

DREAMING OF A *VERDE* MERRY CHRISTMAS

THE TIME I SPENT CHRISTMAS IN ARIZONA

The weather outside is frightful, and it will probably stay that way until May.

While I love the holidays and the opportunities to spend time with family, I've never been crazy about the weather. We're less of a winter wonderland and more of an icy wasteland, but that comes with the Ohio territory. The only time I've ever gone away for Christmas was back in 1994, when my first wife's father took the whole family on vacation.

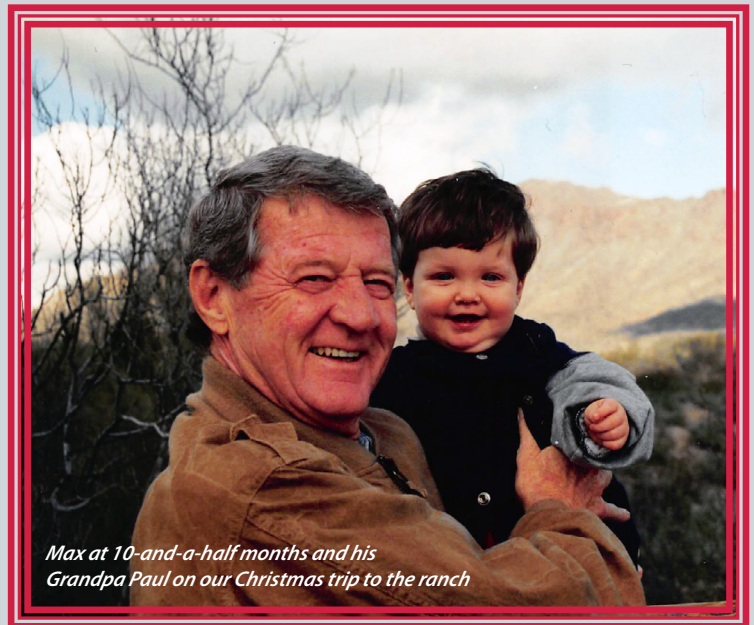
Paul Navin, my father-in-law, was a great guy. He was a respected workers' comp attorney and taught me a lot. After Paul was diagnosed with lung cancer, he wanted to do one last big trip with his family. It was Paul, his wife, Dana, me, my then-wife, Colleen, our newborn son, Max, and Colleen's three siblings, Brett, Beth, and Emily. Together, we escaped the blight of the Ohio winter and fled down to Tucson, Arizona.

The first place we went to was a resort billed as a destination for movie stars. I think that was true, but the movie stars must have stayed there in the 1930s! We checked in and discovered we'd be staying in these rundown cinder block cabins, all jammed together. It was terrible! After about a day of that nightmare, we were able to make a break for a place called Tanque Verde Ranch.

Talk about a complete 180! Tanque Verde Ranch was really nice. It's a big, beautiful resort out in the desert, with swimming pools, horseback riding, and tons of great stuff to do. We took some horseback lessons and got them really galloping. My favorite part of that trip was staying in the saddle when my horse took off running. I'm not sure how well I would have fared if he'd thrown me.

Colleen was eight months pregnant with our second son, Garrett, so, unfortunately, she couldn't participate in the more rigorous activities. She spent most of the trip in the cabin with Max. Lucky for her, being in the cabins gave her lots of time to get acquainted with the javelinas — small, bristly hogs that roam the deserts of Arizona. These guys like to wander around the cabins, and they stink to high heaven! You smell the javelinas before you see them.

Compared to Ohio, that part of Arizona is like being on the moon. The landscape is so different, but it's beautiful. We were out there in December, when the weather



Max at 10-and-a-half months and his Grandpa Paul on our Christmas trip to the ranch

was nicer than Ohio but cool for Tucson. I don't know how beautiful I would have found Tanque Verde Ranch if we'd been out there in summer. The Tucson Chamber of Commerce says it only gets to 120 degrees F, but I talked to some guys who worked on the ranch and they told me their thermometer had clocked 160-degree days. If word got out that Arizona can get that hot, no one in their right mind would ever visit!

It was great to enjoy a sunny Christmas for once. When we came back home after New Year's, we walked out of the airport and into a 0 degree ice storm. Typical Ohio. Whatever your plans for this holiday season, I hope you're able to stay warm and spend it with the people you love.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

-Jim Monast

How to Build the Perfect Snowman

(ACCORDING TO SCIENCE)

If you're lucky enough to get a good snow day this year, building a snowman is a great way to spend it. That said, building a snowman isn't all fun and games. It's hard work, and you want to make sure the end result is worth the sore legs and soggy pants. Here are some science-backed strategies for building the perfect snowman.

