

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Let's Find Positivity Amidst Life's Challenges

December has finally arrived, which means the new year is right around the corner. As I sit back and reflect on all of the good and bad experiences I saw the past year, I'm reminded of "That's Good, That's Bad," a children's book by Margery Cuyler I read to my kids so many years ago.

In the story, a child receives a balloon while visiting the zoo. He starts to float away and finds himself in all sorts of hijinx with the zoo animals. As things happen, the narrator states, "That's good," before realizing the young man's danger. She corrects herself, saying, "This is bad!" It's a fun book that helps us understand there are different perspectives to each situation, and we might not know exactly whether something is good or bad until enough time has passed.

When I first looked back at this past year, I felt sad. I realized I've been in this industry for many years, and many of my long-term colleagues have hung it up and retired. However, some never got the opportunity to retire before they passed away. There aren't a ton of people in our area who practice the same law as me, so we all went to the same conferences and belonged to the same organizations. I got to know their personalities, and many became close friends, so it's noticeable when a member of the community is gone.

While there have been changes in the community, I've also had to make adjustments in my workplace. Wilma retired in January, and finding anyone to fill her shoes has proven difficult. Hiring in the legal field has become so much more challenging than ever before, just like everywhere else, it seems.

I've hired a handful of people who didn't work out after a few days. It's a shame because I want people looking to grow and provide exceptional customer service. Thankfully, Todd and Samantha have stepped up to help! I couldn't be more grateful for them!

There were positive moments this year at home. We welcomed a new bulldog puppy into our home named Ellie, and she has been delightful. However, we had a little incident with her recently. Ellie ran in front of Amy to greet a neighbor, causing Amy to fall and break her hand. She's recovering after surgery now, but it was an expensive accident we didn't expect!

Outside of these events, I've spent much of my year rereading some of my favorite authors, attending conferences on how to improve our practice and service, and learning how to grill and smoke meats on a Kamado grill.

There will be difficult moments during every single year of our lives. It's crucial that we don't let them bring us down. There's always a positive to look for, even in the darkest times. I've found that the most challenging things in life present us with the best learning opportunities and make us stronger eventually.

Enjoy the rest of your year, and have a very merry Christmas!

-Jim Monast



Jim's Year-End Reflections

Normally, we feature one of our wonderful clients in this space, sharing our journey together following their injury.

This time, I thought I'd share tales of this year's adventures undertaken by those of us you've come to know and love at Monast Law Office!

In January, Chris Hjelle (who handles settlements) went on a family vacation in Mexico. He's an active guy (his wife Jennifer is much more sensible, enjoying time on the beach and by the pool) and got attacked by a mountain goat the locals have named "Demon" while off-roading on an e-bike. Demon horned Chris in the leg, so Chris retaliated by grabbing him by the horns and twisting. He says he taught that goat a lesson: Don't mess with a Hjelle! To memorialize the occasion, I got Chris a plush goat and a goat-scream button for his office.

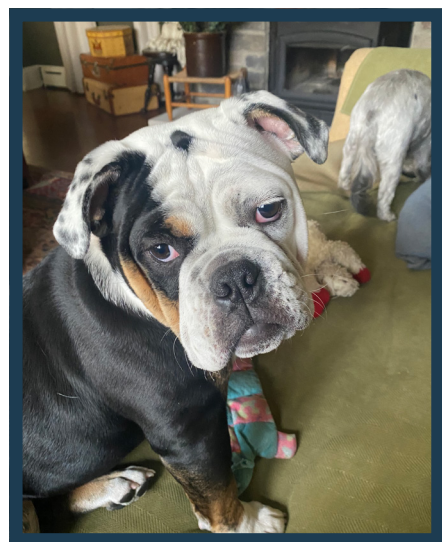
As I mentioned on the cover, over Independence Day weekend, Amy and I got a new bulldog puppy. Ellie is a typical bulldog, loving the world and everyone in it and not shy about bumping into anyone — literally. While walking her and Molly (our 2-year-old rescue mix, all of 8 pounds and still the dominant

canine in our home) in October, a neighbor hollered, "Hello" as we passed. Ellie ran in front of Amy, she tripped and fell, splintering bones in her left hand. This required a plate, eight screws, and lots of therapy.

Not to be outdone, on the morning of the OSU-Rutgers game, your fearless leader proved that distracted walking can result in stupid accidents and injury. We have a small step down at our front door. While walking into the house, I glanced at the birds in the tree near the door, wondering how in the world they could be so small yet make such a racket. I've never missed the step in 33 years, but I did that morning. The Ring camera video captured me falling forward and the stuff I was carrying flying out of both hands. I learned stucco wins when colliding with my face, and that facial/head wounds bleed a LOT!



I refused to go to the emergency room for stitches because the game was on at noon, and I didn't want to spend all afternoon waiting for them to get to me and tell me to go for an MRI to see if I had an orbital fracture, etc. Instead, I used a lot of New-Skin (liquid



bandage), and after a couple of hours, the blood wasn't even trickling out anymore (until the evening, when I had to use more).

Since I was not terribly injured, my family, friends, and neighbors have enjoyed mocking my clumsiness. One son suggested I could use photos for that tired old lawyer advertising "I fight for you!" as the black eye would add some realism. A neighbor bought an app to make a sparkly background for a photo of my bloody face. I'm glad I can bring some laughter to others.

Be safe this holiday season, and hold your loved ones close. While mountain goat attacks in Ohio are probably rare, slips and falls on ice can happen far too easily, as can car wrecks. Our accidents weren't life-threatening, thank heaven, but they sure happened just as quickly as serious ones do.

