



**MONAST**  
LAW OFFICE

# Workers' COMPanion

November 2017

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## A TIME OF GRATITUDE and Reflection

This Thanksgiving, Amy and I are doing Thanksgiving a little differently from years past, heading out to our daughter Whitney and her husband Robby's new home in Alexandria, Ohio. Lucky for us, all five of our children and their significant others will be joining, along with our adorable grandbaby, Oliver. We're excited to celebrate at their new place — this impressive, hundred-year-old Victorian house with an old root cellar and towering ceilings, nestled in the small local community. It'll be a thrill getting the whole family together this year. When we travel out of state for holidays, a kid or two is almost always unable to attend.

It'll be a welcome respite from a difficult year. In late January, Amy's sister Karla — who she's always been incredibly close with — was diagnosed with cancer and tragically passed away Easter weekend. The diagnosis came out of the blue and dealt a huge blow to Amy, Karla's husband Steve, her children, and all the relatives. Such a loss in a close-knit family can make traditional gatherings like Thanksgiving painful at times, but it also goes to show how vital it is that we spend as much time with our loved ones as possible while we still have the opportunity. As you all know, life can change at a moment's notice.

In the past we typically traveled out to Morton, Illinois, to be with a huge group of Amy's family to meet up, chow down, and reconnect. It was always a massive affair, with everyone bringing their favorite dish, along with whatever "signature" dish had been inevitably requested by another member of the family. My brother-in-law would smoke, bake, and fry three separate turkeys, as everybody milled around in the kitchen all day, concocting the most delicious fare you can imagine. In the end, it'd result in a spread that looked like something straight out of the banquet hall in "Game of Thrones."

**"Besides losing at Settlers of Catan, catching up, and laughing with those closest to me, I'll be spending a lot of time reflecting on the many things in my life for which I'm thankful."**

This year, the food is certain to be just as good, if a little less extravagant. I'm responsible for the fresh turkey, and, of course, I'm bringing my legendary (if I do say so myself) cranberry orange chutney. It's sort of like a sauce, but thicker, made by reducing down the cranberries until they pop in the heat. It's always a big hit, but I'm not sure that it can compare to Amy's garden salad, which is essentially five different kinds of vegetables steeped in a mouthwatering, sugary sauce.

Besides losing at Settlers of Catan, catching up, and laughing with those closest to me, I'll be spending a lot of time reflecting on the many things in my life for which I'm thankful. For one thing, our children and grandson are all healthy, happy, and have a firm connection to their faith. I'm also glad that we're not so spread out across the country that we can't manage to meet up for gatherings like this one, even as life gets more confusing and challenging over time. I know that not every family has the privilege of gathering and enjoying one another's company.

Though Karla's absence will surely be felt around many Thanksgiving tables this year, she lives on in the relationships and memories we've formed as a family.

*- Jim Monast*





# 3

## CLEANING 'RIP-OFFS' THAT ACTUALLY WORK

**If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.** But

sometimes we stumble across a few hidden gems that make our lives easier. And, when it comes to cleaning house, we can all use a little "easier." Check out these products you may have already written off and let them surprise you.

**Dollar Store Cleaning Products** If you've ever ducked into the local dollar store to buy some Mylar balloons for your niece's birthday party, you might have noticed the jugs and spray bottles plastered with the word "Awesome." Surely, this knock-off soap can't work as well as your brand-name products, right? You'd be surprised. Online reviewers sing Awesome's praises, suggesting it should really be a higher price for how well it works. Just make sure you wear gloves when you use it.

**Detergent Pods** You use too much soap in your washing machine and dishwasher. At least, that's what the New York Times reported as the No. 1 complaint from repair people and appliance experts. Modern appliances are designed to use less water, and as soap becomes more concentrated, using too much can damage your machine. That's what makes detergent pods so handy. They don't look like they can clean all your dishes or an entire load of clothes, but they actually provide the perfect amount for modern machines. You save money on detergent and machine repair!

**Foam Cleaning Blocks** Anything with "magic" in the title sounds like a scam. For this reason, you may have avoided the Mr. Clean Magic Eraser and similar melamine foam products. But this is one case where the product lives up to its wild claims. Melamine foam is abrasive and can break down and remove material from fine cracks and textures, making it an effective cleaner. It can be used to whiten sneakers, clean tub scum, and remove permanent marker from your fridge.

Since the snake oil salesmen in the days of old first tricked trusting folks out of their hard-earned cash, consumers have wised up and are quick to write off perceived scams. Still, every now then you get lucky, and the cheap white sponge really does make the stove look like new. But you should still think twice before you say yes to gas station sushi.

## Sondra O.

### IMPRESSIVE CASE RESULTS

Sondra O. sustained more than eight injuries over the course of her employment with a well-known manufacturer of household cleaning supplies in Springfield, Ohio. These injuries involved her back, neck, shoulders, and a partial great toe amputation. In addition, she had undergone chemotherapy following a nonwork-related mastectomy and had a history of hernia repair. During our representation of Sondra in her various workers' compensation claims, which we were able to settle for three times the initial offer proposed by the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, we recommended to Sondra that she file for Social Security disability. Given that she was over age 50 and clearly couldn't return to her manufacturing job, she qualified for Social Security benefits even though she was physically capable of a limited degree of sedentary

work. Not only were we successful in obtaining a favorable settlement for Sondra's industrial claims, we were able to secure several years of accrued Social Security benefits for her, as well as Medicare coverage.



