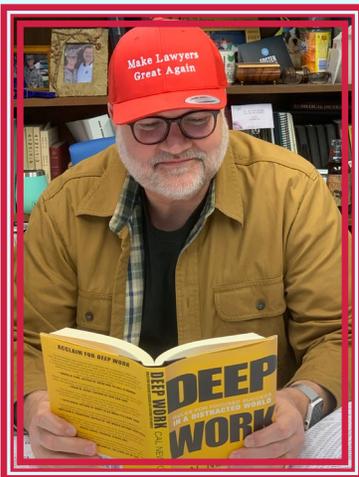


## SAWDUST WITHOUT BUTTER

### THE WORST KIND OF BOOKS TO READ



**“I’m thankful for e-books because my wife has threatened to take drastic action if I try to bring home any more books.”**

**Y**ears ago, when I was a boy, my family took a trip to the Grand Canyon. During the road trip, my mom and I read “Harvest Home,” a horror novel by Thomas Tryon. We had only a single copy of the book, so we took turns reading a chapter and passing the book back over the seat. When we both finished the same chapter, we’d talk about it a little before reading more.

I’ve mentioned before that I’ve always been an avid reader thanks to my parents. My mother was always reading something. She particularly loved Mary Higgins Clark, who just passed away Jan. 31, and Agatha Christie mysteries. My dad was also a big reader. My dad finished high school, but my mom did not. Both of my parents were self-taught because they read so much.

When I was a kid, I followed their lead. I’d spend the summers cutting grass and use the money to buy comic books. At one point, I had hundreds of copies of “Richie Rich,” “Casper the Friendly Ghost,” “Archie,” and the like. Besides comics, there was nothing I loved more than diving into a good fantasy novel. I loved “The Lord of the Rings,” “The Sword of Shannara,” and “Dune.” (Yeah, I know — nerd alert!)

When I got to law school, I quit reading for a while. You read so much technical stuff in law school, and most of it is dry and boring. “Like eating sawdust without butter,” as one professor put it. Eventually, I started reading for fun again as a good mental break. These days, I’m an avid reader once more, which isn’t a surprise to anyone who’s ever been to my house.

We have shelves full of books at home and at work. My desk is covered in stacks of books. I even have boxes of books in storage. I’m thankful for e-books because my wife has threatened to take drastic action if I try to bring home any more books. Amy claims we’re running out of room for us humans. I maintain that humans can’t thrive unless we’re

surrounded by good books. In response, she has become somewhat of an Olympic-caliber eye-roller.

March 2 is Read Across America Day, so it’s a great time to assess our reading habits. People ask me how I find time to read so much while still running my law office. Like anything worthwhile, we have to make time. E-books help a lot. If I’m having lunch at my desk, I can grab my iPad and read whatever book I’m working on at the moment. It’s a lot easier to carry around an iPad than a bunch of paperbacks. Audiobooks are also great. As I drive around the great state of Ohio for hearings, I’ve found listening to an audiobook is a lot more pleasant than hearing radio DJs chatter on. Lately, I’ve listened to several excellent crime mysteries. “Call Me God” on Audible about the D.C. sniper attacks is superb!

Amy and I also make time to read at home. If a new season of “The Walking Dead” hasn’t started and there’s not a college football game on, we watch little TV. Our evenings are usually filled with reading. Business and self-help books help me stay at the top of my game. Theology helps me stay spiritually centered because, let’s face it, life is hard. Biographies like “Can’t Hurt Me” by Navy SEAL David Goggins (whom I’ve met!) are really inspirational. I write a lot, so any book that can help me improve my writing also goes on the list. This doesn’t mean I’ve lost my love for fantasy and pulp fiction. I love zombie books, like Keith Blackmore’s “Mountain Man” series (rough language alert), and political thrillers (anything by Joel C. Rosenberg).

There are so many reasons we should read, but for me, the biggest reason is because it’s a new window on the world. A good story whisks us away and makes us think about things in a different light. And our perspective on life impacts the story we are writing for ourselves each day.

*—Jim Monast*

# THE POWER OF PRETEND

## IMAGINARY FRIENDS PROMOTE REAL LIFE SKILLS

Studies show that up to 50% of young children have imaginary companions, ranging from entirely conjured entities to beloved stuffed animals. The popular social stigma around imaginary friends is that these children must be shy or lonely, but psychologists disagree. In fact, if your child develops an imaginary friend, most psychologists say it's an activity you should promote instead of discourage.

