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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."

INSPIRATION My Road to Becoming a Lawyer

BY RENEE NORDSTRAND

It's fitting that we're launching this first edition of our newsletter during the holidays — after all, it's a time for gratitude and self-reflection. I can think of no better way of beginning this publication than to express how grateful I am for you, our friends and clients. Thank you for the trust and confidence you have placed in us over the years. As I look back on the road that led to the foundation of this law firm, I couldn't be more proud of what we've accomplished.

From the time I was a teen, I wanted to be a lawyer. I recall my father being very animated as we sat at the dinner table and he told our family about his cases — the people he represented, the challenges they faced, and what he was going to do to help them. He was passionate about helping his clients and telling his clients' stories, always asking our opinions on the case. My father's passion for fighting for his clients' rights and helping people inspired me to become a lawyer.

Throughout the years, my father's clients often let him know how happy they were with his assistance, giving him handcrafted works, cards, and great praise. Seeing these acts of gratitude, even as a kid, drove home that my father had really made a difference for these people.

When I was 17 years old and thought I was invincible, I had a serious accident and came to understand what these clients had gone through. Unfortunately, during a ski trip at Mammoth Mountain, I decided that I would ski a run called Hangman's Hollow, which would be my last run that day. Flying down that steep, rocky slope, I caught an

edge and wiped out. My face and body hit the rocks, causing a serious brain contusion, concussion, facial injury, nerve damage in my arm, and a compression fracture in my back that would cause me pain for the rest of my life.

Thankfully, my parents, family, friends, and teachers were there to support me through recovery, and I graduated high school with my class. Although I went through a long recovery process, which involved surgeries, learning how to walk again, wearing a back brace, and suffering lingering chronic pain, one lesson has stuck with me: Traumatic accidents can impact your entire life. I have the context to understand the hardship that my personal injury clients endure.

My wanting to help injured people comes as no surprise. I followed directly in my father's footsteps. In fact, my dad still practices law in LA, and we often talk about our cases and have worked together on several cases. Since founding Nordstrand Black PC (formally Law Office of Renee Nordstrand) over 25 years ago, I have represented hundreds of clients for many different types of injuries resulting from every type of pedestrian and vehicle accident, trip/slip and falls, defective products, animal and dog bites, construction and industrial accidents, dangerous property conditions, and negligent handling of remains, to name a few. I love the law and am satisfied that I am able to give those facing serious injuries a voice against large insurance companies. I feel grateful that I can help my clients and their families find the treatment and support they need.



Practicing law in Santa Barbara has been rewarding and being able to give back to the community, fulfilling. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to volunteer as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and at Girls Inc. Nordstrand Black regularly donates to Transition House as well as many other charitable organizations. I have been a member of Santa Barbara Women Lawyers (SBWL) and SBWL Foundation for 25 years and served as President of SBWL. For the last five years, I have served on the Foundation Board for Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation.

If you're currently recovering from an accident, I know how frustrating recovery can be. The best advice I can give, as someone who has been injured in a serious accident, is to be patient, work hard in therapy, and keep a positive outlook. If you haven't found a solution to your chronic pain, don't give up. Different treatment modalities work for different people. As for me, about six years ago, I finally found relief for my chronic unrelenting back pain when I discovered Iyengar yoga. So, keep searching for solutions, and live life to the fullest.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season,

—Renee Nordstrand

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

Why Do We Hang Christmas Lights?

The first string of twinkling lights illuminating your neighbor's house is always a telltale sign of the upcoming seasonal festivities. Christmas lights are a holiday staple, but have you ever wondered where this beloved tradition started?

The tradition of hanging lights on the tree originally started with candles. Because this posed an immense fire hazard, Edward Hibberd Johnson, a close friend of Thomas Edison and vice president of the Edison Electric Light Company, vowed to find a better way to decorate Christmas trees with light. In December 1882, three years after Edison's invention of the lightbulb in November 1879, Johnson hand-wired 80 red, white, and blue lightbulbs together and wound them around a Christmas tree in his parlor window. A passing reporter saw the spectacle and declared in the Detroit Post and Tribune, "One can hardly imagine anything prettier."

Johnson continued this tradition, increasing the number of lights each year and eventually putting them up outside. But because electricity was still a new concept, many years passed before the fad took off for regular Americans. In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge began the tradition of lighting the National Christmas Tree, which spurred the idea of selling stringed lights commercially. By the 1930s,

families everywhere were buying boxes of bulbs by the dozen. Today, an estimated 150 million Christmas lights are sold in America each year, decorating 80 million homes and consuming 6% of the nation's electricity every December.

Whether you'll be putting up your own lights or appreciating the most impressive light displays in your neighborhood or town, let the glow fill you with joy this season. Just don't leave them up until February!



Protection From the Uninsured Motorist

Car insurance can give drivers a false sense of security. Here's the truth: "Full Coverage" may not mean you are fully covered for your medical bills, car rental, or other damages. When you're hit by a driver with little to no insurance — regardless of the severity of your injuries — you won't be able to recover much in damages from the negligent driver. However, UM/UIM coverage can change this.