# WHY THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC HURTS INJURED WORKERS MOST

**Opioid addiction is on the rise nationwide**, but it's hit Ohio especially hard. According to a state report, unintentional drug overdose deaths increased in Ohio by 642 percent between 2000 and 2015. In 2014, we saw more opioid overdose fatalities than any other state in the nation, with unintentional overdose being the leading cause of death in the state since 2007. And, unfortunately, too many of these deaths have been injured workers who were prescribed opioids in an attempt to curb their pain.

The story is strikingly similar and scary for people all across the country. Following an injury, a person is prescribed an opioid by a doctor to relieve pain. The patient then uses up the prescription and subsequent refills, but when it finally runs out, they may find that a dependence on the drugs has taken hold. To avoid agonizing withdrawal symptoms — including vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, and muscle aches, among others — they turn to buying drugs off the street, and the cycle of addiction begins. As tolerance grows, it becomes increasingly difficult to afford pills, and too often, sufferers turn to heroin or illegally produced fentanyl.

Opioid users are naturally at a high risk for overdose, resulting in the tragic deaths of numerous individuals simply seeking relief.

Despite the overwhelmingly negative statistics, opioids are still continually prescribed by doctors. If you or someone you love has suffered an injury at work and has been prescribed one of these powerful painkillers, it's best to abide by these three rules to avoid addiction:

- 1. Limit use of the drugs to seven days if possible.**
- 2. Take the opioids by the clock, exactly as prescribed.**
- 3. Make sure you have a medical team that is easily accessible and that provides regular checkups.**

Recovering from a work-related injury is a trying time for anyone. But it doesn't have to spiral into a potentially fatal situation. Keep close tabs on your opioid use, and keep the focus on your recovery.

## SUDOKU

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ANSWERS



## ABBY'S APPETIZERS

### ROASTED PARMESAN PESTO POTATOES

*It only takes 3 ingredients to make these crispy, flavorful potatoes. They're the perfect side dish for any meal.*

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs. red potatoes, quartered
- 2 tablespoons basil pesto
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 3 tablespoons grated fresh Parmesan cheese

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, combine potatoes and pesto. Toss to coat. Transfer potatoes to a large baking sheet or shallow roasting pan. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Roast 20 minutes and remove from oven.
3. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese evenly over potatoes and put the pan back in the oven. Roast for an additional 10–15 minutes or until potatoes are tender and crispy. Remove from oven and serve warm.

*Recipe courtesy TwoPeasAndTheirPod.com*





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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 A Time of Gratitude and Reflection
- 2 These Products Make Housework Easier!
- 2 Case Results: Sondra O.
- 3 The Opioid Epidemic and Injured Workers
- 3 Roasted Parmesan Pesto Potatoes
- 4 The Secrets of Turmeric

# THE TRUTH ABOUT TURMERIC

## The Secrets of the Yellow Spice



**For thousands of years**, turmeric has been a staple in curries as well as a spice renowned for its ability to treat a vast number of ailments.

Known for its warm and bright yellow color when dried and powdered, the turmeric plant is native to a Southeast Asia, from India to Indonesia. It's become a genuine "spice-of-all-trades."

In recent years, turmeric's popularity has spiked throughout North America. People are adding it to food and using it to treat everything, from arthritis to heartburn.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the spice can treat just about every kind of inflammation in the body, whether it's joint pain or a headache.

Have a stomachache or nausea? Try turmeric. Have a mild rash or burn on your skin? Try turmeric. There are even a number of current studies looking into the effectiveness of turmeric as a treatment option for those with diabetes and dementia.

With such a long list of ailments turmeric is purported to treat, you have to remember to take it with an additional dose of skepticism. Can one spice really treat all of these things?

Let's take a look at what the research has said. As an anti-inflammatory, researchers have found over 20 distinct compounds that work similar to NSAIDs (such as aspirin and ibuprofen). Of those compounds, six are COX-2 inhibitors. COX-2 is an enzyme that causes inflammation and pain in the body.

In short, these six compounds help block the enzymatic reaction that triggers inflammation. One of these compounds is called curcumin, which is often considered the "active ingredient" in turmeric. An article published in the medical journal *Nutrition and Cancer* found that, by weight, pure turmeric powder contains 3.14 percent curcumin.

However, clinical trials of curcumin have produced less-than-stellar results. A comprehensive review of 120 studies of curcumin, published in 2017 in the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, found no evidence that the compound produced positive results as an anti-inflammatory or antioxidant.

In fact, researchers found curcumin to be an, "unstable, reactive, non-bioavailable compound." What does this mean for people who use turmeric for its medicinal properties?

If it works for you, continue to use it. If you've thought about adding it to your diet, give it a try. It's safe to use and studies have shown virtually no toxicity, even in high doses.