



# Workers' COMPanion

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www.monastlaw.com | 614-334-4649 | 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd. Bldg 2, Suite 2117, Upper Arlington, OH 43220-2913

## DRIVING MY PRACTICE FORWARD IN 2018

**While I've been practicing law for 32 years,** it's only been about five years since I left my old partnership and struck out on my own. Those five years have been some of the most educational of my life, not necessarily in the minutiae of the law — after a couple decades you get a pretty solid handle on that — but in everything that goes into running your own small business.

In law school, you learn a lot about analyzing facts and arguing your case, but nobody bothers to teach you anything about keeping a practice afloat. Of course, this makes sense as most small-firm attorneys like myself tend to view their firms as a service instead of as a money-making business. After all, my goal is to help regular folks achieve the best outcome from a difficult situation, rather than to keep my eye on the bottom line.

When you're in a larger firm or even working closely in a partnership, this kind of thinking works just fine, since you've got another body to bounce ideas off of. But when you're the chief, cook, and bottlewasher all at once, it forces you to think about how you're going to reach out to the people who need your help. It makes you realize that, no matter how empathetic, understanding, and knowledgeable you are concerning your clients' issues, it's not going to mean much if people can't find you in the midst of all the noise.

The trick is to find that delicate balance between using your resources wisely to reach the greatest number of people who could use your representation and still managing to offer that vital one-on-one connection with every client. It's also important to offer educational resources to help people understand workers' comp. Not everyone needs an attorney on their workers' compensation claim, but I guarantee that anybody opposing their claim will have their own representation. Even if they're not my client, if I'm able to help even one person get the compensation they deserve, then I've done my job.

In that regard, I feel that my efforts have definitely paid off. I've had friends and members of my church come to me for all kinds of help, and I've been able to guide them through the legal process to a successful outcome. I have dozens of clients who have become almost like family to all of us at the firm. Over the months that we work with our clients, we get invested in their cases and lives. It's incredibly gratifying when you can call up somebody months after their case is settled and discover that they're doing great. It's inspiring to see how hopeful and driven people remain in the midst of crisis.

Looking forward into 2018, I'm eager to reach more of those people. When they're losing wages for months of missed work and the medical bills are mounting, my only goal is to be there, offering a helping hand. Everything I do is in service of that goal.



**"It's incredibly gratifying when you can call up somebody months after their case is settled and discover that they're doing great."**

*-Jim Monast*



# FROM THE WEB TO THE WALL

## TOOLS TO PRINT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PHOTOS

According to Gizmodo, Facebook users upload 300 million photos per day. Similarly, 95 million photos and videos are shared on Instagram daily.

Social media is a great platform for sharing and storing, but what if you want to literally hold on to those memories? That's where Free Prints and Social Print Studio come into play.

**Free Prints** The most attractive aspect of the Free Prints app is right in the name. Users can download 85 free 4-by-6-inch photo prints a month (up to 1,000 a year). But you can only print one free copy of each photo. Additional prints will run you 9 cents each. Standard shipping costs \$2.99, and your photos arrive within five to 13 days. Or, for an additional dollar, they can arrive in four to six days. If you choose to print photos in sizes other than 4-by-6 inches, you will have to pay more for the service.

The app is well-designed and easy to use; you can print photos from your device's library or link your accounts to print directly from Facebook, Instagram, Dropbox,

Flickr, and Picasa. The app is free and available for iOS, Android, Windows Phone, and Windows 8. Once your photos are uploaded and saved, you can then browse PhotoAffections.com, where you can order a variety of custom products, including magnets, canvas prints, and phone cases.

**Social Print Studio** Functioning as both a website and a stand-alone app, Social Print Studio is a small company based in San Francisco that has been printing social media photos since 2010. While this company is capable of printing photos of your social media posts, they can do so much more with your digital memories.

