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LAW OFFICE

Workers' COMPanion

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CHILI, CROCK-POTS, AND COLLEGE FOOTBALL

How I Cook My Way Through Fall

October is finally here, and for me, there's no better time of year. The trees around Ohio start turning those beautiful shades of red, orange, and yellow, and the air gets that perfect crispness. It's the ideal backdrop for cooking up some hearty, comforting food to share with family and friends — because, let's face it, what's better than a warm meal on a chilly fall day, especially with a good game of college football on in the background?

Now, in our house, I'm the one who handles the cooking. It's a bit ironic, considering my wife's mother was a home economics teacher, yet somehow, neither my wife nor her mom developed a love for cooking. I guess it just wasn't their thing! But for me, I've always been drawn to the kitchen. Maybe it's because I grew up watching my mom, who grew up on a farm, whip up meals out of seemingly nothing. Or maybe it's the influence of my dad, who lived in Louisiana and could make a mean gumbo, shrimp salad (with plenty of garlic), and jambalaya. Whatever the reason, I made sure to pass that love for cooking down to my sons. And I'm proud to say they've picked it up quite well — they might even be as obsessed with jambalaya as I am!

During the fall, nothing beats a pot of chili simmering away all day. It's a recipe I've refined over the years, tweaking it here and there until it's just right. It's one of those recipes that is barely legible on a notecard with crossed-out measurements, sauce stains, and wobbly handwriting, so I don't think I'll be able to share it with you any time soon!

Aside from chili, fall is also perfect for Crock-Pot cooking, but back in the day, I was a bit skeptical. It seemed too easy, almost like cheating — and, really, the food wasn't very tasty. But I have to admit, I've come around. I've discovered some pretty fantastic recipes, and there's even

a website I recommend to anyone looking to get into slow cooking — RecipesThatCrock.com. It's run by a down-to-earth couple who share a ton of great recipes that I cycle through all the time.



One of my favorites is their pulled pork. It's ridiculously simple: just use some Lawry's seasoning, a pork shoulder, half a cup of sherry, and let it cook for 8–10 hours. The result? Fantastic. I always have leftovers, which I happily pass along to my kids. Another go-to is the Mississippi pot roast. You take a chuck roast, throw in some dried ranch seasoning, a little butter, and pepperoncini with their juice, and let it cook all day. The smell alone is worth it, and coming home to a ready-made meal after work is pure bliss.

If it weren't clear how much I love cooking, my collection of cookbooks would be the dead giveaway. One of my favorites is "Food and How to Make It," a fundraiser cookbook filled with long-guarded family recipes contributed by real people. It's like a treasure trove of Junior League recipes. I also have plenty of handwritten gems from my mom that I keep tucked away in a beat-up old recipe box.

There's something incredibly relaxing about cooking. It clears my mind, and I find it to be one of the most rewarding ways to unwind after a long day. I hope you get a chance to try one of these recipes, browse around RecipesThatCrock.com, and enjoy a cozy fall filled with good food and great company. After all, nothing brings people together quite like a warm, home-cooked meal.

- Jim Monast

SMART SACRIFICES

MASTERING MILESTONES ON THE ROAD TO RICHES

People who struggle financially cite some common reasons: low pay, credit card debt, high housing costs, inflation, too much retail therapy, etc.

Few realize that by setting goals and making the sacrifices required to achieve them, they could join the ranks of those who live comfortably with ample savings. Here are five proven steps for making your money work for you.

PAY OFF HIGH-INTEREST DEBT.

You must stop the bleeding from costly credit card debt. One of the best strategies is the avalanche method, which entails paying off your highest-interest debt first to save the most money on



interest. Another method, the snowball approach, requires paying off the smallest debt first, then redirecting that money to pay off the next largest debt. This method saves less money in interest but offers more immediate gratification.

SAVE UP AN EMERGENCY FUND.

If you can, set aside \$2,000 as a safety net immediately. After paying off any high-interest debt, build that fund to cover 3–6 months of expenses. Stash it in a high-yield savings account so it will keep working for you while you pursue other goals.

INVEST YOUR SAVINGS.

Start investing any new savings for higher returns. Avoid speculative plays such as cryptocurrency or individual

stocks. Instead, do some research on index funds, exchange-traded funds, bonds, or certificates of deposit with solid track records.

INCREASE YOUR EARNINGS.

If you don't have money, you must work to get it. It may not be fair that some people work three or four jobs to meet their goals, but it's better than staying stuck. You also may have to invest in gaining new skills to increase your income.

TAKE CHARGE.

Clinging to a victim mentality is self-defeating. Thinking positively isn't enough to make you rich, but it will open up new opportunities you couldn't otherwise have imagined and help you stick to your goals.

Once you have mastered these secrets of the rich, start working toward your own milestones. The lifelong rewards will be more than worth the effort!

The Road to Recovery

SCOTT'S INSPIRING RETURN TO TRUCKING AFTER INJURY

At Monast Law Office, we're privileged to work with incredible individuals like Scott Tatum, who inspire us with their resilience and determination. Scott has become a beloved client and even earned the nickname "Hollywood" from his friends and family after appearing in our website video. He has a story that we believe deserves to be shared.

Scott's journey began in Cleveland, Ohio, where he grew up before relocating to Columbus in 1992. A lifelong trucker, Scott's grandfather and several other family members also took to the road. He loved the freedom of the open road, but in 2011, an injury threatened to take away the career he cherished.

After undergoing surgery in 2012, Scott's doctor told him it would take 2–3 years to fully recover — a timeline that didn't align with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), which often expects a much faster return to work. Despite this, Scott never lost hope. He was determined to find a way to rebuild his life, even when told he might never drive a truck again.