Choose the Right Snow

Snow is your artistic medium, so make sure you have the right material for your project. Yes, there is a wrong kind of snow to use when building a snowman. You want the snow to be moist enough that it packs well but not so slushy that it collapses under pressure. The ideal snow for building your masterpiece is freshly fallen snow when the temperature is around 32 degrees F. If the snow isn't quite right, you can moisten it a little by spraying water on it.

Location Is Everything

Before you start stacking your snowman, pick the right location for it to hang out. Asphalt will heat up faster, so stick Frosty on a grassy lawn. If you can find a place that will be in the shade when the sun comes out, all the better.

Pay Attention to Proportion

As you roll the snowballs to form the head and body pieces, keep proportions in mind. This is important for the visual aesthetic of your snowman and overall stability. Mathematician Dr. James Hind from Nottingham Trent University developed a formula for building the perfect snowman. He recommended that a snowman be 64 inches tall, while the sections of the snowman should be 31 inches in diameter for the base, 20 inches in diameter for the middle, and 12 inches in diameter for the head.

Once your snowman is built, science has just one rule for decorating: Have fun. Grab a scarf and a top hat, a carrot nose and radish eyes, or a fancy bow tie. Building the perfect snowman means building a snowman that will make you smile when you see it.



CLIENT STORY: WESTIN KENYON

Over the years, I've represented people with all kinds of injuries: back, neck, and shoulder injuries from lifting or falling; head injuries from falls; horrible hand and knee injuries; terrible burns; and nails in eyes.

One of the most horrendous cases I've seen in 34 years of practice (dang, that's a long time!) involves Westin Kenyon, a young man from Lancaster, Ohio. Westin worked the usual part-time jobs while in high school (Waffle House, McDonald's, Subway). After graduating in May 2018, full of the promise of a great new job in California working with some relatives, Westin and his fiancée, Grace, moved west. Westin and Grace met at the career fair at Lancaster High School during their junior year and have been inseparable ever since.

We all know that, sometimes, opportunities seem full of more potential than they actually turn out to have (especially when we're young, I think). Also, family can sometimes paint an overly rosy picture. It turns out the relatives really just wanted Westin and Grace to move out to California with them — the job didn't exist.

California is a very expensive place to live. Learning this and also that Grace was pregnant with baby Miles, the kids moved back to Ohio to be near family and friends. Embracing his role as provider for his future wife and child, Westin got a good-paying job with Rumpke as a loader. These guys leap off the truck to grab the trash and heave it into the back. He logged 73 hours Thanksgiving week alone. A week later, as he leapt out, the driver didn't stop in time. Westin's right foot was sucked under one of the huge tires and crushed. The back of it was actually ripped off.

Westin spent the next two months in intensive care at Riverside. Amazingly, though the doctors initially thought they'd have to amputate his foot, they were able to reattach the dangling heel. He's had 12 surgeries so far and has a couple more coming soon to "debulk" the flap. He has had to learn to walk again and wears what reminds me of Frankenstein's boot for the right foot. Still, he's gradually been easing back into the workforce: first at Goodwill, then YMCA, and now Habitat for Humanity. He hopes to return to Rumpke next year.

I mention Westin for a couple reasons. The first is that we just went through hearings to set his wages. Since he was in high school half of the year prior to his injury and working only part-time jobs, Rumpke set his wages at a generous \$80.26 per week then increased it to \$155.90. We filed a motion to have his wages (which governs the payments under the life of the claim) set at what he was earning at Rumpke. Incredibly, the first Industrial Commission hearing officer thought anything over \$262.18 per week would be a "windfall" to Westin and unfair to poor old Rumpke. Happily, on appeal, the next hearing officer agreed with us that Westin's wages should be set at what he was earning at Rumpke. This means Westin can provide for his family when he has to go off work for future surgeries.

The second reason I share Westin's story is because of his attitude. This young man has maintained a positive attitude throughout his ordeal, even when he thought he'd lose his foot. His face lights up when he talks about Grace and baby Miles. He's always got a smile on his face and is truly an inspiration for anyone going through very difficult times. I just wanted you to meet him.



I'm a Seasonal Employee CAN I GET WORKERS' COMP IF I GET HURT AT WORK?

Under Ohio's workers' compensation law, employers who are required to carry workers' comp insurance must provide coverage to **all** of their employees, including part-time, temporary, and seasonal workers. Unfortunately, many seasonal employees don't realize they have the same right to workers' comp as full-time, permanent employees. This is a huge problem because seasonal employees are often more likely to get injured on the job than other workers.