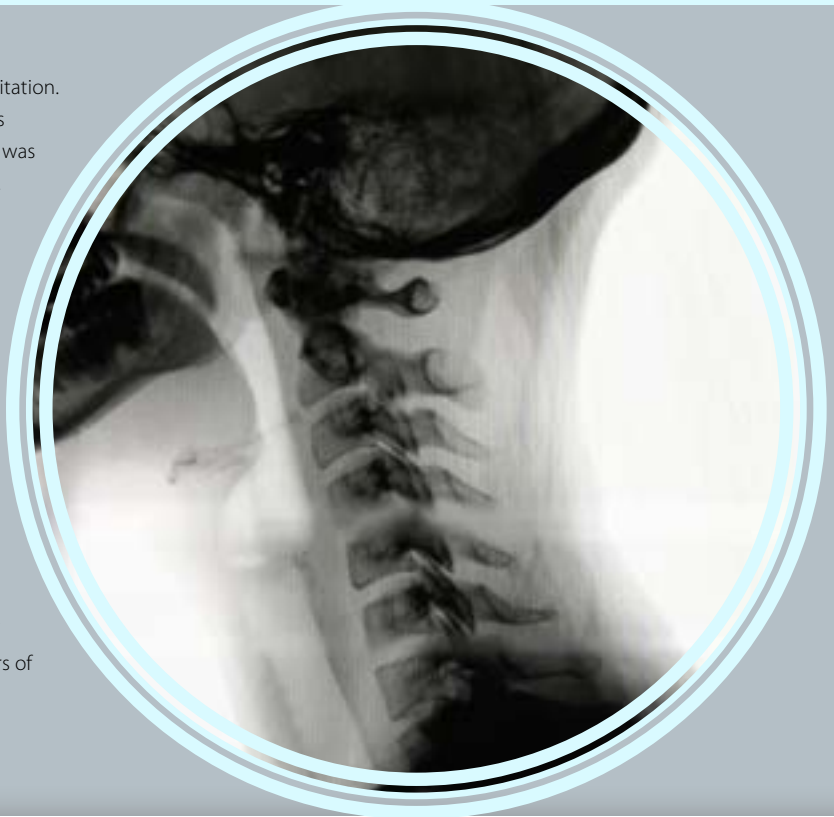
Social Print Studio's products are divided into four categories: photobooks, the classics, wall art, and everything else. You can order your photos printed in soft, hard, or layflat book form. Their classic options include postcards, mighty prints, and photostrips. Or, turn your photos into beautiful wall art with metal prints, canvas prints, and wall calendars. You can even get greeting cards, stickers, and buttons. Pricing varies by item, but one thing remains constant: Social Print Studio is dedicated to offering the best products possible. The app is free and available for iPhone, iPad, and Android.

While sharing photos on social media accounts is an easy way to store your memories, these apps will help you keep and display those memories for years to come. The next time you need to spiff up your walls or give an extra-special gift, pay them a visit!

## Larry N.

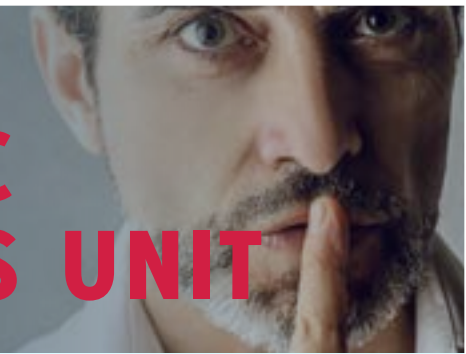
### IMPRESSIVE CASE RESULTS

Larry N. sustained an on-the-job neck injury requiring rehabilitation. While in a BWC-sanctioned rehab program, he aggravated his underlying neck injury so badly performing exercises that he was forced to undergo an anterior discectomy and fusion at C6-7. Six days later, he had a second surgery to reposition the graft that had slipped. An MRI done 18 months later revealed a herniated disc at C3-4. He returned to work, but began experiencing excruciating headaches and developed significant depression and anxiety. His doctors ultimately recommended he stop working. He requested and was granted permanent total disability under his workers' compensation claim. We also encouraged Larry to file for Social Security disability benefits. His application was denied initially and again at the reconsideration (first level appeal) levels. At his hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, we successfully argued that Larry's combination of physical and mental impairments, including his debilitating headaches, made it impossible for him to sustain any form of gainful employment. The ALJ awarded Larry nearly three years of accrued benefits, totaling almost \$50,000.



## BEWARE OF THE FRAUD SQUAD

# DON'T TALK TO THE BWC SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT



*In Ohio, the FBI of workers' compensation is called the Bureau of Worker's Compensation (BWC) Special Investigation Unit, which is also affectionately known as the Fraud Squad. They investigate tips and allegations that an injured Ohioan may be collecting workers' compensation payments while working on the side.*

As most people know, it is illegal to collect weekly workers' compensation payments and work at the same time. If you work and collect benefits at the same time, (there are some exclusions such as wage loss and permanent partial disability), it is considered fraud, and it carries a wide range of unpleasant consequences.

Obviously, there are occasions where the Fraud Squad acts commendably and recoups money that shouldn't have been paid when someone claiming injury is clearly able to work. In theory, they even investigate employers who scam the system by underreporting payroll or characterizing employees as independent contractors when they are not. However, if the Fraud Squad can't prove their case with their own investigation and collection of evidence, they'll approach an injured worker directly.

