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LAW OFFICE

Workers' COMPanion

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST WINTERS

We have definitely entered the winter season as January is usually our coldest month of the year. Those who have lived in Ohio for a while know that our winters are no joke. Snow, frost, and ice are always expected to make an appearance at some point during the month. While our winters can certainly be harsh, there are places around the globe that make our winters look like summer.

A few months back, I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Washington, D.C., where Dallas Seavey was giving a speech. For those unfamiliar with Seavey, he is the youngest to ever compete in and win the Iditarod. It amazed me to hear how humble Seavey was as he described racing with a team of dogs in the freezing cold that would often drop to 60 degrees below zero. He talked about perseverance and fighting adverse conditions, but what stood out to me the most was how well he took care of himself so that these obstacles didn't hinder him.

While we might not be racing in the Iditarod or living in Alaska, we are still greatly affected by the winter weather whenever it comes around. There's almost always something we can learn from these conditions. I still remember a time when I was young and camping with my friends. Camping and hiking in the winter was always a great time for us, and on one trip, we decided to travel to Old Man's Cave in Hocking Hills.

As we were packing up and rolling up our sleeping bags, my bag rolled away from me and went over the edge of an outcropping. It would have fallen into a pond, but since it was winter, the pond had frozen over. Out of instinct, I jumped over the edge and fell a good distance. I hit the ice and slid across to get my sleeping bag. My friends thought it was the coolest thing ever, in part because the ice didn't crack and they didn't have to save me from freezing water. This trip taught me that sleeping bags do roll.

I've always enjoyed camping in the winter and am grateful that my sons feel the same way. There were plenty of times when we would all go winter camping together with the Boy Scouts where we learned some crucial lessons. The first is to always wear a stocking cap. These hats will keep your head and ears warm, which will make the experience much more enjoyable. There's nothing worse than waking up in the middle of the night and heading outside only to be met with the freezing cold as it rings through your ears.



It's also essential to have something between you and the ground while sitting and sleeping. It will be much more comfortable and also warmer.

I live in a house that was built in the 1940s, which means it takes quite a bit to heat it. We replaced the boiler not long after moving in, and the new boiler lasted us 10 years. It broke as soon as the warranty was up. This left us without heat for three weeks. There was electric heat at opposite ends of the house, which kept the pipes from freezing, but our saving grace was the wood stove. We couldn't find the necessary part to fix the boiler and instead used copper piping that made the boiler look like something straight out of a steampunk movie. Thankfully, the wood stove provided enough heat to keep us warm through those weeks.

Another issue that came with the older house was the piping from the washer to the laundry tub to the outside. The pipe that went outside would freeze every winter and we would have to attach a hose to a faucet and spray the pipes to thaw them out, which could take up to an hour. When Amy moved in, she suggested that we get someone to enclose the outside piping. We looked into it and got it rerouted. We haven't looked back since. The lesson I learned from this story is to always listen to your wife.

I hope you all have a safe and happy winter season!

- Jim Monast

EASY, AFFORDABLE WAYS TO EMBRACE NATURE IN YOUR HOME

Thanks to the chaos we've experienced since 2020, many design experts are looking to create spaces that are calm, welcoming, and grounded. Enter one of the biggest design trends of the 2020s: neutral, natural elements.

Here are some easy ways to bring nature inside and boost your home's look without overspending.

The obvious option is to add more houseplants.

And plants don't have to be difficult! Consider your home space, first. How much light do you get? Is it a dry or humid home? How likely is it that you will remember to water a plant? Bring these concerns to your local nursery, and they will help you find the perfect leafy friend(s) to fill your space.

Then, opt for pieces that won't decay. When choosing new decor for your home or when updating your knickknacks for the seasons, look for wooden or natural items that don't have a life cycle. Fake plants, wooden statues and picture frames,

and piles of stones or vases with rocks can bring the richness of the great outdoors into your home with little effort and can be reused each season.

Now, look to your backyard! If you have a big pine tree that produces pine cones each year, don't let those go to waste! Baskets or vases filled with pine cones can be great fall and winter decor pieces, while lots of clever crafters have made wreaths, scent diffusers, and other fun items with pine cones found in their yard. Just be mindful of what you take from nature. Don't take anything of value to the ecosystem, and don't grab items from state or national parks.

Finally, utilize windows. Part of embracing natural design elements is letting nature do the talking! Focus your design in each room around windows. For instance, fix plant displays near windows or hang bird feeders in trees you can see through your windows. If you really want to get cozy with the outdoors, consider installing a skylight!

To find more inspiration, take a walk and discover how Mother Nature has designed her space. Bring those ideas into your home and enjoy the comfort of the great outdoors within your own great indoors.



MEET DANELLE, OUR NEWEST LEGAL ASSISTANT

A legal assistant with over 24 years of experience in workers' compensation law, Danelle is the first point of contact for many new clients at Monast Law Office. A proud graduate of Briggs High School and the Northeast Career Center in Columbus, Danelle has her associate degree in legal assisting with certification in workers' comp law from Columbus State Community College. When you call our office, you can be sure you will be speaking to a knowledgeable assistant who will answer your questions and help you get started on your claim or appeal.

