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ON TO A NEW YEAR

A RESOLUTION TO PUT FAMILY FIRST

This has been a tremendous year for the firm. We've been incredibly busy, a fact that I am thankful for because it means we've been spending a lot of time representing people who really need our help. Generally, we have climbs to face each year, but we're very proud to represent people in tough situations — people who desperately need help and have fortunately found us.

I feel privileged to be part of something where I know I am making a difference in the lives of so many people, helping them overcome terrible challenges and move on with their lives. As we go on ahead, I am eager to keep taking on new clients and new cases.

Outside of the firm, my goals for the coming year are focused on my family. I know I need to be better about keeping in touch with my brother and sister. It's strange, because when you grow up being around your siblings every single day, you never really believe there will be a time when you don't see them all the time. Or

that you might not even hear from them for weeks. Our adult lives get so busy with work and our own families, and many of us forget to just reach out to our siblings when we don't need anything.

My resolution is to get better about that. I'm going to make a bigger effort to reach out and call my brother and sister just to say hey more often. We need to get together more outside of the holidays. With my sister moving back into town, this will probably be a lot easier. Maybe this will be the year we can all go skiing together again.

Our family used to be avid skiers. I've been skiing since I was 7 years old. My parents would take us up to the slopes out in Pennsylvania or Vermont. At some point, we even started going out to Colorado and skiing the Rockies.

Once we had kids of our own, my wife and I would take our girls out to California to visit my mother-in-law and enjoy some of the amazing skiing they have out there.

Before she passed, my mother-in-law lived in Southern California, right in the shadow of the San Gabriel Mountains. What made California trips so cool was that we could be swimming in the ocean in the morning, enjoying the warm weather, and then pile into the car and be skiing up at Bear Mountain in the afternoon.

It's amazing out there, with so much snow and those gorgeous views. I would love to go back. It's been some time since I've been skiing, what with my busy schedule and the warm weather. But if a ski trip includes spending more time with my family, how could I not take the opportunity to hit the slopes once more?

This December, I hope you're getting plenty of time with the ones you love as well. Happy New Year!

- Joseph Miller

WHERE ROAMED THE GNOME?

In December of 2015, Bev York thought she'd never see her trusty garden companion, Leopold, again. The Victoria, B.C., resident noticed her garden gnome was missing — possibly stolen by neighborhood kids or a local gnome enthusiast. At the time, Bev figured there wasn't much she could do about the missing gnome. She assumed he would never be seen again. She went on with her life and continued to tend to her garden without him.

Eight months later, Bev spotted a curious plastic bag tied to the gate at the end of her driveway. In the bag was the gnome, not any worse for wear, along with a hardbound book — with the gnome's cheery face emblazoned on the cover. The book, it turned out, was a photo journal filled with the adventures of Leopold the gnome.

Bev opened the book, which read in the words of Leopold himself: "Hi, my name is Leopold the traveling gnome. One morning, back in December of '15, I saw a motor home toddling

along Finlayson Arm Road. I thought to myself, 'There's got to be more to life than standing knee-deep in rain water, being peed on by neighborhood dogs, and staring at the same view every single day.' So I hopped on ..."

And so, that kicked off the journey of Leopold — named so by the gnome-nappers, a family of three and their two dogs. By the time he made it back to Bev, Leopold the gnome had traveled down the Pacific Coast, from Victoria to Baja California, and throughout the western U.S. The gnome had relaxed on the beach, explored the Grand Canyon, enjoyed a margarita the size of his head — pointy gnome cap included — all before finally returning home to Bev's garden, where he continues to live the conventional life of a garden gnome.



MEET FAATIMAH LOVELL, INTAKE SPECIALIST

Faatimah grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Her previous work experience involves working in various arenas of customer service and sales, where she has received several accolades and awards for her outstanding exemplification of providing quality client and customer care. She has studied nursing and health care administration and possesses an enthusiastic interest in the legal field.

Her hobbies include spending time with her two daughters, reading, and cooking. Faatimah finds her work at Joe Miller Law to be both fulfilling and rewarding, as she is able to combine her empathetic personality and energetic work ethic to help others. We find her enthusiasm and perseverance to be infectious, and we are thrilled to have her as part of our team at Joe Miller Law!