Psychologists claim that the invention of an entire friendly persona points to the fact that the child is both creative and highly social. Imaginary scenarios also give kids an opportunity to indulge in their wildest aspirations, like going to the moon or inventing a time machine. Their creativity gives them the ability to dream, explore, and experiment in useful ways. Imaginary friends can also be there to comfort your child when they're feeling down or experiencing a tantrum, which is helpful when they are learning how to manage their emotions.

There are also many ways parents can take part in interactions with imaginary friends to strengthen their own relationship with their child. Imaginary friends can make interactive play more meaningful and can be useful in accomplishing daily routines, like cleaning up or getting ready for bed. They also provide a window into the way your child's mind works by encouraging the vocalization of thoughts and feelings



they may not otherwise share. Imaginary friends are often a proxy for the children who invent them, so the conversations your child has with or about their friend can provide a lot of insight into how your child views the world and themselves.

Imaginary friends are so important to how some children learn and grow that they've been featured in pop culture for many years. Entertainment like "Calvin and Hobbes," "Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends," and even adult shows like "Supernatural" — which featured an episode about a main character's childhood imaginary friend returning to teach him valuable lessons as an adult — portray the inventors of imaginary friends as outgoing and creative. It just goes to show that letting the imagination run wild not only encourages healthy development but can also lead to lots of fun.

## CLIENT STORY: CHARLES HAAS

Guys who work in oil and gas are a different breed of cat. It's hard, dangerous work. My dad used to say his time working as a roustabout in the Louisiana oil fields was the manliest work he ever did.

Charles Haas knows this work. In 2015, he was a casing operator for Oilfield Inspection Services, a company that tests and inspects the huge tubes that line the drilled wells. These pipes are



40–45 feet long and about 10 inches around, and they weigh 500 pounds. They are transported in bundles in a triangular steel rack on a front-end loader. The pipes were racked four layers high, despite safety regulations mandating a three-layer limit. Typically, a chock is in place to prevent the rack of pipes from rolling. But one day, the company used a plastic chock, which wasn't strong enough to keep the pipes in the overloaded rack from breaking loose. When it broke, over 3,500 pounds of pipe dropped from 30 feet high. Charles saw these coming and tried leaping out of the way, but his right ankle, foot, and lower leg were crushed, his ribs were fractured, and his shoulder and elbow were torn.

His ankle needed reconstruction and a lot of hardware. He developed a staph infection requiring placement of a catheter line to supply continuous antibiotics. After six weeks, the line thrombosed, and he had to finish on oral antibiotics. He had more surgeries on his ankle and leg and extensive surgery to repair the tears and bone breakdown in his shoulder.

Charles could easily have died from this accident, and he relived it in his nightmares repeatedly. He required intense treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Slowly, as his physical and emotional wounds healed, he started vocational retraining. Thinking he'd like to help others as he had been helped, he took classes toward a nursing degree. The classes spiked his anxiety levels, so he decided to serve people by doing something he'd enjoyed all his life: cooking! He's now a sous-chef at Napoli's Italian Eatery in Canton, a restaurant with hundreds of 5-star reviews.

Charles recently decided he wanted to put this chapter of his life behind him, so he closed his claim. Before he did, we obtained for him one of the largest safety violation awards possible. Charles never gave up. We are proud to know him and look forward to enjoying his excellent cooking on our next trip to Canton!

# Chlorine, Gasoline, and Carbon Monoxide

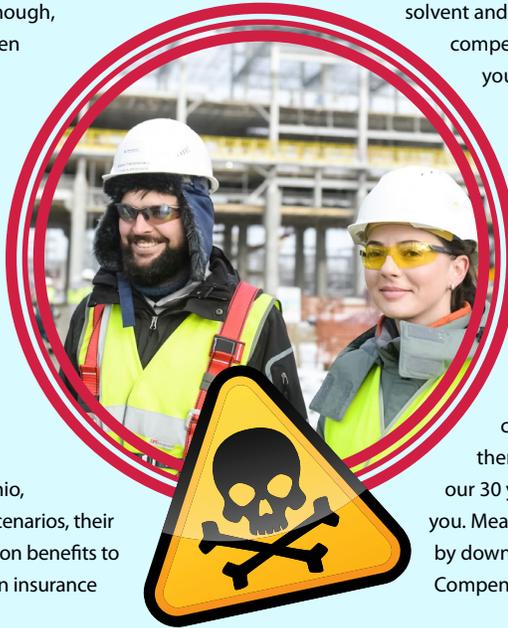
## THE MOST DANGEROUS CHEMICALS IN THE WORKPLACE

If you work in a high-risk field like construction, manufacturing, or agriculture, then odds are you're used to operating on high alert while you're at work. Even when you're careful, though, accidents can happen — and they seem to happen more and more frequently to American workers.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people killed at work due to exposure to harmful substances, like electricity, or environmental conditions, like extreme weather, jumped by over 85% between 2013 and 2018. Every year, about 45 workers are killed specifically by inhaling dangerous substances, including carbon monoxide, chlorine, cleaning solvents, degreaser, gasoline, methane, and paint fumes.

