with our instructors, who also happened to be teachers at our school. There were three to four kids per car, plus the instructor, and we began each day by heading to the local donut shop so the instructors could meet up and get a coffee to calm their nerves.

In one instance, I was driving my group down a small hill. I must have been coming in hot on the car in front of us as my instructor pressed down hard on the passenger-side brakes, causing us to slide and the tires to screech. We

stopped a few inches from the car in front of us. That driver looked in his rearview mirror and waved his fist around in the air at us. I was mortified, but I'm pretty sure that guy was having fun at a new driver's expense. I became a much more cautious driver after that.

While my adventures as a young driver are memorable, they don't compare to my children's experiences. My kids weren't as excited about learning to drive as I was. They waited to get their licenses, with one even waiting an entire year. They all got into fender benders during their first year of driving, but my eldest son, Max, was something special. It seemed like he was always running into trouble with his vehicles.

When my dad decided he couldn't drive anymore, he gave me his old Jeep Grand Cherokee. It wasn't in the best shape, but I figured it would make a great first car for Max. I got it fixed up and added a nice brush guard for his birthday. Max was driving past the Columbus Zoo one winter, hit a patch of ice, and rolled that Jeep, completely totaling it. He was okay, but it was still a scary situation.

Max was always getting into some kind of trouble with his vehicles. He once slid down a hill and had to cut himself free from his seatbelt. I was white-knuckling the entire trip every time I had to ride with him. Miraculously, Max became a much better driver after saving enough money to buy his own car. Pride of ownership must have played a role.

If your kids are just learning to drive, I wish you and them the best of luck. It's an exciting time in their lives but be prepared for some extra anxiety during their first few months on the road.

-Jim Monast

NEW YEAR, NEW PERSPECTIVES

NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

2023 has arrived, so it's time to plan for the year ahead and set some resolutions. On Dec. 31, as the clock struck midnight, you likely celebrated the New Year with fireworks, parties, noise makers, the ball drop, music, celebration hats, and confetti. But around the world, not everyone celebrates the same way. Check out some of these traditions others use to ring in the new year!

Colombia

Who doesn't love to travel? In Colombia, many carry an empty suitcase or two around the neighborhood, hoping to bless the coming year with many chances to travel.

Spain

In Spain, you may catch some natives eating exactly 12 grapes, one for each clock strike once midnight arrives. Each one represents good luck for each month in the new year. In larger cities

such as Barcelona and Madrid, they gather to eat grapes together in the main squares.

Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Bolivia

In these Central and South American countries, the new year is celebrated with lucky underwear! The most common colors are red, intended to welcome love in the upcoming year, and yellow, which is said to bring about prosperity.

Greece

If you were to visit Greece on New Year's Eve, you might see onions — thought to symbolize rebirth — hanging on the front doors of every home. On New

Year's Day, parents wake their children by gently tapping them on the head with the onions.



Philippines

In the Philippines, people use round shapes to represent coins that symbolize prosperity in the new year. Some even display round fruit, such as grapes, on their dining room table and, like people in Spain, will eat 12 at midnight.

Denmark

To get rid of evil spirits, the people of Denmark will throw old plates and glasses against their friends' and families' front doors. Then to "leap" into the new year with good luck, they stand on chairs and jump off!

What New Year's traditions do you have?

CLIENT PROFILE: BRUCE SHACKELFORD

Our dear friend and longtime client Bruce Shackelford is coming up on the 10-year anniversary of his work injury and our representation.

A longtime employee of Klosterman Baking Company, he injured his back while traying and loading stacks of bread. A day later, he could hardly walk and had to leave work after four hours.

Ultimately, he underwent several epidurals in his back followed by extensive surgery. He's had an implanted spinal stimulator and several followup procedures for reprogramming. He walks with a cane and battles the black dog of depression associated with the pain of his injuries and the limitations that result. Along the way, he lost his wife, Mitzy, in 2008 and then his friend, Candy, in 2016. And yet, he always tries to brighten the days of others.

Occasionally, Bruce would ride over from Springfield on his beloved Harley to stop in and visit, or bring us Schuler's donuts. After a while, however, his back got so bad, he had to sell his bike. This led to one of the most satisfying hearings I've ever had as an attorney.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been paid in Bruce's claim for medical and compensation payments, and his employer has fought him



every step of the way as we've sought approval for treatment. One time, while we were battling over treatment for his depression, the employer presented their smoking gun: a photo of Bruce riding his Harley with his lady on the back. He told the company psychologist he could no longer ride because of his back and yet here was the photo. We got this from the defense attorney on a Friday, three days before the hearing.



I dug a little. It turns out someone in the defense attorney's office had gone to Bruce's Facebook page and found the photo. I went to the page and found it, too ... five years earlier than when the employer said it was posted. The picture even had the date on it, showing it was taken BEFORE Bruce's injury; he'd sold the bike a couple years before the defense attorney's office found the photo.