Hit Your Caffeine Reset Button

2 STEPS TO END YOUR COFFEE AND ENERGY DRINK CRAVINGS

There comes a point in every hardworking adult's life when we realize we're not getting the most out of our daily cup of coffee. One cup becomes two, two becomes four, and before you know it, you have a problem — though you wouldn't necessarily admit it. So many of us rely on coffee or energy drinks to get through the morning — and then later to make it through the afternoon. Caffeine makes our day.

Is it time to hit the reset button? If you're not getting the same boost of energy from coffee, energy drinks, tea, or soda, it might be time to start over. Another cup isn't the answer. In fact, it's the opposite. Most of us make the mistake of adding, when we should be subtracting.

Step One. Start by drinking a little less every day. How much less is up

to you and may depend on how much caffeine you consume. Look at your current drinking habits. How much have you had to drink today — coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks?

A good place to start is to drink one less cup every two days. If you drink eight cups of coffee a day, over the next two days, stop at seven; the two following days, stop at six; and so on. Keep in mind, the quicker you wean yourself off caffeine, the more likely you are to experience withdrawal effects like headaches and irritability. When you take it slow, you have more control.

Step Two. Find beverage substitutes. One of the best drinks you can consume while "decaffeinating" is warm water with lemon and honey. Many people swear by this combination. It can help

you stay awake and alert, without any of the stimulating effects of caffeine. As you drink fewer caffeinated beverages, drink more water. Give yourself something to reach for — as you would a cup of coffee or can of soda.

Your goal is to give your body time to adjust to lower levels of caffeine in your system. After about a week or two, you should begin to notice that you're getting more from less — if not, you need to continue the weaning process. For some people, it may take as long as a month. Stick with it and you will be impressed with the results. You can still drink coffee, but you'll only need one cup instead of eight!

DID YOU KNOW ...



If you are under an open award in Virginia or an accepted claim in North Carolina, the workers' compensation insurance carrier must remit your weekly comp check within 14 days of the date the check becomes due, plus three days allowance for mailing. When things are running smoothly, you will notice that your

check normally arrives on the same day of the week. But if your check doesn't arrive on the normal day you receive your checks, your check is not considered late until the 17 days pass. There are several reasons your check may be delayed — no mail due to a federal holiday, issues in the accounting department at the

comp carrier, etc. While this is a huge inconvenience for the injured worker, unfortunately, there is no action that can be taken with the VWCC or NCIC until the check is 17 days late.

At that point, we can ask for the check and move for the appropriate penalties with the commission.

RECENT CASE DEVELOPMENTS

We are so happy to have recently obtained a significant workers' compensation settlement for Jim Hoffius, a Virginia engineer who was severely injured on the job when he was rear-ended in car accident.

kind enough to share the following in an email:

Joe and Lisa,

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to you and your entire staff for the educational experience this has been and to each one of you for the

consistent help throughout this ordeal/process. I am positive we would have made many mistakes without your guidance through it all.

I hope my body will heal (but I have my doubts) and to never have to go through something like this again, but if necessary, we would know who to turn to for this type of guidance — and who to recommend if we know of someone else in a similar situation.

*Thank you,
James and Debbie Hoffius*

We were honored to represent Mr. Hoffius, and we're happy we were able to get him to a place where he is in a decent position to move forward financially and, hopefully, obtain a new career more in line with his physical restrictions since his accident. We wish him tremendous success in the next stage of his career and life.



Joe's Monthly 'SOUL SNACKS'

"If you are not a better person tomorrow than you are today, what need have you for a tomorrow?"
— R. Nachman

"The opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness; it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy; it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death; it's indifference."
— Elie Wiesel

Beef and Mushroom Stuffed ACORN SQUASH

What You'll Need ...

- 1 acorn squash
- Coconut oil, for sautéing
- ½ onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- ½ pound ground grass-fed beef
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 cups chopped fresh spinach or other green (arugula, kale, etc.)



Step by Step ...

1. Cut the squash in half and scoop out seeds. Microwave the squash for 7-8 minutes, or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, in a skillet over medium heat, melt a little coconut oil and add the onion, garlic, mushrooms, grass-fed beef, curry powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Stir until vegetables are cooked and beef is browned.
4. Add the spinach and cook until it's just wilted.
5. Scoop the filling into the squash halves and serve.

Recipe inspired by cookituppaleo.com.