One ray of light in these dark statistics is that in Ohio, workers injured on the job (or, in the worst-case scenarios, their survivors) may be eligible for workers' compensation benefits to ease their financial burden. Workers' compensation insurance

is fault-blind, which can be good or bad for the person seeking payment. On the one hand, if your exposure was your fault (for example, if you dropped a bottle of solvent and were overcome by the fumes), your workplace can't refuse to compensate you. On the other hand, you can't sue your employer if your workplace was inherently safe.



If you inhale a dangerous substance while you're working and feel sick, head to the doctor right away and file a workers' compensation claim with the state or your employer. Workers' compensation should cover the cost of your doctor's visit, treatment, and after the first eight days, any additional time you need to take off of work to recover.

If you're having problems filing your workers' compensation claim or if the company you work for is denying you coverage, then we can help. Call us today at 614-334-4649, and we'll put our 30 years of workers' compensation case experience to work for you. Meanwhile, learn more about the workers' compensation process by downloading our free e-book, "The Worker's Guide to Injury Compensation in Ohio," from MonastLaw.com.

## SUDOKU

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ANSWER

## NIBBLES WITH NUG

### EASY IRISH SODA BREAD



Inspired by AllRecipes.com

#### INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 tbsp white sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk, divided
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 375 F, and lightly grease a large baking sheet.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and margarine.
3. Stir in 1 cup buttermilk and egg, and mix until dough comes together.
4. Knead dough on a lightly floured surface. Form dough into a round before placing it on baking sheet.
5. In a small bowl, combine melted butter and remaining 1/4 cup buttermilk.
6. Brush the raw loaf with this mixture and cut an "X" into the top.
7. Bake loaf for 45–50 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean after being inserted into center of loaf. You may need to continue brushing the loaf with the butter mixture while it bakes.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 What Are You Reading?
- 2 Forging Imaginary Friendships
- 2 Client Story: Charles Haas
- 3 Is Your Workplace Making You Sick?
- 3 Easy Irish Soda Bread
- 4 Bringing Love, Joy, and Life Back to Kishi Station

# TAMA, THE CALICO

## THE FIRST FELINE STATIONMASTER IN ALL OF JAPAN

During the mid-2000s, the Kishi Train Station in Japan began to deteriorate. By 2006, Kishi Station was left completely unstaffed because of low ridership and financial problems. However, one last resident still remained after everyone else was long gone: a black, white, and tan cat named Tama.

Tama first appeared at the station as a young cat in the late 1990s. She lived near the train station and would visit commuters daily to receive affection and the occasional treat. But, as it turned out, her continued visits to Kishi Station would end up playing a much bigger role for the station.

The same year it became unstaffed, residents living near the station asked the president of the Wakayama Electric Railway, Mitsunobu Kojima, to revive the station because the cat's survival depended on it. It turns out Tama's original owner had asked the railway workers to care for her before he moved away — he couldn't bear to take her from the station she loved to visit so much.

So, Kojima decided to go meet Tama. He liked her immediately and adopted her. A year later, Tama was officially named the Stationmaster of Kishi Station, the first cat stationmaster in Japan. To complete her look, Kojima gave her a small conductor

hat to wear as she greeted commuters from her window perch inside the ticket gates.

As an official stationmaster, Tama became well known all across Japan and throughout the world. She appeared in the media and on promotional materials that soon brought much-needed foot traffic to Kishi Station. Thousands of tourists came rushing to Kishi to see Tama for themselves, ride the Tamaden carriage, and pick up Tama merchandise inside the station.

Tama brought joy to all commuters for the next several years before passing away in 2015. Nearly 3,000 people attended her funeral, and her legacy lives on. Tama's successors continue as stationmasters: Nitama, who serves as Kishi stationmaster, and assistant Yontama at Idakiso, five stations away.

Tama's friendly and loving nature impacted many people around her, and she will always be affectionately known as the cat who saved the Japanese train station.

