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THE TOWN DOG

Meet Longville's Town Ambassador

Just about every day, on Highway 84, you'll find Bruno trotting along. He's either headed into town or headed home after a long day of treats, pats on the head, and the occasional "good boy!" Bruno is the town dog, as proclaimed by the carved wooden statue you'll find in the Longville, Minnesota, town park. It's a role he was born for.

About 12 years ago, a man approached the home of Longville residents Larry and Debbie LaVallee. A puppy rested in his hands, no more than a couple months old. The man spotted the puppy at the end of their driveway and assumed it belonged to the couple. The LaVallee's had never seen the pup before, but they quickly fell in love.

The couple took him in, named him Bruno, and soon realized he wasn't an ordinary dog. Bruno had no interest in being penned in or tied up. He wanted to see the world. One day, Larry decided to let Bruno wander. Larry figured, since his nearest neighbors were a ways down the road, Bruno could quench his wanderlust without getting into trouble.

It wasn't long until Bruno discovered Highway 84. He followed his nose, and 4 miles later, he was in downtown Longville. Before he knew it, he was friends with

just about everyone in town — which wasn't hard, considering Longville is home to 156 people.

Every day, Bruno made the rounds: City Hall, the library, the ice cream shop, and his favorite, the grocery store. Or, more specifically, the back entrance to the grocery store, which happened to lead right into the deli department. Licking his chops, Bruno patiently waited for delicious deli scraps.

These days, Bruno is a regular senior citizen. At 12 years old, his joints aren't what they used to be. But that hasn't stopped him from making the trek into town to see all of his buddies and get a few well-earned scratches behind the ear.





Workers' COMPanion

JANUARY 2017

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FROM CLEANING BATHROOMS TO REPRESENTING THE INJURED

Maintaining My Roots

I did my best — and maybe my most important — job interview dressed in my scroungiest clothes. Well, maybe *scroungy* is a little strong, but I definitely wasn't donning a suit. Instead, I sat in my future employer's fancy leather chair in a ratty sweatshirt and beat-up jeans, straightening my spine in an attempt to look professional.

I should back up a bit. I've worked hard for a living my whole life. Starting at age 13, I would trek to the local drugstore after school, vacuum the floors, and clean the bathrooms. I'm the youngest of seven kids, the product of a dad who flunked out of Oberlin after serving in the Navy and did automotive equipment sales, and a mother who never graduated high school. She was a hard worker, though, having grown up on a farm in Iowa and working as a sales clerk most of her adult life. Her other full-time job, as you can imagine, was managing the swarm of children flying around the house. My brothers have driven semis, worked on manufacturing lines, served in the Marines and as firemen, and raced cars on dirt tracks. I've done my share as well: cleaning, driving a forklift and a delivery truck, hauling cow manure, and a whole host of other jobs.

As the only kid to go to a four-year college and then postgraduate school, my family thought it was just the greatest thing when I graduated from law school. They've always been so supportive of and impressed with my decidedly white-collar path in life, but the truth is, I'm humbled by what they all do. I like to talk up my brother who started at Whirlpool on the production line and retired as the vice president of the whole factory. He is, to me, a man's man.

My whole family has always worked hard for a living, and I've never forgotten where I come from. I used to listen to my dad in his home sales office, talking and laughing with his customers on the phone. The lessons from those eavesdropping sessions have been invaluable in my life. My dad, maybe a bit indirectly, taught me how to talk to people and be invested in what they say — you know, the basics of being friendly. My family may make a bit of a big deal about my career, but I've never wanted to be anything besides approachable, a patient teacher, and a good listener.

I worked as a mediator at the prosecutor's office all through law school. A school buddy of mine mentioned that he'd interviewed with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, and though I was interested, I thought to myself, "What is that, exactly?" I'd never heard of it. Intrigued, I called the law director there and inquired about the job. "Well, what are you doing right now?" He asked. I told him I was at the office but not seeing people that day so I was just in the aforementioned sweatshirt and jeans. He asked if I could write, and I assured him I could. "Well hey," he said, "why don't you grab a writing sample and come on in right now?"

A short time later, at the end of that meeting, I was hired. When I worked for the Bureau, I defended the Ohio State Insurance Fund. I will be the first to admit, I was young and a little arrogant. When I moved on from the BWC into private practice, it was a huge mental shift from defending the Fund, to helping people who got hurt on the job, working to get them what they deserved.

I'm glad I made the change, because I love my clients. I love representing a person, getting to know them, and really *helping* them. Oftentimes, injured folks are in a bad way; their life is kind of a mess in the post-injury chaos, and they're handing it to me and saying "Hey, fix this." It's an honor and a privilege to be entrusted with someone's well-being and to actually be able to deliver. It's the biggest thing that keeps me coming in each day.

Here's hoping your new year is a great one,

Jim Monast





TRAVELING WITH KIDS IN 2017

Goodbye Backseat Breakdowns

The holidays have come and gone, but many parents are still feeling a little dazed by the whirlwind of excitement and chaos. If you traveled during the holidays, you might be wondering now how you could've done it without the Santa Claus leverage ("If you don't stop poking your sister, Santa's going to see and put you on the naughty list").