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, employers are desperate to get more people into the workforce in order to meet the massive increase in customers. In their rush, companies can fail to properly train their seasonal employees, leaving them at greater risk for accident or injury. Common seasonal jobs that result in high injuries include:

Retail Temporary employees at stores or malls are often stuck with the most strenuous tasks including stocking shelves, working security, and cleaning up after closing.



Order Fulfillment Centers There are three Amazon fulfillment centers in the Columbus area alone, and they have a notorious reputation for employee injuries. Due to requiring employees to work long hours with strenuous tasks, in 2018, Amazon was named one of the most dangerous places to work by the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health.

Stockrooms Target, Walmart, and other major retailers need to keep inventory moving from delivery trucks to the store floor. Temporary workers are hired to unload products and stock shelves. This strenuous work often leads to injuries.

Restaurants Without proper training, working in a restaurant can be incredibly dangerous. Untrained seasonal workers risk experience slips and falls, knife accidents, and back injuries.

Christmas Tree Lots Seasonal workers who cut down Christmas trees, transport them to sale lots, and load them onto customers' cars face a lot of risk. Sprain and strain injuries, severe falls, and power tool accidents are common on Christmas tree lots.

If you are injured while working a temporary seasonal job over the holidays, remember that you have the same rights as a full-time, permanent employee. You can seek medical care and compensation for your injuries. If a temporary employer claims you cannot file workers' comp, **they are lying to you**. Report your injury, seek medical care, and call 614-334-4649 to speak to an experienced workers' comp attorney immediately!

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ANSWER

NIBBLES WITH NUG POTATO LATKES

For the Holiday Season

Inspired by The New York Times

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large russet potatoes, scrubbed
- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into quarters
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- Safflower or vegetable oil, for frying

DIRECTIONS

1. Using either a food processor with a coarse grating disc or the coarse side of a box grater, grate potatoes and onion. (If using a food processor, halve or quarter potatoes.) Once grated, wrap in a clean dish towel or cheesecloth to wring out as much moisture as possible.
2. Transfer to a mixing bowl and mix in eggs, flour, salt, baking powder, and pepper.
3. Heat a heavy-bottomed pan containing 1/4-inch of oil over medium-high heat. Use a heaping tablespoon to drop batter into the hot pan, working in batches. Use a spatula or spoon to form them into discs. Fry about 5 minutes per side, until deeply browned.
4. Transfer to a paper towel-lined wire rack to drain, and serve alongside applesauce and sour cream.



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HORSING AROUND

MEET A DIFFERENT KIND OF THERAPY ANIMAL

Horses have been loyal and useful companions to humans for centuries. But unbeknownst to many who fear these long-legged, 1,000-plus-pound mammals, horses are also naturally intuitive and extremely sensitive to the moods of people around them. These traits make them excellent therapy animals for those with autism, cerebral palsy, chronic illnesses, and PTSD, among many more. In fact, there are dedicated horse-riding camps geared toward chronically ill children and adults all over the world.

However, riding horses isn't the only way to benefit from equine therapy; horses are also fantastic comfort animals that can relieve anxiety and promote a positive environment for bedridden patients — as long as the doorway is big enough.

Meet Peyo, the 14-year-old “love stallion” from Dijon, France, who is cheering up chronically ill patients one nuzzle at a time. This accomplished artistic dressage competitor accompanies his owner, Hassen Bouchakour, on visits to hospitals and nursing homes, bringing joy with every clop of his hooves.

Patients suffering from all manner of ailments blossom when Peyo comes to visit, laughing and smiling while being nudged by his soft nose. He seems to have a keen sense for patients who are truly suffering, and though his handler is

always nearby, Peyo often chooses which rooms to enter of his own volition.

Having a horse in a hospital room may not sound very sanitary, but Peyo goes through a strict grooming regimen to be deemed hygienic enough to be around patients. His hooves are greased, his mane and tail are braided, and his entire body is rubbed down with antibacterial lotion before being covered by a blanket.

Before Peyo became a therapy horse, he was almost put up for sale by Bouchakour, who had a hard time wrangling Peyo's fiery personality. But, over time, when they traveled to shows and competitions together, Bouchakour noticed the horse was drawn to the injured and disabled and would instantly calm at their touch. “It is one of the most pure, honest, and sweet things,” Bouchakour says. “They like each other very much without asking for anything else.”



Photo by Jessica Rodriguez @jessicarodriguezphotographer