When BWC suggested he pursue a different profession, Scott took an aptitude test and scored so high that the examiner became his advocate, pushing Scott to attend college. Scott's tenacity paid off, and he earned his Surgical Technician Certification. He went on to work at a large hospital in Columbus, setting a standard for excellence and helping colleagues with their studies.



Yet, Scott's heart remained with trucking. Encouraged by surgeons who saw his strength and resilience, he began doing light trucking on weekends while still working part time at the hospital. Eventually, Scott returned to trucking full time, and today, he owns his own company with two semi-trucks, living a life he once feared he'd lost forever.

Scott credits his attorney, our very own Jim Monast, and our team with being his "stress relievers" during those challenging years. He says, "Jim told me, 'We will take care of this; you just focus on healing.'" That personal touch made all the difference. Now, Scott enjoys life with his three grandchildren, grateful for the journey that brought him back to the work he loves.

Scott's story is a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of having a supportive team behind you. At Monast Law Office, we're honored to have been part of Scott's journey and proud to share his success with you.

HARVESTING HOPE AND HEALTH

HOW ROUTE 1 IS EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH AGRICULTURE

When students from marginalized communities face challenges in school, options are limited and can lead kids to slippery slopes and down dangerous paths. However, Marcus Carpenter and his organization, Route 1, are opening up exciting new possibilities for these young people who are often left behind. Carpenter, a fourth-generation Black American farmer, is transforming 21st-century farming and empowering youth in Minnesota not only to grow and sell nutritious food but also to make a positive impact on their lives and communities.

Carpenter's agricultural roots run deep, tracing back to his great-grandmother Sally, who purchased 180 acres of farmland in Arkansas in 1914. The road leading to that farm was named Route 1, and today, Carpenter has turned that legacy into a forward-thinking organization that embraces both tradition and innovation.

Route 1's Seeds to Success Youth Academy offers a refreshing opportunity for young people who might be struggling in school or life. Take Anthony Rasmussen, for example. He came from a low-income family but discovered his passion for farming through the program. His involvement in growing part of the 7,000 pounds of produce recently delivered to local community

organizations sparked a desire to pursue a career in agriculture. Route 1 is helping him and many others find a meaningful path forward.

Like many places, Minnesota faces challenges with food insecurity, but Route 1 is addressing this issue with creativity and cultural awareness. By incorporating African crops that thrive in Minnesota's climate, Route 1 provides nutritious food that connects culturally with the community. It's a beautiful way to show that agriculture can be both nourishing and culturally significant.

Through community-supported agriculture (CSA), Route 1 also builds bridges between farmers and local businesses. This sustainable model boosts the local economy and ensures that fresh, healthy food reaches those who need it most.

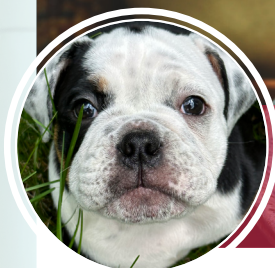
Marcus Carpenter's Route 1 is more than just farming — it's a beacon of hope and a blueprint for a brighter future. By teaching the next generation how to farm, Route 1 is cultivating not just crops but confidence, community, and change. Hopefully, we will see more projects like Route 1 across the country!

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ANSWER



EATS WITH ELLIE

PUMPKIN PIE FRENCH TOAST

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 tsp vegetable oil, or as needed
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 1/4 cup canned pumpkin purée
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/4 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 8 slices day-old bread
- Maple syrup, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Lightly oil a skillet and heat over medium heat.
2. Whisk half-and-half, pumpkin purée, eggs, cinnamon, vanilla, and pumpkin pie spice together in a bowl. Stir in walnuts until evenly distributed.
3. Place 1 slice of bread in the bowl and let it soak briefly to coat both sides. Lift bread to let excess liquid drip back into the bowl, then transfer to the hot skillet.
4. Cook for 2–3 minutes or until golden brown, then flip and cook the other side until done.
5. Stir batter to redistribute walnuts and repeat with other slices of bread, cooking in several batches if necessary.
6. Serve warm with maple syrup.

Inspired by AllRecipes.com

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PLAYING CARDS AND THE CALENDAR

AN UNEXPECTED SYNCHRONICITY

The humble deck of playing cards has remained relevant in a world filled with digital screens and instant gratification. Beyond card games, however, these pocket-sized wonders have a captivating history.

THE CALENDRIAL CONNECTIONS

As we explore the history of playing cards, we uncover the intricate relationship between a standard deck's components and the modern calendar. From the two primary colors representing day and night to the four suits corresponding to the four seasons, the parallels are uncannily precise.

THE RHYTHMIC RESONANCE OF THE CARDS

Dive deeper, and you'll find the 13 card values, from Ace to King, align seamlessly with the 13 weeks in a quarter and the 13 lunar cycles. When you add the numeric values of all the cards, the total is 365 – the exact number of days in a year, with the addition of the Joker card representing the leap year.



BEHIND THE MYSTERIES OF THE COURT CARDS

But the synchronicity doesn't stop there. The 12 court cards, comprising the Kings, Queens, and Jacks, mirror the 12 months of the calendar year, adding another layer of intrigue to the connection.

EMBRACING THE TIMELESS ALLURE OF PLAYING CARDS

Whether this remarkable alignment is a coincidence or deliberate, the relationship between playing cards and the calendar is a fascinating and thought-provoking revelation. For ardent card enthusiasts, this knowledge adds another dimension to their hobby.

Rediscovering playing cards can be a refreshing and enlightening experience in a world that often prioritizes the digital and the instant. So, the next time you find yourself shuffling a deck, take a moment to ponder the hidden secrets that lie within.