If you're traveling with young kids this year, you want to focus on what really counts — spending a few relaxing days away. Let us help you minimize the stress with the help of these simple tips.

Pack smart. When packing your kids' luggage, make sure the kiddos have everything they need, but don't overpack. Unfortunately, this may mean having

to play the bad guy when kids want to bring their entire toy arsenal on the plane. Make sure the bag is easy for them to handle and that each item is essential.

Use apps. If space is an issue, bringing a tablet or phone with games downloaded is much easier than carrying a variety of books and games along for the ride. You can still limit your child's time on the device, but for long airport wait times or car rides, such a distraction can be the difference between breezy and breakdown.

Give them a say. Keep your kids interested in the journey by letting them be a part of it! Show them the path you'll be taking, tell them about where you're going, and let them document the adventures you have by photographing the whole thing. They'll be more excited about the destination and more actively involved in how you get there. If you take public transportation, let them have a seat by the window, and ask them about the people and places you see outside.

Traveling with kids isn't easy — any time of the year — but 2017 offers the chance to take family travel to the next level of relaxation. Whatever you do, remember to stay calm and focus on the memories. You've got this.

Tinh P.

IMPRESSIVE CASE RESULTS

Tinh P. and her husband moved to the Columbus area at a young age from Southeast Asia. After their three children started school, Tinh went to work on the assembly line at a large food processing plant. After several years, she noticed the onset of pain in her hands and elbows and was diagnosed with bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. Following surgery to each wrist, she returned to work, but her condition did not improve. She wore night splints and took appropriate medication but complained of pain in both wrists and experienced numbness and tingling in her middle, ring, and little fingers. Repeat surgeries did not improve her condition.

The following year, she slipped on a wet floor and fell, suffering a microfracture of the near inner ear, strains and sprains from her neck to her low back, and a disc herniation in her neck. Given that surgery failed to improve her wrists, Tinh opted not to undergo surgery for her herniated disc. Instead, her doctors recommended pain management, including a series of epidural steroid injections. She subsequently developed myofascial pain syndrome in her neck, a painful condition that results in significant pain and loss of motion.

Her employer vigorously fought her treatment and all of the additional conditions. We were successful in overcoming the reports of the hired

defense doctors and obtaining approval for the additional conditions and treatment following many hearings over several years.

Ultimately, Tinh's employer inquired about settlement of the claims, and we were able to negotiate a settlement of nearly \$200,000, four times higher than the employer's initial offer. Tinh and her husband have continued to send us Christmas cards each year, telling us how they continue to pray for all of us. It was a blessing and honor to represent her, and it is exciting that her children have gone on to complete professional degrees in medicine and elsewhere.





HORSING AROUND AT WORK

Are You Covered Under Workers' Compensation?

The weird thing about the term “horseplay” is that you don’t see horses getting all that rough very often. Sure, they nip each other and can certainly get into some seriously violent fights, but *horseplay* is usually pretty tame. The same goes for employees goofing off at work — nine times out of 10. It’s that 10th time you need to worry about. Some of the fooling around you do could result in injury, which might not be covered under workers’ compensation — and could get you fired.

Injuries that occur during roughhousing at work are compensable only if the claimant was not the instigator of the incident. Compensability for injury suffered by the non-instigator have long been recognized in Ohio, under the theory that horseplay results from associations and conditions inseparable from factory life.

In 2014, the Wall Street Journal reported on the case of a young maintenance worker for an Atlanta-based railway service who was messing around with his work buddies at a rail yard one evening. The group decided to test out a potato cannon

they had assembled from spare parts, but instead of firing, the device — stupidly packed with metal scraps and gunpowder instead of spuds — exploded, sending shrapnel flying through the air. The worker, who was perched on a nearby fire escape, recording footage on his phone, was struck across the skull. He sued his now former employer, claiming the company should have to pay damages for the brain injury.

The case was dismissed by a trial court, but a state appeals court soon overruled the decision, under the theory that supervisors at the plant ought to have ordered the workers to stop horsing around and leave the site. His employer has appealed to the Georgia Supreme Court.

Horseplay cases really depend on the circumstances, but as a rule, it’s best to remember that, while all work and no play make Jack a dull boy, Jack will certainly be less apt to injure himself if he keeps his mind on his work — not pranks or hijinks.

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ANSWERS

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8	6	3	7	5	9	2	4	1
2	9	5	6	4	1	3	8	7
3	4	7	1	4	9	8	7	6
9	8	1	6	2	7	3	4	1

ONCE-A-YEAR DROP DOUGHNUTS



New Year’s resolutions were made to be broken, right? Okay, maybe not, but we won’t tell if you don’t. This easy drop doughnut recipe is perfect for that one last splurge before the diet *really* starts. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¾ cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Oil (for frying)

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg.
2. Add oil, milk, and egg. Mix well.
3. Using a spoon, drop dough into hot oil.
4. Fry until light brown on both sides, turning once.
5. Drain well on paper towels.
6. While hot, turn in or sprinkle with plain, powdered, or cinnamon sugar.

Recipe inspired by food.com.