Many people will talk to the Fraud Squad without a lawyer present because they are asked, "Why would you need a lawyer if you don't have anything to hide?"

I've represented many clients who have been accused of fraud after they received workers compensation payments. Some of these cases have been laughed out of the hearing room but, no matter the outcome, the Fraud Squad makes every one of these clients' lives miserable.

It is important for any individual receiving workers' compensation to recognize one thing: Activity you don't consider "work" may qualify as work under Ohio law. The Fraud Squad will come after you if they think you may have received any income while getting workers' compensation payments, and for heaven's sake, do not talk to them without a lawyer present, even if you think you have nothing to hide.

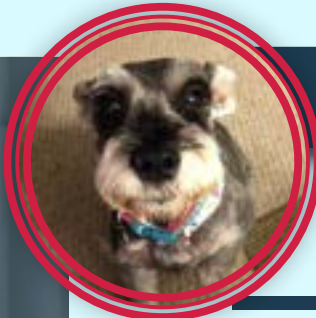
Fraud recovery looks good for the BWC and makes great for PR. Once you agree to talk to the BWC, they will do everything they can to make a case out of the information you tell them. When approached, do one thing — shut your pie hole!

# SUDOKU

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ANSWERS



## ABBY'S APPETIZERS

**LEFTOVER** Recipe inspired by TheWoksOfLife.com.

## TURKEY RAMEN

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 leftover turkey carcass
- 6 scallions, divided
- 8 slices ginger
- 6 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 16 cups water
- 4 eggs
- 4 ounces bacon
- 4 portions fresh, not instant, ramen noodles
- 2 cups leftover turkey, shredded

### DIRECTIONS

1. Remove most of the meat from the turkey carcass, shred, and set aside. Put carcass in a large stockpot, along with 3 scallions, ginger, mushrooms, and water. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 3 hours.
2. Place eggs in a small saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, then immediately remove pot from heat and let sit for 4 minutes. Transfer eggs to an ice bath to cool.
3. Cook bacon until crisp. Drain, chop, and set aside. Chop remaining scallions.
4. Once the broth is done simmering, prepare the fresh noodles according to package directions. Divide noodles among 4 bowls and cover with broth. Add shredded turkey, chopped scallions, chopped bacon, and an egg to each bowl.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Looking Into the Future
- 2** Hold On to Your Memories
- 2** Case Study: Larry N.
- 3** Beware of the Fraud Squad
- 3** Revive That Leftover Turkey!
- 4** Can a Bird Save the Day?

## These Feathered Heroes Aren't Exactly

# BIRDBRAINS



We hear stories about dogs, cats, and even dolphins stepping up to save the day, but mammals aren't the only animal heroes worth celebrating. Check out these feathered friends who prove every bird has its day.

### Charlie the Watch Bird

When two men knocked on his door early one September morning in 2011, kindhearted Jack Dukes welcomed the strangers into his home, hoping to offer assistance. The men turned on him. They beat Jack up and demanded pills, but this didn't fly with Jack's pet macaw, Charlie. The colorful bird leapt to his master's defense, scratching and biting one of the invaders. After Charlie took a chunk out of the intruder's arm, the man and his accomplice fled, and Jack called the authorities.

### Willie Sounds the Alarm

In 2009, Megan Howard and her pet parrot, Willie, were babysitting 2-year-old Hannah Kuusk. When Megan went to the bathroom, she suddenly heard a loud scream and a high-pitched voice shouting, "Mama baby!" She dashed out of the

bathroom and found Willie next to Hannah, whose face was turning blue. Howard quickly performed the Heimlich maneuver to save the choking girl, but she considers Willie the real hero. The local chapter of the Red Cross later awarded Willie their Animal Lifesaver Award.

### Cher Ami and the Lost Battalion

During World War I, a division of U.S. forces managed to cross German lines in what would be called the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Unfortunately, they were completely alone. Enemy and friendly fire rained down on them, and the commander sent a plea to headquarters with his last carrier pigeon, Cher Ami. The moment Cher Ami took off, Germans opened fire on the pigeon. However, despite being shot through the breast and losing a leg and an eye, Cher Ami kept flying. He made it 25 miles to headquarters, delivering the message that saved 194 men. Cher Ami was awarded the French Croix de Guerre, a medal celebrating wartime heroics, and his body is enshrined at the Smithsonian's Price of Freedom exhibit in Washington, D.C.

They say birds of a feather flock together, and these brave birds flock with the humans they love. Maybe being birdbrained isn't such a bad thing after all.