WHAT IS UM/UIM COVERAGE?

Uninsured motorist (UM) and underinsured motorist (UIM) coverage protects you from being left to pay for another driver's mistake. As the name suggests, this optional addition to your insurance policy protects you when the person responsible for the accident doesn't have the coverage for the harm they've caused you. While you are not required by law to have UM/UIM coverage, it's very risky to go without it.

DO YOU NEED UM/UIM COVERAGE?

The Insurance Research Council (IRC) found that about 1 in 8 drivers in the U.S. does not have car insurance — and California far exceeds this national average. Over 15% of drivers in this state do not have any coverage, making driving without UM coverage a significant risk. Even more numerous are the many underinsured drivers in California who only have the minimum \$15,000 in coverage required by law for

bodily harm. While this may sound like a lot, when you factor in the costs of emergency medical treatment, therapy, medications, lost wages, and pain and suffering, this minimum doesn't come close to covering the cost of serious car accidents.

HOW MUCH UM/UIM LIABILITY COVERAGE SHOULD YOU HAVE?

You should always purchase UM/UIM coverage. This protects you and occupants of your vehicle when another person causes an accident resulting in injuries or damages. UM/UIM coverage is relatively inexpensive. You cannot purchase more UM/UIM coverage than you have liability coverage. Purchase as much liability and UIM coverage as you can afford.

Liability coverage is available to an injured party in the event you are at fault in an accident. To protect yourself from losing all of your assets, you should have liability coverage equal to your net worth.

FORCED TO TRIAL DUE TO A LOW OFFER All Cases Are Worth Fighting

Car accidents can leave life-altering injuries, sometimes not realized for weeks. That's exactly what happened to our 20-year-old client when her Honda was rear-ended by another vehicle. What initially seemed like soft tissue back pain in the immediate aftermath of the accident turned out to be something far worse.

AFTER THE ACCIDENT Within a few hours of being rear-ended, our client, a young college student, was seen by a doctor who initially didn't find much cause for concern and even told her she didn't have to cancel her snowboarding plans for the following day. When she hit the slopes, however, she could tell something was wrong but continued her trip. Two weeks later, she returned to the doctor, complaining of mid-back pain. It took 11 months before medical professionals finally determined the source of her discomfort: trauma to her spine had caused disk material from her vertebrae to leak into her spinal column.

MORE THAN SOFT TISSUE BACK PAIN Our client's symptoms took time to develop, gradually worsened, and

eventually, it was clear that she would need extensive medical care, including epidural injections, physical therapy, doctor visits, and MRIs. Despite these costly projections, the insurance company for the responsible party only offered \$20,000 shortly before the trial date to settle her case. The insurance company argued that her medical condition was not caused by the accident as evidenced by the fact that she could go snowboarding the next day. Attorney Renee J. Nordstrand advised the client to take the case to trial.

JURY TRIAL The insurance company disputed our client's injuries, arguing she only suffered from whiplash. At trial, the lawyer for the defense pointed to the many activities our client still did after the accident, including snowboarding, hiking,



and a trip to Australia. Nordstrand brought in a surgeon to educate the jury about the slow-developing nature of her injuries and proved to the jury the effect that those injuries had on our client's lifestyle.

THE VERDICT After four days of trial and 5 1/2 hours of jury deliberation, a verdict was reached. The jury awarded our client \$219,668 in damages — a far cry from the initial offer of \$10,000 and final offer of \$20,000. This is why having an experienced trial lawyer is necessary. If you want legal representatives who know how and when to fight, call us at 805-962-2022.

WORD SEARCH

D J Z W P I M P P T Y R U J E
A W U R A E G H N T Q C Z L L
M O X F R L T E D L U T W N B
A Y K X T S M I Z F P W V T I
G Y F P B E J Z T K M T A B S
E S X M L E V E T I E U S D S
S H W T M G L B M X O J Z L I
P E T F Z A K S Z Q Q N P V M
X E Q K W G J L M O A Z U E D
S U C S F U N H W H V I A I A
Q J U U A R G U M E N T S Q C
N I R D L H Q E C I V V H U R
T C G M X U I B C T E S T I D
V R T H K C J A P L Q R U W X
M M R A V X I L Q O K H C D X

Admissible
Argument
Damages
Jury
Law
Lawsuit
Petition
Settlement

GINGERBREAD DOGS

'Tis the season for holiday cheer! Share some cheer with your four-legged friends with these special holiday dog treats.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup molasses
- 4 tbsp honey
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp dried powder ginger

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350 F.
2. In a medium bowl, combine molasses, honey, water, and oil, and set aside. In a large bowl, mix together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and ginger. Slowly add dry ingredients to wet ingredients, mixing well until dough forms.
3. Separate dough into four equal balls. Wrap dough balls in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 3-5 hours.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out chilled dough to 1/4-inch thick. Use dog-shaped cookie cutters to cut out treats.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes on baking sheet until cookies start to brown. Carefully remove treats from the oven and let them cool completely before serving to your dog.

Inspired by GoneToTheSnowDogs.com