MORE THAN A TEAM

STARBUCKS CREW RAISES FUNDS FOR A SUPERVISOR IN NEED

Mark Twain once said, "Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life." The same can be said about the people you work alongside. When coworkers feel like family, work becomes much more enjoyable as everyone will go above and beyond to ensure everyone feels appreciated and noticed. In some workplaces, this sentiment goes even further. The team at a Starbucks on Marshall University's campus recently rallied around their supervisor after she experienced an unfortunate event.

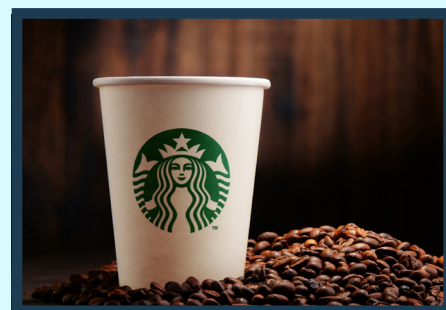
Karen Collinsworth has worked as a supervisor at Starbucks for decades. She loves her job and enjoys hiring students from the nearby campus to staff her location. Collinsworth developed a maternal role for her team, helping her employees with whatever problems they encountered. When thieves burglarized Collinsworth's car a few

months ago, her team returned the kindness she had shown them.

Collinsworth's 2004 Kia was robbed twice within a short span of time. The first thief took her catalytic converter, while the second stole interior parts. Karen didn't have the money to repair her vehicle or buy a new one, which left her in dire straits. Thankfully, her team had her back and started a fundraiser to help Collinsworth get a new car.

"After work, when I got back to my dorm, I decided to just make it (the fundraiser) because I figured even if we couldn't raise that much money, any amount would help her. It was just kind of like a spur of the moment (thing)," said Cassie Gray, a coworker of Collinsworth.

The Starbucks team shared the fundraiser on Instagram, Facebook, and YikYak, asking people to



give if they were able. It didn't take long for them to reach their goal. At first, they aimed to raise \$10,000 but brought in more than \$40,000 to help Collinsworth with her car troubles. The president of Marshall University donated \$5,000 himself!

Now, Collinsworth is in the market for a new car instead of repairing her old Kia, thanks to the support of her tremendous coworkers.

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ANSWER



MUNCHIES WITH MOLLY

SKILLET CHICKEN POT PIE

Inspired by TheModernProper.com

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/2 tsp celery seed
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 cups peas
- 4 cups cooked chicken
- 1 package frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 425 F.
2. In 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat, melt butter, then add onion, celery, and carrots. Sauté for 5 minutes.
3. Add flour, salt, pepper, celery seed, and garlic powder to pan and stir. Sauté for 2 minutes. Slowly incorporate milk.
4. Add stock and bring to a simmer, whisking until mixture thickens. Add peas and chicken.
5. Roll out pastry sheet into 16-inch square on floured surface. Cut into 3-inch squares and place overlapping onto chicken mixture.
6. In a small bowl, whisk egg with 1 tbsp water. Brush egg over pastry and place in oven for 25 minutes or until golden and bubbling.

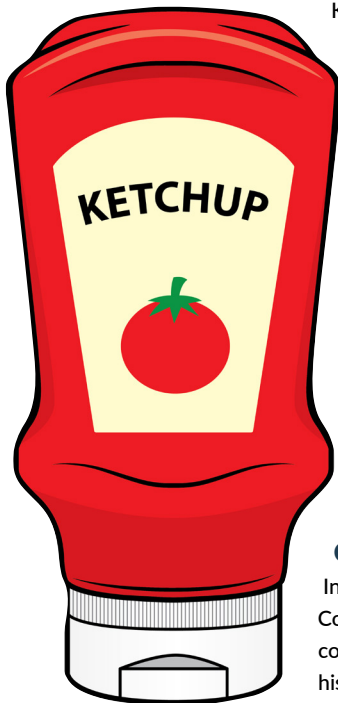
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FROM MIRACLE CURE TO TASTY DELIGHT

THE UNBELIEVABLE HISTORY OF KETCHUP



Ketchup, the popular tasty and tangy condiment found on tables and in refrigerators worldwide, has a surprising and somewhat peculiar history. In the 1830s, it was not just a topping for hamburgers and hot dogs; it was actually sold as medicine — yes, medicine!

A Unique Origin

Ketchup's roots can be traced back to Asia, where it was called ke-tsiap (Xiamen), a sauce made from fermented fish sauce. It made its way to Europe in the 17th century, but it looked and tasted different from the ketchup we know today, as it included ingredients like mushrooms, walnuts, and oysters — no tomatoes.

The Medicinal Claim and Tomato Connection

In the 1830s, an Ohio physician named Dr. John Cook Bennett began marketing a tomato-based concoction as a medicinal elixir. Dr. Bennett claimed his tomato extract had incredible healing properties

and promoted it as a cure for a wide range of ailments, including diarrhea, indigestion, jaundice, and rheumatism.

During this time, tomatoes were still relatively new in American cuisine, and many people were skeptical about their edibility and safety. In fact, some believed tomatoes were poisonous, but Dr. Bennett aimed to market them as a safe and healthy miracle ingredient. His tomato preparation was a precursor to modern ketchup.

The Transition to the Table

Over time, the medicinal claims surrounding tomato-based ketchup faded, and people began enjoying its taste. A tomato-based ketchup started to appear in cookbooks as an ingredient in recipes and was commonly paired with eggs, meat, and fish. By the late 19th century, ketchup had become a staple in American households, and companies like Heinz began mass-producing it.

Today, it's tough to imagine ketchup as anything other than a delicious topping for our favorite foods, and while tomatoes do contain antioxidants and vitamin C, we know ketchup won't cure a sickness. However, its transformation from fish sauce to tomato medicine to a beloved topping is a remarkable twist in culinary history!