Danelle's duties at Monast Law Office include intake interviews with potential clients, filing initial claims with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), working with our settlement consultant to prepare claims for settlement, communicating with doctors to get the records and evidence necessary to file a successful claim, and making sure Jim and his clients are prepared for hearings before the Industrial Commission.

In her free time, Danelle enjoys camping at Deer Creek with her family and is an avid Stephen King fan — something she has in common with Jim! Danelle has dedicated her professional life to workers' comp law because she loves helping people who have been injured get the benefits they need to get well and return to work. She loves the quiet family atmosphere at Monast Law Office and enjoys the challenges she comes across on a daily basis.

SURPRISING VETERANS WITH A NEW HOUSE



Actor and comedian Rob Riggle is known for his hilarious antics as a comedian and actor in movies like "21 Jump Street" and "Step Brothers," but did you know that he's also a retired U.S. Marine? Even with fame, Riggle has not forgotten his military roots and is finding new ways to support members of our military.

This past November, Riggle partnered with Veterans United Home Loans and has been helping them surprise veterans across the country with brand-new houses during their Thanks To Veterans campaign. The houses are completely paid off and will be home for these veterans and their families for years to come.

"These veterans have continued to live the military value of 'selfless service' even after they've hung up their uniforms," said Riggle. "Teaming up with Veterans United to recognize these incredible veterans has been an amazing experience."

Veterans in need got houses in California, Georgia, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. These veterans have continued to give back to their

communities after retiring from the military. The organization gave a house to a widowed mother of three as well as a Vietnam vet who was in need of a wheelchair-accessible home.

"Our #ThanksToVeterans campaign underscores the daily commitment of veterans as local leaders, dedicated volunteers, and exemplary neighbors," said Pam Swan, vice president of military relations for Veterans United Home Loans. "And what better way to thank these deserving individuals than by giving them houses of their very own in the communities they call home?"

You can see the reactions of veterans and their families as they are presented with their new homes at ThanksToVeterans.com. Seeing the surprise and happiness on their faces is incredibly heartwarming and is sure to bring a tear to your eye.

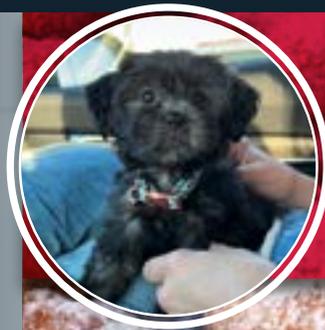
Our veterans have sacrificed a lot for our country, and it's inspiring to see the lengths that Riggle and Veterans United are willing to go to share their appreciation for our veterans' service.

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ANSWER



MUNCHIES WITH MOLLY DEEP-FRIED NEW YEAR'S 'COOKIES'



Inspired by MennoniteGirlsCanCook.ca

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp yeast
- 1/2 cup water, warmed
- 1/2 cup and 1 tsp sugar, divided
- 5 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 1/2 cups milk, warmed
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 4 cups raisins
- 7 cups flour
- 4 cups canola oil

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine yeast, water, and 1 tsp sugar. Wait 10 minutes.
2. Stir in remaining sugar, eggs, butter, milk, and salt.
3. Fold in the raisins and flour. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Let the dough rise for an hour.
4. In a high-sided pot or deep fryer, heat canola oil to 340 F. Line a plate with paper towels.
5. Drop a rounded tablespoon of dough into the oil. Fry until golden brown, then set aside on the plate. Poke the cookie with a toothpick. If the toothpick comes out clean, it's cooked through!
6. Repeat until the batter is gone.

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HOW TO KEEP NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR REAL, THIS TIME

New Year's Eve has come and gone, and now that the champagne is finished and the decorations are put away, it's time to buckle down and work on those New Year's resolutions. The only problem is ... your resolutions for this year and last year are the same.

Change is tough, so you're not alone in being unable to stick to your resolutions. This year can be different, if you want it to be. Here are some tips to keep you on track.

Have a specific goal. Many resolutions are vague — along the lines of "exercise more" or "eat healthier." That's too ambiguous to inspire motivation, and vagueness leaves room for excuses. Make your goal more concrete, so you can measure your success. Specific goals could include going to the gym three times a week, being able to bench a certain number of pounds, or only indulging in fast food once a month. Make your goal realistic — if it's too drastic or difficult, it's easier to give up.

Have a plan. Bad habits are hard to break, so change won't come about naturally. It's important to consider how you'll structure your day around your resolution and what obstacles you might face. When will you go to the gym, and what will you do if that time gets interrupted? How will you plan meals to avoid spontaneous drive-thru visits? Write down what you



want to accomplish and all the things that might stand in your way. Then, figure out how you'll deal with them before they happen.

Start small. On Jan. 1, you're probably enthusiastic about your resolution and ready to hit the ground running. Not so fast — doing too much too soon is a classic mistake. It's okay to be excited, but working out until you're sore all over or constantly eating salads you hate will turn your resolution into a chore that you'll want to avoid. Start with light workouts or replacing some of your carbs with veggies. Once you get the hang of that, you'll be ready to scale up slowly.

Using these guidelines, you'll make lasting changes that extend beyond February. Get 2022 started off on the right foot, and next year you'll be ready to make a whole new resolution — and keep it.