Ah, folks, there are times in a lawyer's life representing someone that are very sweet indeed. Revealing the actual photo with the date taken at the hearing was one of those rare moments. Seeing the hearing officer stare at defense counsel who stammered to explain their underhanded attempt to impugn Bruce's character is a memory I'll long cherish.

Anyway, our friend is still hanging on. We are working toward obtaining permanent disability or perhaps a settlement if it seems good for him to do so. I wanted to introduce Bruce to you, another of our favorite people.

IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL WELL-BEING

BY LISTENING TO BIRDS



There's nothing quite like waking up early on a weekend morning, brewing yourself a cup of coffee, and relaxing outside to birds chirping and singing. It's enough to make your worries melt away and improve your mental outlook for the day. Scientific evidence supports the idea that being around birds or listening to them can improve your mental health for up to eight hours after hearing their song.

New research from a King's College, London, study found that seeing or hearing birds is linked to improving mental well-being even for people with depression. The researchers gathered real-time reports from participants using the smartphone app Urban Mind. People were asked three times a day whether they could see or hear birds before responding to questions about their current mental health status. The study lasted for three years and involved over 1,200 participants from Europe and the United States.

"There is growing evidence on the mental health benefits of being around nature, and we intuitively think that the presence of birdsong and birds would help lift our mood," says lead author Ryan Hammoud from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's College, London. "However, little research has actually investigated the impact of birds on mental health in real-time and in a real environment. By using the Urban Mind app, we have, for the first time, shown the direct link between seeing or hearing birds and a positive mood. We hope this evidence can demonstrate the importance of protecting and providing environments to encourage birds, not only for biodiversity but for our mental health."

Interestingly enough, the habitat that the birds belonged to did not make a difference in their ability to improve one's mood. As long as the individual could hear or see birds, they noticed improvements in their overall mental well-being. While the birds might have flown south for the winter, we're eagerly awaiting their return, as they'll undoubtedly bring more joy and positivity into our lives.

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ANSWER



MUNCHIES WITH MOLLY

SLOW COOKER CHICKEN AND WHITE BEAN STEW

Inspired by EatingWell.com

INGREDIENTS

- 4 15-oz cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 4-oz Parmesan cheese rind
- 2 1-lb bone-in chicken breasts
- 4 cups chopped kale
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground pepper
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup parsley leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. In a 6-qt slow cooker, combine beans, broth, onion, carrots, rosemary, and Parmesan rind. Top with chicken. Cover and cook on low until the beans and vegetables are tender, about 7-8 hours.
2. Remove chicken from slow cooker. On a clean cutting board, let the chicken rest until cool enough to handle, about 10 minutes. Shred the chicken and discard bones.
3. Return chicken to slow cooker and stir in kale. Cover and cook on high until kale is tender, 20-30 minutes.
4. Stir in lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Discard the Parmesan rind. Serve the stew drizzled with oil and sprinkled with Parmesan cheese and parsley.

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PROVIDING RIDES AND SAVING LIVES

MEET AN UBER DRIVER TURNED HOMETOWN HERO

We all like to imagine we would do whatever it takes to help others if we witnessed a tragedy, such as a house fire or car accident. We see it all the time when watching our favorite shows and movies, but these random heroic acts rarely happen in real life. When they do, they're awe-inspiring. One New York City man was faced with one of these harrowing situations and showed tremendous courage when he helped save lives, all while on the clock.



Fritz Sam works as an Uber driver in New York City. He had just picked up a passenger and was taking her to LaGuardia Airport when he noticed a hectic scene in a Brooklyn neighborhood. He soon saw flames and dark smoke emerging from a second-story window of an apartment building. He asked his passenger if he could pull over to offer help.

He approached a group of bystanders, yelling for people to get out of the residence. As people fled the building, Sam asked if everyone was out. Someone said there were still people inside. Without hesitation, Sam ran

through the building and found a woman who was hesitant about leaving. He convinced her to go and brought her to safety, and then he returned to help another man get out of the building.

Once he saw firefighters on the scene, Sam returned to his vehicle and proceeded to drop his passenger off at the airport. She still made her flight, even with their impromptu stop.

In a statement to "TODAY," Uber said, "We're incredibly grateful to have such a heroic and thoughtful member of our community in Fritz. He went above and beyond to keep his neighbors in New York safe — and still managed to get his rider to the airport on time."

When talking to "TODAY," Sam stated, "You'd be surprised what little things we do that can be impactful. Because, trust me, those little things are going to make a big difference for somebody."

It's safe to say that very few people consider Sam's actions a "little thing." He acted heroically and is an inspiration to many.